

Participation of Power in Democracy

Introduction:

Earlier we discussed democratic character and further tried to know how democracy developed in the global perspective. In this chapter, of this class, we shall try to know how the elements of conflict are inherent in democracy due to social inequalities. How do the caste and communal diversification affect democracy and how does the democratic behaviours change on the basis of gender discrimination?

We shall also see, in this chapter, how democracy tries to present amicable solution to all social variations, differences and disparities by maintaining equilibrium among them. Elaborating on these concepts, we shall try to know how social variations assume distinctive forms and how social variations and democratic politics affect each other. In the second part of this chapter we shall focus on three social disparities based on social division and distinction - caste, religion and sex. We shall focus on distinctively what are the types of disparities based on these three elements and how they are expressed in politics; .

Dialectics in Democracy:

Elements of dialectics in democracy: Students! We studied in the chapter-2 of class IX that the people are the local point of governance in the democratic form of government. Democracy is such a system of government in which the people are ruled by the people. The people representatives, in the governance, want to give paramount importance to the interest and desire of the people. That is why the democratic practice of governance is

affected by the emerging conflict in the society. To understand it better, we shall examine the following few events and issues. The population of Marathi people which was 34 percent in 1961, increased fairly and reached above 57 percent in 2001. It is true that the number of migrants from Chennai, Bangaluru and Hyderabad in South India, to Mumbai has fairly decreased due to development in that region. Similarly the number of migrants from Surat, Ahmedabad, and Vadodara, etc to Mumbai has decreased due to development in Gujarat.

Now the people who come here in search of job are Hindi speaking. They are confined in the sub urban areas such as - Meera-Bhaiwair, Thane, Kalyan, Ope and Navi Mumbai. The Tata Institute of Social Sciences, in a study, found that more than 49 percent migrants are related to productive works. The Marathis, on the other hand, have their supremacy in the white collar job with high wages and privileges. They hate the poor **Bhaiyya** (North Indian Hindi speaking people, particularly from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh). Who earn their livelihood through menial work and render their affordable services to the natives in different ways. If India is a country of all Indians, in the same way Mumbai is a state of all Indians. In Mumbai there are many public undertakings in which there is a heavy investment of public income. The people in backward states like- Bihar and U.P. can get, only one fourth of the total amount deposited in banks, as loan but the situation in Mumbai is different, that is why today Mumbai is the 'Financial Capital' of India. Recently, few politicians out of appeasement policy provoked the sentiments and feelings of Marathis and got the people of Hindi speaking region thrashed mercilessly and compelled them to leave Mumbai. Many people lost their lives because of manhandling.

Similarly, the Bihari students were beaten up during Railway Recruitment Board Examination in Mysore. The Biharis were killed in the North East state in Assam also. It is worth considering that the sufferers in the violence were identified on the basis of their region, rather than caste, religion and community. In other words, the basis of violent action in Mumbai and Mysore was regional division. Certainly, it is an adverse action to the

established principles of democracy guaranteeing the right of its citizen to live and make their home in any part of country. But under the policy of appeasement such actions are not resisted by the ruling parties. A direct effect of this dialectical aspect implies on the democratic principles and practices.

The nature of opposing the Mexico Olympic was based on racial discrimination. 59 percent population of Belgium resides in Flemish region and speaks Dutch. The rest 41 percent people live in Wallonia region and speak French. In the Brussels, 80 percent population is French speaking and only 20 percent people speak Dutch language. The French speaking people are more prosperous and substantial while the position of Dutch speaking people is not satisfactory. Mounting tension between both groups was quite natural and its start experience was reflected in Brussels. This conflict set the direction of democratic government and many powers of the Central Government in Belgium was ceded to the two regional governments. Namely, the State Governments are not in the control of Central Government. There is a separate government of the equal representatives of both the communities in Brussels. For issues, such as Culture, Education and language the Dutch, French and German speaking people form their community government; viz in Belgium, race and caste is not the basis of social division rather language is the main factor in social division. In Sri Lanka, social division is on both the levels, regional as well as social.

But just opposite to it, social division in India is extremely complex. Here is a great difference between the culture of North Indians and South Indians and there is a big linguistic difference too. Tendency of friction and tension among caste is omnipresent. There is conflict in the interests of forward and backward castes. The backwards and the suppressed have their own problems. In Bihar, recently a new identification for dalit and mahadalit is established. The imposition of the effect of the inter-conflict on the different element of democratic government is quite natural.

Now we shall discuss the politics of social division by explaining the region of social discrimination, harmony and conflict among these variations and the changing behaviour of democracy.

Come! let us discuss these issues

Students! You have read the above mentioned instances. Now some important issues are presented before you for consideration. Think on the issues and tell whether you agree to these issues

Issue No.-1 : Article 19 of our constitution guarantees right to freedom to all the citizen of country. Every citizen has right, to reside and live anywhere, in any part of Indian states, to adopt any occupation, trade and business. Similarly under Article 15 of the constitution any type of distinction and discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste or birth place is prohibited. In the light of the constitution it is obvious that the atrocities done against the North Indians in Mumbai under leadership of Raj Thakray and the so called Marathis is absolutely a sordid attempt to shatter the social system for which there should be provision of severe punishment.

