

MARGIN, MARGINALITY, MARGINALIZATION

Unit Structure

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OBJECTIVES

- To study the definition, nature and scope of marginalization
- To gain insights into the sociological understanding of marginalization

1.1 Background

Marginalization and social exclusion of individuals and groups are a reality which is reflected in every society and in all periods of human history. In the later part of the twentieth century national governments, transnational bodies and institutions began to pay more attention to the improvement of the situation of the excluded groups. This can be attributed to the awareness related to human rights and the significance of social research. Civil society, self-organizations, advocacy groups, social researchers and NGOs played a critical role in addressing the issue of marginalization and social exclusion and in advocating sustainable changes.

Within the area of marginalization and social exclusion, many issues have to be addressed, such as, racism, discrimination, globalization, poverty, immigration, social welfare, health and human rights. Also the list of potentially or actually marginalized and excluded individuals, groups and populations is extensive. This includes the most vulnerable sections of the society: women, children, poor persons, racial and ethnic minorities, disabled persons, immigrants, isolated older persons, ex-prisoners, drug users, people living with HIV/AIDS, Psychiatric patients, sex workers, homeless people and marginalized youth. These people face common social, economic, and individual problems even if they emerge from diverse backgrounds.

Indicators and definitions for marginalization and social exclusion might vary in different settings and regions. Therefore the process, types, forms, causes of marginalization and social exclusion needs to be understood against the relevant context.

This topic is divided into three units:

1. The first unit deals with the common definitions of the concepts of margin, marginality and marginalization.
2. The second unit deals with the effects of marginalization on the vulnerable groups based on caste, class, tribe, gender.
3. The third unit deals with the understanding of the discrimination of multiple marginal groups and social exclusion.

1.2 Margin, Marginality and Marginalization

Millions of people across the world have experienced marginality. Marginalized groups have relatively less control over their lives. This makes them vulnerable and susceptible to exploitation. These groups become a part of the vicious circle whereby they lack positive and supportive relationships, leading to further isolation. The phenomenon of marginalization has caught the attention of social observers and has become the centre of discussion in academic fields in the past few years. We shall dwell upon concepts related to margin, marginality and marginalization.

1.2.1 Margin

Margin is defined by the edge or border of some object, phenomenon or act. It also denotes side brink, fringe, boundary, limits, periphery and extremity, etc. Generally it is used to mean the opposite of mainstream. The “margins of society” refers to people who exist (figuratively, not physically) at the edges of society.

People who live outside of socially accepted norms, or who lack social power. Such individuals or groups are isolated from and not fully accepted by the dominant society or culture, and as a consequence, frequently disadvantaged.

These concepts have diverse meanings according to the context where these are discussed.

Marginals are considered to be the oppressed and exploited sections of the society and is a universal phenomenon. It is not only related to a particular group or a nation, but rather it is a universal phenomenon as mentioned earlier. The Encyclopedia of Public Health defines marginal or marginalized groups as, “To be marginalized is to be placed in the margins, and thus excluded from the privilege and power found at the center”.

Check Your Progress

Can you define the concept of Margin ?

1.2.2 Marginality

Marginality is referred to as the property of being marginal. It can be a position in a territory or a social position excluded from the dominant group or power centre. It is an involuntary position and condition of an individual or group at the margins of social, political, economic, ecological and biophysical systems, preventing them from access to resources, assets, services, restraining freedom of choice, preventing the development of capabilities, and eventually causing extreme poverty. Peter Leonard defines marginality as, “...being outside the mainstream of productive activity and/or social reproductive activity”.

- **Sociological Understanding of Marginality**

Marginality research dwells on identifying the social processes responsible for marginalization. A strong base for the source of concepts and ideas related for the analysis of marginalization is provided by classical sociology. Several sociological perspectives provide an explanation to the process of marginalization. Within the social science tradition, one of the earliest references to marginalization could be traced back to Simmel’s work on ‘The

Stranger (1908) and ‘Sociology of Space’, which was later revisited by Robert E. Park in his paper, ‘Human Migration and the Marginal Man’. This was followed by Schutz work on ‘Stranger’ and ‘Home Comer’, G.H. Mead’s work on ‘The Philosophy of the Present’ and Durkheim’s analysis of ‘Anomie’ and ‘Moral Community’ present a robust insight into the phenomenon of marginality.

Check Your Progress

1. What is Marginality ?

1.2.3 Marginalization

The concept of **marginalization** permeates the current literature but is rarely defined. When it is discussed it is usually related to the concepts of inclusion and (social) exclusion. It is a fact that social exclusion and marginalization appear to be interchangeable. Hansen (2012) observes that inclusion can only be understood through an investigation as to what constitutes exclusion. In that sense, these two are interrelated and interdependent processes.

A cursory look at the literature on the discourse around ‘marginalization’ and ‘social exclusion’ reveals that there are a range of conceptualizations. Marginalization may relate to social exclusion arising from a lack of equal opportunities and barriers to learning and participation. It may relate to social justice and equity, seen through the lens of cultural and social capital. It may refer to specific groups perceived to be especially vulnerable to exclusion and stigmatization. It may pertain to the social and relational aspect of poverty. It could be expressed through ‘clauses of conditionality’ within the realm of public policy. It could relate to the need to give marginalized groups a voice. Moreover, marginalization can be understood to be contextually related, wherein social exclusion is perceived as a process constituting relativity. One could be seen as marginalized in relation to others within the same context. Marginalization is also understood in terms of agency, in that it does not occur by chance – rather it arises from actions and/or circumstances. The process of marginalization is dynamic – the interaction between sets of variables within the environment will display

significant impact upon future prospects. These are not discrete categories, but interdependent and interconnected to each other.

Marginalisation describes the position of individuals, populations or groups who are positioned outside of ‘mainstream society’, living at the margins of those in the centre of power, cultural dominance and economical and social welfare. Marshall (1998) defined marginalization as, “a process by which a group or individual is denied access to important positions and symbols of economic, religious, or political power within any society...a marginal group may actually constitute a numerical majority...and should perhaps be distinguished from a minority group, which may be small in numbers, but has access to political or economic power”.

Danel, et.al. (2002) observes that marginalized groups are kept away from power and resources, the same resources that enable self-determination in economic, political and settings. ‘People in the margin’ have an inherent characteristic; viz., they have poor access to economic and other resources like education, health and social welfare. Another characteristic is that their participation and self-determination are on a low level. However, definitions of what is regarded as marginalized are highly dependent on the historical and socio-economic context of a society.

Check Your Progress

Can you define Marginalization ?

What is Margin , Marginality and Marginalization? Try to define all the three concepts briefly

1.2.4 Nature and Forms Of Marginalization

There exist various forms of marginalization. We take a look at Social, Economic, Spatial, and political marginalization.

- **Social Marginalization:** When some people or communities in the social environment experience the feeling of being excluded from society, it is termed as being socially Marginalised. In a society, Marginalisation can be because of the different languages they speak, different customs or cultures they follow, different religions or ethnic or regional communities, different colours or clothing styles, etc. They can also be Marginalised in terms of their caste and class or rich and poor. These people are excluded socially, politically, economically, legally, etc.

Marginality is ascribed (a person is born with) as well as acquired in a social setting. For some groups, those who are severely impaired from birth, or those who are born into marginal groups (lower castes in India, ethnic minorities, indigenous people in Australasia, Native Americans, etc). This type of marginality is lifelong and shapes their lived experiences. For example, being born in a particular caste, especially lower caste, where people are kept away from certain opportunities. For others, marginality is acquired by later disablement which is triggered by social and economic changes in the system. For example, Losing one's economic status.

- **Economic Marginalization:** Economic marginalization relates to economic structures, in particular, to the structure of markets and their integration. In a market situation, some individuals or groups are segmented from the others in general. These individuals can be said to be marginalized from the rest of the economy. Segmentation and exclusion may sometimes have non-economic and non-financial origins, especially if the discrimination is based on gender, caste, or ethnicity. Poverty and economic marginalization will have long term direct and indirect repercussions on the overall health and wellbeing of people.
- **Political Marginalization:** Political Marginalization denies the groups to participate in democracy and decision making processes. This leads to loss of marginals' right to every social, economic and political benefit. Political empowerment is one of the most important tools for accessing other social and economic privileges. Remember the times when women were kept denied rights to vote ? Lack of access to political powers affects large sections of people, including women, migrants, disabled persons, elderly, ethnic minorities etc. It is observed that we find that participation by women is minimized across the globe. It is men who hold power and lead politics

around the world. This is true at all levels of power in politics. This is a particularly acute problem in the underdeveloped countries, wherein women's participation in political affairs is mostly linked with the dominant, male-oriented social, cultural and religious environment. A women, even after achieving the position, ends up becoming a titular head under the control of her male counterpart. This kind of marginalization is also felt by ethnic minorities, migrants, disabled persons, elderly, etc.

- **Spatial marginalization:** The nature of marginality found in a particular community or territory will depend on its political, social and economic history and on its natural and human resource endowments. Generally, it is seen that marginality occurs in areas which experience a convergence of political, cultural, economic and environmental problems. However, it is possible for communities and regions to experience political and cultural marginality without necessarily showing signs of economic distress. Such marginality often is not easy to see as it occurs under the garb of hegemony which prevents people from exercising their political, economic or cultural rights. Such spaces are usually visible. However, they are made more visible when hegemonic powers produce “spaces of exclusion” as in the case of the American ghetto, or slum neighbourhoods.

Check Your Progress

Which are the different forms of Marginalization ?

1.2.5 Causes of Marginalization

The last two to three decades several phenomena such as globalization, migration, and economic developments have had a significant impact on the economic lives of millions of people. There are several causes of marginalization which are as follows:

- **Exclusion:** Marginalization combines discrimination and social exclusion. Caste and class prejudice, in many societies across the globe, exclude many groups and communities, and hinder their productive participation in economic and social development.

- **Globalization:** Globalization in the post 1980 period has marginalized much of the third world and low income, developing countries. The era of globalization is a cause of concern for many underdeveloped countries. In the case of Africa, Latin America, and some parts of Asia, the human development indicators have been declining.
- **Displacement:** Development programmes implemented by the governments of various nation states have caused forced population displacement. Global capitalism is known to have destroyed everything on its path. As more and more people become a part of the system, more communities are displaced, dispossessed of their lands, livelihood and support systems.
- **Natural and Unnatural Disasters**

Disasters are not limited to a group or a nation, but rather are a global phenomena and a serious threat to development. Vulnerability is linked to broader social issues: such as poverty, and to social exclusion, conflict, and marginalization. There are three broad categories of disaster and their combined impact on development is staggering . Natural disasters like earthquakes, volcanic eruption, hurricane, tornado, ice storm, flood, landslide, wildfire, insect infestation, and disease outbreaks. These disasters may be further sub classified as meteorological, oceanographic (tsunami or sea storm), hydrological, or biological events, Development Imperatives Technological: Associated with technological advances, i.e., explosives, unexploded ordnance, toxic spills, emissions and transportation accidents. It also includes hazardous materials incidents involving carcinogens, mutagens, or heavy metals; dangers such as structural failure of devices and machines or installations, and plants, such as bridges, dams, mines, power plants, pipelines, high rise buildings, vehicles, and trains. Social disasters which include incidents primarily involving social unrest, such as hijacking, riots, demonstrations, crowd rushes, and stampedes, terrorist incidents, as well as terrorist attacks

Apart from those mentioned above, general causes of marginalization include :

- One's Sexual orientation or gender- being Homosexual or simply being born as a women, closes many opportunities for a person.
- Religion or ethnicity
- One's history
- Less representation in political spheres
- Different culture or rituals contrasting with majority
- Different language or clothing
- Caste and Class
- Poverty or Race
- Disabilities
- Age

India, even though being a diverse and multicultural nation, examples of marginalized groups in this country include the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, LGBTQ communities, Women, minorities , etc.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the various reasons for Marginalization ?

2. What are the Consequences of Marginalization ?

3. How do Disasters play a role in marginalization ?

1.3 Conclusion

Marginality is a complex condition of disadvantage which individuals and communities experience as a result of vulnerabilities that may arise from unfavourable environment, cultural, social, political and/or economic factors. Although most research on marginality deals with distressed economic and ecological conditions of life, the concept of marginality can also be applied to cultural, social and political conditions of disadvantage. Scholars observe that marginality is demeaning to the individuals at various levels. It is harmful for the economic well-being, for human dignity, as well as for physical security. It is

relatively easy to identify marginal groups, who will face irrevocable discrimination at the hands of members of dominant society. Marginalization is one of the main reasons for the deprivation of a large group of people hampering the progress of the society.

1.4 Summary

Marginalization and social exclusion of individuals and groups are a reality which is reflected in every society and in all periods of human history.

Margin is defined by the edge or border of some object, phenomenon or act. It also denotes side brink, fringe, boundary, limits, periphery and extremity, etc.

Marginalization may relate to social exclusion arising from a lack of equal opportunities and barriers to learning and participation.

There exist various forms of marginalization, such as social, economic, political and spatial marginalization.

There are several causes of marginalization which are as follows: Exclusion, globalization and displacement.

Marginalization is harmful for the economic well-being, for human dignity, as well as for physical security. It is relatively easy to identify marginal groups, who will face irrevocable discrimination at the hands of members of dominant society.

1.5 Questions

1. Examine the concepts of margin, marginality and marginalization.
2. Discuss the nature and forms of marginalization.
3. Elaborate on the factors responsible for marginalization in society.
4. What are the causes and consequences of Marginalization ?

1.6 References

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MARGINALIZATION OF CASTE, CLASS, TRIBE, GENDER AND MINORITIES

Unit Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Marginalization of Women
- 2.3 Marginalization of Scheduled Castes
- 2.4 Marginalization of Scheduled Tribes
- 2.5 Marginalization on the basis of Class
- 2.6 Marginalization of Minorities
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- 2.9 Questions
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2.0 Objectives

- To gain insights into the extent of marginalization faced by different sections
- To study the forms of marginalization faced by disadvantaged groups

2.1 Introduction

Marginalization has been in practice since time immemorial. Prejudices and stereotypical ideologies have helped support the practice of marginalization and exclusion. Although the level of marginalization may span from an individual level to a global level, history shows that certain groups and specific communities have been victimized at the hands of age-old oppressive patterns.

Whenever, the discussion on marginalization and/or social exclusion comes into the central picture, certain groups and their exclusion becomes clear. Those groups are Women, dalits, tribals, children, prisoners, refugees, minorities, poor people, etc. In this unit we shall be dealing with the problems of marginalization based on caste, class, tribe, gender and minorities.

2.2 Marginalization of Women

The term 'woman' has been defined as a process of becoming one rather than being born as elaborated by Simone de Beauvoir. Beauvoir refers to Hegel's master-slave dialectic as analogous, to the relationship between man and women. This proposition treats women as the 'Other' in relation to man and the process is referred to as 'Othering'. The 'Other' has thus gained significance and needs to be examined. Therefore, on the basis of her analysis the entire category called 'women or the 'Other' is marginalized because of structural and systemic discrimination prevalent in the society.

The concepts of 'sex' (understood as a biological category) and 'gender' (understood as a social construct) help us analyze the way the societies and their structures are gendered. Institutions of socialization within the society like the family, education system, media, culture, religion, legal system and others play an important role in the construction of gender and reinforce patriarchal values. Gender is manifested through varied kinds of controls on women – on their production, reproduction, sexuality and mobility.

Gender is embedded within other social stratifiers. These lead to varied outcomes for men and women. The social construction of masculinity and femininity influence every aspect of a woman's life: her position in the labour market, health, educational opportunities and restrictions, social lives, entertainment and leisure. Gender inequality is also reflected in sexual relations between men and women and can be understood through the maintenance of subordination. Sometimes, sexuality and sexual choice becomes the basis for exclusion, marginalization and gender-based violence. Sexual orientation and sexual preference has a detrimental effect on individuals at the economic and social level.

Women's movements and women's organizations have challenged the paradigms of development. They have also sought to broaden conceptualizations of family, market, public/private discourse, politics and violence. They have also questioned the limited scope of social movements and sought to broaden the contours of knowledge production and dissemination.

The exclusion, deprivation and marginalization of women are seen through various forms:

- **Gender Bias:** Gender, perhaps is the oldest and permanent source of social differentiation. Patriarchy and gender inequality in society is the main cause of women's deprivation by way of health, food and nutrition, more susceptible to mortality and contributing to unbalanced male-female ration was well as in the

spheres of education, employment, wages and that of political representation. Women are treated by men only as consumers, sex objects or reproductive machines as a result of which their status in the family and society has been demoted. Subsequently this has led to increasing violence and denial of human rights, liberty, equality and justice.

- **Dual Responsibility:** Women's attitude towards their stereotyped role is rapidly changing. This is reflected through their participation in different job sectors, advancement in the field of education, granting of more liberty, rights and privileges to women. Managing both responsibilities in the public and private sphere can be tough and challenging because of multiple responsibilities.
- **Illiteracy and traditional beliefs:** Because of illiteracy and traditional beliefs within the family majority of women are denied access to healthcare and are unaware of their basic rights. This has resulted in a high rate of maternal mortality and morbidity. The high mortality rates among women as revealed by maternal death due to anaemia, haemorrhage, abortions and other avoidable conditions; indicate that women's health in general and reproductive health in particular are neglected due to her illiteracy and ignorance about health and balanced diet. Illiteracy also further limits women's ability to earn money and participation in decision making in male dominated families.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain Marginalization of Women

2. What are the reasons for Marginalization of Women ?

2.3 Marginalization of Scheduled Castes

India's caste system assigns individuals a certain hierarchical status according to Hindu beliefs. As members of the lowest rank of Indian society, the Scheduled Castes (SCs) face discrimination at almost every level. Structural discrimination against these groups takes the form of physical, psychological, emotional and cultural exploitation. This is legitimized by the social structure and the social system. These groups have been physically segregated into settlements on the fringes of the villages, forcing them to live in unhygienic and inhabitable conditions. All these factors affect their health status, access to healthcare and quality of life. Access to and utilization of healthcare among the marginalized groups is determined by their socio-economic standing within the society.

Caste-based marginalization is a serious human rights issue. Caste-based discrimination entails social, economic, educational, political exclusion, segregation in housing, denial or sometimes restrictions to easy access to public and private services and employment. SCs have been historically oppressed, culturally subjugated and politically marginalized. The rules of untouchability and the notions of 'purity and pollution' dictate what members of this group are allowed to do, where they are allowed to go, rules related to marriage, exogamy, social intercourse, food, all extending into the minutest aspects of daily life.

- **Exclusion, Deprivation and Marginalization faced by the Scheduled Castes**

Since the inception of the institution of caste system in the Indian sub-continent, the marginalization of the SCs has begun. This community is subject to inhuman and subhuman treatment which goes against the principles of human rights. Some problems faced by the SCs have been listed below:

- **Economic exploitation:** The abuse of bonded labourers remains endemic within a range of occupations. Children are particularly more vulnerable. They are at risk for child labour and child slavery as they are born into marginalization.
- **Isolation faced by young learners:** Young girls and boys from the community have limited or no access to education. Even if they do have access, the social isolation works to stifle the aspiration of the young learner. The young child suffers systematic and systemic abuse in the form of deprivation, discrimination within the learning space and sometimes physical violence.

- **Stigmatization and untouchability:** The social stigma of the untouchables manifests itself in all walks of life. They are denied access to temples and to the services of the Brahmins and are shunned by the higher castes. They are considered to be born as impure and are ordained to live as impure. The rest of the society is so much concerned about purity that they permanently keep untouchables in a state of economic, social and political subordination.

The stigma associated with one's caste, lasts a lifetime and cannot be eliminated by rite or deed. Defined in relation to behaviour, untouchability refers to the set of practices followed by the rest of society to protect itself from the pollution conveyed by the untouchables. This concern with ritual pollution is not limited to the role of untouchables. It is designed to keep the untouchables in an inferior economic and political position through physical separation.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain Marginalization of Scheduled Caste.

2. Explain various forms of Marginalization faced by Scheduled Castes.

2.4 Marginalization of Scheduled Tribes (STS)

The term 'Scheduled Tribes' first appeared in the Constitution of India. Article 366 (25) defined Scheduled Tribes as "such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purpose of this constitution". The Scheduled Tribes much like the Scheduled Castes face structural discrimination within Indian society. Scheduled tribes are a product of marginalization based on ethnicity and have been subjected to historical injustice.

Some of the problems faced by the STs are as follows:

- **Loss of control over Natural Resources:** Traditionally the tribals have enjoyed almost absolute rights of ownership and management over natural resources. Resources such as land, forests, wildlife, water, soil, fish etc. have been communally owned. With the advent of industrialization in India and the discovery of mineral and other resources in tribal inhabited areas, the tribal control has given way to state control of the regions leading to constant conflict between the two groups.
- **Lack of Education:** Although there is a direct connection between greater participation in the development process and education, tribals are inhibited from taking advantage of education due to several factors. These factors include tribal superstitions, prejudices, abject poverty, semi-settled or unsettled way of life, lack of interest, alien language and subject taught at school and lack of facilities in tribal areas; all contribute to lack of education.
- **Displacement and Rehabilitation:** Most infrastructure and development projects centre around tribal inhabited lands. Acquisition of land by the government for the projects have led to large scale displacement of tribal population; especially in the regions of Chhotanagpur, Orissa, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh. This has led to a feeling of alienation and hopelessness among the tribes.
- **Problems of Health and Nutrition:** Tribals face health related problems due to economic backwardness and insecure livelihood. This leads to the problem of malnutrition, high infant mortality rate, low levels of life expectancy both for the young mother and the child.
- **Gender Issues:** The environmental degradation and destruction of forests lead to a rapidly shrinking resource base. This has direct bearing on women's wellbeing since women are responsible for household tasks like arranging for fodder, fuel and water. The opening of tribal regions to industrial and commercial exploitation has exposed men and women to the ruthless operations of the market economy.
- **Erosion of Identity:** Tribal institutions, norms, and way of life are coming in direct conflict with modern institutions. This can lead to apprehensions about the preservation of tribal identity. Tribal dialects and languages are becoming extinct and this is leading to the erosion of tribal identity.

Check Your Progress

1. Define Tribes

2. What are the problems faced by Tribes ?

2.5 Marginalization on The Basis of Class

Class is an open system. This system is flexible and vertical mobility is absolutely free. There is no barrier in terms of movement from one status to another. Status is based on achievement, and not by birth or inheritance of parental status. It is determined by wealth, money, intelligence, talents, power, education, income, etc. of a person. Marginalization divides the society into haves and have nots, could result in crime, poor health, class struggle, health issues and benefits of progress are limited to only a few.

Class discrimination, also known as classism is prejudice or discrimination on the basis of social class. Classism is the systematic oppression of subordinated class groups to advantage and strengthen the dominant class groups. It includes: 1) individual attitudes and behaviours, 2) systems of policies and practices that are set up to benefit the upper classes at the expense of the lower classes, resulting in drastic income and wealth inequality, 3) the rationale that supports these systems and this unequal valuing; and 4) the culture that perpetuates them.

People from the poor or working class tend to internalize the dominant group's beliefs and attitudes towards them. They tend to apply these against themselves and against other members of their class. Internalized class discrimination is the

acceptance and justification of class discrimination by the working class and poor people. Examples include: low self-esteem, feeling of inferiority to higher-class people, disdain or shame about traditional patterns of class, or denial of heritage. On the other hand, there could also be feelings of superiority to people lower on the class spectrum than oneself, hostility and blame towards other working-class or poor people; and beliefs that classist institutions are justified and fair.

