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NCERT Class 10 Political Science Chapter 4: Gender, Religion and Caste YouTube Lecture Handouts

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Common Social Differences:

- Gender
- Caste
- Religion

Gender

- Sexual division of labor
- Women do the work inside the home & men do the work outside the home
- However, men if paid for work in home (cooking etc.), are ready to do it
- Similarly, women do work outside home – fetch water from wells, collect fuel and work in fields & in urban areas as domestic helpers
- Work of women is not valued and not recognized
- Women constitute around half of the society but contribution to politics is negligible
- Rise of feminist movements – equality in education, career and personal life
- Now there are female doctors, teachers, lawyers etc.
- Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, Norway and Finland, the participation of women in public life is very high

India is mainly a patriarchal society & reasons

- Lower literacy than males
- Higher dropouts in school

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- Proportion of highly paid females is less and most work is not paid and valued
- Son meta-preference & unwanted girls (Economic Survey 2018)
- Sex selective abortion has led to decline in child sex ratio
- Dip in sex ratio in 17 of the 21 states and Gujarat registered 53 points decline (as per 2018)
- Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 provides that equal wages should be paid to equal work, but still females are paid less as compared to males
- Reports of harassment, violence and exploitation against women – creates unsafe environment

Women's wellbeing can be addressed if women gains power and are elected representatives

2009 Lok Sabha election – 10% females & in state assemblies around 5%. Even if CM/PM is women, Cabinet is largely male

Women in national parliaments in different regions of the world (in%)



Image of Women in National Parliaments in Different Regions Chart

- One-third of seats in local government bodies – in panchayats and municipalities – are now reserved for women
- Demand for similar reservation in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies for more than a decade but no consensus yet
- Disadvantaged groups do benefit when social divisions become a political issue - If casteism and communalism are bad, what makes feminism a good thing? Reservation is a not an answer.

Religion, Communalism and Politics

Northern Ireland: Even when most of the people belong to the same religion, there can be serious differences about the way people practice that religion.

Gandhiji used to say that religion can never be separated from politics – but focused on moral values

Human right activists argue that most victims of communal riots are from religious minorities

Family laws of all religions discriminate against women

Those in power should prevent discrimination and oppression

Problem begins when religion is seen as basis of nation. Using religion in politics is called as communal politics.

Problem again when one religion and its followers are pitted against another

Communal politics

- Followers must belong to same community
- Their interest must be same
- If the followers of different religion have some commonalities these are superficial and immaterial.
- There interests are different and involve conflict
- There are many different voices within the community and religion (all voices have the right to be heard)
- Extreme form - people belonging to different religions cannot live as equal citizens within one nation. Either, one of them has to dominate the rest or they have to form different nations.

Communalism takes form of politics when:

- Religious prejudices, stereotypes of religious communities and belief in the superiority of one's religion over other religions
- Communal mind often leads to a quest for political dominance of one's own religious community
- Political mobilization on religious grounds - sacred symbols, religious leaders, emotional appeal and plain fear in order to bring the followers of one religion together in the political arena
- Can take form of violence, riots and massacre (India and Pakistan were worst sufferers during partition)

Secular State

Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Islam in Pakistan and Christianity in England.

- Indian Constitution does not give a special status to any religion. No official religion in India.
- Freedom to profess, practice and propagate any religion, or not to follow any
- Prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion
- Allows the state to intervene in the matters of religion in order to ensure equality within religious communities, for example, it bans untouchability

Communal prejudices and propaganda need to be countered in everyday life and religion based mobilization needs to be countered in the arena of politics

Caste & Politics

- This is an extreme form of social division
- Scheduled Castes or Dalits include those that were previously regarded as 'outcaste' in the Hindu social order and were subjected to exclusion and untouchability.
- Scheduled Tribes or Adivasis led a secluded life usually in hills and forests and did not interact much with the rest of society.
- Census does not count OBCs. NSS, 2004-05 estimates around 41% OBC. SC, ST and the OBC together account for about two-thirds of the country's population and about three-fourths of the Hindu population
- Members of same caste form community that practiced same occupation, married within caste group and didn't eat with other caste groups
- Based on exclusion and discrimination against outcaste caste groups & subjected to inhuman practices of untouchability
- Reformers - Jyotibha Phule, Gandhiji, B.R. Ambedkar and Periyar Ramaswami Naicker
- With urbanisation, growth of literacy and education, occupational mobility, and the weakening of the position of landlords in the villages, the old notions of caste hierarchy are breaking down

Constitution of India prohibited any caste-based discrimination and laid the foundations of policies to reverse the injustices of the caste system

Economically upper caste are well off, Dalits & Adivasis are worst and middle class lies in between. Although every caste has some poor members, the proportion living in extreme poverty (below the official 'poverty line') is much higher for the lowest castes. Upper castes are heavily over-represented among the rich.

Some systems still prevail like

- Marriage within caste or tribe
- Untouchability has not completely ended
- Some groups that didn't have education before, lagged behind – disproportionately large upper caste among upper middles
- 'untouchable' castes were denied the right to own land
- Only 'twice born' castes had the right to education

Caste takes into politics

- People choose representatives to muster support to win elections
- Political parties and candidates in elections make appeals to caste sentiment to muster support

In reality, this does not come true as:

- No parliamentary constituency in the country has a clear majority of one single caste
- No party wins the votes of all the voters of a caste or community (as vote bank it can be larger proportion of vote bank)
- Many political parties may put up candidates from the same caste
- Ruling party and the sitting MP or MLA frequently lose elections in our country. That could not have happened if all castes and communities were frozen in their political preferences
- Voters have strong attachment to political parties which is often stronger than their attachment to their caste or community
- Rich and poor or men and women from the same caste often vote very differently

Politics in Caste

Politics also influences caste system

It is not politics that gets caste-ridden, it is the caste that gets politicized

- Each caste tries to become bigger by incorporating neighboring castes
- Caste groups enter into coalition
- New caste groups come up like backward and forward caste groups

People from backward caste gain better access to decision making

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Bring end to discrimination against particular castes, for more dignity and more access to land, resources and opportunities

Exclusive attention to caste can produce negative results as well. It can divert attention from other pressing issues like poverty, development and corruption.

-Mayank



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