Issue No.-2 : If under the influence of Article 19, arrival of outsiders continued to increase in any town or city, the feature of population growth of the town and city will change tremendously and all types of social evils will arise there. Exploitation of economic resources of the local people will start. Consequently, their existence may be in danger. Therefore, there should be concern for the interest of the locals instead of taking action against the insurgents. If not done so, the civil services in many cities besides Mumbai, Delhi or Kolkata will begin to shackle and there would began conflict among different groups. Definitely, against the pious principles of democracy, the leaders will shatter the ideology of tolerance and integrity of the country for their political gains.

Issue No. 3 : Caste and race are not identical because basis of caste is social whereas the basis of race is biological. Therefore, national awakening against race is biological and natural. So, raising voice against caste exploitation may be considered justified. However in my opinion, the retaliation against apothecial in Mexico Olympic games by Smith, Carlos and Norman cannot be considered rational and justified.

Issue No. 4 : Race is not purely biological. In some extent like caste it is sociological and statutory classification, which is a subversive element of conflict for a democratic country. There should be remedy of this situation.

The Nature of social division in democratic system:

If you will think over the above instances you will find that there are many characters of social division and all these have their own ways of protests.

The social division and discrimination is based on regional sentiments that leads to protests and conflict. It is discussed in the later unit. The violent actions in Mumabi, Delhi and Kolkata against the north Indian people of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh states are its best examples.

The most suitable example of apartheid can be seen in the Mexico Olympic Games in 1968. During medal ceremony of 200 m race in Mexico Olympis 1968, the winner Afro-American sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos exposed from their behaviour the tyranny and apartheid on a black American. Austrian sprinter Peter Norman, who was neither American nor black, opposed apartheid by supporting Carlos and Smith. In Belgium and Sri Lanka this division was prevalent on both levels - regional as well social. The division in Srilanka seems on both the basis of language and religion. Social diversity in India is in different forums. In India, social division is on the basis of language, region, culture, religion, caste sex etc.

Origin of social discrimination and diversity:

Selection of community or caste is not in the control of individuals. A person becomes a member of a community on the basis of birth. A child born in a family becomes a normal member of the community. Man-woman, black-fair, tall-short etc. are results of birth. These types of social divisions are called birth based social divisions.

But all divisions are not birth based divisions. Some of them we select on our own, as several persons change religion with their will and become member of another community. Some people become atheist, while all members of the family are theist. Members of the same family can follow Shaiv, Shakt, Vaishnava religion. It also depends on the desire or person that member of the some family can select a profession.

It is possible that many members of a family may adopt profession of farmer, government servant, businessman, pleader, etc. Consequently, their community changes and their personal interest can be different.

Difference between social variation and social division:

All social variations are not necessarily basis of social division. It may be possible that different communities have different opinions, but their interests will be the same. For example, castes of the people who suffered atrocities in Mumbai were different. Their religion and sex were also different, but their region was the same. They all belonged to the same region, the North India. They had common interest and they all were engaged in their occupation.

Thus, social variation could not take the form of social division. However, ideology of distinction formed among persons due to social variation sporadically plays a main role due to common interest. The Indian students who live in Australia may be related to different communities of Indian society, but there is similarity and likeness due to common interest;

beyond their groups and limits. It was the reason that some Indian students became victim of violence of Australian rowdies. Similarly both Carlos and Smith were Afro-American and same in some sense viz. the black American. While Norman was white Australian. But there was one uniformity among the three, they were against apartheid. The followers of Hinduism, Christianity, Jainism, Buddhism and Islam are of same caste and community. Though there we find unity among them on the basis of religion, but there is possibility of opposite ideology based on region, caste, colour and sex. Again, the people of different religion being member of same race, caste and colour, may follow the same ideology. In so much as, there might be conflict of ideologies among the rich and the poor members of the same joint family.

However, in conclusion, we can say that we all have more than one identification that can be a part of more than one social groups. In one word we can say “our identification in each context makes its own nature.”

There is a great difference between social variation and social division. Social division occurs when some social difference overlaps with other difference. Difference of upper castes and schedule castes is a social division because across the country the scheduled caste are commonly poor, deprived, homeless and victims of discrimination whereas the upper castes are commonly well off and privileged. Therefore, member of the scheduled castes began to feel that they are from other communities. So we can say, when a difference becomes more important than the other and the people begin to feel that they are from other community, it leads to a situation of social division. The difference of white and black in America is a social division.