People who belong to the middle-class sometimes tend to internalize the dominant society's belief and attitude towards them. They tend to play these against others. Internalized superiority is the justification and acceptance of class privilege by the middle class people. Class privilege could be manifest in several ways. This includes the tangible or intangible benefits such as: better contacts with employers, inherited money, "legacy admissions" to higher education, good health care, quality education, speaking with the same accent and language as people with institutional powers and having inside knowledge of how systems of powers operate.

Check Your Progress

1. How can you relate class with Marginalization?

2.6 Marginalization of Minorities

Due to its rich natural resources, the Indian subcontinent has witnessed several invasions and immigration. This has resulted in the formation of a diversified and a pluralistic society. Generally, and ideally, minorities are the ones categorized as a distinctive community who domicile in a society but are considered to be numerically subordinate as compared to the dominant population. The Constitution of India grants special fundamental rights for the protection and advancement of minorities in India. However, the term "minority", is not defined in the Constitution. One can nevertheless deduce from Articles 29 and 30 read together that the term primarily refers to religious and linguistic minorities. Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jain and Zoroastrians (Parsis) have been notified as minority communities under Section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.

Although Indian society has depicted tolerance and flourishing pluralism, certain divisive forces have resulted in different forms of marginalization and exclusion of minorities. Hence, many minority groups experience a lack of identity and security, which is discussed as follows:

- **Problem of Identity:** Since the minorities follow different socio-cultural practices, have distinct history and cultural traits, minorities are faced with the challenges related to identity. This can give rise to the problem of adjustment with the majority community.
- **Problem of Security:** Having a distinct identity and being small in number in relation to the rest of the society may bring feelings of insecurity about their overall wellbeing, assets and life. This sense of security may get magnified whenever there is tension and strife between the majority and minority communities.
- **Problems relating to Equity:** As a result of discrimination, the minority community may be kept away from the fruits and opportunities of development. Because of the difference in identity, the minority community may experience a sense of inequity.

In countries all around the world, rates of poverty among minorities are disturbingly high. There are many different types of minorities: racial and ethnic, national and linguistic, cultural and tribal, political and religious, gender and sexual. There are immigrants and refugees. People with disabilities and mental health disorders also form a minority group. Poverty, unemployment and incarceration rates are typically much higher among these populations than among majorities. Physical and mental health is poorer. There is also lower educational attainment.

Minorities tend to have poorer health and experience more violence. Prejudice, discrimination, social exclusion and marginalization are major factors. Institutional discrimination in governments, corporations, and education systems, exists in countries around the world. This discrimination provides a breeding ground for inequality. Inequality restricts people's ability to obtain jobs and education, to access housing and healthcare, or to take recourse to judicial and legal protections.

Sociological and psychological research has demonstrated that discrimination and social exclusion can impact mental and physical wellbeing, which further has consequences for an individual's ability to work and earn and live a life of dignity. All of these factors contribute to the high levels of poverty among minorities.

2.7 Conclusion

Marginalization is linked to experiencing disadvantage, prejudice and powerlessness. Marginalization manifests in various forms across different sections of the society. In India there are several communities and groups who are face discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, class, religion and ethnicity. There are different reasons why these communities face marginalization. Each experiences marginalization in distinct ways. Each of these categories has a long history of struggle and resistance. In the context of development, the marginalized communities want to maintain their cultural distinctiveness while having access to rights, development and other opportunities.

2.8 Summary

Several groups of Women, dalits, tribals, children, prisoners, refugees, minorities, poor people, have faced marginalization because of age old oppressive patterns.

Discrimination against women is reflected through gender bias, dual responsibilities and lack of economic, educational, and political rights.

Caste-based marginalization is a serious human rights issue. Caste-based discrimination entails social, economic, educational, political exclusion, segregation in housing, denial or sometimes restrictions to easy access to public and private services and employment.

Classism is the systematic oppression of subordinated class groups to advantage and strengthen the dominant class groups

Although Indian society has depicted tolerance and flourishing pluralism, certain divisive forces have resulted in different forms of marginalization and exclusion of minorities

2.9 Questions

1. Examine the problems of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
2. Discuss the problem of class based discrimination.
3. Elaborate on 'Gender-based discrimination and its causes'.
4. State the problems faced by the minorities within the society.

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MULTIPLE MARGINAL GROUPS AND THEIR DISCRIMINATION, DEPRIVATION AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Unit Structure

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 - 3.1.2 Social Exclusion and Resources
 - 3.1.3 Forms of Social Exclusion
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- 3.3 Prejudice and Discrimination
 - 3.3.1 Forms of Discrimination
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- 3.7 References

3.0 Objectives

- To examine the varied concepts related to marginalization
- To understand the impacts of marginalization on multiple groups

3.1 Introduction - Social Exclusion

The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy a productive, healthy and creative life. For this reason, it is important to address the issue of marginalization. Development is broadly understood in terms of mass participation. However, marginalization deprives a large section of the people from participating in the development process. This is a complex and serious problem that needs to be tackled at the policy level. This section deals with processes that are related to marginalization, namely, social exclusion, social discrimination and deprivation.

Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It means the lack of denial of resources; rights, goods and services. It also involves the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. Social exclusion has detrimental effects on the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole. Social exclusion is involuntary i.e. exclusion is practiced regardless of the wishes of those who are excluded. Social exclusion is sometimes wrongly justified by the same argument that the excluded group itself does not wish to participate. The truth of such logic is not obvious when exclusion is preventing access to something desirable.

3.1.1 Sustainable Development and Social Exclusion

Although there is no universally agreed definition or benchmark for social exclusion, lack of participation in society is at the heart of nearly all definitions put forth by scholars, government bodies, non-governmental organizations and others.

Enshrined in the Agenda 2030 of Sustainable Development Goals, is the principle that every person should reap the benefits of prosperity and enjoy minimum standards of well-being. The aim is to free all nations and people and all segments of society from poverty and hunger and to ensure healthy lives and access to education, modern energy and information.

If these goals are to be achieved, institutions will have to work for those who are deepest in poverty and most vulnerable. The Agenda 2030 has set broad targets aimed at promoting the rule of law, ensuring equal access to justice and broadly fostering inclusive and participatory decision-making. When these goals and targets are effectively translated into action and properly benchmarked, they represent they fulfil the goals of social inclusion processes. However, social inclusion encompasses a broader set of concerns than those reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Participation may be hindered when people lack access to material resources, including income, employment, land and housing, or to such services as education and health care — essential foundations of well-being that are captured in Agenda 2030. Yet participation is also limited when people cannot exercise their voice or interact with each other, and when their rights and dignity are not accorded equal respect and protection.

Thus social exclusion entails not only material deprivation but also lack of agency or control over important decisions as well as feelings of alienation and inferiority. In nearly all countries, to varying degrees, age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, migration status, socioeconomic status, place of residence, and sexual orientation and gender identity have been grounds for social exclusion over time.

Check Your Progress

1. What is Social Exclusion ?

3.1.2 Social Exclusion and resources

A socially and economically marginalized group can be assessed by the level of participation and accessibility they have towards the different resources available in a society. In every society some people have a greater share and accessibility to different and varied valued resources, such as: money, property, education, health and power than others.

These social resources can be divided into three forms. These three forms are:

Capital-economy: in the form of material assets and income;

Cultural capital: such as educational qualifications and status;

Social capital : in the form of networks of contacts and social associations.

Often these three forms of capital overlap and one can be converted into the other. For instance, a person from a well-to-do family can afford expensive higher education and so can acquire cultural or educational capital. Patterns of unequal access to social resources are commonly called social inequality. Social inequality reflects innate differences between individuals; for example their varying abilities and efforts. Someone may be endowed with exceptional intelligence or talent or may have wealth and status. However by and large social inequality is not the outcome of innate or natural differences between people but is produced by the society in which they reside, which means that social inequality is structurally produced.

3.1.3 Forms of Social Exclusion

Exclusionary processes can have various dimensions:

Political exclusion: includes the denial of citizenship rights such as political participation and right to organize, right to vote, and right to electoral politics, and also of opportunity. Bhalla and Lapeyre (1997) argue that political exclusion also includes the idea that the state, which guarantees basic rights and civil liberties to

the individual, is not a neutral agency. Rather it is a vehicle of a society's dominant classes, and may use its agency to discriminate between social groups.

Economic exclusion: includes lack of access to labour markets, credit and other forms of 'capital assets'.

Social exclusion may take the form of discrimination and includes a number of dimensions such as gender, ethnicity, class and age. This reduces the opportunity for such groups to gain access to social welfare and puts a limit on their participation in the labour market.

Cultural exclusion: refers to the extent to which diverse values, norms and ways of living are accepted and respected.

The relationship between the categories is interconnected and overlapping. Given the complexity of influences of individuals, it is impossible to identify a single specific cause in the context of social exclusion. People may face exclusion because of deliberate action on the part of others; or as a result of societal processes which do not involve deliberate action; or sometimes even by choice. However, in most cases social exclusion may be the major cause of poverty, suffering and sometimes death. This may be attributed to the operations of unequal power relations.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain any 2 causes of Social Exclusion

2. How do resources play a major role in social exclusion ?

3.2 Marginalization and Deprivation

The concepts of social deprivation and social exclusion share a similar focus on the inability of individuals to participate fully in their life or their community of society. There are several serious repercussions that arise as a result of marginalization and/ or exclusion. The biggest impact that occurs is social and relative deprivation. Deprivation is one of the concepts closely associated with the discussions of social inequality. Sociological analysis defines deprivation broadly as inequality of access to social goods. It includes poverty and other wider forms of disadvantages. It refers to denial of access to resources required for self-development and fulfilment of basic necessities. Resources can be social, economic and cultural and basic necessities vary from one culture to another.

Deprivation is a broader phenomenon than poverty. There is a need to distinguish exclusion from deprivation, despite the fact that the two terms are interrelated to each other. The measurement of social deprivation has tended to emphasize a lack of material or financial resources that contributes to a lack of social participation. On the other hand, measures of social exclusion have emphasized the lack of participation in a broader range of social, cultural and political activities.

One may face deprivation despite relatively good economic conditions. People in war torn areas, like West Asia and some African countries, suffer from multiple deprivations in the form of non-access to health, education, sanitation, housing, etc. due to absence of a peaceful political atmosphere. In other cases, cultural norms can lead to deprivations.

Deprivation, in turn, is divided into two segments which are as follows:

Absolute deprivation: refers to the lack of life's basic necessities i.e. food, water, shelter and fuel. It means the loss or absence of the means to satisfy the basic needs for survival – food, clothing and shelter. **Relative deprivation:** refers to deprivations experienced when individuals compare themselves with others. Individuals who lack something compare themselves with those who have it, and in so doing feel a sense of deprivation. Consequently, relative deprivation involves comparison. It is usually defined in subjective terms. The concept is intimately linked with that of “reference group” – refers to a group to which an individual or another group is compared.

Deprivation theories, hence, state that people who consider themselves to be deprived of resources they deem as important and imperative, such as, status, esteem, money, privilege, justice, would have the tendency to join Social

Movements. Relative deprivation is considered to play a vital role in motivating people to join certain social movements in order to gain their goals and objectives.

Walter Runciman states that Relative deprivation can be divided into Egoistic deprivation and Fraternalistic deprivation. According to him, Egoistic deprivation occurs when a person compares himself/herself to that of another member of the group that the person belongs to. If he considers himself to be given fewer privileges or fewer facilities as compared to the other person, the person might experience Egoistic deprivation.

Fraternalistic deprivation, on the other hand, occurs when a group or a community compares itself with that of another group and while comparing, it finds itself to be deprived or excluded from certain social, economic and political resources of a society. According to Runciman, Suffrage movement or the Civil Rights movement, are some of the typical examples which exhibit and reflect Fraternalistic deprivation.

Check Your Progress

1. Mention and briefly explain 2 types of Deprivation ?

2. Are social exclusion and Deprivation same ?

3.3 Prejudice and Discrimination

Prejudice refers to a negative assessment of another person based on their perceived group membership (eg. Race, caste, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation and ability). It is common against people who are members of an unfamiliar cultural

group. Prejudice often begins in the form of a stereotype, that is, a specific belief or assumption about individuals based solely on their membership in a group, regardless of their individual characteristics. Stereotypes become overgeneralized and applied to all members of a group. A simple distinction between prejudice and discrimination is that prejudice is to do with attitude, while discrimination is to do with action.

It is difficult to define discrimination. Since discrimination is typically considered to be the opposite to the norms of fair and equal treatment within a democratic market society, there are significant normative implications to defining discrimination. Most definitions of discrimination revolve around two yet distinct means of defining the phenomenon: a) intentional discrimination, and b) disparate impact. Pager and Shepherd (2008) provide an insight into competing definitions of discrimination, but observe that most of the definitions fall in either one of the two categories mentioned above.

There is a need to distinguish discrimination from other related phenomena such as racism, prejudice, sexism, or stereotypes. Discrimination refers to a set of behaviours, whereas the other concepts refer to ideology, attitudes, or beliefs. These may or may not translate or manifest into discriminatory action.

Discrimination is an action or practice that *excludes*, *disadvantages*, or *differentiates* between individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of some ascribed or perceived trait. The sociological study of discrimination can be divided into two types of inquiries:

- 1) discrimination as a social phenomenon (to be explained) and
- 2) discrimination as an explanation for other observed social phenomenon.

A wide range of disciplines; such as – sociology, anthropology, political science, psychology, economics and law - have addressed discrimination as an explanatory object. These disciplines have tried to shed light on the reasons why discrimination occurs and what conditions give rise to and reproduce its practice. We need to differentiate the sociological approach to ‘discrimination as an explanatory object’ from that in other disciplines, particularly psychology or economics. This is because the sociological approach looks at the macro level analysis, explaining the phenomenon as a result of social processes. It does not necessarily reduce this phenomenon to individual-level preferences or cognitive processes. Sociologists have also addressed discrimination as an explanation for an observed phenomenon of interest, namely social stratification which is by extension associated with unequal distribution of status, material benefits and political rights.

3.3.1 Forms of Discrimination

There exist several forms of discrimination:

Racial and Ethnic Discrimination: results in unequal treatment between individuals on the basis of real and perceived racial differences. It may manifest at different levels of social life, from minor disregard or intense hostility in interpersonal interactions to much larger reflections in public institutions. These may also be referred to as structural or institutional discrimination, as in caste inequalities.

Sex, Gender and Gender Identity Discrimination: This form of discrimination refers to an adverse action taken against a person based on their perceived sex, gender, and/or gender identity. Historically, different social roles for men and women have been justified on the basis of sexual differences. Unfair discrimination usually follows the gender stereotypes held by a society.

Religious Discrimination: This form of discrimination is the prejudicial treatment of a person or group differently based on their spiritual or religious beliefs, or lack of it.

Reverse Discrimination: is a term referring to discrimination against members of a dominant or majority group or in favour of members of a minority or historically disadvantaged groups. This discrimination may seek to redress social inequalities where some disadvantaged groups have been denied access to the same privileges of the powerful group. In such cases it is intended to remove discrimination that disadvantaged groups may already face. Reverse discrimination may also be used to highlight the (positive) discrimination inherent in affirmative action programmes.

Institutional Prejudice or discrimination: refers to discrimination embedded in the operating procedures, policies, laws or objectives of large organizations. These organizations include the governments, corporations, financial institutions, public institutions and other large entities. It refers to the unfair, indirect treatment of certain members within a group.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain any 2 forms of Deprivation

2. Explain the Difference between Prejudice and Discrimination.

3.4 Conclusion

The varied forms of marginalization: social discrimination, social exclusion and social deprivation create detrimental effects on individuals, groups and communities. One of the many challenges for the many people whose lives have been “othered” by the mainstream society is to reclaim their voices and use the power to recreate the narratives. It is necessary to acknowledge the oppressive structures that affect people who are identified as disadvantaged groups and use advocacy to defend the right to speak and be heard.

3.5 Summary

Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It means the lack of denial of resources; rights, goods and services.

Social exclusion entails not only material deprivation but also lack of agency or control over important decisions as well as feelings of alienation and inferiority.

Deprivation is one of the concepts closely associated with the discussions of social inequality.

Discrimination is an action or practice that *excludes*, *disadvantages*, or *differentiates* between individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of some ascribed or perceived trait.

The varied forms of marginalization: social discrimination, social exclusion and social deprivation create detrimental effects on individuals, groups and communities.

3.6 Questions

1. Define social exclusion and discuss the forms of social exclusion.
2. Discuss the theories of deprivation and elaborate on the problem of deprivation.
3. Examine the features and forms of social discrimination?

3.7 References

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MAHATMA JYOTIBA PHULE AND DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR

Unit Structure

4.0 Objectives

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Mahatma Jyotiba Phule

4.2.1 Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's contribution to Women's education

4.2.2 Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's views on Untouchability

4.2.3 Social Reform Movement

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4.0 Objectives

- To understand the situation of marginalized groups
- To understand the contribution of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule to the social reform movement.

4.1 Introduction

Marginalization has a wide range of understandings. Marginalization is the process by which established or emerging elites create superior versus subordinate or dependent socio-economic relations. Through this arrangement labour and distributions of social resources are manipulated. Caste based marginalization is the most frequent and intense variety of exclusion in India which is historically rooted in religion and culture of Hinduism. In a caste based society systems are manipulated to work in favour of the high caste groups, but work for the detriment of the other groups. This allows the high caste people to orchestrate interdependencies in such a way that power is limited to the subjugated groups. Thus, not only are the people from low caste marginalized at the ritual level, they

are deprived of positions of substantial political and economic influence and also experience physical, cultural, emotional and psychological exclusion. This form of historical injustice was meted out to people from the lowest caste for centuries. Various programmes have been introduced for the socio-economically backward section of the country and eradication of poverty. The much debated affirmative action of the state, viz., caste-based reservation has played a key role in ensuring education, employment and political representation for the oppressed section of our society. The roots of these policies can be traced back to the writings of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule who made an assertion for legislative rights. In this section, we discuss two personalities; Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who took up the responsibility to fight this injustice, challenged the prevailing practice of inequality and caste-based discrimination and paved a path for upliftment and enlightenment of the marginalized sections of the society.

4.2 Mahatma Jyotiba Phule

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule (1827-1890) initiated social change in 19th century India especially in Maharashtra through his philosophy. The 19th century will be remembered as an era of social criticism and transformation that focused on nationalism, but more so because of its emphasis on women's issues such as female infanticide, child marriage, restriction on women's education, etc. He was known as a global philosopher and was respectfully referred to as one of the 'Mahatmas' (Great Soul) of India. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was a social reformer of Maharashtra. He was a first teacher of the oppressed, and a critique of orthodox people within the society. The task of social reform was not easy. Social reformers had made tremendous effort for social and religious change in Indian society during this period. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule played an important role in this area. As a solution to the problems of gender and caste oppression he contributed with a constructive suggestion. This was by way of a new image of religion which was known as universal religion. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule became critical about the ground realities of many rural groups. Influenced by Thomas Paine's book on 'Rights of Man', (1791), Mahatma Jyotiba Phule developed a keen interest in social justice and became a strong critic of the caste system.

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was a philosopher, leader, and organizer of the oppressed caste. He fought for the rights of women, untouchables, and worked for their liberation. He worked on several issues which included religion, varna system, ritualism, British rule in India, mythology, and the question, the condition of production in agriculture and the peasantry. Jyotiba Phule emphasized on the significance of an individual rather than the society.

4.2.1 Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's Contribution to Women's Education

In 1848, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule began his work as a social reformer and was interested in the education of lower caste boys and girls. He encouraged his wife Savitribai to take education and opened a girl's school, a first of its kind on 15th May 1848 in Pune. As no teacher was available to teach in the school, as no teacher dared to work in the school in which untouchable students were admitted, Jyotiba asked Savitribai to take on the responsibility. The orthodox opponents of Jyotiba were furious and started a violent campaign against them. They refused to give up and chose the interest of the larger society over their wellbeing and safety. During this time, Jyotiba took keen interest in building a network of institutions which would enable education to the oppressed sections of the society. He opened two more schools for girls in 1851 and in 1852 was honoured by the Board of Education for his contribution towards women's education. By 1858, he gradually retired from the management of these schools and entered a broader field of social reform and turned his attention to social evil practices prevalent in society at the time.

4.2.2 Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's views on Untouchability

Other than the field of education, Jyotiba worked towards addressing issues that the Dalits and untouchables faced in society. He believed that revolutionary thought must be backed by revolutionary practices. He analyzed the structure of Indian society and identified the Shudra-ati shudra as the most oppressed. He believed that the Shudra-ati shudra would lead the revolution on behalf of the whole society, to liberate the entire people from the restrictions of Hindu traditions. Water, which is considered as life, is a human rights issue today. Jyotiba realized that the oppressed sections were not allowed access to wells, ponds or lakes, so he fought on their behalf for access to water. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's ideas and work had relevance for all Indians. As his great work for the lower castes, he was felicitated with title "Mahatma" by the people of the erstwhile Bombay in 1888. He belonged to the first generation of social reformers in the 19th century.

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule spoke on religious and practical issues for many years. Through debate he removed illusions from the people's minds. He has written books dedicated to the people. He continued to discuss these issues in newspapers. He has instructed the public through many poetic compositions. He ingrained knowledge to the people about the cause and effect of religious matters. He has displayed what is right and what is wrong with respect to customs and traditions. He disapproved the practice of idol worship and upheld monotheism. He firmly believed that the adherence to a false religion, idol worship and caste system have

together created destruction in India, a fact reflected in his book, 'Sarvajanik Satya Dharma'.

In her book, "Culture Revolt in a Colonial Society ", noted sociologist Gail Omvedt mentions that Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's thought represented the fulfillment of the renaissance desire for social transformation along revolutionary lines. In sociological terms it makes good sense that he, rather than later and more widely known elite thinkers, should be the primary renaissance figure. Any culture, after all, rests upon the class society and the dominance of a particular class. Hence the total transformation of culture requires the destruction of this dominance. In terms of India, Hindu culture and the caste system rested upon Brahmanism. Hence, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, who aimed for the complete destruction of caste, superstition, and inequality, linked thought with a movement of opposition to the Brahmin elite. He was a vehement critic of the caste system that was based on Hinduism. He viewed Hinduism as a hegemonic ideology of the Brahmins where the lowest castes were exploited, excluded and discriminated against. Thus the brahmanical attitude fueled the process of marginalization not only at the economic level, but also socially and political level.

Check Your Progress

1. Can you summarize Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's view on Caste ?

4.2.3 Social Reform Movement

The essence of the history of the 19th century is the story of the social reform fuelled by the introduction and spread of modern education. During this transitional phase, even though educational institutions were open to every person, not many were aware of the importance of education. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule worked towards building awareness relating to education and its potential for social change. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule started revolting against the biased caste-system and justified the cause of education of women and lower castes. He felt that education could become a tool in recognizing the work of the oppressed castes as a dignified labour, which was exploited by society.

In 1873 he established the Satyashodhak Samaj that aimed towards the consolidation of an egalitarian society. The Samaj worked towards integrating women into the formal education system and advocated widow remarriage. Jyotiba's social thoughts are based on humanism. It is based on values of equality

and justice. He spread his values through his work and thought. Jyotiba's humanism can be considered to be true and modern.

4.3 Conclusion

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was the first amongst his contemporaries to advocate structural change by overthrowing the hegemonic culture built by the Brahmins and the upper classes. For Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, knowledge matters because it can help question, change and transform the individual and society. Thus Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, like John Dewey believed in the power of education in making society more democratic. It can play a role in reconstructing, rethinking, and interpreting tradition. This aspect of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule is extremely relevant in the context of caste in contemporary India where despite constitutional provisions, caste discrimination and caste related atrocities remains widespread.

