

Gender, Religion and Caste | Easy Notes for class 10th

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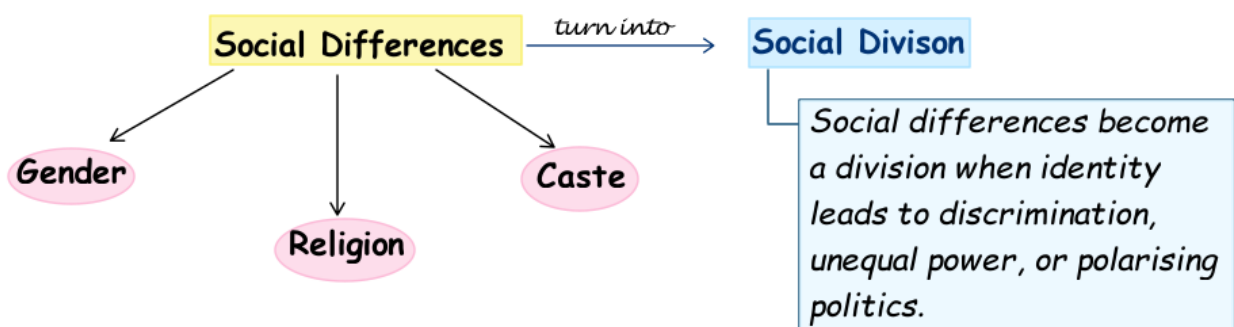
Introduction:

Every society has many kinds of people. How politics deals with these differences decides whether we stay united or get divided. In India, we have largely stayed together, but differences still exist. In this chapter, we look at three major social divisions ; **gender, religion, and caste** and how they appear in politics.

Social Differences:

These are the naturally occurring and socially constructed distinctions among individuals or groups such as gender, caste, religion, language, region, or socioeconomic status. These differences doesn't mean inequality.

Remember: Social differences don't automatically mean inequality. They become inequality only when people are treated unfairly because of those differences.



Relation of politics with social differences :

- Politics can give groups a voice (representation, reservations) and make fair laws/policies to protect equal rights.
- If leaders use identity to spread prejudice or hate, normal differences can turn into social divisions and conflict.

Gender and politics:

Biologically, males and females possess different physical attributes which is natural to happen. However, when *societal norms* decide the roles, it bounds people and creates **gender division**.

- Gender division can be of labour, pay, opportunity, benefits etc.
- Thus, when any of the above divisions persist in society, they must be addressed.

Now the question arises, how can we reduce such gaps or divisions if any? What platform should we use to eliminate gender inequality? Let's go ahead and find the answer.

Public/Private Division:

The belief that women should perform household work and look after kids and elders still prevails in many families. However, It does not mean that all women are just confined to their household chores. They work outside also. Moreover, women have *political as well as educational rights* these days. Yet, the percentage of such women is not satisfactory.

Note: Most changes we see today happened because people spoke up for gender equality. Women in many countries organised and protested to get equal rights. They asked for better political representation and stronger legal rights. *Some groups also demanded equality at home and in family life. These movements are known as Feminist movements.*

What are Feminist movements?

- They are organised campaigns that demand equal social, economic, and political treatment for all genders ; especially women.

1. Women's Education:

- If we talk about the literacy rate of women, it is only 54 % whereas it is 76 % among men.
- Also, drop out rates of girls are more than boys, especially in higher classes.

2. Employment:

- Employment rate of women has increased but the high paid women are still very less in proportion.
- Moreover, in many areas, women get less pay for the similar work. So, there was an act (*The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976*) passed by the government in this regard. It was to reduce gender pay gap.

What is The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976?

- A law that requires equal pay for women and men doing the same or similar work. It prohibits sex-based discrimination in recruitment and service conditions.

3. Political Representation of Women:

- In India, the proportion of women in the legislature has been very low.
 - **For Example:** the percentage of women members in Lok Sabha was 14.36 percent for the first time in 2019.
 - The share in the state assemblies is less than 5 percent.
- But after [decentralization](#), women's participation at least in local government bodies have increased.
 - **For Example:** More than 10 Lakh women are elected in panchayats and municipalities.
- **Note:** In 2023, Parliament passed the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (Women's Reservation Act, 2023), which provides 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and the Delhi Assembly.

Since people need platform to express such issues. they take up the matter of gender bias in politics.