Sometimes, it seems that social dissimilarities are prevalent in many groups. Therefore, the interest of several groups on an issue can be similar while there may be difference in views on other issues. For example, the interest of suppressed and deprived are similar in all religion. Although they have similarity in their social interest while there may be difference in religious views and create tension. This division clearly appears on world level also. For example, both Northern Ireland the Netherlands are Christian dominated country. People of the countries are divided into two sections: Catholic and Protestant. But the basis of social division between the two groups are not similar. The Catholic community of Northern Ireland is poor and deprived, and have been victims of exploitation since long. So there is very close relation between class and religion in Northern Ireland. In other words, we can say that there seems complete equality and unity among the Catholic of Ireland, while in the Netherlands, Catholics and the Protestants are both rich and poor. Therefore, direct fighting and killing goes on between the Catholics and the Protestants in Northern Ireland, while there is nothing such in Netherlands because there does not seem any similarities between religion and class. Any country whether it is big or small, social division and variation is clearly visible.

Conflict and harmony are ladder of democracy passing through which *Lok Satta* determines its policies. These policies are not easily settled but tries to make harmonious atmosphere by passing through the tough situation of rivalry. According to a situation all fighting groups finally accept it and the policies are determined. Endeavour for reservation of backwards in government jobs and educational institutions started years before. The provision of reservation was implemented after violent tensions and a prolonged struggle from Kaka Kalekar report to the recommendations of the Mandal Commission. Whenever such situation creates a situation conflict emerges among political parties and labelling of caste on political parties starts.

Effects of Caste on Politics:

In other words we can say that caste becomes dominant on politics, and the way of politics establish under the social justice. When we see the scenario of Indian politics, we shall meet with such concepts.

The plight of the scheduled castes in the seventies is mentioned in the poem of the Maharashtrian poet Nander Dhasal.

Travelled for centuries!

Those!!

But now we have opening lips;

No! from this pathway of darkness!

Yes! Our ancestors, swayed carrying darkness,

But now we have to let down,

The burden from their backs!!

For this matchless city

Discharged our blood,

And got this stone in return....

The poem composed in the seventies more or less draws our attention towards the social structure of whole of India and expresses that existence of recognition and access of scheduled castes was far from politics.

Before seventies the Indian politics swunged between the privileged interest groups. In other words it is not exaggeration to say that till 1967 the upper castes had their supremacy in politics.

Struggle for possession of power continued between scheduled castes and middle class backward castes during seventies to nineties. After nineties supremacy of backward castes and concepts of awakening in scheduled castes continued to register their presence in the political corridors and influenced the politics. In the *Mahamanthan* of the Indian politics, the struggle of backwards and scheduled castes remains effective. In the year of

modern decade, the balance of politics looks fitting in favour of dalits and mahadalits (in context of Bihar). In all contexts of government policies, the recognition of scheduled caste's Justice has become the centre point.

The situation of politics has been the same not only in India, but whole of the world. The political parties start competition in tune with the divisions prevalent in the society. Thus political division becomes social division. The country goes towards disintegration if harmony is not established among the destructive elements. We can take example of Ireland mentioned above. Northern Ireland is a part of Great-Britain and has been in the grip of violence, caste feeling and political conflict. The population of Ireland is mainly Christian and they are divided into two sects. 53 percent population represent protestant while 44 percent population of Roman Catholics are represented by Nationalist parties. They demand to merge the Northern Ireland with Ireland republic, that is dominated by Catholic. The protestants represented by Unionist parties, are in favour of living with Great-Britain because Britain is mainly Protestant dominated. Hundreds of people and army jawans have been killed in Britain in violent clashes between Unionists and nationalists. In 1998 a peace agreement was made between the government of Britain and the Nationalists in which both the parties agreed to suspend violent movement. But in Yugoslavia the story did not end in such a pleasant way. Yugoslavia divided into many parts out of political race that began on the basis of religious and caste divisions.

In most of the countries in the world, there is a social division of one kind or other and such divisions adopt political form. For the political parties, in democracy, it is quite natural phenomenon to talk about social divisions and make separate commitments to different groups. Efforts of providing reasonable representation to different communities and making policies

fulfilling the genuine demands of different communities are part of the chain. In most of the countries a direct relation appears between nature of voting and social divisions. Many parties pay attention to their communities and politicize in their interest, but its results does not affect the integration of the country.

Three determinant factors of social division :

Social division depends on three factors of politics :

First :

The people want to confine their recognition to self-existence because besides national thought the people have sub-national or regional thought also. When any one thought goes on violent at the cost of other thoughts, social imbalance emerges. For example, as long as the people of Northern Ireland see them only as Protestant or Catholic, their violence will not stop. The unity, integrity and harmony of India will remain in danger unless the regional feelings like Bengal for Bengalis, Tamil Nadu for Tamils, Maharashtra for Marathis, Assam for Assamese and Gujarat for Gujratis are not suppressed. So, it is reasonable that all feelings or recognition remain in their limits and should not interfere in other's limit. In other words there will be no problem if people recognize their multiple identities as a part of national identity. For example, the people of Belgium consider themselves as Belgian even if they speak Dutch or German. Most the people in our country, have such views in terms of their recognition. There are many variations, in India; still all citizens consider themselves as Indian first. That is why our country is a symbol of unity and integrity.