4.4 Summary

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule (1827-1890) was known as a global philosopher and was respectfully referred to as one of the 'Mahatmas' (Great Soul) of India.

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was a philosopher, leader, and organizer of the oppressed caste. He fought for the rights of women, untouchables, and worked for their liberation.

In 1848, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule began his work as a social reformer and was interested in the education of lower caste boys and girls.

Other than the field of education, Jyotiba worked towards addressing issues that the Dalits and untouchables faced in society.

He viewed Hinduism as a hegemonic ideology of the Brahmins where the lowest castes were exploited, excluded and discriminated against.

In 1873 he established the Satyashodhak Samaj that aimed towards the consolidation of an egalitarian society.

4.5 Questions

1. Elaborate on the contribution of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule towards women's education.
2. Examine the works of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule with reference to the abolition of caste discrimination.

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DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR

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4.0 Objectives

- To gain insights into Dr. Ambedkar's writings and political philosophy
- To examine the issue of social inequality and caste-based oppression

4.2 Introduction - Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar was born in 1891 in a Mahar community, an untouchable caste of Maharashtra. In 1913, the Maharaja of Baroda awarded scholarship to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to pursue higher education from the University of Columbia in New York. From 1913 to 1917, and again from 1920 to 1923, he lived overseas. He had established himself as a leading intellectual at this time. He received a PhD from Columbia University for his thesis, which was later published as a book titled "The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India."

Despite his achievements, Dr. Ambedkar had to face discrimination and orthodoxy from all fronts. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a global personality with in depth knowledge of law. He studied all the progressive constitutions of the world and designed the Constitution of India. He worked towards eradicating social evils, and discrimination on the basis of caste, class, colour, gender, race and language. He relentlessly worked towards giving justice and dignity to the marginalized sections of the society.

Dr. Ambedkar played a significant role for the upliftment of the downtrodden sections of society. He was considered as a messiah for the suppressed class. His

personal experiences relating to caste discrimination shaped his outlook; and thus began a journey to represent and help raise the voice of the voiceless sections of the society. Dr. Ambedkar recognized the evils of the prevailing caste system and its impacts on the oppressed human being. This also led the founding father of the Constitution of India to create an egalitarian society wherein justice, social, economic and political rights would be extended to all irrespective of their caste, creed, religion or gender.

4.2.1 Dr. Ambedkar on Caste system

Dr. Ambedkar saw the caste system as an unequal mode of organization of social relations, which embedded within itself the notion of purity and pollution. He argued that this system was sanctified through religious codes which had several restrictions. The caste system with its strict rules forbade any intermixing between castes. There were also restrictions on social intercourse and interaction was permitted within a regulated structure. One of his critical works is 'The Annihilation of Caste', which was an undelivered speech he wrote in 1936. Dr. Ambedkar claimed through his writings that the Hindu caste system does not allow change of occupation even when it is required in an industrializing society. Hence, the caste system which advocates 'division of labourers than division of labour' is the actual root cause of poverty.

Dr. Ambedkar founded the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha with the aim of spreading education and improving the economic conditions of the oppressed classes. He led by the slogan 'Educate-Agitate-Organize' towards reconstructing Indian society on the principles of equality. In 1927 he led the march at Mahad, Maharashtra to establish the rights of the untouchables to take water from the public Chavdar Lake. This marked the beginning of anti-caste and anti-priest movements. Another landmark step in the struggle towards ensuring equal rights is the temple entry movement led by Dr. Ambedkar in 1930 at the Kalaram temple.

4.2.2 Inspiring works of Dr. Ambedkar

A critical inquiry into the inequality of the caste system has been the central theme of all of Dr. Ambedkar's works. 'Who were the Shudras? How they came to be the fourth Varna in the Indo-Aryan society', is among the earliest works of Ambekar which attempts to debunk the colonial absurdity of Aryan/non-Aryan theory. This book reflects his stance on the question of caste and provides the much needed course correction in terms of public discourse in India. 'The Essential Writings of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar' is a compilation of selected writings of Dr. Ambedkar, which serves as a guide to the evolution of Dr. Ambedkar's thought. 'Against the Madness of Manu: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Writings on Brahmanical Patriarchy', (2013) provides insight into the practice of caste endogamy and prescribes it for national interests and imposes new codes on Brahmin women.

4.2.3 On Women's emancipation

In his 1916 research paper titled, 'Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development', the 25-year old Dr. Ambedkar offered an insight that the caste system thrives by imposing sanctions and control over women. He also observes that caste is a product of sustained endogamy. Regarding the outcome of endogamy, he maintains that scholars have spent more time charting how sati, child marriage, and enforced widowhood impacted society, but never bothered to investigate the origin of these customs. He highlighted the dual benefit of Brahmanical ideology of endogamy; which worked to preserve as well as eulogize the very practices that degraded women. In Dr. Ambedkar's view, three operations central to the origin and development of caste come to the fore: intra-group organization of reproduction, violent control of surplus women's sexuality, and legitimating control practices through ideology. From that time upto the introduction of the Hindu Code Bill, he sought to radicalize women's rights in the 1950s. Dr. Ambedkar deployed a range of arguments to make his case against Brahmanism and its twin patriarchy.

Dr. Ambedkar was a strong critic of the old law books like Manusmriti and Arthashastra which reflected a sense of bitterness towards the suppressed class in general and women in particular. Dr. Ambedkar was highly influenced by the conduct and humanism of the great social reformers like Buddha, Kabir and Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. He equivocally declared that untouchables must leave the Hindu culture and accept another religion instead, and led by example by embracing Buddhism.

4.2.4 Father of the Indian Constitution

As a chief architect of the Constitution of India, Dr. Ambedkar made special provisions for the empowerment of the marginalized sections of the Indian society. Dr. Ambedkar was given the responsibility of the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly and as a Minister of Law in the Nehru Cabinet. He was elected to chair the drafting committee of the Constituent Assembly in 1947, and while doing so, Dr. Ambedkar abandoned many of his radical ideas as he steered the Assembly through the process of drafting the Indian Constitution. His concern for the oppressed class is seen in some of the special constitutional provisions for social equality for the Scheduled Castes. The practice of untouchability was 'abolished' in the constitution of independent India (articles 15 and 17), and the Untouchability (Offences) Act of 1955 clearly states that such discriminatory practices would be punishable by law. Article 46 provides the Indian version of affirmative action, specifically in terms of the State's responsibility in providing education and economic benefits to the weaker sections of the society. He also outlined the terms and conditions on which the depressed

classes would consent to place themselves under a majority rule in a self-governing India as follows:

- Equal citizenship and fundamental rights and the practice of untouchability to be declared as illegal.
- Equal rights protected by adequate constitutional remedies.
- Protection against discrimination.
- Adequate representation of the oppressed classes in the legislature.
- Adequate representation in the Services.
- Redress against pre-judicial action or neglect of interest
- Securing the rights for education, sanitation, employment, health, recruitment and other matters of social and political advancement of the depressed classes.

Check Your Progress

Explain Dr. Ambedkar's view on Caste System.

After reading the above paragraphs,, can you recall instances that contributed to the emancipation of the depressed classes ?

4.2.5 Dr. Ambedkar and Gandhi

Dr. Ambedkar was not happy with the stance taken by the Indian National Congress and with the outcome of the Poona Pact of 1932. He became critical of the lack of commitment to the rights of untouchables by the leaders of the time. Dalits continue to feel that Gandhi betrayed them with his denial of the right of separate electorates, and by extension, denying genuine political power to the Dalits. Gandhi was a caste Hindu and a Vaishya by birth. Dr. Ambedkar was a Mahar and had experienced and witnessed discrimination closely. Gandhi held all varnas to be equal. Although he fought against the idea of a group below the varnas, he never rejected the varna theory of four major groups. On the other hand, Dr. Ambedkar totally rejected the entire caste hierarchy, and dismissed the current trend among untouchables to 'sanskritize' by imitating the customs, beliefs and practices of the

higher castes in a bid to raise their own status. Gandhi did not believe that there should be political battles to secure the rights of the untouchables, or approve their attempts to enter temples, unless this was agreed to by the temple authorities. Dr. Ambedkar argued that only political power could ensure the rights of dalits and solution to untouchability. Gandhi's faith in 'Ahimsa' and 'Satyagraha' led him to believe in a 'change of heart'; whereas Dr. Ambedkar's trust was in law, political power and education.

4.3 Conclusion

Dr. Ambedkar's contribution is valuable in terms of the social and political thought and denouncement of Brahmanical attitude. His fiery writings and speeches brought about consciousness of the political, economic and social problems of the untouchables and paved the way to address their concerns. Among many of his contributions, the greatest one was in respect to securing fundamental rights through the directive principles of State policy enshrined in the Constitution of India. For Indians, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is not only a historical personality; he has metamorphosed into a symbol for collective aspirations and an icon for the emancipation of the oppressed.

4.4 Summary

Dr. Ambedkar played a significant role for the upliftment of the downtrodden sections of society. He was considered as a messiah for the suppressed class

Dr. Ambedkar saw the caste system as an unequal mode of organization of social relations, which embedded within itself the notion of purity and pollution.

Dr. Ambedkar offered an insight that the caste system thrives by imposing sanctions and control over women.

As a chief architect of the Constitution of India, Dr. Ambedkar made special provisions for the empowerment of the marginalized sections of the Indian society.

For Indians, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is not only a historical personality; he has metamorphosed into a symbol for collective aspirations and an icon for the emancipation of the oppressed.

4.5 Questions

1. Examine Dr. Ambedkar's contribution as a nation builder.
2. Discuss Dr. Ambedkar's view on caste and untouchability.

4.6 References

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PERIYAR RAMASAMY AND VERRIER ELWIN

Unit Structure

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5.1 Periyar Ramasamy

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5.1.2 Rationalism

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5.0 Objectives

- To gain insights into Periyar's contribution as a social and political reformer
- To understand the features of the anti-caste movement

5.1 Periyar Ramasamy

5.1.1. Life and Thoughts of Periyar

E.V. Ramasamy "Naicker (1879-1973), better known as "Periyar" (literally meaning "the big man", figuratively meaning "the revered one" or "elder") is an iconic figure in the history of Tamil Nadu. Periyar is known for many of his contributions: social reformer, champion of non-Brahmin political and social interests, anti-caste crusader, advocate of women's rights, and atheist and rationalist. E.V. Ramasamy was born in Erode, the then part of Madras Presidency. From a very young age he began to criticize the use of religion to reinforce discrimination. He always fought for the identity and recognition of Tamil

people. He was against the principle of Brahmanism. He joined the Indian National Congress in 1919. In his capacity of chairman of Erode municipality, he initiated policies like eradicating caste discrimination, boycotting foreign clothes, etc. Until 1925 he worked for INC but then he left it due to ideological differences and internal clashes with Congress officials.

Periyar was a prominent social and political reformer. He laid the foundation of many ideologies in modern Tamil politics. He is also called as “Father of Dravidian Movements”. In Tamil Nadu since 1967 all state governments have been formed by two parties – Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). Both the parties split from Periyar’s Dravidar Kazhagam (DK), but still claim its legacy.

5.1.2 Rationalism

Periyar laid the foundation for using the “idea of dialogue” in every matter. He was inspired by the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates and his notion of logic and rationality. Ramasamy took rationalism as his weapon to take on the suppression at the hands of the upper class and caste. He started talking about realistic and idealistic principles. There should be a feeling among us that caste cannot divide us. The evils that prevail in any society are due to our selfish deeds. His commitment to rationality moved him to challenge cultural norms which were validated and accepted without questions. He also voiced against the capitalist class which always created difficulties for the working class. He adopted rationalism to lead a peaceful life in all aspects. In the context of Brahmin oppression, he stated that in the name of God and religion we have forgotten humanism. He is considered as an atheist who rejected god, religion, and rituals.

5.1.3 Caste and Religion

Vaikom Satyagraha (1924-1925) –Vaikom is a metaphor for social justice- when hundreds of satyagrahis from the Tamil country joined hand with their brothers in a heroic struggle. Vaikom was then in the princely state of Travancore. The temple of the presiding deity, Lord Mahadeva, was out of bounds for Ezhavas and other castes considered to have a low ritual status. As a mark of protest, Periyar presided over the satyagraha in the midst of violence and indignity inflicted by the orthodox community and the repression of the police. As his campaign was supported enthusiastically, the government imposed prohibitory orders on him and was imprisoned. The satyagraha ended in partial victory, and was considered as an important milestone. Because of his ideological differences, he became a bitter critic of Gandhi, and this impacted his views on satyagraha.

The dominance of intermediary castes in south India, and Dalit political and cultural assertion since the 1990s, has triggered a re-evaluation of Periyar's ideas on caste and their impact on the empowerment of backward castes. Here also he criticized Brahmins to act as monopolists and cheat other communities. He condemned the practice of using caste into religious practices. Periyar would definitely be placed on a pedestal for his advocacy against Brahmanism. He did not only challenge Brahmins in this category but also the non-Brahmins who supported caste and class differences.

In 1990, Indian government's decision to introduce reservation (affirmative action) for backward castes in education and employment, and the upper-caste protest against it, brought back memories of Periyar's role in empowering backward castes. Further, with the renewed rise of Hindu fundamentalism from the 1990s, Periyar's critique of religion, especially Hinduism, has been recognized politically and intellectually.

5.1.4 Women's Question

Periyar's views on the emancipation and empowerment of women were way beyond his times. His best contribution was made in the field of women's rights. He observed that women were viewed as only child bearers and had no other image. He wanted to legitimize the equality of men and women in society. He stood fiercely against the inhuman practice of dowry. According to him, after divorce women would also get the right to property and in education and health, there must be equal opportunities. He argued that while others advocate birth-control with a view to preserving the health of women and conserving family property, he advocated it for the liberation of women. According to biographer D. Gopal Krishnan, Periyar and his movements led Tamil society towards the betterment of women's conditions.

5.1.5 Self Respect Movement

Self-respect movement got a significant impetus in his era. He educated others to regard themselves as respected beings. Human actions should be based on rational thinking. For Periyar, the philosophy of self-respect was of utmost importance. He promoted Self Respect in 1925 and this led to institutionalization of the movement in 1952. He conceptualized the objectives of the movement as thus: imparting proper political knowledge, fighting for freedom from slavery, avoiding unnecessary customs and rituals, eradicating the caste system, establishing an egalitarian society and many more. The self-respect movement served the purpose of a social revolution.

Check Your Progress**1. What are Periyar's views on women?**

5.1.6 Language and Language movement

Respect for Dravidian Culture could be felt when he opposed the new policy of compulsory Hindi language to study in schools. Periyar argued that the cornerstone of inequality lay in Sanskrit-driven Hindu scriptures, and given Hindi language's proximity to Sanskrit, the imposition of Hindi language would fuel social backwardness and religious hegemony. He established his views as anti-Hindi because it would destroy the culture and notions of Tamil people. Then whole South India went against the promotion of Hindi as a compulsion. Periyar was very obstinate for his Tamil culture and language preservation. He always claimed that Old Tamil was the mother of Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. Through his writings and art, he spread the use of the Tamil language.

5.1.7 Village Upliftment

In one of his booklets called "Village Upliftment"; he called for the progress of rural areas. The word "rural" itself is a symbol of discrimination for him. There was a lot of social and economic difference among regions and rural people were generally regarded as the poorest ones. His social reforms were in tune to the ground realities of the time.

Check Your Progress**1. What is the Self Respect Movement ?**

5.2 Conclusion

His ideals of a free nation are altogether based on the spread of knowledge and education, logical thinking, casteless society, abolition of poverty and untouchability and all-round growth of individuals. His works provide an insight into and conceptualizing of non-mainstream ideological trends in modern Asian history. In recent times, there has been a renewed political interest in Periyar's ideas along with the intellectual interest in the history of the non-Brahmin movement have converged to produce new forms of awareness. This has led to the emergence of new, revised versions, editions and reprints of Periyar's writings.

5.3 Summary

Periyar is known for many of his contributions: social reformer, champion of non-Brahmin political and social interests, anti-caste crusader, advocate of women's rights, and atheist and rationalist.

He was inspired by the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates and his notion of logic and rationality.

Vaikom is a metaphor for social justice- when hundreds of satyagrahis from the Tamil country joined hands with their brothers in a heroic struggle.

Periyar's views on the emancipation and empowerment of women were way beyond his times.

For Periyar, the philosophy of self-respect was of utmost importance. He promoted Self Respect in 1925 and this led to institutionalization of the movement in 1952.

He established his views as anti-Hindi because it would destroy the culture and notions of Tamil people.

His social reforms were in tune to the ground realities of the time.

5.4 Questions

1. Discuss Periyar's contribution as a social and political reformer.
2. Examine the characteristics of the anti-caste movement led by Periyar.

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5.2 VERRIER ELWIN

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5.2 Verrier Elwin

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5.2.0 Objectives

- To examine the contribution of Verrier Elwin to the study of tribes in India
- To understand Elwin's contribution to tribal policy in India

5.2.1 Introduction

Verrier Elwin was an anthropologist and was often called J. G. Frazer of Indian anthropology. The difference between Verrier Elwin and Frazer is that Elwin was not trained in anthropology but Frazer was a scholar from university and was often termed as the armchair of anthropology. Elwin was born in 1902; he was the son of an Anglican Bishop of Sierra Leone and the Chaplain General of the British force. He belonged to a religious family therefore he got educated in theology and was supposed to take on his family lineage in terms of continuing with the religious work. He attained a distinguished academic record and in 1926 became the Vice-President of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford and soon thereafter Chaplain of Merton College. Since he had the responsibility of taking forward the task of becoming a priest, he pursued his research and study in theology.

As a student of Christian movement meeting, Elwin had attended at Stanwick, he met J. C. Winslow who had come back from India to recruit young men for his Christian mission. Elwin was already interested in coming to India and was easily convinced into joining Winslow's Christa Seva Sangha which worked at Sabarmati. So, he abandoned a prospective academic career in England in favor of

religious searching so he came to India in 1927 as a missionary in Pune in Maharashtra. However, later he gave up his commitment to proselytize and dedicated his life to research and to help preserve tribal life and culture.

In India he was inspired by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi and began participating in the Independence movement. Because he openly expressed support to the Indian nationalist cause, he was taken to task by the British government when he was on a short visit to England. He later withdrew from practical politics and directed his humanitarian zeal toward independent social work in India.

During his stay in Pune 1928-1931, Elwin was involved in national movement so at this period in his initial days he had no idea working for the tribes he was just interested to be a part of the national struggle as he was influenced by Gandhi. He was very close to Gandhi and he worked with and Gandhi in return called Elwin his son. There was a very close bonding between Gandhi and Elwin and they continued for a few years to work for nationalist struggle.

On the advice of Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Verrier Elwin dedicated his entire life to work among the tribal people. This proved to be a turning point in his career. A combination of scholarship, religiosity, humanitarianism and practicality; all combined to make Elwin a 'humanitarian anthropologist'. He was depressed by the attitude of the common man towards the tribal population. He also challenged the idea that tribals were uncivilized and he started to work for tribals.

5.2.2 Contribution to Tribal Development

In his writings, Elwin took care to stress that he was not against assimilating tribals into the mainstream. He only wanted such assimilation to occur at a pace, and on terms, that suited the tribals. His contribution to tribal development is very wide and he has written 26 anthropological works on tribals- of these 14 are monographs, 2 are novels, 2 are anthropological studies written in collaboration with his old friend Shamrao Hivale and his autobiography. His work is appreciated because he was not trained to do ethnography or not trained in anthropology or to write a monograph while he lived with tribes and wrote detailed monographs.

Besides this, he has published a number of articles. He was a man continuously working on tribals and today these monographs and writings are a part of all syllabus and courses on tribal development or tribal policies. Many valuable contributions were made through "Man in India", a journal which published articles related through anthropological work. These writing include monographs on individual tribes, studies of Indian folklore, documentation of folk art, statement of tribal policy, etc.

In addition Elwin published many articles. Among the well-known writings of Elwin are: 'Leaves from the Jungle' (1936), 'Phulmat of the Hills' (1937), 'A Cloud that's Dragonish' (1938), 'The Baiga' (1939), 'Loss of Nerve' (1942), 'Maria Murder and Suicide' (1943), 'Folk Tales of the Mahakoshal' (1944), 'Folk Songs of Maikal Hills' (1944), 'Folksongs of Chattisgarh' (1946), 'Bondo Highlanders' (1952), 'Myths of the North-East Frontier of India' (1958), 'A Philosophy of NEFA' (1959), 'The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin: An Autobiography' (1964). Elwin was undoubtedly one of the most prolific writers in contemporary Anthropology. It has been observed that he produced the largest corpus of data on Indian ethnography which came from single person.

Elwin was a self-taught anthropologist. He did not mold his writing as per the training of any professional anthropologist. He mastered the methodological and theoretical questions open to anthropology but made use of them only if he wanted meaning in the context of the subjects he was studying. Elwin himself admits that he came to anthropology through poetry, which allowed him to view anthropology from an integral and humanitarian perspective. In his words, "the essence and art of anthropology is love. Without it, nothing is fertile, nothing is true".

Elwin held a number of important official positions such as: Anthropologist to the Government of Orissa in 1944, Deputy Director of the Department of Anthropology of the Government of India from 1946 to 1949, and Advisor for Tribal Affairs to the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) from 1954. He received a number of honours and academic Awards: Wellcome Medal (1943), Rivers Memorial Medal (1948), Campbell Medal (1960), Dadabhai Naoroji Prize (1961), Padma Bhushan (1961). Because of his in-depth knowledge on tribal affairs he was held in high esteem and confidence by government personalities including Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, and by many with whom he worked. Elwin was considered as one of the great romantics of anthropology and the most inspired chronicler of India's tribal people.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain Elwin's Contribution to Tribal Development .

5.2.3 Five Principles of Tribal Policy

Elwin influenced Nehru's policies for Indian tribes. Nehru introduced the 'five principles' for the policy related to the tribals. Nehru appreciated the spontaneity of tribal life, amidst abject poverty and destitution. He believed that the tribals should not be thrown into the process of modernization but should be allowed to participate in it as a natural evolutionary process.

Following are the five principles formulated relating to the tribals:

1. Tribal people should be developed as per their tradition and along their lines of their genius, rather by imposing alien values upon them.
2. Tribal rights in the forest as well as land should be respected.
3. Teams of tribals should be trained in the task of administration and development.
4. Tribal areas should not be over-administered with too many schemes.
5. Results should not be judged in a quantitative way, or the amount of money spent, but by the impact made on human life.

In the obituary dedicated to Elwin, David Mandelbaum wrote that he had made an important contribution to India which is a bit difficult to measure, but may be more important than the impact that he made regarding tribal policy. He changed the view that Indians have of themselves and of their society. He defended the tribal people and often clashed with Hindu puritans who tried to reform tribal society in their ascetic mode. He vigorously denied that this brand of puritanism was the true spirit of India. Certain aspects of his life resonated with the honored religious tradition of India. He believed in abstinence from material possessions, poverty and self-denial for a higher cause.

Elwin's critics say he was an anti-modern romantic whose influence on tribal policy further marginalized the tribals. His theory of keeping the tribals isolated left them unprepared for all external influences and this has had a detrimental effect on the economy, social structure and behavioural patterns of tribals especially in the North-East. On the other hand, Elwin's admirers argue that without him, tribals would have suffered an even worse fate. His legacy may be contentious, but the ideas Elwin engaged in are relevant even today.