Religion, communalism and politics:

Religion is another type of social division. Unlike gender differences, the religious differences are often expressed in the field of politics. It is due to following reasons:-

- **Religion and politics are inseparable:** In every religion, there are moral values and ethics which guide people towards humanity. So we must incorporate such values in politics in order to promote religious equality. Hence, both religion and politics become inseparable.
 - *Gandhiji used to say that religion can never be separated from politics. He believed that politics must be guided by ethics drawn from religion.*
- **Demand of Religious minorities:** Since religious minorities remained the worst sufferers during communal riots, they demanded protection and recognition. This way, religion becomes a political matter.
- **Discrimination in family Laws:** Almost in every religion, male dominance could be seen in family laws. So, women demanded change in these laws to make them more equitable. Thus, politics came into play.
 - *For Example: The matter of Triple Talaq.*

Here one thing to note is that religion is not the problem but the ideas any religious community promotes become the reason for differences. So, let's read about these ideas and understand which one should any country prefer.

Communalism and Secularism:

Communalism

Secularism

It is an idea in which people of any particular religious group believe in the superiority of their own religion.

Forms of Communalism in Politics

1. Prejudices and stereotypes of religious communities.
2. Majoritarian dominance.
3. Political mobilization on religious lines.
4. Communal violence.

It is an ideology that promotes equality for all the citizens irrespective of their religion. Also, separate state and religious matters.

Model of a Secular State

1. There is no official religion in the secular state.
2. Constitution provides freedom to profess, practice and propagate any religion, or not to follow any.
3. The Constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion.
4. Also, the Constitution allows the state to intervene in the matters of religion in order to ensure equality within religious communities.

Caste and politics:

Social division in Indian society is not only on religious and gender basis but caste based also. Earlier, caste division prevented many people from equal political, social and economic rights. But in modern India, caste inequalities have decreased. Do you know how these changes occurred?

Why caste inequalities have declined?

- Constitutional provisions such as reservation policies and rights for disadvantaged caste groups.
- Urbanization, growth of literacy and education.
- Occupational Mobility.

Why caste discrimination is still present?

- Even now most people marry within their own caste or tribe.
- Untouchability has not ended completely.
- Under the old system, many caste groups which did not have access in education, have naturally lagged behind.

Caste inequalities: The caste system of India is based on such belief in which no two different castes can practice similar occupations, marry and eat with other caste members.

Caste in politics:

Casteism: It is a belief that caste is the sole basis of social community.

This is about how the groups we belong to (like our castes) shape our political behaviour. In other words, our social identities, like caste, influence how we participate in the political process. Let's?

discuss some of the forms:

1. **Caste Consideration in Candidate Selection:** Parties consider the caste composition of the electorate and choose candidates from various castes to gain support and win elections.
2. **Caste Sentiments for Political Gains:** Political parties and candidates use appeals to caste emotions to gather backing from different caste groups.
3. **Mobilization of Formerly Inferior Groups:** Political parties aim to mobilize and gain support from groups that were historically considered inferior. This shift is due to universal adult franchise and the principle of equal voting rights, where every individual's vote holds the same value.

Are elections all about caste?

No doubt caste influences politics to some extent but it is not the only area of focus in order to win the majority support. There are several instances to prove it.

1. No parliamentary constituency in the country has a clear majority of one single caste. So, every candidate and party need to win the confidence of more than one caste and community to win elections.
2. No party wins the votes of all the voters of a caste or community.
3. Many political parties may put up candidates from the same caste.
4. The ruling party and the sitting M.P. or M.L.A. frequently lose elections in our country.

Politics in Caste:

This is about how the things politicians do can change how we think about our castes. Thus, Politics also influences the caste system and caste identities. Thus, ***it is not politics that gets caste ridden, it is the caste that gets politicized.*** This influence can take several forms:

1. **Caste Group Expansion:** Various caste groups seek to expand their influence by absorbing neighboring castes or sub-castes that were previously excluded from their fold.
2. **Coalition Building:** Many caste groups are compelled to form coalitions with other castes or communities, leading to dialogues and negotiations aimed at garnering broader support.
3. **Emergence of New Caste Groups:** The political landscape witnesses the emergence of new caste groups such as 'backward' and 'forward' castes, further entangling caste dynamics within politics.

Role of Caste in Politics:

Positive Role:

- Expression of caste differences in politics gives many disadvantaged communities the space to demand their share of power.
 - *For example:* People from Dalit and OBC communities have gained better access in decision making.

Negative Role:

- Unnecessary focus on caste related matters can divert people's attention from other pressing issues such as poverty, development and corruption.
- In some cases caste division leads to tensions, conflict and even violence.

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Very nice and soo helpful . Thank you soo much

Category

1. Class 10th

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