Second :

The second important factor is, how the political parties have been raising demands of any community or particular region. It is easy to accept the demands that are within the ambit of the constitution and not detrimental to others. It is clear from the above discussion how political scenario of pre-seventies and post eighties and nineties changed but the harmony in Indian society is still intact. Contrary to it, leaders of the different communities in Yugoslavia put such demands on behalf of their caste groups which were impossible to fulfil within the border of a country. Consequently, Yugoslavia disintegrated and divided into different parts.

Third :

Result of the politics of social division depends on the form of government. It is also important what reactions the government expresses on these demands. If the government had injected the demands of justice related to backwards and Dalits, India would have been on the brink of destruction. But the government considering their social justice just gave them participation in power and tried honestly to bring them into mainstream. So inspite of trivial conflicts, peace and harmony prevalent in the Indian society. In Belgium, too, interests of community were given proper representation in the community government. But in Sri Lanka, justified demands of Tamils are suppressed in the name of national integration. The effort to maintain integration on the basis of power often takes a country towards division.

In democracy, political manifestation of social division is a common phenomenon and it is a symbol of healthy politics also. The expression of social division through various forums in politics works as agent to maintain harmony among such divisions. Consequently, none of the social divisions could be violent more than a certain limit and this tendency is helpful also in making democracy stronger. People raise their demands peacefully in constitutional way, give pressure through elections and make efforts to get solution.

Nature of Caste, Religion and Sex discrimination in social division:

Among the three manifestations of social division, concept of caste is most important. Both its positive and negative aspects have importance in politics. Caste system plays various roles in politics. On the one side, caste variations and dissimilarities in politics make place for the deprived and the weaker communities to push their matters forward and make demand for their participation in power. In this context caste politics has created situation, for dalits and backward castes to access power and influence the decision making process in a better way. On the other side, merely emphasising on caste may lead to a great loss. Politics based only on racial identification is not good for democracy.

Caste Inequalities:

In all societies across the world, there are communities based on social inequalities and division of labour. Like India, in other countries also basis of occupation is hereditary. Occupation automatically transforms from one generation to others.

The community systems based on occupation is called caste. When it is consolidated, it is called radical form of division of labour and we begin to call it caste. In a particular sense, it differs from other community in society. The community based on hereditary occupation is called caste and it is ratified through rituals also. It is recognized as a separate community and all the members of the community have similar type of occupation. Marriage of their sons and daughters are arranged in their own community and they invite their own community for feast. Marriage of their offspring can not be done in other communities nor do they try to do so. They eat sitting together on important family and community occasion. Sporadically,

if their sons and daughters get married in other community, their own community stops having common feast with them and later they are expelled from the community.

Varna System:

Varna system is a large group based on castes. It consists of several castes. Therefore, Varna system is a hierarchy system of caste groups, in which one caste will remain on the upper rung and the others will remain below accordingly. For example, there is a systematic of Varna Vyavastha system in Hindus according to which Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra are hierarchical order. In the beginning, this system was based on division of 'Karma' or occupation and except their respective works they had mutual feast and marriage. But later on the system became more rigid and permanent and common feast and marriage were confined to the same Varna. Again, the Varna was divided into several communities which is very radical. It is called caste system. Further, many sub-castes emerged among them. It was a negative tendency of the caste system in the Indian society. Under caste system the condition of the Vaishya and the Shudra is dissatisfactory, while the condition of the Brahmin and Kshatriya is better. The Indian society was completely divided into forward and backward castes. The reign of political power remained in the hands of forward classes from the very beginning and they got satisfactory share in powers. And the castes of the lower rungs were called untouchables and the system of untouchability came in vogue. The dalit castes belonging to untouchable community remained completely deprived of powers. But the nature of Indian politics changed in the later half of the previous century. The dalit castes were awakened. The politicians and social reformers like Jyotiba Phule, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar and Periyar Ramaswamy advocated for forming a society free from caste distinction and they succeeded in their efforts. As a result of the efforts of these great men and the

awakening in the backward class, dalits and deprived community, a great change occurred in the caste structure and caste system in modern India. The socio-economic change has also played an important role breaking the caste system. All round economic development, growth in literacy rate and education, freedom of adopting occupation, expansion of urbanisation also weakened the caste system. A change has been emerging in the mentality based on the traditional nature of caste and Varna system even in villages.