5.3 Conclusion

Elwin contributed to one of the fundamental ideals of Modern India; that is the development of Indian nationhood. His studies of the tribal population of India are available in literary forms and accessible to the non-anthropological readers. This has led to an impact on the enlightened minds of the dominant social groups. They

were convinced about the essential oneness all the people of India, despite their diversity in all aspects all social life. He applied liberal and imaginative approach to tribal development. This enabled the government of India to formulate tribal policies which combined the best of idealism and realism in the contemporary socio-cultural life of India. This has helped to bring about a synthesis of the traditional and the modern elements of India's life and thought in the new Indian nation.

5.4 Summary

Verrier Elwin was an anthropologist and was often called J. G. Frazer of Indian anthropology.

Elwin was involved in national movement so at this period in his initial days he had no idea working for the tribes he was just interested to be a part of the national struggle as he was influenced by Gandhi.

In his writings, Elwin took care to stress that he was not against assimilating tribals into the mainstream. He only wanted such assimilation to occur at a pace, and on terms, that suited the tribals.

Elwin influenced Nehru's policies for Indian tribes.

Elwin's critics say he was an anti-modern romantic whose influence on tribal policy further marginalized the tribals.

5.5 Questions

1. Discuss the contribution of Verrier Elwin to Indian anthropology.
2. Examine Verrier Elwin's view on the policy of assimilation of tribals.
3. State the biographical account of Verrier Elwin.

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TARABAI SHINDE, PANDITA RAMABAI

Unit Structure

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6.1.1 About Tarabai Shinde

6.1.2 The Turning Point

6.1.3 Stree Purush Tulana

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Objectives

- To understand the contributions of women reformers towards the emancipation of women
- To gain insights into the earliest contributors to feminist thought

6.1 Introduction

The 19th century saw the emergence of women in the Indian subcontinent who have resisted forced widowhood, denial of education, forced marriage, caste based violence, child marriage, sexual violence within and outside the family, and were expected to follow the norms and mores of behavior in private and public sphere. In such challenging times, some women dared to take on the system and speak out against the oppressive structures. In colonial Maharashtra women tried to give a voice to their lives through biographies, autobiographies, articles in newspapers, journals, or write books in which they endeavoured to discuss the issues faced by women which had patriarchal roots. Today these writings are considered to be theoretical and visionary and provide a baseline for feminist historiography. Several women personalities initiated revolution in the thought process and paved the way for the feminist movement of the 20th century. In this section students will be introduced to two such personalities: Tarabai Shinde and Pandita Ramabai; who criticized the traditional value system which was imposed on women forcefully and

both were initially associated with social organizations; Satyashodhak Samaj and Arya Mahila Samaj respectively.

6.1.1 About Tarabai Shinde

Tarabai Shinde was born in 1850 in Berar province of Buldana. She belonged to a Maratha family. Being from a conservative society; Tarabai Shinde just like other women of her time were locked within the confines of the house. However, she was supported by her father Bapuji Hari Shinde who was a clerk in the office of Deputy Commissioner of Revenues. He published a book titled, "Hint to the Educated Natives" in 1871. Her father was very well versed with English. He knew the importance of education because he worked in the British office. He home-schooled Tarabai and taught her Marathi, English and Sanskrit. We could truly say she had linguistic skills. Along with that she was also well versed in modern and classical literature.

Tarabai Shinde challenged patriarchy once again when she got married and lived with her husband in her house, following the practice of "Ghar Jawai". She decided to remain childless which was completely against the rules set for a women in the society. It is believed that women are complete only when they have children. Here we can clearly see how Shinde lived her life without fearing the society. She not only preached about crushing down patriarchy but she also practiced the same.

Tarabai's father had a very good relationship with Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Savitibai Phule. Tarabai started working with the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule towards caste eradication and gender equality. Indian society had a very rigid caste system. Tarabai challenged this Caste system by educating the lower caste girls. She worked with Mahatma Jyotiba Phule to educate these girls. Apart from this she even started working to re-marry the widows. She did all this by being a part of Satyashodak Mandal. She along with Mahatma Jyotiba Phule received a lot of backlashes from both men and women.

6.1.2 The Turning Point

Tarabai's life took a turning point when she read a news article published in 1881 in 'Pune Vaibhav', an extremely orthodoxy weekly newspaper. The article was written attacking a young Brahmin widow who was sentenced to execution for murdering her illegitimate son to avoid public disgrace and ostracism. Vijayalakshmi feared the society would punish her for having an illegitimate child being a widow and therefore she decided to kill the child.

Stri-Purush Tulana is an essay of 40 pages published as a book in 1882. It was written as a response to an article on the Vijayalakshmi case published in the Pune Vaibhav. Stri-Purush Tulana put forth a mature feminist argument which expanded

the scope in which the composition of patriarchal society was analyzed. Unlike other writers her book has the capacity to deeply impact the audience. Her words directly affected the reader's mind. Her language was considered harsh but she had stated facts. She mentioned the hypocrisy of man, the sufferings of women in such a way that other writers would never have. She asked questions that women wouldn't dare to ask and men would never answer. Her book was a critique to upper caste patriarchy and the caste system. Since, during that time the maximum number of press owners were Brahmins; it was very difficult to get her essay published and finally when it was published, the book did not garner the attention it deserved.

Check Your Progress

1. What is Stree Purush Tulana?

6.1.3 Stree Purush Tulana

In this book, Tarabai discussed nine blames which were traditionally imposed by men for a long time; which have weakened women's position. She also claimed that women have all capacities and abilities like that of men, but are suppressed by the patriarchy on purpose. She urged that people must focus on Widow remarriage, eradication of Child Marriage, Sati etc. She believed and preached that instead of setting behavioural codes for women the society must focus on their upliftment and eradication of evils that destroy their life. She believed that privileges enjoyed by men are a cause of degradation of women. She points out the double standards of men in various areas which are as follows:

Adultery: She speaks about how women are expected to surrender her body to her husband no matter whether he is physically handicapped, drunkard or a womanizer, or how old he is. She also talked about how women have no right over their bodies. Adultery was considered to be a grave crime, in which both men and women were involved, but men were forgiven while women had to face humiliation, punishment and untold misery.

Gods: Tarabai Shinde questioned god on the discrimination meted out to women. When men and women were created there was no difference between them. Had God forgotten his children after creating them? Why was all the happiness given to

men and why did women have to suffer? She observed that women were severely punished for sins they committed while men were forgiven. When men or women commit the same crime men are set free while women are punished.

Religion: Unlike other women she spoke boldly, stated her views. She believed that religion was created by men as a means to control women. Religion was used like a “tool” by them to oppress women. Religion and cultural practices have forever oppressed women, denying them their rights.

Double Standards of Patriarchal system: Tarabai has pointed towards the hypocrisy in how men portray themselves as the protectors of religion, Dharmas, duties and their responsibilities but in reality, they themselves live a life that is gifted by the colonial powers. She refers to the dressing style, food, travel, new forms of consumption, employment and education that Indian men embraced so enthusiastically, from boots and stockings to pigeon and liquor for supper, from travel by steamship to living in colonial-style bungalows. She observes that Indian men are in a rush to embrace British fashions that only made man a laughing stock, yet many of the same men regard themselves as the self-appointed champions of strict religious traditions at home.

Manusmriti: Manusmriti is considered as a guide to living human life and was extremely orthodox to the point that it made women’s life unbearable. It states that it is the nature of women to seduce men; therefore men should be cautious in the company of women. It clearly stated that girls are supposed to be in the custody of their father when they are children, women must be under the custody of their husband when married and under the custody of her son as widows. She is forbidden from asserting her independence. In fact, Manu encourages us to see this control as “reverence” and “protection” rather than as “repression” and “oppression”. Women should be held responsible for every injustice hurled at them. Whether it is rape or molestation or acid attack, the onus of the blame is transferred to her. This explains why marriage came to be considered as universal and compulsory for every girl. It also explains why motherhood was considered important and begetting of a son was an unwritten rule.

These examples clearly give us the ideas as to how problematic these scriptures were. Tarabai Shinde during that time pointed out at these scriptures, she tried to enlighten the people through her writings. During that time Manusmriti was respected just like any other religious scriptures today. Unlike other reformers she took up the courage to point out the orthodoxy of this text.

British Raj: Tarabai Shinde supported the British policy towards education and stated that women were given the gift of education by the Britishers. Tarabai

Shinde further states that such a gift could not be expected from the male reformers from India. She believed and observed how British Raj could be a tool to counteract patriarchy. Since, the British Raj was introducing reforms, emphasizing on education. She believed that all these reforms would help women develop and come out of the shackle of patriarchy and live a better life.

Pativrata: Pativrata is a term used in Hindu culture and traditions to refer to the duty of every married woman who is to be faithful and loyal to her husband. Pativrata literally means a virtuous wife who has made a vow to her husband of her devotion and protection. Basically, placing the husband on the pedestal and treating him like a God. When speaking about this concept Tarabai says that in order to have “Pativrata” wife men should also have virtues like God.

Politics of Gender: Tarabai claimed that men in the colonial period accepted those reforms which had deep concern and were beneficial to men and those which would make their life easy. On the other hand, essential and required reforms which would impact women positively and help them to come out through the worst social conditions and enhance the opportunities for development of women, were very conveniently denied by men.

Education: She emphasized on women’s education. She argued that if women were educated, they would know the extent of irreparable damage the practice of child marriage would have and wouldn’t fall prey to it. She stated that education would help women to stay away from crime. In one of her arguments she enquired intensely, that if only women had vices then why were prisons full of male criminals.

6.2 Conclusion

Tarabai Shinde’s writings were not only relevant in those times but they hold an important position in today’s world. Using a persuasive language she described the condition of women in India. She found the privileges enjoyed by men to be cause of degradation of women. She was fierce, bold; her writings directly impacted the reader’s mind. When many refused to speak on the evils of the caste system, she worked to educate the girls of lower caste. She not just preached but her actions were against patriarchy. She asked the questions that women feared to ask and men feared to answer and in doing so truly paved the way for feminism in India.

6.3 Summary

Tarabai Shinde’s writings were not only relevant in those times but they hold an important position in today’s world.

Stri-Purush Tulana put forth a mature feminist argument which expanded the scope in which the composition of patriarchal society was analyzed.

In this book, Tarabai discussed nine blames which were traditionally imposed by men for a long time; which have weakened women's position.

Tarabai's father had a very good relationship with Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. Tarabai started working with the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule towards Caste eradication and Gender equality

She found the privileges enjoyed by men to be the cause of degradation of women.

6.4 Questions

1. Write a note on Stri-Purush Tulana.
2. Examine the way in which Tarabai Shinde paved the way for feminism in India.

6.5 References

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PANDITA RAMABAI

Unit Structure

6.2.0 Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.2.1 Early life of Pandita Ramabai

6.2.2 Travel to Europe and America

6.2.3 The founder of Mukti Mission

6.2.4 Conversion to Christianity

6.2.5 Contribution to Feminism

6.3 Conclusion

6.4 Summary

6.5 Questions

6.6 References

6.2.0 Objectives

- To examine the contribution of Pandita Ramabai towards emancipation of women

6.2 Introduction

Pandita Ramabai was one of India's most influential women reformers. She was born on 23rd April, 1858 in her father's ashram. She was one of the few social reformers who helped to introduce progressive thought in the country. Her core contribution was that she condemned patriarchy and worked for women's right to education. She is recognized as a renowned scholar, educator and feminist who broke the society barriers and expectations. Pandita Ramabai founded the Arya Mahila Samaj on 30th November 1882 with the objective of empowering women to lead a dignified life. She paved the way for the welfare and education of Indian widows and challenged social norms and became a champion of women's rights throughout the country.

6.2.1 Early Life Of Pandita Ramabai

Pandita Ramabai was born as Ramabai Dongre, into an intellectual Brahmin family. Her father believed that women should have an education and against traditional Hindu social norms he taught Ramabai how to read and write Sanskrit. While she was still very young her family was thrown into abject poverty and became religious vagrants, travelling across the Indian subcontinent and learning

many of its languages. She lost both her parents and sister and brother to starvation. Her expertise in Sanskrit and recitation at the age of 20 impressed the Brahmins of Calcutta, so they conferred the title of 'Pandita' (the feminine of pundit, or Sanskrit scholar) and 'Saraswati', after examination by the faculty of University of Calcutta. Later she married a Shudra. Such a marriage would have been impossible before the Civil Marriage Act of 1872. Ramabai's husband died less than two years afterwards, leaving her with a daughter. In the first year of widowhood she did three significant things. She founded the Arya Mahila Samaj, a society of high-caste Hindu women working for women's education and against child-marriage. Secondly, she published her first book, 'Stree Dharma Niti' (Morals for Women). Thirdly, she appeared before the Hunter commission on Education in India, an enquiry set up by the British government.

6.2.2 Travel To Europe And America

Two years after being guided by Cheltenham's exceptional Dorothea Beale, Ramabai went to the United States to attend the graduation ceremony of Anandibai Joshi from the Woman's Medical College of Philadelphia. Ramabai was introduced to the world of late 19th century American feminism. Inspired by the movements, she came up with the idea of establishing a school for Hindu widows. The objective of writing HCHW was to raise funds for establishing institutions for emancipation of women. She travelled across the United States, lecturing and organizing "Ramabai Circles" to generate funds. While she worked in association with American philanthropists and educators, Ramabai reflected on popular ideas related to women in the Indian context and realized that they were very problematic.

Pandita Ramabai's book 'The High Caste Hindu Woman' was a reflection of the oppressed and suppressed lives of upper caste Hindu women. Meera Kosambi considered the book to be so influential that she declared it as 'an unofficial Indian Feminist Manifesto'. The book was published in 1887 in the United States and within a year of its publication sold over 9000 copies. "The High Caste Hindu Woman" (HCHW), presented Indian society to Americans the plight of women in traditional upper caste Indian society through analytical arguments.

However, the task of preparing 'The High -caste Hindu Woman' was far from easy. She loved her nation, her culture and was an iconoclast. The book depicts every stage of a high caste woman's life, beginning with 'Childhood', 'Married Life', 'Woman's Place in Religion and Society', 'Widowhood', and 'How the condition of women tells upon Society'. The book ends with an appeal to raise the institution for girls and women who are deprived from education and consequently lack many opportunities for building their lives.

6.2.3 The Founder Of Mukti Mission

After her return from America, Ramabai started widow homes in Pune. In Kedgaon she envisioned opening institutions which would provide vocational training to the girls such as teachers, governess, nurses, home keepers, printing press, farming, etc. She drew from her own life experiences as a young widow and furthered her commitment for providing the means of survival to widows. In 1896, during a severe famine, Ramabai travelled across villages of Maharashtra rescuing thousands of children, child widows, orphans and destitute women and sheltered them at Mukti and Sharada Sadan. The book 'The High Caste Hindu Woman' reflected Ramabai's commitment to India's high caste child widows. The book talks about the plight of these women and girls in the most culturally sensitive way. She states that when women are married off as children, they usually live with their husband's family.

If the husband dies at a young age, the child widow is often blamed for the death and subject to hatred by the family, as prescribed by a particular interpretation of Hindu scriptures. In HCHW, Ramabai provides a detailed account of the young widow's plight. The widow is required to wear a single coarse garment, red, white or brown. She is entitled to only one meal a day. She is forbidden from attending family feasts and should refrain from showing herself to people on auspicious occasions and is considered a bad omen.

Ramabai exposed the shallow customs and traditions with critical evaluation and analysis. She argues the evil practices from a historical perspective and points out the decline in women's freedom with regard to social institutions.

6.2.4 Conversion To Christianity

In September 1883 Ramabai converted to Christianity. This shocked the Indian community as conversion of a Brahmin woman from a highly respected family, with orthodox learning was not accepted easily. Her conversion came at a point where she had received immense spiritual support and aid from her Christian community. Her conversion also needs to be understood against the context of her upbringing in a traditional upper-caste Hindu society. Since she had exposed the dominance of patriarchal structures of the Hindu caste society, she had to face the consequences of betraying her caste and community and was relegated to the margins of official histories of western India and especially Maharashtra.

6.2.5 Contribution To Feminism

Ramabai was clear in her lifelong refusal to conform to patriarchal norms and resolute commitment to equality and justice. Meera Kosambi has provided an analytical perspective of Ramabai's writings and its impact on the Western world. Kosambi observes that what lent Ramabai's contribution as highly potent is that

this writing came from a woman – a solitary and largely unsupported Indian woman – who ‘named’ the systemic problems of the ‘oppressed Indian woman’. The attempt to trace her entire register is a project of retrieval – of her significant texts, her multiple ideological evolutions and the intricacies of her feminism. This is also an understanding of feminism within the intersecting and sometimes conflicting structures of patriarchy, religion, nationalism and internationalism.

6.3 Conclusion

Pandita Ramabai was a scholar, feminist and educator who broke the shackles and expectations as a woman living in the 19th century India. She was a pioneer of women’s education and a champion of women’s rights and empowerment. She saw caste as a major flaw in Hindu society and coupled with patriarchy, it became a lethal weapon used to subjugate women. She challenged patriarchy and rallied for women’s rights. As a keen social analyst she believed that caste associations promoted narrow self-interest and prevented the development of a democratic spirit in the real sense. Ramabai believed in western arguments for progress and development of Indian women.

6.4 Summary

Pandita Ramabai was one of India’s most influential women reformers.

She paved the way for the welfare and education of Indian widows and challenged social norms and become a champion of women’s rights throughout the country. While she worked in association with American philanthropists and educators, Ramabai reflected on popular ideas related to women in the Indian context and realized that they were very problematic.

‘The High Caste Hindu Woman’, presented Indian society to Americans the plight of women in traditional upper caste Indian society through analytical arguments.

6.5 Questions

1. Discuss the contribution of Ramabai Pandit towards the upliftment of women.
2. Examine the understanding of feminism through the contribution of Pandita Ramabai

6.6 References

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Life of Pandita Ramabai: Championing Women's Education and Social Reform

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SOCIAL WELFARE AND THE ISSUES OF RIGHTS CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS FOR RESERVATION

Unit Structure

7A. 0 Objectives

7A.1 Introduction

7A.2.1 Definition of Scheduled Castes (SC)

7A.2.2 Definition of Scheduled Tribes (ST)

7A.2.3 Definition of Other Backward Classes (OBC)

7A.3 Reservation of Economically Weaker Sections

7A.3.1 Protection of Women

7A.3.2 Protection of Transgender

7A.3.3 Reservation of Persons with Disabilities

7A.3.3.1 The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995

7A.3.3.2 The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

7A.4 Summary

7A.5 Questions

7A.6 References

7A. 0 Objectives

- To introduce the students with the different concepts of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes as well as weaker sections
- To explore the Provisions laid down by the Government of India for the upliftment of weaker sections
- To explore various safeguards provided by the constitution to the Weaker sections in the form of amendments of the laws

7A. 1 Introduction

This unit has been divided into two parts 7A and 7B to provide the readers with a better understanding of Constitutional provisions for reservations for the upliftment of the weaker sections of the society and also the Issues of Representation of the

same. The first part i.e 7A of the Unit will take you through the various constitutional Provisions which are laid down by the Constitution and the various Bills, Laws which have been passed and amended from time to time by the Government of India for the upliftment of the weaker sections. When we say weaker sections, it does not mean whether someone or a group is physically weak, rather these sections refer to the groups who have been intentionally kept backward by denying their rights and lack of access to the provisions by the majority and upper castes/classes. If such groups are not protected by Law, a major part of society would never progress . Let us now explore the meaning and various provisions provided to the weaker sections of the society.

7A.2.1 Definition of Scheduled Castes (SC)

- (1) The President specifies the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes with respect to any State or Union Territory, after consultation with the Governor thereof and by public notification. These shall be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that State or Union Territory for the purposes of the Constitution.
- (2) By law, Parliament may include or exclude any caste, race or tribe or part of or group within any caste, race or tribe from the list of Scheduled Castes specified in a notification issued under clause (1), but a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification.

"Scheduled Castes" mean such castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within such castes, races or tribes deemed under article 341 to be Scheduled Castes for the purposes of the Indian Constitution.

7A.2.2 Definition of Scheduled Tribes (ST)

India's Constitution is the first document to mention "Scheduled Tribes". According to Article 366 (25) of the Constitution, scheduled tribes are those tribes or tribal communities or parts or groups within them which are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes.

In regard to any State or Union territory, the President may, upon consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts or groups within those tribes or tribal communities. These will be the Scheduled Tribes of the state or union territory.

By law, the Parliament may include or exclude from the list of Scheduled tribes specified in a notification issued under clause (1) any tribe or tribal community, or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community, but a notification issued under the said clause cannot be varied thereafter.

The President, after consulting with the State governments concerned, specifies Scheduled Tribes in a notified order in relation to each State/Union Territory. Only Parliament can amend these orders subsequently.

Despite abolishing untouchability, prejudice against SCs and STs persists in some form or the other - be it overt, covert or subtle in expression. Atrocities against SCs and STs continue to occur frequently. More and more Dalits and Adivasis are becoming landless and are joining the ranks of agricultural labourers. Loss of land is caused by atrocities against Dalits and Adivasis. This state of landlessness makes them vulnerable and fuels and promotes further perpetration of atrocities against them.

Since the 1980s there has been a steady decline in the allocation of government funds for SC and ST development and welfare projects. Despite providing reservation quotas for jobs, the representation of SCs and STs at the higher levels of all public services remains poor. However, the policies that are present are elucidated below.

For Protection and Development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes:

The provision and safeguards for Backward Classes and especially for SCs & STs have been included in the Indian Constitution. The safeguards are in the field of social, economic, political, educational, cultural and services under the State for people belonging to these communities for their development.

Safeguards for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

Social Safeguards

Articles 17, 23, 24 and 25(2)(b) of the Constitution instruct the State to provide social safeguards to Scheduled Castes. Article 17 is in relation to the abolition of untouchability that is being practiced in society. The Parliament put into practice the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 to address and abolish untouchability practiced against Scheduled Castes.

Article 23 forbids traffic in human beings and 'Begar' and other similar forms of forced labour and states that any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable by law. Even though there are no specific mentions about the SCs in this Article, the majority of the bonded labour comes from SCs. Hence, this Article is important for their protection. The Parliament enacted the Bonded Labour system (Abolition) Act, 1976 for identification, liberation and rehabilitation of bonded labourers.

Article 24 instructs that any child below the age of 14 years shall not be employed to work in any factory/mine or involved in any other form of dangerous employment. In this Article as well, there is no specific mention of the SCs but a considerable portion of child labour engaged in dangerous employment belong to SCs.

Article 25(2)(b) states that Hindu religious institutions and organisations that are public in nature shall be accessible to all classes and sections of Hindus. The term Hindu also contains persons professing Sikh, Jain and Buddhist religion.

Economic Safeguards

Articles 23, 24 and 46 form a portion of the economic safeguards for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Please refer to the earlier paragraphs for Articles 23 and 24.

Article 46 says that the State shall promote with significant care, the educational and economic interests of the economically weaker sections of the people, especially of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall shield them from social injustice and exploitation.

Educational and Cultural Safeguards

Article 15(4) gives power to the State to make important provisions for the progress of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens and for SCs. This provision has allowed the State to reserve seats for SCs in educational institutions for general and professional courses and so on.