A rapid change has occurred in the old form of caste system and caste based narrow mindedness in towns in comparison to villages because people belonging to various caste reside in the same mohalla so more openness has emerged in their thought due to feelings of neighbourhood. Feast is definitely not limited to caste community, but on the occasion of family function and other occasion all people of the mohalla do not hesitate in having their feast sitting together. There is no wonder over inter-caste and inter-religion marriages. There is no objection in travelling sitting together in trains or buses, and eating in hotels. In the third part of our constitution caste distinction is prohibited. The constitution guarantees freedom to everyone to choose occupation of his/her choice. Government has made laws under the provision prohibiting caste feelings mentioned in the constitution and declared the feeling of untouchability as punishable act. Provision of punishment has been done for this.

Still in India caste-practices have not been completely uprooted. Marriages are mostly done in the same caste and it is accepted as the best. In spite of clear constitutional provision, untouchability is still prevalent in our society. From centuries, some caste-group are in position of advantages and some are suppressed. Some powerful castes have remained on the vanguard in education and for that reason they have influence in education even today.

Some caste community (dalit castes) are still deprived of education. Naturally they are backward. This is the reason that among the urban middle class the ratio of powerful caste community is more and there is more consciousness among them. As caste and economic condition have close relationship, their social status is also better and they have supremacy in society. It would not be an exaggeration to say, in other words, that caste is also an important basis of economic inequalities. The caste having more access on resources will flourish and those who have no access will be backward and deprived. In ancient times, untouchable or Shudra had no right to have land. In ancient times, dalits had even no right to get education. Only the twice-born caste (dwij) had right to get education. However, such type of ideas based on caste have been prohibited and such type of act is declared illegal. Still the impact of attitude that kept few deprived communities in profit or loss, is still present in the society. These inequalities have not be obliterated completely rather some other inequalities have increased.

However, an average change has emerged in the social structure. The old circumstances of the position of caste economy is not completely present rather it has also changed.

There are some special characteristics for determining caste-based social structure and economic status. In this context, some following points can be focussed:

1. The average economic status has very close relation with Varna system
2. Though affluence and poverty is prevalent in all castes but poverty among the lower castes like dalits and tribals is on large scale. The condition of dalits and mahadalits are more miserable. Therefore, people living below the poverty line (each person per month 327 rupees (rural) and 455 rupees (urban) are mostly related to dalits and tribals. More number of the rich is among the upper caste community.

**Percentage ratio of the person's living below the poverty line
(Year 1999-2000)**

Caste and community	Rural	Urban
Scheduled Tribes	45.8	35.6
Scheduled Castes	35.9	38.3
Other Backward Castes	27.00	29.5
Muslims Upper Castes	26.80	37.2
Hindus Upper Castes	11.7	9.9
Christians Upper Castes	9.6	5.4
Sikh of Upper Castes	0.0	4.9
Other Upper Castes	16.0	2.7
Other groups	27.0	23.4

Courtesy : National sample survey 5th round 1999-2000

Castes in Politics:

It is said that caste is the basis of community and society because the member of the same caste form a natural community. People of the community have common interest; their interests are different from the interests of other communities. Consequently there is no uniformity in the interests of different caste community, but on the basis of experience we should accept that caste is an aspect of our life but it is not the only and the most important aspect. There might be many aspects of castes in politics. As -

1. At the time of election, in course of finalising a candidate the political parties keep the caste equation in mind. Parties put their candidates from the caste having large number of voters in that constituency so that they could get large number of votes to win the election. Even in the formation of government, caste equation is kept in mind. It is taken into care that different castes and able persons should be given proper representation.
2. Political parties try to use the caste feeling to win the election. Some special parties are identified on the basis of caste feeling.
3. During election, parties try to present themselves clean and above caste feeling for making reputation among the voters.
4. During election, importance of lower castes and dalits increases. Candidates of upper castes also go before the lower castes in a polite requesting way to win their heart. On these occasions, self-respect and self-esteem awaken among the lower castes. However, these parties have opportunity to get political consciousness.

Tendency to decrease casteism in elections:

Often caste-feelings are emphasised in election and this concept develops that election is nothing but play of castes. But this is not so. The other concepts, in politics are not of lower importance as

1. No electoral constituency is carved in such a way that consists of the electoral of same caste. It is possible that number of a particular caste is fairly large, but members of other castes also play decisive role. Therefore each party wants to win the favour of the people of more castes.

2. It would not be right to say that a particular party comes into power by getting the votes of only one caste. When people say a particular caste as a vote bank of a party it means most of the member of that caste, vote in favour of the party.

3. All political parties field their candidate of the caste belonging to the caste that has large number of voters in a parliamentary or legislative constituencies. It is possible that the voters of a particular caste have no candidate of their caste.

4. If caste feeling had been permanent and unbroken, the parties to come in power polarising caste would never have been defeated. It may be accepted that the regional parties come into power by tying relation with caste-groups, but to have recognition on All India basis it is necessary to have thought free from caste and communal feelings.

After taking into account the above mentioned facts, we come to the conclusion that though the role of caste is important in politics, but the other factors are also not less effective. The voters often have more close relation with political parties than their relationship with their respective castes. The poor and the rich of the same caste vote to different parties. Fame of government and state leaders does not increase due to their caste mask rather it increases due to their works.