Political Safeguards

Reservation of seats for SCs/STs in the local bodies of the States/UTs, Legislative Assemblies of the State and in Parliament are given in the Indian Constitution and are as follows:

Article 243D Reservation of seats:

- (1) Seats shall be reserved for (a) the Scheduled Castes; and (b) the Scheduled Tribes in all the Panchayats as well as Municipalities. The proportion of number of reserved seats to the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in that Panchayat or Municipality, will be as close as possible to the proportion of the population of the Scheduled Castes in that Panchayat area or of the Scheduled Tribes in that constituency is to the total population of that area. These seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat or Municipality
- (2) One-third or more of the total number of seats reserved under clause (1) shall be reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes.
- (3) One third or more (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat.

Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People –

- (1) Seats shall be reserved in the House of the People for –
 - (a) the Scheduled Castes;
 - (b) the Scheduled Tribes except the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam; and
 - (c) the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam.
- (2) The number of seats reserved in any State or Union territory for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes under clause (1) shall bear the same proportion to the total number of seats allotted to that State or Union territory in the House of the People, as the population of the Scheduled Castes/Tribes in the State or Union territory holds to the total population of the State or Union territory.

Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States –

- (1) Seats shall be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, except the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam, in the Legislative Assembly of every State.
- (2) The number of seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assembly of any State under clause (1) shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats in the Assembly as the population of the Scheduled Castes in the State or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State or part of the State, as the case may be, in respect of which seats are so reserved bears to the total population of the State.

7A.2.3 Definition of Other Backward Classes (OBC)

Apart from the SC and STs, there are Other Backward Classes also recognised. Backward classes are not defined in the Indian constitution. It is up to the Center and to the States to decide which classes belong to this group. Backward classes are those that are educationally or socially disadvantaged.

Under Article 340, the President may appoint a commission to examine the conditions of socially and educationally backward groups.

Some Provisions for Other Backward Classes**Safeguards Related to Education and Public Employment**

The State makes special provisions in the constitution for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens. These provisions relate to

their admission to educational institutions including private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the State, other than the minority educational institutions.

The State makes provision for reservation of appointments or posts in favour of backward classes of citizens that are not adequately represented in the services under the State.

State considers any unfilled vacancies of a year, which are reserved for being filled up in that year, in accordance with provision for reservation, as a separate class of vacancies to be filled up in succeeding year or years and such class of vacancies are not considered together with the vacancies of the year in which they are filled up, for determining the ceiling of fifty per cent reservation on total number of vacancies of that year.

Agency for Monitoring Provisions

According to Article 340, clause (1) of the constitution, on the basis of the report by an appointed commission, the President can specify references to scheduled castes as classes including other backward classes and the Anglo-Indian Community.

Check your progress

1. Can you define Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as described in the Constitution of India.

2. Describe the various Safeguards provided in the Constitution for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

3. Write in brief about the constitutional reservations provided to Other Backward Classes.

Apart from affirmative action or reservations for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, the Government of India provides safeguards to persons on the basis of gender, class and disability.

7A.3 Reservations for Economically Weaker Sections of the Society

On 7 January 2019, the Union Council of Ministers approved a 10% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions for the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) in the General category. The cabinet decided that this would be over and above the existing 50% reservation for SC/ST/OBC categories.

Below are the provisions for Economically Weaker Sections.

1. Article 15 of the Constitution, Clause 6 allows the State in making —
 - (a) any special provision for the advancement of any economically weaker sections of citizens other than the classes mentioned in clauses (4) and (5);
and
 - (b) any special provision for the advancement of any economically weaker sections of citizens other than the classes mentioned in clauses (4) and (5) including special provisions relate to their admission to educational institutions, private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the State, other than the minority educational institutions referred to in clause (1) of article 30. If provided, the reservation would be in addition to the existing reservations and subject to a maximum of ten percent of the total seats in each category.

For the purposes of this article and article 16, "economically weaker sections shall be identifiable on the basis of family income and other indicators of economic disadvantage.

2. Article 16 of the Constitution, clause 6 allows the State to make any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any economically weaker sections of citizens other than the classes mentioned in clause (4), in addition to the existing reservation and subject to a maximum of ten percent of the posts in each category.

7.3.1 Women's Reservation Bill:

The Women's Reservation Bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 9 March 2010 by a majority vote of 186 members in favour and 1 against. As of March 2013, the Lok Sabha has not voted on the bill.

The Bill seeks to reserve 33.33 percent seats in the Lok Sabha or the Lower House of Indian Parliament and in the State Legislative Assemblies for women, in

accordance with the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments which reserved the same percentage of seats for women in rural and urban local bodies respectively. The Bill has been introduced in the Indian Parliament several times since its initial launch in 1996, but the status of the bill remains undecided primarily due to lack of political consensus.

In Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, 33% of posts are reserved for females in all government departments and services, such as police, health, education and general administration. From 2015 onwards Kerala has implemented a 55% reservation for all posts of its local self-governing bodies.

There are several provisions in the constitution in order to protect women from discrimination, violence and trafficking, such as:

The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 dealing with prevention of trafficking of women and children.

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (28 of 1961) (Amended in 1986) that intends to prevent giving and accepting of dowry in terms of property, money by either party, or any one in connection to either party.

The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 that regulates images or material that is derogative of a woman, or of being corrupt or of being susceptible to public morality.

The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 (3 of 1988) is an Act to provide for the more effective prevention of the commission of sati and its glorification. Sati refers to the burning or burying alive of widows.

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 that covers any woman in the household who may be facing physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or financial violence in the home.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 that aims to protect women from harassment at the workplace and providing guidelines for proper conduct.

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 that specifies the meaning of sexual offences, including acid attack, attempt to disrobe, stalking, voyeurism etc in its description.

Article 243 D ensures reservation for women in Panchayats and Municipalities. It reserves one third or more seats from the total reserved seats (including SC/ST/OBC), for women.

Check your Progress

1. List the process of identification of a person from the Economically Weaker Section.

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2. Throw light on the debates relating to the Women's Reservation Bill.
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7A.3.2 Protection of Transgender Persons

“The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act”, 2019 is an act of the Parliament of India with the objective of providing for the protection of rights of transgender people, their welfare, and other related matters in the whole of India. The Trans Bill was opposed thoroughly by the community. Although members of the opposition criticised the 2019 act and assured transgender people that they would not vote in favour of it, it was passed by the Lok Sabha on 5 August 2019 and by the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Parliament, on 26 November 2019. The president assented to it on 5 December 2019, upon which the act was published in the Gazette of India. It has been in effect since 10 January 2020 following a notification of the same in the Gazette on the same day.

Prior to this, On 24 April 2015, the Rajya Sabha had unanimously passed a private member Tiruchi Siva's bill - “Rights of Transgender Persons Bill”, 2014 guaranteeing rights and entitlements, reservations in education and jobs (2% reservation in government jobs), legal aid, pensions, unemployment allowances and skill development for transgender people. It also contained provisions to prohibit discrimination in employment as well as to prevent abuse, violence and exploitation of transgender people. The bill also provided for the establishment of welfare boards at the centre and state level as well as for transgender rights courts. This remained pending in Lok Sabha until the government introduced a new transgender rights bill and passed it as- The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act”, 2019.

Although a few states provide partial reservations for transgender in the public sector with respect to education and employment, the 2019 Act does not constitutionally provide any mandatory reservation to trans people, who are essentially as a socio-economically backward class.

7A.3.3 Reservations for Persons with Disabilities

There are two constitutional acts dealing with rights of persons with disabilities. Both of these acts have been the fruit of tremendous work undertaken by civil society movements, government commissions to ensure rights of persons with disabilities.

7A.3.3.1 The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights, and Full Participation) Act, 1995 was enacted according to the “Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region.” This Proclamation was issued in a meeting of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Region in December 1992 at Beijing, where the “Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons 1993–2002” was launched. The Act listed seven disability conditions. They are visual impairment, low vision, hearing impairment, locomotor disability, intellectual disability, mental illness and cured leprosy respectively.

The Act followed a perspective of social welfare with respect to Persons with Disability. The main objective was the prevention and early detection of disabilities, and to provide education and employment to the Persons with Disability. The Act also ensured 3% reservation in Government jobs and educational institutions. As a measure of non-discrimination, it emphasised on making situations barrier-free.

7A.3.3.2 The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

The list has been expanded from 7 to 21 conditions in the RPWD Act, 2016. It now includes cerebral palsy, dwarfism, muscular dystrophy, acid attack victims, hard of hearing, speech and language disability, specific learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, chronic neurological disorders such as multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease, blood disorders such as haemophilia, thalassemia, and sickle cell anaemia, and multiple disabilities. The Act provides an elaborate definition of mental illness which is “a substantial disorder of thinking, mood, perception, orientation, or memory that grossly impairs judgment, behaviour, and capacity to recognize reality or ability to meet the ordinary demands of life.” Those with at least 40% of any of the above disabilities are classified as persons with benchmark disabilities. Persons with a disability having high support needs are those who are certified as such under **section 58(2)** of the Act.

At least 5% of seats are required to be reserved in all Government institutions of higher education and those getting aid from the Government for persons with benchmark disabilities. 4% reservation is to be provided in posts of all Government establishments with differential quotas for different forms of disabilities for persons

with benchmark disabilities. Incentives should be given to those employers in the private sector who provide 5% reservation for persons with a benchmark disability. Special employment exchanges are to be set up for persons with Disability.

Check your Progress

1. Elucidate on the provisions of The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.

2. Can you briefly explain how the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 is different from The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

7A.4 Summary

This topic outlines the various provisions in the constitutions for different vulnerable groups. Beginning with the definition of Scheduled Caste and Schedule tribe, an overview of the various accommodations in the Constitution is provided. This is followed by provisional safeguards for Other Backward Classes as they appear in various States. Reservation based on gender and disability is discussed at the end. As mentioned earlier, we have seen the Provisions for the reservations of weaker sections in the first part of this Unit, in the next part, we shall explore the issues of Reservation of the weaker sections.

7A.5 Questions

1. Examine the debates over the Women's Reservation Bill.
 2. Outline the provisions included in the Constitution for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
 3. Elaborate on the rights of Persons with Disability as mentioned in the Constitution of India.
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ISSUES OF REPRESENTATION

Unit Structure

7B.1 Introduction

7B.2 Political Reservation

7B.3 Educational Reservation

7B.4 Employment Reservation

7B.5 Issues relating to Reservation of Scheduled Caste/Tribe

7B.6 Gender and Reservation

7B.6.1 Reservation vis-à-vis Women

7B.7 Disability Quota and Exclusion

7B.8 Minorities and Reservations

7B.9 Recommendations for better inclusion

7B.10 Summary

7B.11 Questions

7B.12 References

7B.1 Introduction

Indian politics have been marked by controversy over reservations. Considering the subject's complexity, much of the controversy is inherent. Social locations and contexts have influenced the intensity of the controversy. Throughout history, different types of reservations have attracted very different responses from society as a whole. At the time of independence, schedule castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs) were rarely opposed as was the case with so-called Other Backward Classes (OBCs), officially known as Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBCs). The Indian intelligentsia and masses feel strongly about reservations. As a result of this argument, two major groups have emerged: reservationists and counter-reservationists. Formerly, the phenomenon was seen as a matter of right, and they considered it more important than merit. According to them, merit is an element of hegemonic culture and is a cultural construct. The anti-reservationist standpoint, on the other hand, argues that this is an issue that goes against the primary idea of the Indian constitution, which is 'equality of opportunity' (Hooda, 2001).

7B.2 Political Reservation

Under Article 330 and 332, STs and SCs are provided seats in both the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies of the state to express their grievances as oppressed sections of society. Originally, the programme began with a 10-year plan with the aim of putting pressure on government bodies to resolve injustices faced by these backward communities.

In doing so, the representatives are faced with the dilemma of being labelled as belonging to one side or another. The representatives tend to be called Harijan or Adivasi Leaders if they attempt to inform the authorities of the grievances of their communities, or they are assumed to be elitists who neglect their communities. As regards fighting for their rights and injustice, there is a lack of political consciousness among the members of the ST/SC communities and their non-elected representatives.

7B.3 Educational Reservation

The disadvantaged groups in higher education include women, Muslims, Scheduled Castes, and tribes (Chanana, 1993). Despite the fact that several other dimensions could still have been selected to illustrate their educational backwardness, she bases her conclusion on the number of students enrolled in higher education. These oppressed groups differ in the degree to which they are oppressed. Right from the start, many of the committees and commissions appointed by the government have stressed the importance of educational development. Thus the still prevailing educational backwardness proves the failure of all the constitutional provisions in favour of scheduled castes/tribes as well as the other minorities.

7B.4 Employment Reservation

The employment quota policy for minorities in the public sector can be traced back to 1947. The constitution of India ensures reservation of a share of public sector jobs specifically for SC/ST community members, along with a balance of share in the total population of the country. This results in variations in the share of jobs reserved affecting the employment quota in relation to labour market outcomes. The Constitution makes provision to ensure safeguarding their adequate representation in the public sector under Article 16(4), 320(4) and 335 of the Indian constitution. The reservation quota however might differ from one state to another based on the share of population of SC/SC communities. Hence the policy of employment quotas for minorities could improve their labour outcome by being employed in these reserved jobs. Even those who do not end up getting a reserved job might some or the other way be benefited from the overall changes in the employment sector involving their community.

7B. 5 Issues relating to Reservation of Scheduled Caste/Tribe

Affirmative action is a broad concept that consists of strategies to counteract discrimination and allow excluded and underrepresented groups into society's most ideal positions. Despite some evidence of ongoing caste discrimination and oppression, caste reservations were not viewed as a political problem but as a foundational necessity for Indian Democracy.

One common source of conflict at different levels of representation is the question of which marginalized groups have been excluded and why, as well as which groups have been included in the process.

Castes were used as the principal means of distributing wealth, power and knowledge in a political movement. Various political movements followed. Many political parties of the 1970s, such as Dalit Panthers and Dalit Sangharsh Samithi, demanded a more equitable distribution of power. As these movements and parties gained momentum, it became apparent that the claim of one unified and homogenous policy was false. As a result, politicians are less likely to target certain ethnic groups with special benefits and may prefer party organizations with cross-cutting affiliations. However, despite the weak effects of quotas on marginalized castes and tribes, partisanship appears to play an important role. India's central states, such as Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and the north-eastern hill states, are mainly inhabited by tribes and have been suffering since the Indian mainstream has contaminated them and the pan-Indian model of state, society, economy and culture has ravaged them. It deprived them of their traditional rights to land, forests, and produce, and prevented them from benefiting from the policies of the new economic and political systems. It is noted that tribes in the North Eastern Hill states are distinct from those in central India, since they are not as impoverished or oppressed. They have had more exposure to missionary activity and are therefore more educated than those in central India.

Check your Progress

1. Elaborate on Reservation and its components.

2. Mention the issues of representation that affect SC/ST communities in India.

7B.6 Gender and Reservation

Sexual minorities in our society have been treated as deviants due to the issue of sexuality, which has caused social division. It is considered unnatural for them to exist. The Supreme Court only recently recognized Third Gender as a concept independent of either gender. Moreover, the court ordered transgender people to be treated as 'socially and economically backwards' in order to seek employment. It was clarified, however, that the verdict only concerns homosexuals, and that it does not apply to other sections of society, such as gays, lesbians, or bisexuals. The recent de-criminalisation of same-sex relationships is a long-awaited step in the right direction, however there is a long way to go in acceptance of alternate sexualities in mainstream societies. Although there are a number of NGOs that work for the upliftment of this minority, it will only succeed if people are open to it. While the third gender remains on the margins, transgender people will have to deal with prejudice, injustice, and discrimination. In order to educate and sensitize about minority rights, political leaders and their constituent parties need to be involved, as they are the gatekeepers that determine how far marginalized groups are allowed to participate in political processes.

7B.6.1 Reservation vis-à-vis Women

While women have made significant advancements in education along with political participation, they remain under-represented in leadership positions throughout the world. Some countries have responded to these by-passing laws to enact gender parity in politics; increasingly, those who wish to have gender parity on corporate boards. A country's behaviour regarding women likely relates to its adoption of quotas. In both India and Norway, the randomized assignment of political quotas and the unanticipated introduction of board quotas enabled researchers to perform causal analyses, so this review focused on evidence from these two settings. The Indian evidence demonstrates that quotas increase female leadership and influence policy outcomes. Having women represented in the

highest decision-making bodies is a crucial element of empowering women politically. A nation cannot be proud of its citizens if it discriminates, and no civilized society can claim to be modern unless it treats its women as equally as its men. The idea of a 30% female quota at all levels of electoral bodies was proposed by Rajiv Gandhi in the late 1980s. For women's rights to be promoted at the grass-roots level, women's groups wanted the reservation to be confined to panchayat level. The Indian Constitution was amended in 1993 to include the 73rd and 74th Amendments to address this demand. In 1955, the issue of quotas was raised again, but the focus was on representation for women in Parliament. In 1966, the United Front government led by Deva Gowda introduced reservation in Parliament, but the changes were rejected by some male politicians who argued that women should stay at home. This was described as "the battle of the Sexes" by the media. Protests against the proposed reservation bill that would have reserved 33% of seats for women in the Parliament occurred in 1998. However, men who opposed the bill, expressing concerns that middle class women will only benefit, disrupted the proceedings several times, causing adjournments.

Contemporary India is being characterized by a crisscrossing movement of oppressed groups. An overall democratization of society is essential to addressing history's longest oppression. This is even more important in a plural society like India, where the political system must ensure equality between all groups to combat this oppression. In other words, the quest for gender equality and justice will need to be tied to the fight for emancipation of oppressed groups and communities.

7B.7 Disability Quota and Exclusion

Considering the complex, subtle nuances of multiple cultural discourses, disability in India requires negotiation and interpretation. On the one hand, disability is assumed to mean a lack, or a flaw, resulting in significantly reduced capability. Another understanding of disability sees it as a way of protecting and caring for oneself. Although not exhaustive, these examples illustrate how non-positivity underpins a negative cultural identity. Disabled people are still seen struggling in society, as The Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation Act 1995 still awaits proper implementation creating an unwelcoming environment. (There is one sign language news bulletin per week for people with hearing impairments.) The range of reading material is limited for the disabled section along with other factors of necessity making them feel excluded. In most cases, services provided by the state for persons with disabilities are provided by the voluntary sector, making it unable to cover even a minuscule portion of those in need.

7B.8 Minorities and Reservations

Despite lists of castes and tribes prepared by the government which provide information about the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, there is no clear definition of 'minority' in the Constitution. The term "minority" is normally used to describe a group of people distinguished by their ethnic origins, race, language, politics, and religion. According to Article 14 of the Indian Constitution, minorities are guaranteed equal protection under the law. Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, gender, or place of birth, while Article 16 equal protection under the law applies to public employment. The language, script, and culture of minorities is guaranteed in Article 29, and Article 30 guarantees their right to establish and administer educational institutions based on their faith or philosophy. Provision is also made for adequate opportunities for teaching in the mother tongue at the primary level. The two other religious communities that are really disadvantaged are the Muslims and Neo-Buddhists. A majority of Neo-Buddhists belong to the Scheduled Castes, so the Scheduled Caste discussion will cover their position. The constitution provided for religious minorities to establish separate educational institutions in order to preserve their distinct cultural heritage. Indian society is also known for its cultural diversity. Not to forget mentioning, the diversity within minority groups must be taken into account when designing representative and participatory processes and ensure correspondingly diverse representation to avoid overrepresentation of minority elites, sometimes called the creamy layer. Representing marginalized minorities effectively must extend beyond political institutions to other structures like the civil service and the police, institutions that are inhibited from addressing injustices during times of power. (International IDEA, 2013).

Check your Progress

1. Discuss the challenges to reservation for women in the constitution.

2. Write a short note on problems relating to reservation for persons with disability.

3. Elucidate the challenges of implementing a uniform understanding of minorities in India.

7B.9 Recommendations for better inclusion

The degree of genuine participation can vary considerably; however, if the perception of participation is genuine, it provides legitimacy to and acceptance of the constitution. Yet, representational legitimacy also remains a controversial topic, and the question is who has the right to speak on behalf of minorities-and particularly religious groups. Most religious groups are typically non-homogeneous—either economically or politically—and their representation is often considered to be derived from the group's elite. In fact, complications with subgroup power and varying interests have been raised by many marginalized groups, including ethnic minorities, women, LGBTI people and many others. These marginalized groups are usually not homogeneous and feature diverse opinions, which makes any change process difficult for the groups to manage. It usually means educating themselves, forming consensus, and establishing minimum common ground and alliances before sensitizing majorities.

It is not uncommon for members of marginalized groups to assume that, if they were given a seat at the constitution building table, they could, and should, wear many hats of representation. It is especially true for women, who are often expected to represent all women, as well as other marginalized groups, because gender cuts across many marginalized groups and the interests of the party they belong to. This makes their jobs even more challenging. One example is the woman elected to

represent both men's and women's interests by a party that uses women to meet quota requirements or other legal requirements without taking a stand on women's issues per se. (Krook, 2006).

It is important to mobilize marginalized groups to meaningfully contribute to the constitution building process. In the long term, this will ensure sustainable peace and security, as well as the recognition of diverse identities.

Positive engagement with Majority groups: It is important for minorities and marginalized groups to interact with majorities so that opinions that a stronger role for minorities would undermine majority interest are dispelled.

By investing in the education of marginalized groups of their own members on effective consensus building processes, marginalized groups can arrive at minimum common positions and broad internal alliances before engaging with majorities.

Establishing alliances between marginalized groups and dominant groups - primarily political parties, journalists, and the judiciary. It can be achieved through face-to-face relationships, but also through education and training campaigns aimed at sensitizing dominant groups to the needs of the marginalized. In the end, this should be made available to the public. A process such as this begins with aligning the interests of dominant and marginalized groups. In these processes, ensure that marginalized groups have their security concerns respected.

A multi-pronged Advocacy Approach: It is important to adopt a broad approach to advocacy for the rights of marginalized groups. In particular, they need to focus on a robust human rights framework as well as an independent judiciary. To facilitate marginalized groups' participation in the constitution building process, Information Communication Technology (ICT) is only one of many tools available. and therefore should not substitute for other approaches such as face-to-face consultations. In ICT-based exchanges, participants' interests need to be emphasized and mapped to representative issues.

Listing: Listing specific minority groups under non-discrimination clauses needs careful consideration. Create constitutional frameworks that promote gender equality by adopting gender-sensitive norms. Providing opportunities for women to participate in the constitution-building process and to voice their concerns regarding livelihood security and, in post-conflict settings, safety, security, and effective food security. Members of marginalized groups, in particular women, should be trained and given the confidence to engage in technical issues surrounding constitution-writing.

People advocating for marginalized groups' rights need to take a broader approach to changes to the constitution than just focusing on provisions directly related to their interests, such as a human rights framework, an independent judiciary, and accountable government in general.

Lastly, the decision to strive for inclusion on lists with non-discrimination clauses should be carefully considered and that further research be undertaken to identify the positive and negative effects of listing marginalized groups. For marginalized groups, this leads to greater benefits than constitutions with strong general human rights protections.

7B.10 Summary

Under this topic, we discuss issues relating to representation of various groups in Indian society. Beginning with briefly tracing the issues relating to reservation and the rights of SC and STs, we go through the issues that women, trans persons and sexual minorities face. Next, understandings of issues relating to disability were discussed. It ends with some recommendations for better inclusion.

7B.11 Questions

1. Elaborate on the mechanisms that prevent fair representation for SC and ST groups in India.
2. Discuss the debates relating to reservation for women in the Parliament.
3. Comment on the challenges to implementation of affirmative action for persons with disability.