Politics within caste means ‘politics also affects the caste — We have seen above that the role of caste in politics is very important. Therefore, caste affects politics. But it should not be taken as there in one sided relation between politics and caste. Politics too, affects caste and instigates caste feelings. Specific castes try to take favour of community that was isolated from them.

1. Sometimes politics tries to make an alliance of many castes having more or less same position to attain political power. This scenario is obviously seen in some states of northern India. Negotiation and dialogue go on among the castes of alliance. In other words, we can name them as politicization of castes.

2. The entire Indian politics today is moving around the backward, dalit, minority and deprived communities. To increase their power, they are engaged in ameliorating the bad conditions of their communities. The most important advantage of this is all round development of India. The centre of politics today is around these deprived and exploited groups. May be unconsciously but it is a positive aspect of politics. Therefore, the main objective of politics of today is to provide land, resources and opportunities to dalits, deprived and the backward castes. So that their economic condition could improve. More and more commitments are made for their participation in power and their importance in the form of vote bank has considerably increased.

Religion, Communalism and Politics:

Now we shall discuss other type of social division. This social division is based on religion. This type of social division based on religion seems not only in India but in the whole world. Like India, followers of different religion are present in all countries. Their faith can be different from the faith of others and their thought based on their faith can also be different. As we have seen earlier that there are two separate communities Roman Catholic and Protestant of the same religion in Ireland. There is tension between them over supremacy.

There is tradition of many faiths of the same religion in India. As in the Hindu religion, there are Shaiva and Vaishnava, Kabir Panthi, Jains and Buddhist.

Politicization of religion almost seems in most of the countries. We can view them from the following points of view:

1. Once Gandhi ji said that religion could not be separated from politics. We should not infer that the foundation of politics should be the religion of Hindu and Muslims. He believed that moral values should be based on politics and politics should be guided through the values established in religion.
2. According to the report of human rights group, the biggest victim and sufferer of communal riots in India is the minority community. Therefore, there should be special arrangement for their protection.
3. The women movements have tried to explain through a report that all family laws in all religion discriminate with women. Therefore, the provision of family law is more inclined towards males, by which there is much place for women, insecurity, exploitation and oppression. So there should be amendment in such laws. But no party looks ready to do so.

All these things are related to religion and politics. Do such feelings come into mind, after thinking deeply on the above mentioned matters that religion is a wrong view and it should be kept separated from politics? In reality, inclusion of good ideas, ideals and values of different religion in politics will make the country better. It can play an important role in politics.

Being a member of religious community everyone should have right to raise strongly their needs, interests and justified demands in politics. The political authority should pay special attention on these matters. But the political authority should also watch that no religion makes distinction with other or is oppressive towards others. Prohibition of such type of activities is a must in politics.

Communalism:

Religion becomes a problem in politics when

1. Religion is recognized as base of nation.
2. Manifestation of religion in politics is done for the excellence and individually of a particular community.
3. Politics begins to support the demands of a particular religion.
4. The follower of a particular religion stands against others; it happens only when the beliefs of a religion is considered superior to other religious beliefs and one religious group presents its demand against other religious groups. In this process the state starts to use its power in favour of a particular religion and the problems become more complex and riot begins between the two communities.

The usage of religion in politics in this way is called communalism.

Definition of Communalism:

When we begin to say that very religion forms community, communalism germinates into politics and the thinking based on this concept is communalism. According to this, the believers in one religion belong to same community and their basic and important interests remain the same. Although their right may be difference of opinion among the members of the particular community, yet the differences are meaningless and all need to have same type of thought. The members of the particular religious community have this very view that the thought and interest of the members of other religion is opposite to theirs. Although many religious communities display unity in their thought, that is totally superfluous. The interest of different religion will definitely be different and there will be more

chance of tension. When the thinking of the particular community goes on the tension becomes violent, and riot begins. There is growing belief that the members of other religion cannot live like common citizen in the same nation. The followers of the other religion, on the basis of such mentality are compelled to create their separate Nations/state or accept the supremacy of their religion and carry out directions imposed on them.

This type of thinking is false because desires and aspirations of every one can definitely be not the same. Everybody has a separate role in the society and their position and status is also not the same. They have individual thought and the expression of their thought may also differ. Therefore, it is illogical and unjustified attack on the followers of other religion, to oppose them and take them out of country by every religious community. To see all persons related to a religion collectively in non-religious context is to suppress the different voices, concepts and thoughts of that community.

Features of Communalism in Politics:

We feel and see every day the manifestation of communalism as religious prejudices, stereotypes of religious thinking and belief in the superiority of one religion over the other religion. Though these are very common phenomena but this thinking is hidden within us. Therefore, this is also a type of communalism.

1. The communal thinking generally wants to keep the superiority of their religious community in politics. This effort of the people of the majority community takes the form of majoritarian dominance. For example, the majoritarian dominance of Sinhalese in Sri Lanka. Here, even the government elected through democratic way took many steps to maintain the supremacy of Sinhalese community under majoritarian measures. As declaration of

Sinhali as the only state language in 1956, priority to Sinhalese in universities and government jobs, took many steps for the protection of Buddhist religion, etc.

2. Political mobilisation on religious line is another form of communalism. For this, help is taken from sacred symbols, religious guides, emotional appeals etc. It is often seen at the time of election when special appeal is made by a particular follower of a particular religion to vote in favour of a particular party.

3. Finally, we see the worst form of communalism, when there is violence, riot and massacre on the communal basis. We have faced this tragedy at the time of partition. Even after independence, major communal riots have broken out in many places.

Concept of Secular Government:

Our constitution makers had already anticipated this terrifying face of communalism. So the secular model of government was adopted in India and our country became a secular nation. Many provisions are made in our constitution for the formation of secular society

1. In our country no religion is accepted as the state religion. Contrary to the status given to Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Islam in Pakistan and Christianity in England, the Indian constitution does not give any special status to a religion.

2. The constitution guarantees right to every citizen to embrace any religion through his/her own belief. On the basis of this, he/she will not be deprived of any opportunity. Members of all religion have right to follow and peaceful propagation of their religion. For this purpose, they can establish and carry out education institutions.

3. According to our constitution, any type of distinction on the basis of religion is declared unconstitutional.

4. To maintain equity in religious community, interference can be made even in religious matters in accordance with the constitution.

For example, the government does not permit untouchability.

Secularism is not only an ideology but foundation of our constitution while communalism is a challenge for the basic concept of India.

Gender Issues and Politics:

Gender disparity is an important form of social disparity. Though the gender disparity is visible in all areas of social structure, yet in the study of politics it is hardly recognised. Here we shall not focus on the biological structure of male and female, rather discuss the prevalent traditional images and settled roles related to them.

Social division based on gender discrimination is clearly visible in both public as well as private sectors. In course of upbringing of boys and girls this feeling occurs that the main responsibility of girls in the future are limited to manage family and rear children and it is corroborated through gender division of labour. This tendency can be seen more or less in all families. The area of women-work is limited within home. Cooking, cleaning of clothes, sewing and rearing of children are their job. It has no biological foundation. Males can also do these jobs in a better way. But this ideology has settled into mind of male group that women are born to do these jobs only. The male group accepts this settled social role of women. But the males do this job happily where the remuneration is paid for jobs of this nature. They do not feel themselves inferior to do such job. If the males clean utensils in their house, cook food, do sewing-stitching they called feminine. Sarcastic remarks are passed on them in society.

We see it also that most of the cooks in hotel are males and similarly females, like males bring water from outside to meet the demand in home. They gather fuels also and work in fields, though they are not paid for these jobs. The women who do domestic work in a middle class family are paid remuneration. The women of middle class family attend office. Here in terms of women this truth will have to be accepted that the women who work for additional income in addition to their domestic work are not considered as more valuable. They have no credit for their day-night job.

However, in modern time the women have been registering their presence in all sphere of life. India is an agriculture based country and main source of livelihood for the people of this country is agriculture. On the utterance of 'farmer' in English and 'Kisan' in Hindi the people visualise the face of males. From creators of words to policy-makers all have underestimated the contribution of women related to agricultural sector. While the truth is that there has been stabilisation in agriculture today. The census data of 1991 and 2001 tell that there has been an increase in the numbers of women in agricultural sector in the previous decades. The following data confirm it:

1. In agricultural sector, participation of women is 40 percent.
2. In agricultural sector, today 53 percent males are in the total male workers while the percentage of female workers are 75 percent in total female workers.
3. Among the rural women workers, 85 percent women do different works related to agriculture.

Thus we find that the participation of women in agriculture, the main economic sector of India, is fairly good. But the irony is that the women related to agriculture are not paid remuneration equal to males. Towards

them, no change of view has come in society. The women began to raise their voice against this type of exploitation. They started mobilisation to get equal status in every area like that of males. Women movement is a chain of this sequence.

In fact, different areas of public life are in the grip of males. Though women have half share in human population, in public life especially in politics their role is insignificant. Earlier only the male class had right to participate in public matters, to vote or fight election for public posts. The women had to labour hard very much, for participation in public life. Gradually issues were raised in politics and the women started to get opportunity in public life. The women got right to vote first in England in 1918. Gradually they got right to vote in other democratic countries. Actually, the political expression of gender division and political mobilisation on this issue helped in taking ahead the role of women in public life.

Today we witness women's participation in every field. Today they are working as scientist, doctor, engineer, manager, teacher in college and universities. The level of women participation in public life is very high in Norway, Sweden and Finland.