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PUBLIC SPHERE

Unit Structure

8.0 Objectives

8.1 Introduction to the Frankfurt School

8.2 Jürgen Habermas and The Public Sphere

8.3 Evolution of Public Sphere in India

8.4 Influence of Colonial Policies

8.5 Relationship between Public and Private Spheres

8.6 Influence of National Movement

8.7 Private and Public Spheres in Post-Independence India

8.8 Summary

8.9 Questions

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8.0 Objectives

- To understand the concept of Public Sphere
- To explore the influence of colonial policies in India
- To Evaluate the relationship between the Public and Private Sphere in the post independence period

8.1 Introduction to the Frankfurt School

Associated with Goethe University Frankfurt, the Frankfurt School was a school of social theory and critical philosophy. This German intellectual movement was founded during the Interwar period (1918–39), during the Weimar Republic (1918–33), as a reaction against the contemporary socio-economic systems (capitalist, fascist, communist) of the 1930s. Those who belonged to the Frankfurt School were concerned with the conditions (political, economic, societal) that allow social change to be realized through rational social institutions. Their emphasis on the critical component of social theory stems from their attempts to transcend the ideologies of positivism, materialism, and determinism by returning to the critical

philosophy. Since the 1960s, the critical-theory work at the Institute for Social Research has been guided by Jürgen Habermas's work on communicative rationality and intersubjectivity.

8.2 Jürgen Habermas and The Public Sphere

Jürgen Habermas is a German philosopher and sociologist in the tradition of critical theory. Among his most notable contributions is "Public Sphere" that prompts one to explore democracy and question its existence in plural societies.

Habermas's work with the Institute for Social Research best explains the history and controversy surrounding 'The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere'. Habermas studied under Horkheimer and Adorno in Frankfurt, Germany during the 1950s and investigated the ways in which elections were held during the Enlightenment and the American and French revolutions, as well as how elections impacted political discourse.

The central element of democratization, according to Habermas, is political participation. He wrote *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962), which contrasted the participatory, active forms of bourgeois public life in the age of liberal democracy with more private forms in an industrial society governed largely by media communications and the elite classes.

Habermas explored the development of the "bourgeois public sphere" in Britain, France, and Germany during the late 18th and 19th centuries, and then raised the question of its degeneration in the 20th century. In addition to outlining the notion of the bourgeois public sphere, public opinion, and publicity, Habermas analysed social structures, political functions, and the concept and ideology of the public sphere, and then illustrated how the public sphere has grown in recognition of society. Finally, explained how public functions have changed, as well as how public opinion has changed.

Habermas explained that the bourgeois public sphere, which appeared around 1700, served as a formal boundary between the private concerns of individuals in their family, economic, and social lives and the demands and concerns of both. In this tradition, the conflict between a means of achieving societal consensus and common interests was employed to bring together bourgeois and citizen. The public sphere was a broad range of media, including newspapers and journals, political discussion institutions such as parliaments, political clubs, literary salons, and locations where public assembly took place, along with pubs, coffee shops, and other public areas which were conducive to social and political dialogue. It was the first time in history that both individuals and organizations could influence public

opinion, allowing them to express themselves directly and influence the laws and policies of their society. As a result of the development of a bourgeois public sphere, public opinion that resisted state power and the interests that dominated bourgeois society in general could be developed.

The public sphere referred to by Habermas thus points to a space that exists between the ordinary requirements of everyday life in civil society and the realm of state power. As a result, the public sphere serves as a medium between the private realms of the workplace and the family and state. In Habermas' words, "the bourgeois public sphere" refers to the spaces in which individuals interact with the government and social policies that oppress their rights.

According to public sphere principles, all issues of general concern could be discussed. Freedom of expression and assembly, freedom of the press, as well as the right to freely participate in political discourse make up the public sphere. In Habermas' view, the bourgeois public sphere became institutionalized during the democratic revolutions, enacting constitutional rights and establishing a judicial system to settle disputes among people or groups, or between individuals and the state. So, it is the public sphere that affects all forms of governing decision making.

According to Habermas, a liberal public sphere originated in the Enlightenment and the American and French Revolutions, but has now changed to be a media-dominated public sphere under "welfare state capitalism and mass democracy." The idea of public opinion no longer consists of a rational consensus that results from reflection, discussion, and debate, but instead of the manufactured opinion made by surveys and the media.

In other words, Habermas does not see the media as a facilitator for valid discussion of public issues, but as a platform for shaping the public debate around topics sanctioned and approved by corporate and state-owned media. Thus, the relation between a sphere for public discourse and individual participation has been disrupted, and citizens are reduced to passive observers. Habermas proposal to revitalize the public realm included a proposal for an intervention to be carried out through the very institutions that facilitate public communication.

Criticism

Habermas's study of the public sphere has been subjected to critical argumentation.

In bourgeois society, the public sphere was generally dominated by white, property-owning men, whereas the concept of the public sphere and democracy implies a liberal and populist celebration of tolerance, diversity, and argumentation.

Working class, plebeian, and women's public spheres developed alongside the bourgeois public sphere to represent voices and interests that were excluded from it. Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt criticised Habermas for neglecting the plebeian and proletarian public spheres.

It is therefore more productive to imagine a multiplicity of public spheres, sometimes overlapping, but also at times conflicting, as opposed to conceiving of one liberal or democratic public sphere. These include public spheres of excluded groups, as well as more mainstream societies. Furthermore, it is important to note that the public sphere itself has shifted with the rise of new social movements, new technologies, and new spaces for public interaction.

Check your Progress:

1. Briefly explain the Frankfurt School of thought in sociology.

2. Explain Habermas' Public sphere and its influence on a democracy.

8.3 Evolution of Public Sphere in India

India is a land of multiple identities, with a variety of religions, languages, tribes, communities clamouring for power or sustenance. Add the ideas of purity and pollution to this, having a common unified voice, or a space where communities' interaction with each other becomes impossible. As a consequence of its inability to reflect minority cultures, the public sphere has become increasingly inaccessible to minorities. Along with this inability to adequately reflect diversity, public

spheres are defined by majoritarian norms and values that are considered to be neutral.

The public sphere at present in India has been shaped decisively by British colonialism and the national movement that arose in response to it. India's public sphere has continued to be strongly influenced by these two factors even after independence. To understand India's specific features, it is necessary to examine how the public sphere emerged.

8.4 Influence of Colonial Policies

Sandra Freitag (1990) distinguishes between what Habermas conceptualized as the public sphere of western Europe and the concept she describes as 'public arena' in India in order to understand the public sphere and its evolution in India.

The influence of British colonial policies upon India may best be understood by looking at the manner in which it interacted with its populations. Sandra Freitag argues that the British effectively ruled out direct social relationships between individuals and the government. Instead of a representative government, it had a 'representative form of government' involving specific individuals representing particular groups (Ali, 2001). Thus, each of the distinct communities was represented by individuals chosen by the colonial state. A representative government emerged as a result.

Freitag explained the way the public sphere is different in India, England and France. India was an imperial state, so individuals had no direct relationship with the state. National rituals in Europe are strongly influenced by cultural values and traditions. The focus is on a shared history that defines participants as equals in relation to the state. The imperial rituals of British India, contrary to popular belief, emphasized the 'diversity' of their rule.

In the case of England and France, collective activities such as public protests and ceremonies contributed to the shaping of their states via public opinion. While this model was essential in the development of nationalism in India, the local influences prevented it from being fully replicated.

In the late 19th century, agitators in north India looked to community definitions rather than European models to explain the relationship between the state and individuals. Freitag asserts that these north Indian definitions are mostly about religion. Thus, religious and communist identities became a viable alternative to nationalism.

In contrast to western Europe, India has a culturally-specific public sphere, which Freitag refers to as **public arenas**. People could participate in the rituals of the state in public arenas. Public arenas have traditionally operated through issues of authority and legitimacy, which also shaped collective ritual in western nation states of modernity.

In light of the national movement in reaction to colonial rule, it is crucial to understand how the Indian public sphere is shaped. Compromises and collusion at the level of the administration were the product of native elites who sought exclusive power. A right to national self-determination can also be viewed as the right to define one's own public sphere, based on certain desirable norms, values, beliefs, and practices within a culture (Tamir 1993 as cited by Ali, 2001). Even though minorities can exercise their right to national self-determination, public spheres are invariably disproportionately shaped by the values and symbols of the majority. Minority members are further disadvantaged when they are unable to express their cultural heritage in public.

8.5 Relationship between Public and Private Spheres

Having a public sphere and a private sphere in relation to each other is a colonial practice. The effect of colonialism is specifically derived from the way the colonial elite, adhering to its 'representative mode of governance,' interacted with indigenous elites and representatives of various communities. Private spheres are characterized by the fact that the imperial state rarely encroaches on them and usually leaves them alone. Despite this, the imperial state had some influence in the private sphere. It enacted laws that regulated citizens' behaviour, such as the codification of individual laws.

In the 'public' areas of business, criminal law, contract law, and evidence law, British and Anglo-Indian law ruled. Hindu and Muslim laws, by contrast, are defined as 'personal', dealing with individuals rather than regions, and dealing with the most intimate aspects of human existence - family relationships, family property, and religious devotion.

8.6 Influence of National Movement

Freitag extends her analysis to show how public arena activities relate to the national movement. The nationalist movement, when it called upon women to fight the good fight for national freedom, perpetuated the image of a particular woman, the upper caste Hindu woman, to come forward. The idea of "Bharat Mata" as it emerged was also that of a fair skinned woman (Chakravarty, 1989). The forefront

of the public sphere was Hindu, upper caste and needed to be rescued. Freitag points to the Cow Protection Movement, as a public-sector activity in the late 19th century to argue that while it was "clearly not nationalism," it was still an important step as "it operated in the very same public spaces, utilising the same forms of publicity and venues of communication, and made very similar kinds of demands for protection of shared values and modes of behaviour as did the nationalist movement. For this reason, movements like the Cow Protect Movement "had at least as influential an impact on the development of Indian nationalism as did the western model from which its vocabulary was often drawn" (Freitag, 1996 as cited by Ali, 2001).

8.7 Private and Public Spheres in Post-Independence India

According to Freitag, the state established public and private spheres of government during British rule. In this dichotomy, the state leaves 'private' or 'specific' interests to the many communities that make up the realm while remaining the protector and defender of 'general' or public interests. The conflict was caused in large part by the assumption that all 'political' issues could be dealt with in the state's institutions while topics related to religion, family, and identity were considered 'apolitical' and did not need to be addressed by the state or its institutions. However, the state did enact very visible personal laws for Hindus and Muslims despite not intervening directly in their affairs.

In a similar way to this sharp distinction, minority empowerment provisions were later included in the Indian constitution. Mahajan argues that the Indian Constitution had a 'two-fold' policy. It tried to ensure that no community was systematically disadvantaged, yet on the other hand, it granted each community autonomy to live according to its own wishes (Ali, 2001). The problem arises from the fact that while democracy and positive affirmation policies exist in the public sphere, the private sphere remains elusive. This is different from western societies, where democracy rose from the liberal understanding of the value of humans. While the law in India is liberal, the political, religious or personal ideology is not. This, coupled with the multiplicity of communities, and identities creates larger issues of representation and equitable distribution of opportunities.

In order for democratic public space and a democratic private space to coexist, both must be reformed. In other words, we need to institutionalize multiculturalism in society. Two separate, parallel efforts are required to effectively express minority cultures in the public sphere. The first is to occupy the public sphere and prevent it from the dominance of the majority groups and reassess the relationship between the public and the private spheres.

Check your Progress

1. Discuss how the public sphere in Europe is different for India.

2. Briefly explain the role of nationalist movement in the development of public sphere.

3. Elaborate on the Public Sphere as it stands in Post-Independence India.

8.8 Summary

We traced the public sphere as it emerged with democracy in this topic. Habermas refers to the public sphere as a space between the ordinary necessities of daily life in civil society and the realm of state power. Habermas's study of the public sphere has been subjected to critical debate. In bourgeois society, the public sphere was primarily dominated by white, property-owning men, whereas the concept of a public sphere and democracy implies a liberal and populist celebration of tolerance, diversity, and argumentation. Along with the bourgeois public sphere, the public spheres of the working class, the plebeians, and women emerged to represent voices

lacking access to it. Finally, we examined the Indian public sphere. The Indian public sphere, as it stands today, was shaped largely by colonialism and by the national movement that arose in response. The different aspects of private and public sphere in pre and post-independence times are also discussed.

8.9 Questions

1. Explain the meaning of Public Sphere as understood by Jurgen Habermas.
2. In India, the public sphere that emerged was different than Europe. Discuss.
3. Elaborate on the influence of National Movement on the shaping of Public Sphere in India.

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CRITIQUE OF CULTURAL NATIONALISM AND HINDUTVA

Unit Structure

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Nation
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- 9.5 Cultural Nationalism
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- 9.7 Origin of Cultural Nationalism
- 9.8 Critique of Cultural Nationalism
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9.0 Objectives

- To learn about Cultural Nationalism and view it critically.
- To learn about the Hindutva movement
- To look into the complexity associated with it.

9.1 Introduction

In the era of Netflix, OTT platforms and Amazon culture, where you order a product with a click, it gets delivered to your home. In the world where we are talking about bitcoin and digitization, where society has progressed from the theological stage to the positivist state, in the words of Comte, it is surprising to know that Nationalism still rules our minds, eventually our society. As they say in our body, both an 18th-century person resides and even the 21st-century person resides.

This chapter deals with two sensitive topics, i.e., Cultural Nationalism and Hindutva. As a sociology student, you are expected to develop a broader framework and widen your reading and knowledge than those you have been socialized through primary groups, opinions, and social media. A few things you have to keep in mind while reading this chapter is that unless you widen your approach and have to be ready to look into the other side of the problem, which you may have never seen earlier. The intention is not to target any groups but to understand the process and look from a vantage point of view to learn our society better.

Through this chapter, the writer aims not to harm any religious group, ideology, intentionally or unintentionally; we are trying to study the facets of Nationalism, Cultural Nationalism, Hindutva objectively and academically.

9.2 Nation

Before understanding the critique part of Cultural Nationalism, we need to first learn about Nation. The Cambridge dictionary discusses Nation as a country, especially when thought of as a large group of people living in one area with their government, language, traditions¹ etc. There are different kinds of ideologies on which governments operate within a nation like democracy, communism, dictatorship, socialism, and capitalism. However, all these 'ism' are constantly affected by the cultural practices of the people. Every country has its own history, journey, mistakes, conflicts, approaches; some turn out to be successful and some are on the path towards it.

9.3 Nationalism

According to Collins dictionary, Nationalism is the desire for the political independence of people who feel they are historically or culturally a separate group within a country². One who practices Nationalism is called a Nationalist. In his essay of 1945, George Orwell discusses Nationalist where he points out, "A nationalist thinks solely, or mainly, in terms of competitive prestige... His thoughts always turn on victories, defeats, triumphs and humiliations. He sees history, especially contemporary history, as the constant rise and decline of great power units, and every event that happens seems to him a demonstration that his side is on the upgrade and some hated rival is on the downgrade." One needs to understand here that Nationalism is different from patriotism. However, one of the parts of

¹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/nation>

² <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/nationalism>

Nationalism is patriotism too. Nationalism has the culture and politics within it. Extreme Nationalism begins a problem when it creates prejudices against the other groups and nations.

In its inclusivity, Nationalism is one of the few ideologies common across regional, economic, gender and cultural differences. Nationalisms that inspired the French to revolt against a tyrannical king in 1789, or of the countless anti-colonial, independence movements of the 20 century³.

Check Your Progress

1. Can you explain the meaning of Nationalism

2. Can you explain the use of the Nationalism principle during Covid -19

9.4 Nationalism during Covid 19

Countries closed their airports for foreign travelers. Migrants were seen as a threat in some places, even within their own country. New phases of Nationalism were visible where some countries stopped their supply of vaccines to another country. Communal feelings were evoked and united fighting against the virus through symbols like a burning lamp, addressing the covid infected people as warriors, speeches by prime ministers. It redeveloped the 'We' feeling among people. However, those who didn't receive the benefits were annoyed. Yet after the

³ Schertzer, R., & Woods, E. T. (2020). How Nationalism can be a force for good in the struggle against Covid-19. *USA pp-American Politics and Policy Blog*.

independence movement, the covid 19 was an important phase where India witnessed a new form of Nationalism which social media have further fueled. Throughout the world, Nationalism was invoked by the leaders of that country to fight against the covid.

9.5 Cultural Nationalism

Cultural Nationalism often occurs in the early phase of a national movement, sometimes before an explicitly political nationalism has appeared. Cultural Nationalism is focused on the cultivation of a nation. Here the vision of the Nation is not a political organization but a moral community. The key agents of cultural nationalism are intellectuals and artists who seek to convey their Nation's vision to the wider community. The need to articulate and express this vision tends to be felt most acutely during times of social, cultural and political upheaval resulting from an encounter with modernity.

Cultural nationalism views that it is through common tradition people are bonded together. The character of a nation is seen best from culture than just from the state as an entity. One of the aims of cultural Nationalism is to unite the different aspects of the national culture.

According to T. K. Oommen, Cultural Nationalism refers to the articulation of popular aspirations by the people to preserve and nurture their 'natural bonds' rooted in religion, caste, tribe, language or region".

Accordingly to John Hutchinson, cultural Nationalism is usually more than a small group of historical scholars and artists concerned to revitalize the community by invoking memories of the Nation as an ancient and unique civilization. But periodically, it has expanded into a major ideological movement that has tried to regenerate the Nation on communitarian lines, challenging both established political nationalist movements and the existing state. Indeed in many contexts (e.g., in Eastern Europe and Asia), this grassroots movement has played a central part in nation-building.⁴

⁴ Woods, E. T. (2016). Cultural Nationalism.

Sage.<https://repository.uel.ac.uk/download/075af71b8d62f776213cc439b70d86dd3aa2502228d0f4bcb9a0ba2f51903346/324134/Woods%202016%20Cultural%20Nationalism%20Sage%20Handbook%20of%20Cultural%20Sociology.pdf>
<https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/19144?mode=full>

9.6 Linguistic Nationalism -

Linguistic Nationalism in India and the 1956 States Reorganization Act Following independence, India was confronted with integrating the princely kingdoms that surrounded it. After the accession process, India's political map consisted of numerous multilingual presidencies, such as Bombay, Punjab, and the United Provinces. Linguistic Nationalism in the era of Robotics and Artificial intelligence is still being used to gain vote banks and create ethnocentric beliefs among the weaker groups by the powerful groups. To a certain extent, preserving one's linguistic identity is necessary. However, preserving the linguistic identity and mob lynching the violators is unethical. The life of a human is above that of language, religion, caste, class. The movement stands contrary on its own as there is a discussion on the preservation of language. On the other side, the local, regional, tribal languages schools are being shut down. This is due to the importance given to the English and private medium schools. A favorable ecosystem is created for English rather than regional languages. Surprisingly, many people feel ashamed of speaking in their regional languages. Another shocking fact is that English is used as a measure of a person's intelligence rather than treating it as a mere language.

9.7 Origin of Cultural Nationalism

There are several views over the origin of cultural Nationalism. Few scholars point out that the history of cultural Nationalism begins in 18th-century Europe. Some view it originated among Irish groups. A variety of developments in the realms of ideas, culture and politics converge at this time to produce what Leerssen refers to as a 'tipping point' leading to the explosion of cultural Nationalism in the 19th century. These developments include the emergence of historicism and Indo-European linguistics; the rise of Romanticism in literature and the arts; and a growing commitment to constitutional politics and the idea of 'rule by the people' (Leerssen, 2014: 11)⁵. The writings of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) created a new phase of the emergence of cultural nationalism in Europe. Everyone contributed to its emergence like universities, artists, writers, and musicians; the emergence of cheap wood pulp and printing press led to cultural Nationalism as a product for consumption for people.

⁵ Leerssen, J. (2014) When was Romantic Nationalism? The Onset, The Long Tail, The Banal. Antwerp: NISE.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain your observations on Cultural Nationalism.

2. Discuss Linguistic Nationalism.

Critiques of Cultural Nationalism

Cultural Nationalism has been criticized time and again by scholars from different disciplines and periods. Let us look into some of the reasons for it.

- **Authoritarian regime –**

In the name of preserving culture at any given point, a country could turn into a severe form. Authoritarian culture produces a system where people are not able to live life freely. Let us take this with the example of North Korea, where a nation could shut itself down to other cultures because of the dictatorship. The leader becomes the hero, idol, and object of worship and prayer. No internet, mass media is allowed. Those within are monitored thoroughly. The point is the idea of cultural Nationalism can go so far that the fundamental rights of human beings could get violated at any point. Taliban owned places where the fundamental rights for women to educate; choice is suppressed.

- **Politics**

Cultural Nationalism thrives on an ideology of shared culture. There exists within it a political notion of Nationalism and that is problematic. The idea of having Nationalism ends diversity and brings about homogeneity. This further turns into an element to prove periodically. There is a test of loyalty that one has to undergo periodically, especially the minority groups in a country. This leads to problems and brings tension.

- **Cultural Suppression -**

Extreme forms of practicing Cultural Nationalism could lead to suppression. This can occur even in the most developed countries of the world or even underdeveloped countries. Suppression of a group or subgroup their ideas, values would lead to loss of identity and make generations live with hatred and pain. For example - In Canada, the government took the children from indigenous tribal homes and placed the children in residential schools. As a result, these children were forced to adopt a new culture, learn a new language, and way of life. Most importantly, they were separated from their parents. A generation grew with resentment and pain. Still, the indigenous group suffers due to the past. This example shows how irrespective of being a developed or a developing, or underdeveloped nation, cultural nationalism is harmful to the peace of society⁶.

- **Use of violence**

The problem with cultural Nationalism is that any event could be blown up into a political event at any given point of time. In the Indian context, several protests, injustice-related women, girls have turned into a political angle, finally leading to even communism and anger. Respecting human values takes a back seat, and the idea of cultural supremacy comes in front. The violators who question the other side of the victims are treated with violence. At times these are even practiced through goons who are hired for this purpose.

- **Rise of Social movement -**

Kaka, in an interview, points out that basic denial of rights and resources leads to social movements. Culture operates through the principle of homogeneity (Oomen). When a dominant group tries to impose its culture on the subgroup, the subgroup loses its identity. As a result, the revolt by forming movements. This leads to many new problems like child soldiers, suicide bombers, conflicts that could run for decades.

- **Enforced Nationalism**

Enforced Nationalism is where you are forced to behave according to the larger group's demand. This is being practiced in different forms and symbols of important national values. The violators who do not follow the nationalism ideals are forced upon them to follow.

⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=peLd_jtMdrc

The dominant political group decides the symbol and enforces it upon others.

- **Intellectuals and Textbooks**

Time and again, the production of knowledge is being monitored by the state. The dominant and favorable ideological thoughts are being conveyed through textbooks for students. Curriculum designing and monitoring the scholar's work and even banning their work is somewhere leading to a half-baked picture of the reality. It also closes the individual's space to view the other side of the reality and a generation growing up on fake narratives created by biased ideological groups. This has been taking place throughout the world through schools, religiously controlled schools and other institutions like universities. Universities that are supposed to be powerhouses of knowledge are harmed through privatization, contract teachers who work for as little as Rs. 300/ 150 per hour for one class. The question then becomes survival or knowledge production.

9.9 Hindutva

Hindutva is the name by which the ideology of the Hindu right, represented by the political party Bharatiya Janata Party, or Indian People's Party (BJP), as it is known. It is also the ideology of the cultural body known as Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, or National Volunteer Core (RSS), which was founded in 1925 and with which the BJP has strong links. Hindutva is a political ideology⁷. Some writers point out that these groups have *state patronage*, to a greater or lesser degree, for years if not decades – but also *state power* provides an added edge⁸.