The figure in India is not yet satisfactorily. Till date, our society is patriarchal society. Many types of discrimination happen with women. We get signs of this through following facts:

1. Even now the female literacy rate is only 54 percent while male literacy rate is 76 percent. Though in many places, girls have been getting first position in school education yet the percentage of girls pursuing higher education is very low. For this aspect there is difference in the thinking of parents. Parents have mentality to spend more on boys. This is the reason that the number of girls in higher education is limited.

2. Due to this backwardness of girls in education even now the number of women achieving higher posts and getting higher salary is very less.
3. Although, according to a survey, a woman on an average works more than seven and a half hours every day while a male's daily average working is six hours. Still the work done by males looks more, because they get income. Although women do so many works of such types that get indirect income but most of their work are done within the walls of home. They do not get money for this so their work is not visible.
4. The dark side of gender bias is very agonizing while the parents have desire of only male baby in most parts of India. The tendency of female foeticide is result of this mentality.

Political representation of females:

Due to this inferior thinking of society towards woman, movements began to start. The demand of participation in power remained on the top among the main demands of women movement.

The women started thinking that these problems can not be solved unless they get control in power. Consequently it became a matter of discussion in the political corridor that the best way to achieve this goal is to increase the participation of electoral representation. Although the number of female representatives in Lok Sabha has increased upto 59, still its percentage is below 11 percent. Even in the developed countries, the number of female representatives in legislature is not satisfactory. In Great-Britain the percentage of female representative is 19.3 and the percentage in the USA is 16.3. Similarly in Italy, even now the percentage of female representatives is 16.1, its percentage in Ireland is around 16.2. The percentage of female representatives even in a developed country like France is 13.9. In the western countries 70 percent women come off the family that have political

background. In the previous Lok Sabha elections, 40 percent women belonged to the family having criminal background. But this time in the 15th Lok Sabha elections the voters have rejected the criminals. 90 percent women MPs are graduate (in India). Even today the opportunity for the women of common family becoming parliamentarian is meagre. Increasing of women representatives is good for democracy.

Victor Hugo has written in this context:

Males have a vision
and women have insight
so they can see things
that are relatively far away.

Questions

1. Every social variation does not take the form of social division. How?
2. How and when social differences take the form of social division?
3. As a consequence of politics of social divisions, changes happen in the behaviour of democracy. Explain it in the context of Indian democracy.
4. Explain briefly the journey of Indian democracy from the seventies to modern decades (in context of social justice).
5. On which things does the result of the politics of social division depend?
6. In the context of controlling the social divisions which statements from these do not apply on the democratic system?
 - a. Out of political rivalry in democracy the reflection of social division appears on politics too.
 - b. In democracy it is possible for different communities to put their complaints in a peaceful manner.

- c. Democracy is the best system to accommodate social divisions.
- d. On the basis of social division, democracy takes society towards disintegration.

7. Think over the following three statements

- a. Where social differences overlap one another, social division happens.
- b. It is possible that a person has multiple identity.
- c. Social division happens only in the large countries like India.

Among these statements which are true?

(1) a, b & c (2) a and b (3) c and d (4) only c

8. Who among the following persons were not against apartheid in democracy?

- a. King Martin Luther b. Mahatma Gandhi
- c. Olympic runner Tommie Smith and John Carlos
- d. Jade Gudi

9. Match the following:

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| a. Pakistan | a. Secular |
| b. India | b. Islam |
| c. England | c. Protestant |

10. Write a short note on the responsibility and objective of democracy in the coming society.
11. How are the caste based differences prevalent in India? Explain.
12. Why can't the election results in India be decided on the basis of caste only? Mention any two reasons?
13. Give detail of different types of communal politics and cite one example for each.
14. Mention different aspects of life in which in India there is discrimination against women and they are in weak position.
15. What is the position of women representation in the legislatures of India?
16. Mention any two provisions that make India a secular country.

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17. When we talk about gender division, we mean

- a. Biological differences between female and male.
- b. The in-equal roles assigned to females and males in the society.
- c. Ratio of the number of boys and girls.
- d. Missing the right to vote to women in democratic system

18. Here in India there is provision of reservation for women

- a. Lok Sabha b. Assembly
- c. Cabinet d. Panchayati Raj Institutions

19. For the meaning of communal politics, think over following statements. Communal politics is based on which

- a. A religion is superior to other
- b. People of different religions, live together happily like common citizen
- c. Followers of a religion make a community
- d. To maintain supremacy of a religious group on all other religions the power of government cannot be used.

20. Which statement among these is correct in connection with Indian constitution?

- a. It rejects discrimination on the basis of religion.
- b. It makes a religion as state religion.
- c. Gives freedom to all people to follow any religion
- d. Give right to equality to all citizens in any religious community.

21. _____ based division is only in India.

22. Match the list I to list II

List - I		List - II
1.	The person considering female and male equal in terms of rights and opportunities	a. Communal
2.	The person considering religion as the main basis of community	b. Feminist
3.	The person considering caste as the main basis of community	c. Secular
4.	The person having no distinction on the basis of religious beliefs among the people.	d. Casteist