9.10 Criticism

- **Use of Internet**

"Technocultural Hindu nationalism" or the use of the internet by global Indian communities to promote Hindu nationalist ideologies, has rapidly increased over a period. With the introduction of technology and various platforms like social media - Facebook, the form of Cultural Nationalism has changed. Scientific and technological expertise have been authorized as essential attributes of modern Indian selfhood. They have been incorporated in imaginings of the state and the Nation, and they have materialized as

⁷ <https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/eaar/archives/on-the-difference-between-hinduism-and-hindutva/> Arvind Sharma, Asian Studies.

⁸ <https://thewire.in/politics/what-hindutva-really-is-and-why-its-risky-to-debate-it>.

claims about identity, community, and society. On Hindu nationalist websites, this apparent paradox is resolved by constructing a narrative where Hinduism is defined as the historical and philosophical foundation of global capitalist modernity itself, and the majority is presented as the natural heirs to that heritage. Technocultural Hindu Nationalism invokes the core proposition of Hindu nationalist doctrine- the idea that India is a Hindu nation and that religious minorities are outsiders to it. The problem with this approach is western technology is often used to invoke feelings of Nationalism and even against globalization.⁹ .

Swati Chaturvedi, In her book, writes how people are being trained in Internet shakas. She adds that on the internet, shakas trolls receive payment for their number of trolls, writing inflammatory messages on people's Twitter, Facebook. They have a target. The price ranges from Rs. 40 for a limited amount of trolls. She also points out there are certain common characteristics like they target women, question their purity, modesty, do not have proper grammar, and even translate the Hindi words into English, forming hinglish¹⁰.

- **Globalization as a tool -**

Arjun Appadurai (1990) points out that global flows of 'ethnoscapes,' 'mediascapes,' 'financescapes,' and technoscapes' lead to new forms of identification in the era of globalization. In all these readings of the impact of globalization, cultural Nationalism appears as a throwback to another era. According to Gerard Delanty¹¹ Society today is an "age of anxiety." The sudden change in consumption of clothes, food habits, relationships, and economics with globalization has led some groups to fear the loss of identity and power. There is also a sense of loss of identity among individuals and hence modern days, gurus emerge in a technology-driven society to fulfill this gap. In short, there are two groups, one who is offering a sense of identity, belongingness, another who is taking it. The problem here is that if the offeror is irrational and has self-interest, the taker cannot realize that he is in a trap. This leads to large social issues, extremist beliefs, and problems like terrorism, racial discrimination.

⁹ Chopra, R. (2008). Technology and Nationalism in India: Cultural Negotiations from Colonialism to Cyberspace. United States: Cambria Press.

¹⁰ Chaturvedi, S. (2016). *I am a troll: Inside the secret world of the BJP's digital army*. Juggernaut Books.

¹¹ Delanty, G. (2008). Fear of others: Social exclusion and the European crisis of solidarity. *Social Policy & Administration*, 42(6), 676-690.

- **Repetition of Ideology –**

The youngsters, children's brain is still evolving compared to a fully grown adult brain, ie. The prefrontal cortex is still developing. Hence many movements even target children and make them child soldiers at times, showing them a partial picture of reality. As a result, they make risky decisions in their lives that otherwise, they wouldn't have taken. Let's take this with an example of Advertisement - When you first see a product on television, you may change the channel. However, when the advertisement appears repeatedly, you tend to observe it, and when you purchase in a shop, you prefer to believe and buy that product. Similarly, when ideas are presented repeatedly and there is no scope for another view of the picture, people tend to make decisions at times that are not rational.

The problem with these movements is that most of the issues are used as a means to win the election, vote bank. The idea we began post-independence, i.e., developing a country with a scientific temper, took a backseat.

- **Utopian Dream**

The dream is of building a society based on a mythological figure. There are frequent chariot rides inviting people to join, especially before elections. However, the subaltern groups have been criticizing such dreams. Such dreams have created an illusionary world or a path that one has to lead and attain. Several printing presses have also contributed to this vision. These dreams stand contradictory as there are nuclear tests, spaceships sent to the moon, and on the other hand, leaning towards a utopian dream.

- **Homogeneity**

The premise of the group rests on the idea of homogeneity. All the subparts' beliefs like tribal worship, animism, cult worship, nature worship, totemic forms, and hero worship are combined into one umbrella and become one group. As a result, the other is seen as a threat. Lack of appreciation of pluralism is also a problem with such movements.

- **Moral policing**

In the newspaper, one can now and then witness where couples are thrashed for being in hotels, in public parks by certain groups. These groups claim that their culture is being westernized. They are going against the culture. However, culture in itself is evolving and a dynamic concept. These groups at times even visit pubs and hit across women even in metropolitan cities.

One needs to observe how an ideology influences an individual to harm other fellow human beings for violation.

Thus, Unity in Diversity is the solution against any kind of conflict. Silencing the voice of the other or seeing the other as a threat is not the answer for a peaceful society. Having a dialogue between cultures, religious groups would help in the development rather than attacking others. Giving space for inquiry, questioning and mutual respect is the answer for the growth of society. Empathy and right learning should be prioritized. A symbol of a progressive nation is valuing and respecting all cultures.

Check Your Progress

1. List out five criticism of Cultural Nationalism

2. List out five criticism over Hindutva

3. Explain your observations on the Hindutva movement

9.12 Summary

The first topic which is dealt with in this chapter is that of Cultural Nationalism. According to T. K. Oommen, Cultural nationalism refers to the articulation of popular aspirations by the people to preserve and nurture their 'natural bonds' rooted in religion, caste, tribe, language or region". Cultural Nationalism begins in 18th-century Europe. Some view it originated among Irish groups. The major criticism associated with that Cultural Nationalism is that it develops a scope for authority regime. It helps for a political ideology to develop. It leads to the cultural suppression of indigenous groups. At times it also uses violence to convey. There is also enforced Nationalism through forcing symbols and the violators are punished. There is also regulation on textbooks, universities and literature. The second topic we learned about in this chapter is that of Hindutva. It is an ideology of the right-wing which has certain political parts and cultural bodies within it. The major criticism associated is through misuse of the internet by trolling, bullying. They also use psychological aspects like fear of loss of culture. The framework operates by showing biased pictures to earn the public and repetition of their ideology. It also operates on the idea of building a utopian dream of kingly life. It also believes in inhomogeneity. The last section looks into how we could bring about a frame where peace is built. It is important to note the fact that Hinduism , like any other religion teaches humanity, peace and respect for all. However, the reality is distorted by others in order to gain power. As mentioned by our leaders, it is important to read the texts by selves rather than depending on the others who present distorted facts and misuse the entire concept of religion by presenting an ideology which leads to violence and suppression against the others.

9.13 Questions

- Discuss the Hindutva and its criticism
- Explain the origin of Cultural Nationalism and its criticism.
- Discuss the nation and nationalism concepts.

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DALIT FEMINIST STANDPOINT – SHARMILA REGE

Unit Structure

10.0 Objectives

10.1 Introduction- Dalit Feminism

10.1.1 Focal Points of Dalit Feminist Standpoint

10.1.2 Emergence of Dalit Women's Organizations

10.2 Conclusion

10.3 Summary

10.4 Questions

10.5 References

10.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the features of dalit feminist standpoint
- To gain insights into the process of intersection of caste and gender

10.1 INTRODUCTION – DALIT FEMINISM

The most important highlight of the last two decades of the 20th century was increasing visibility of third world feminist struggles. In the Indian context, there was an assertion of caste identity and consciousness and the importance of the role of caste to strengthen social movements and transformative politics was discussed. In the early 1990s, the emergence of independent autonomous Dalit women's organizations and discourses prompted discussions around the questions of 'difference' in feminist politics. The works of three scholars stand out in this regard: Gopal Guru, Sharmila Rege and Chhaya Datar. The highlight of the debate is on the questions of a Dalit feminist standpoint and intersectionality in feminism. In this section, we focus on the Dalit Feminist Standpoint put forth by Sharmila Rege.

Feminism is about all genders having equal rights and opportunities. It is about respecting diverse women's experiences, identities, knowledge and strengths, and striving to empower women to realise their full rights. The intellectual history of feminist standpoint theory can be traced to the writings by Marx, Engels and Lukacs into the standpoint of the proletariat. From a historical perspective, standpoint theory focuses on what happens when the hitherto marginalized peoples begin to gain public voice. A dalit feminist standpoint is viewed as emancipatory since the subject of its knowledge is embodied and visible. This position claims a higher emancipatory status than other positions. It also counters pluralism and relativism which puts forth all knowledge based and political claims as valid in their way.

The Dalit standpoint theory's emphasis is on individual experiences within socially constructed groups. It focuses on the hierarchical, multiple, changing structural power relations of caste, class and ethnicity which construct such groups. According to Sharmila Rege, the category of 'dalit woman' is not homogenous, since the subject/agent of dalit women's standpoint is multiple, heterogeneous and sometimes contradictory. Which means that the subject of dalit feminist's liberatory knowledge must also be the subject of every other liberatory project. This requires a thorough engagement with and an understanding of the processes by which race, gender, caste, and sexuality all construct each other. Thus, the dalit feminist standpoint itself is open to liberatory interrogations and revisions.

There are various streams in feminism:- Black feminism, Liberal, Marxist, Post – structuralist etc. Dalit feminism is a stream of feminism that came into light with the rise of the 'The Third World Feminist Struggles'. The perspective developed in response to the shortcomings of both the mainstream women's movement and the Dalit movement in addressing the concerns of Dalit women. The challenges faced by Dalit women need to be understood in terms of their specific location where caste and gender intersect.

Dalit feminism is a theoretical perspective that revolves around Dalit women's experiences and uses it as a vantage point wherein patriarchy and caste are understood as intersecting social structures. Dalit feminism gives a historical account of how the nature and intensity of women's exploitation changes with respect to their social location and challenges the myth that all women are equal and equally exploited.

Check Your Progress

1. Briefly explain Feminism

2. Can you explain what is Dalit Feminism ?

10.1.1 Focal Points of Dalit Feminist Standpoint

Rege observes that the feminism that developed in the 1970s is distinct from the left in three crucial levels in terms of: –

- 1) The categories of woman,
- 2) Experience and
- 3) Personal politics, all of which were central to feminist theorization. The category ‘woman’ was understood as ‘the collective state of women being subjugated by virtue of their womanhood’. The above three categories that were deployed often led to exclusions of women’s realities as they existed around race, caste, class, and ethnicity.

In the 1970s, the vocal feminists belong to privileged sections of the society; white, middle class, university educated and heterosexual women. The experiences of these women came to be universalized as ‘women’s experience’. This was accompanied by sweeping generalizations such as, ‘all women are niggers’, and ‘all women are dalits’. It was argued that women essentially connected with other women; as a result ‘the subjective experiences of knowledge’ became the basis of theorizing the universal experience of womanhood. ‘Experience’ thus became the base for personal politics as well as the only reliable methodological tool for

defining oppression. From this standpoint dalit women's experiences were completely invisible. There was thus a masculinization of dalithood and a *savarnization* of womanhood, resulting in the exclusion of dalit womanhood.

The decades of the 1970s and early 80s were referred to as the times of 'reinvention of revolution' in which several organizations and fronts emerged – the Sharmik Mukti Sanghatana, Satyashodak Communist Party, Shramik Mukti Dal, Yuvak Kranti Dal – did not believe in token inclusion of dalit women, but had the revolutionary agenda to give central role to dalit women. However, a similar commitment was not visible with the other two movements of the time – The Dalit Panthers and the Women's movement; both of which were constituted mainly by the left party based women's fronts and the newly emergent autonomous women's groups. The Dalit Panthers made significant contribution during the cultural revolt of the 1970s; but in their writings and their programmes, dalit women were reflected only in their roles as the 'mother' and the 'victimized sexual being'.

The left party based women's organizations brought to focus economic and work related issues and also helped develop a critique of the patriarchal, capitalist state. The autonomous women's group also highlighted the problem of violence against women. This triggered debates between class and patriarchy, but these formations did not address the issue of Brahmanism. While for the former 'caste' was contained in class; for the latter, the notion of sisterhood was central and important. All women came to be considered as 'victims' and by extension 'dalit', resulting in a classical exclusion.

The autonomous women's groups of the early 1980s were dependent on the left framework (despite being critical of it). During this time they developed sharp critiques of mainstream conceptualizations of work, development, legal processes and the state. This paved the way for the emergence of several theoretical and praxiological reformulations. The feminist group agreed upon a materialistic framework to understand the oppression of women. Since these groups were rooted within the 'class' framework, they naturally focused on the commonalities across class rather than caste or community. This is clear in the major campaigns launched by women's movement such as, the anti-dowry, anti-rape, and anti-violence struggles. These campaigns lacked the analytical frame which is an important feature of the tradition of Mahatma Phule and Dr. Ambedkar that viewed caste hierarchies and patriarchies as essentially interlinked with each other.

Caste-based violence against women follows a pattern. It is seen that varied issues like the incidence of dowry deaths, violent control and regulation of mobility and sexuality of women is a persisting feature of the dominant upper caste. Dalit

women on the other hand, are more likely to face collective and public threat of rape, sexual assault and physical violence at the workplace and in public. A cursory look at the statements issued by various women's organizations during the Mathura rape case reveals this bias. While the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) viewed rape in terms of 'class', the socialist women used the term, 'glass vessel cracking' referring to the loss of honour, and the All Indian Women's Conference (AIWC) provided psychological explanations. Scholars observed that the sexual assaults on dalit women in Marathwada during the '*namantar*' movement failed to garner any reaction. According to them, the anti-rape campaign, therefore, became more of a single issue one.

Rege argues that the increasing visibility of dalit women have made them vulnerable to violence and attack. Dalit women in power structures as sarpanchs, as members of the panchayat and in the new knowledge making process has led to an increased backlash against them. Dalit women are at the receiving end of humiliating practices which often results in rape or the killing of their family or clan member. Such incidents emphasize the need for a dialogue between dalits and feminist activists since inter-caste relations at the local level may be negotiated through a redefinition of gendered spaces.

Rege observes that in the times of globalization and Hindutva, gender issues are being appropriated as cultural issues. Under such a scenario, it is necessary for women to reclaim and reconceptualise their issues. According to Rege, feminist politics should pose a challenge to the caste/class conceptualization of Brahmanical Hindutva. Such an approach calls for a critique of Brahmanical hierarchies from a gender perspective. Such critique has the potential to convert the discourse relating to sexual politics from individual narratives to collective contestations of hierarchies.

Rege draws upon Dr. Ambedkar's analysis wherein caste ideology (endogamy) is understood as the foundation of the regulation and organization of women's sexuality. Hence caste determines both; sexual division of labour and division of sexual labour. The processes of acculturation and assimilation are a part of Brahmanisation. Historically there has been a Brahmanical refusal to universalize a single patriarchal mode. Thus, there is an existence of multiple patriarchies as also overlapping patriarchal arrangements. Even if women seek to be united on the basis of systematic overlapping patriarchies, are nevertheless divided on caste/class lines. If feminists have to challenge these divisions, their struggles should encompass all of the social inequalities that patriarchies are related to embedded in and structured by.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the difficulties faced by women belonging to backward classes ?

10.1.2 Emergence of Dalit Women's Organizations

Several independent and autonomous expressions of women's identity were visible in the 1990s. One example is the formation of the National Federation of Dalit Women and the All India Dalit Women's Forum. At the state level, the Maharashtra Dalit Mahila Sanghatana was established in 1995. One year earlier, the women's wing of the Bharatiya Republican Party and the Bahujan Mahila Sangh set up the Bahujan Mahila Parishad. In December 1996, at Chandrapur, a Vikas Vanchit Dalit Mahila Parishad was organized. Within this Parishad, it was proposed to commemorate 25 December (the day Dr. Ambedkar set fire to the Manusmriti) as Bharatiya Streemukti Divas. Though these organizations are founded on different non-Brahmanical ideological positions, they converge on several issues such as the celebration of the Bharatiya Streemukti Divas and on the issue of reservation for OBC women in parliamentary bodies.

As of today, there are at least three major contradictory and overlapping positions which have emerged from the struggles and politics of dalit women in Maharashtra. The earliest well defined position is the Marxist / Mahatma Phule / Dr. Ambedkarite position of the Satyashodak Mahila sabha. Another position emerging out of the Dalit-Bahujan alliance is that of the Bahujan Mahila Mahasangh (BMM). This approach critiques the Vedic Brahmanical tradition and seeks to revive the bahujan tradition of the '*adimaya*'.

The Dalit Mahila Sanghatana has criticized the continuation of 'manuvadi sanskriti' in the dalit male, who otherwise takes pride in his lineage which emerges from a Mahatma Phule-Dr. Ambedkarite ideology. The Sanghatana proposes to give prominence to most dalit of dalit women in its manifesto. The Christi Mahila Sangharsh Sanghatana, a dalit Christian women's organization, have debated on a variety of issues: the loss of traditional occupations of the converts, their transfer to the service sector, the hierarchical treatment among the Christians on the basis

of caste and region, and the countering of oppositional forces led by the Church and state level Christian organizations.

The non-Brahmanical depictions of feminist politics have generated self-reflexivity among the autonomous women's groups. Their responses can be categorised as

- 1) a non-dialectical position of those who believe that it is important that dalit women take up leadership positions, but do not apply a non-Brahmanical feminist politics for themselves;
- 2) the left position which merges caste into class and continues to question the distinct materiality of caste. This is reflected in their dissent to the declaration of 25 December as Bharatiya Stree Mukti Divas;
- 3) a self-reflexive position of those autonomous women's groups who recognize the need to reformulate and revise feminist politics since the non-Brahmanical depictions are viewed as more emancipatory. It is clear that the issues addressed by the new dalit women's movement go beyond the naming of dalit women and call for a revolutionary epistemological shift to a dalit feminist standpoint.

10.2 Conclusion

Dalit feminism is not to be understood as an exclusionary, closed category that does not allow women who are not dalits to enrich it. Dalit feminism asserts that since Dalit women are most exploited, their experiences are important in understanding oppression. Rege observes that for many of the scholars, who are non dalits feminists, such a standpoint is more emancipatory in that it rejects more completely the relations of rule. Thus adopting a Dalit feminists standpoint position means sometimes losing, sometimes revisioning the 'voice' that feminists had gained in the 1980s. This process has the potential to transform individual feminists into oppositional and collective subjects.

10.3 Summary

The Dalit standpoint theory's emphasis is on individual experiences within socially constructed groups. It focuses on the hierarchical, multiple, changing structural power relations of caste, class and ethnicity which construct such groups.

Rege observes that the feminism that developed in the 1970s is distinct from the left in three crucial levels in terms of: – 1) the categories of woman, 2) experience and 3) personal politics, all of which were central to feminist theorization.

Rege argues that the increasing visibility of dalit women have made them vulnerable to violence and attack.

Several independent and autonomous expressions of women's identity were visible in the 1990s.

Dalit feminism is not to be understood as an exclusionary, closed category that does not allow women who are not dalits to enrich it.

Adopting a Dalit feminists standpoint position means sometimes losing, sometimes revisioning the 'voice' that feminists had gained in the 1980s. This process has the potential to transform individual feminists into oppositional and collective subjects.

10.4 Questions

1. Examine the key features of the Dalit Feminist Standpoint.
2. Discuss the emergence of Dalit women's organization as expressions of women's identities.

10.5 References

<https://www.epw.in/engage/discussion/caste-and-gender>

https://www.india-seminar.com/2018/710/710_sharmila_rege.htm

TRIBES, CASTE AND IDENTITY POLITICS, SEXUALITY AND MARGINALIZATION

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11.0 Objectives

- To introduce the learners to the concept of Tribes, Caste and Identity Politics, Sexuality, Marginalization
 - To understand the problems faced by the Tribals, Lower caste groups and Homosexuals
 - To analyze the barriers and difficulties faced by the Tribals, Lower Caste groups and Homosexuals
-

11.1 Introduction

Indigenous and tribal peoples are often known by national terms such as native peoples, aboriginal peoples, first nations, adivasi, janajati, hunter-gatherers, or hill tribes. Given the diversity of people it aims at protecting, the Convention uses the inclusive terminology of “indigenous and tribal people” and ascribes the same set of rights to both groups. In Latin America, for example, the term “tribal” has been applied to certain afro-descendent communities (International Labour Organization). “Indigenous and tribal people” is a common denominator for more than 370 million people, found in more than 70 countries worldwide. Indigenous and tribal peoples have their own cultures, languages, customs and institutions, which distinguish them from other parts of the societies in which they find themselves (International Labour Organization).

Caste, refers to the ascribed status of a person, rigid social groups characterized by a transmission of lifestyle, occupation, and social status from one generation to another. Caste plays a major role in the social standing of a person and helps him to achieve or may even lose the opportunities. Today, even in modern society, the hold of caste has weakened but it has not disappeared completely. Caste continues to play an important role in society and the social standing of an individual .

Identity Politics has become an important topic in Indian politics in recent years. The rise of lower classes, religious identities, language groups and ethnic conflicts have all contributed to the importance of identity politics in India. Identity discourse is, in the opinion of many scholars, clearly a modern phenomenon. Craig Calhoun aptly describes the situation as he argues that it is in modern times that we encounter increased efforts to strengthen individual and category identities and strengthen self-identity. This is primarily a modern phenomenon because some researchers believe that the emphasis on identity is based on the central organizing principle of ethnicity, religion, language, gender, sexual preference or class position, etc. in the otherwise modern tasteless world. It is thus said to be a "pattern

of belonging, a search for comfort, an approach to community." However, the complex social changes and the imbrications of various forces, factors and events in this modern world have rendered such production and recognition of identities problematic. This is to say that any search for an 'authentic self or identity' is not an innocent possibility; it involves negotiating other, often overlapping and contested, heterodox or multiple 'selves'. Cascardi succinctly elucidates this by observing, "the modern subject is defined by its insertion into a series of separate value-spheres, each one of which tends to exclude or attempts to assert its priority over the rest", thereby rendering identity- schemes problematic. Nonetheless, the concerns with individual and collective identity that simultaneously seeks to emphasise differences and attempt to establish commonality with others similarly distinguished, have become a universal venture.

Check Your Progress

1. Can you define Caste, Tribe and Identity Politics ?

11.2 What is Identity Politics ?

But the question is how do discourses on identity fit into the political landscape? What are the political underpinnings of these discourses on identity? What are the organising principles of movements that characterise themselves as those based on identity concerns? Can we define movements of workers as an instance of identity politics ?

Identity Politics is said to "signify a wide range of political activity and theorising founded in the shared experiences of injustice of members of certain social groups". As a political activity it is thus considered to signify a body of political projects that attempts a "recovery from exclusion and denigration" of groups hitherto marginalised on the basis of differences based on their 'selfhood' determining characteristics like ethnicity, gender, sexual preferences, caste positions, etc. Identity politics thus attempts to attain empowerment, representation and recognition of social groups by asserting the very same markers that distinguished and differentiated them from the others and utilise those markers as an assertion of selfhood and identity based on difference rather than equality.

Contrastingly placed, it is to imply that adherents of identity politics essentialise certain markers that fix the identities of social groups around an ensemble of definitional absolutes. These markers may be those of language, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual preferences, caste positions, religion, tribe, race, etc. institutionalised in jargons, metaphors, stereotypes, and academic literature and reinforced through practices of positive discrimination or affirmative action. The proponents of identity politics thus, assign the primacy of some "essence" or a set of core features shared only by members of the collectivity and no others and accept individual persons as singular, integral, altogether harmonious and unproblematic identities. These core markers are different from associational markers like those of the workers who are defined more by their common interests rather than by certain core essential naturally 'given' identity attributes of the groups engaged in identity politics. Though many would argue that "worker" was an identity deserving legitimacy and as a group, its movements can be referred to as identity Politics, but probably the term "identity politics" as a body of political projects implied to in contemporary discourses refers to certain essential, local and particular categorical identities rather than any universalising ideals or agenda. The adherents of identity politics utilise the power of myths, cultural symbols and kinship relations to mould the feeling of shared community and subsequently politicise these aspects to claim recognition of their particular identities.

The strongest criticism against Identity Politics is that it is often challenged by the very same markers upon which the sense of self or community is sought to be built. It is despite the fact that identity politics is engaged in numerous aspects of oppression and powerlessness, reclaiming and transforming negative scripts used by dominant group;; into powerful instruments for building positive images of self and community. In other- words the markers that supposedly defines the community are fixed to the extent that they harden and release a process of in-group essentialism that often denies internal dialogicality within and without the group and itself becomes a new form of closure and oppression.

Identity Politics as a field of study can be said to have gained intellectual legitimacy since the second half of the twentieth century, i.e., between 1950s and 1960s in the United States when large scale political movements of the second wave-feminists, Black. Civil Rights, Gay and Lesbian Liberation movements and movements of various Indigenous groups in the U.S. and other parts of the world were being justified and legitimated on the basis of claims about injustices done to their respective social groups. However, as scholars like Heyes point out that although "'Identity Politics' can draw on intellectual precursors from Mary Wollstonecraft to Frantz Fanon, writing that actually uses this specific phrase-Identity Politics-is limited almost exclusively to the last 15 years.

11.3 Identity Politics In India

In India we find that despite adoption of a liberal democratic polity after independence, communities and collective identities have remained powerful and continue to claim recognition. In fact, Beteille has shown that the Indian polity has consistently tried to negotiate the allegiance to a liberal [individual] spirit and the concerns and consciousness of community. According to Bikhu Parekh, this process has recognised a wide array of autonomous and largely self-governing communities. It has sought to reconcile itself as an association of individuals and a community of communities, recognising both individuals and communities and giving them fair and equal treatment.

It was probably this claim for and granting of recognition of particular identities by the post-independence state of India that led many scholars to believe that a material basis for the enunciation of identity claims has been provided by the post-independent state and its structures and institutions. In other words the state is seen as an active contributor to identity politics through the creation and maintenance of state structures which define and then recognise people in terms of certain identities. Thus, we find identity politics of various hues abound in India, the most spectacular however, are those based on language, religion, caste, ethnicity or tribal identity. But having said this it would be wrong on our part to assume that each of these identity markers operate autonomously, independent of the overlapping influence of the other makers. In other words a homogenous linguistic group may be divided by caste affiliations that may be subdivided by religious orientations or all may be subsumed under a broader ethnic claim.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain what is Identity Politics ?

11.3.1 Caste

Caste-based discrimination and oppression have been a pernicious feature of Indian society and in the post-independence period its imbrications with politics have not only made it possible for hitherto oppressed caste-groups to be accorded political

freedom and recognition but has also raised consciousness about its potential as a political capital. In fact Dipankar Gupta has exposed this contradiction when he elaborates the differences between Dr. Ambedkar and Mandal Commission's view of caste. While the former designed the policy of reservations or protective discrimination to remove untouchability as an institution from Indian social life and polity, the latter considered caste as an important political resource. Actually, the Mandal commission can be considered the intellectual inspiration in transforming caste-based identity to an asset. Though it can also be said that, the upper castes by virtue of their predominant position were already occupying positions of strengths in the political and economic system, and when the Mandal heightened the consciousness of the 'Dalits' by recognising their disadvantage of caste-identity as an advantage the confrontation ensues. The caste system, which is based on the notions of purity and pollution, hierarchy and difference, has despite social mobility, been' oppressive towards the Shudras and the outcastes who suffered the stigma of ritual impurity and lived in abject poverty, illiteracy and denial of political power. The origin of confrontational identity politics based on caste may be said to have its origin on the issue of providing the oppressed caste groups with state support in the form of protective discrimination. This group-identity based on caste that has been reinforced by the emergence of political consciousness around caste identities is institutionalized by the caste-based political parties that profess to uphold and protect the interests of specific identities including the castes. The Cumulative result of the politicisation can be summarised by arguing that caste-based identity politics has had a dual role in Indian society and polity. It relatively democratised the caste-based Indian society but simultaneously undermined the evolution of class-based organisations.

In all, caste has become an important determinant in Indian society and politics, the new lesson of organised politics and consciousness of caste affiliations learnt by the hitherto despised caste groups have transformed the contours of Indian politics where shrinking caste-class alliances are being encountered. The net effect of these mobilisations along caste-identities have resulted not only in the empowerment of newly emerging groups but has increased the intensity of confrontational politics and possibly leading to a growing crisis of governability.

11.3.2 Religion

Another form of identity politics is that effected through the construction of a community on the shared bond of religion. In India, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, and Zorashtrianism are some of the major religions practised by the people. Numerically the Hindus are considered to be the majority, which inspires many Hindu loyalist groups like the RSS (Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh) or the

Shiv Sena and political parties like the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) or the Hindu Mahasabha to claim that India is a Hindu State. These claims generate homogenising myths about India and its history. These claims are countered by other religious groups who foresee the possibility of losing autonomy of practise of their religious and cultural life under such homogenising claims. This initiates contests that have often resulted in communal riots. The generally accepted myths that process the identity divide on religious lines centre on the 'appeasement theory', 'forcible religious conversions', general 'anti-Hindu' and thus 'anti-India' attitude of the minority religious groups, the 'hegemonic aspirations' of majority groups and 'denial of a socio-cultural space' to minority groups. Historically, the Hindu revivalist movement of the 19 century is considered to be the period that saw the demarcation of two separate cultures on religious basis-the Hindus and the Muslims that deepened further because of the partition. This division which has become institutionalised in the form of a communal ideology has become a major part of the last century signified Hindu-Muslim conflict, in recent years contestations between Hindus and Sikhs, Hindus and Christians have often crystallised into communal conflict. The rise of Hindu national assertiveness, politics of representational government, persistence of communal perceptions, and competition for the socio-economic resources are considered some of the reasons for the generation of communal ideologies and their transformation into major riots. Identity schemes based on religion have become a major source of conflict not only in the international context but since the early 1990s it has also become a challenge for Indian democracy and secularism.

In Independent India, the majoritarian assertion has generated its own antithesis in the form of minority religions assertiveness and a resulting confrontational politics that undermines the syncretistic dimensions of the civil society in India. The process through which this religious assertiveness is being increasingly institutionalised by a methodical rewriting of history has the potential to reformulate India's national identity along communal trajectories.

11.3.3 Language

Identity claims based on the perception of a collectivity bound together by language can be said to have its origin in the pre-independence politics of the Congress that had promised reorganisation of states in the post-independent period on linguistic basis. But it was the "JVP" (Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya) Committee's concession that if public sentiment was "insistent and overwhelming", the formation of Andhra from the Telugu-speaking region of the then Madras could be conceded which as Michael Brecher mentions was the opening wedge for the bitter struggle over states reorganisation which was to

dominate Indian Politics from 1953 to 1956. Ironically, the claim of separate states for linguistic collectivities did not end in 1956 and even today continues to confront the concerns of the Indian leadership. But the problem has been that none of the created or claimed states are mono-ethnic in composition and some even have numerically and politically powerful minorities. This has resulted in a cascading set of claims that continue to threaten the territorial limits of existing states and disputes over boundaries between linguistic states have continued to stir conflicts, as for instance the tensions between Maharashtra and Karnataka over the district of Belgaum or even the claims of the Nagas to parts of Manipur.

The linguistic divisions have been complicated by the lack of a uniform language policy for the entire country. Since in each state the dominant regional language is often used as a medium of instruction and social communication, the consequent affinity and allegiance that develops towards one's own language gets expressed even outside one's state of origin. Thus language becomes an important premise on which group identities are organised .

Though it is generally felt that linguistic states provide freedom and autonomy for collectivities within a heterogeneous society, critics argue that linguistic states 'have reinforced regionalism and has provided a platform for the articulation of a phenomenal number of identity claims in a country that has 1,652 'mother tongues' and only fourteen recognised languages around which states have been reorganised. They argue that the effective result of recognition for linguistic groups has disembodied the feelings of national unity and national spirit in a climate where 'Maharashtra for Marathis, Gujrat for Gujaratis, etc" has reinforced linguistic mistrust and defined the economic and political goods in linguistic terms.

11.3.4 Ethnicity

There are two ways in which the concept of ethnic identity is used; one, it ensures the formation of identity on the basis of a single attribute - language, religion, caste, region, etc; two, it considers the formation of identity on the basis of multiple attributes cumulatively. However, it is the second way of formation of identity on the basis of more than one characteristic - culture, customs, region, religion or caste, which is considered as the most common way of formation of the ethnic identity. The one ethnic identity is formed in relation to the other ethnic identity. The relations between more than one ethnic identities can be both harmonious and conflictual. Whenever there is competition among the ethnic identities on the real or imaginary basis, it is expressed in the form of autonomy movements, demand for session or ethnic riot .

Identity politics or what we might address as the demand for recognition is at its core, essentially the politics of equal dignity and the politics of difference (or authenticity). It has emerged both in the developing and developed world, and has its roots in gender politics, sexual politics, ethnic politics, and religious interpretations, or some combination thereof.

11.4 Sexuality

The social study of sexuality includes the study of sexual behaviors and practices, sexual feelings, sexual orientation, and how specific sexual identities and behaviors are reinforced or discouraged by social institutions and cultures. Sexuality describes sexual identity, attraction, and experiences which may or may not be consistent with sex and gender. This includes heterosexuality, homosexuality (gay or lesbian), bisexuality, queer and so on. Heterosexuality is usually considered as a norm. Anything in contrast to heterosexuality is considered to be deviant. Individuals who identify with role in contrast to their biological sex are referred to as transgender. For example, transgender men have such strong emotional and psychological connections to aspects of women in society that they identify as female. A parallel association with masculinity exists for transgender women. It is very difficult to determine the prevalence of gender transition in society.

Transsexuals are those who alter their bodies with medical interventions to align their physical bodies with their gender identity. They may also be known as male-to-female (MTF) or female-to-male (FTM) transsexuals. However, not all transgendered individuals choose to alter their bodies: many will maintain their original anatomy but may present themselves to society as the opposite gender. This is typically done by adopting the dress, hairstyle, mannerisms, or other characteristics typically assigned to the opposite gender. It is important to note that Cross-dressing is typically a form of self-expression, entertainment, or personal style, not necessarily an expression against one's assigned gender (APA 2008). Transgendered and transsexual individuals experience discrimination based on their gender identity. People who identify as transgendered are twice as likely to experience assault or discrimination as non-transgendered individuals; they are also one and a half times more likely to experience intimidation (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs 2010).

All members of LGBT subgroups are subject to similar prejudices rooted in beliefs and traditions about sexuality and gender. LGBT people, as members of a social minority group, are suffering from various forms of socioeconomic and cultural injustice. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are more likely to

experience intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and the threat of violence due to their sexual orientation, than those that identify themselves as heterosexual. This is due to homophobia (the fear or hatred of homosexuality). Homophobia is reinforced homophobia on a larger scale due to the moral, religious, and political beliefs of a dominant group. In some countries, homosexuality is illegal and punishable by fines, imprisonment, life imprisonment and even the death penalty. Heterosexuality should no longer be assumed; this assumption is called heterosexism. Although many societies have made significant strides in human rights advocacy, LGBT rights struggle to find universal acceptance.

The fact that the Universal Declaration for Human Rights, drafted in 1948, does not specifically include sexual orientation allows some people to consider LGBT rights debatable. The Human Rights declaration states that Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration without distinction of any kind. Now more and more people are openly expressing their sexual orientation, and organizing and demanding their rights. Because of the work of these groups and their allies, acceptance of LGBT rights around the world is growing, and governments in certain countries are beginning to legislate in favor of LGBT rights and anti-discrimination laws. The major issues for LGBT rights on a global scale in future will be eradicating persecution based on sexual orientation, protection in the law from hate crimes and hate propaganda, equal rights and privileges (marriage, common law partnerships, medical-decision making, wills and estates, parenting and adoption) and to work and educate others on homophobia and heterosexism by making the society more open to the changes and sensitizing them towards the issue .

11.4. 1 Concept of LGBT:

LGBT stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. LGBT is intended to emphasize a diversity of sexuality and gender identity-based cultures and is sometimes used to refer to anyone who is non-heterosexual or non cisgender instead of exclusively to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. To recognize this inclusion, a popular variant adds the letter Q for those who identify as queer and/or are questioning their sexual identity as LGBTQ, recorded since 1996. Whether or not LGBT people openly identify themselves may depend on whether they live in a discriminatory environment, as well as the status of LGBT rights where one lives. The first widely used term, homosexual, was thought to carry negative connotations and tended to be replaced by homophile in the 1950s and 1960s, and subsequently gay in the 1970s.

11.4.2 Problems Faced by LGBT People:

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) people face tremendous difficulties growing up in a society where heterosexuality is the norm and homosexuality is regarded as deviant. They continue to face discrimination and exclusion across the world in the social, political, economic and almost all spheres of life. Homophobic violence and abuse targeting LGBT people occur on a regular basis. In most countries same-sex couples do not enjoy the same rights and protections as opposite sex couples, and consequently suffer from discrimination and disadvantage in access to social protection schemes, such as health care and pensions.

In the labour market, a majority of LGBT people continue to hide their sexual orientation or to endure harassment out of fear of losing their job. Particularly vulnerable are young LGBT people who experience estrangement from family and friendship networks, harassment at school and invisibility, which can lead in some cases to underachievement at school, school drop-out, mental ill-health and homelessness.

This International Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies (IJIMS), discrimination not only denies LGBT people equal access to key social goods, such as employment, health care, education and housing, but it also marginalizes them in society and makes them one of the vulnerable groups who are at risk of becoming socially excluded.

11.5 Marginalization and Social Exclusion:

Marginalization is at the core of exclusion from fulfilling and full social lives at all levels. People who are marginalized have relatively little control over their lives and the resources available to them; they may become stigmatized and are often at the receiving end of negative public attitudes. With time they develop low self-esteem and may become isolated. Social policies and practices may mean they have relatively limited access to valued social resources such as education and health services, housing, income, leisure activities and work. The impacts of marginalization, in terms of social exclusion, are similar, whatever the origins and processes of marginalization, irrespective of whether these are to be located in social attitudes (such as towards impairment, sexuality, ethnicity and so on) or social circumstance (such as closure of workplaces, absence of affordable housing and so on). LGBT individuals may experience racism, sexism, poverty or other factors – alongside homophobia or transphobia that negatively impact on mental health. This marginalization often excludes LGBT people from many support structures, often including their own families, leaving them with little access to services many others take for granted, such as medical care, justice and legal

services, and education. Marginalization and bias around sexual orientation and gender identity and expression regularly prevent LGBT people from accessing fundamental public services such as health care and housing and contribute to significant health disparities. Marginalization of LGBT people often starts with the family into which they were born.

11.5.1 Exclusion and Discrimination:

The exclusion and discrimination have major impacts on the lives of lesbian, gay and transgender persons. This has resulted in the following:

- Dropping out of school earlier
- Leaving Home and Family
- Unable to find regular jobs, have less options than others.
- Being ignored in the community and isolated
- Non accessibility to various services
- Mobility, Move to other areas, (such as the city and urban areas) (International Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies (IJIMS), 2014, Vol 1, No.5, 317-331. 320)
- Lack of family and social support
- Rejection from Religion (Esp. Muslim and some Christian Fundamentalist sects)
- Attempt suicide
- Forceful marriage with opposite sex and then divorce.

11.5.2 Impact of Family Reactions on LGBT Children:

In the past, very few adolescents —came out to their families or told others they were gay. Most lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals (LGB) waited until they were adults to talk about their LGB identity with others. Fear of rejection and serious negative reactions kept many LGB adults from openly sharing their lives. More recently, the Internet, school diversity clubs, and LGBT youth groups have helped gay and transgender youth find accurate information, guidance, and support. With greater access to resources, more LGBT youth are coming out (sharing their gay or transgender identity with friends, family, and other adults) during adolescence. Families and caregivers have a major impact on their LGBT children's risk and well-being . Lack of communication and misunderstanding between parents and their LGBT children gives rise to family conflict. These problems with communication and lack of understanding about sexual orientation and gender identity can lead to fighting and family disruption that can result in an LGBT adolescent being removed from or forced out of the home. Many LGBT youth are placed in foster care, or end up in juvenile detention or on the streets, because of family conflict related to their LGBT identity . These factors increase their risk for

abuse and for serious health and mental health problems. LGBT youth and those who question their identity feel like they have to hide who they are to avoid being rejected. Many hide so that they won't hurt their parents and other family members who believe that being gay is wrong or sinful. It increases risky behaviors, such as risk for HIV or substance abuse. It also affects their ability to plan for the future, including their ability to have career or vocational plans.

11.5.3 Problems of Homelessness:

Homelessness include a lack of housing and services that meet their specific needs. Family housing in the shelter system across the country is not available for homeless same-sex couples. Transgender people are not allowed to choose with which gender they are more comfortable living in the shelter system. Abuse and harassment of LGBT homeless people is inevitable . Most domestic violence shelters do not accept gay men or transgender people.

Homeless LGBT youth are without economic support, often engage in drug use and risky sexual behaviors, and often develop mental health disorders. Homeless LGBT youth miss out on education and social support during critical formative years—more than half of homeless LGBT youth report experiencing discrimination from peers.

11.5.4 Homophobia:

Homophobia is generally defined as hostility towards or fear of gay people, but can also refer to stigma arising from social ideologies about homosexuality. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are more likely to experience intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and the threat of violence due to their sexual orientation, than those that identify themselves as heterosexual. This is due to homophobia. Some of the factors that may reinforce homophobia on a larger scale are moral, religious, and political beliefs of a dominant group. Living in a homophobic environment forces many LGBT people to conceal their sexuality, for fear of the negative reactions and consequences of coming out . Negative feelings or attitudes towards non-heterosexual behaviour, identity, relationships and community, can lead to homophobic behavior and this is the root of the discrimination experienced by many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. Homophobia manifests itself in different forms, for example homophobic jokes, physical attacks, discrimination in the workplace and negative media representation. For people who have been brought up to believe that homosexuality is wrong, the realisation that they might be gay can cause feelings of shame and self loathing, leading to low self-esteem. LGBT people who make the decision to declare their sexual orientation can face prejudice and discrimination from their family, friends, and also from wider society.(International

Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies (IJIMS), 2014, Vol 1, No.5, 317-331. 322). Homophobia can cause extreme harm and disruption to people's lives.

11.5.5 Harassment of LGBT Students in Schools:

LGBT students face harassment in schools. Being a teenager is tough enough without fearing harassment in a place where you're supposed to feel safe. All over the country lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students get harassed every day in school. Students who may be even just perceived as being LGBT also get harassed. Too many LGBT students find it hard to speak up about harassment because it is so embedded in our culture. LGBT harassment is one of the last forms of harassment that is still allowed in popular culture.

11.5.6 Psychological Distress:

LGBT people face considerable levels of stigmatization, discrimination and harassment in their daily lives. However, a significant number of LGBT people, most particularly younger LGBT people, have to cope with stigmatization, discrimination and harassment without any support. It has a negative impact on their mental health, leading to significant levels of psychological distress, self-harm and suicidality. LGBT teenagers can be particularly isolated, given that many will be exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity without any support. At this time of negotiating their journey to adulthood, a critical period of social and emotional development, they can be particularly vulnerable. It is often more difficult for LGBT people to be out in rural areas. Comparatively Cities are more conducive to allowing LGBT people to select which areas of their life they wish to be out in (Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies (IJIMS), 2014, Vol 1, No.5, 317-331). 323 men and women are more likely to experience depression and anxiety than are their heterosexual counterparts. These emotions might include intense sadness, anxiety, loneliness, discomfort in social situations, and feeling overwhelmed. It's not because of their gender identity alone! It's because in a patriarchal society, being gender variant causes a lot of distress. So much distress, in fact, that it can be described by the diagnosis of a mental disorder. A number of factors may contribute to this, from living in an often homophobic society to facing family rejection to being closeted in some or all aspects of life. Mental disorders are not symptoms of sexual orientation, but rather they are symptoms of discrimination and fear of discrimination. Most likely due to violence, social rejection, and isolation, the LGBT community experiences higher rates of anxiety, mood and substance use disorders, and suicidal thoughts among people ages 15-5410 . Possibly due to rejection from both gay and straight communities, bisexual women have been found to have significantly poorer mental health than either

lesbians or heterosexual women. Mayock et al. (2009)¹¹ in a large scale Irish study report that young LGBT people as a whole are more vulnerable to psychological distress. They report that over 60% of respondents directly attribute stress and depression directly to their non-heterosexual identity. There is a large body of evidence which supports the claim that poor emotional health can be as a result of homophobic attitudes and heterosexism in society leading to lowered self-esteem and confidence and increased stress particularly for young gay women.

11.5.7 Poor Economic Condition and Discrimination in the Workplace:

In addition to homophobia, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people confront racism and poverty on a daily basis. Discrimination of LGBT persons in the workplace is a significant factor in the differences in socioeconomic status for LGBT persons. Gay and transgender individuals suffer from socioeconomic inequalities in large part due to pervasive discrimination in the workplace. Organizations and individual therapists are not always LGBT friendly, and some therapists may not even recognize their own heterosexism.

11.5.8 Challenges facing LGBT elders:

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) face a number of particular concerns as they age. They often do not access adequate health care, affordable housing or other social services that they need due to institutionalized heterosexism. Most LGBT elders do not avail themselves of services on which other seniors thrive. Many retreat back into the closet, reinforcing isolation. Many LGBT elders experience social isolation and ageism within the LGBT community itself. These issues, often compounded by racism and other kinds of discrimination, demand the attention of policymakers, service providers and activists working on behalf of, and with, the elderly. As LGBT people grow older, they enter a world of services that may not be familiar with LGBT people. A number of problems faced by LGBT elders also stem from the fact that they often do not have the same family support systems as heterosexual people. Little is known about LGBT elders because of the widespread failure of governmental and academic researchers to include questions about sexual orientation and gender identity in their studies of the aged. Legal and policy frameworks which have traditionally excluded LGBT people engender social and economic consequences which deny LGBT elders access to financial resources and community support networks. The need to make broad assumptions about the size of the LGBT elderly population underscores one of the major problems in (International Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies (IJIMS), 2014, Vol 1, No.5, 317-331. 325) understanding the needs of this population. LGBT elders are not only underserved, they are also understudied.

11.6 Summary

People from minority castes, ethnicity and languages , those with varied sexual identities continue to face discrimination, no matter at what stage of development we are. Identity has become an important phenomenon in modern politics. The identification of a member of the group on the basis of sharing common attributes on the basis of all or some of the attributes, language. gender, language, religion, culture, ethnicity etc. indicates the existence or formation of identity. The mobilisation on the basis of these markers is called identity politics. The democratic political system in India enables various groups to organise and assert on the basis the common attributes which they share. Identity politics has both negative and positive roles in Indian Politics

11.7 Questions

1. Explain the concept of Identity Politics with reference to Caste, Ethnicity and Language
2. What is sexuality ? Explain the problems faced by those who deviate from heterosexuality
3. Discuss the role language in Indian Politics.

11.8 References

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