PREFACE

In a bid to standardize higher education in the country, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has introduced Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) based on five types of courses viz. *core, generic, discipline specific general elective, ability and skill enhancement* for graduate students of all programmes at Honours level. This brings in the semester pattern, which finds efficacy in sync with credit system, credit transfer, comprehensive continuous assessments and a graded pattern of evaluation. The objective is to offer learners ample flexibility of choose from a wide gamut of courses, as also to provide them lateral mobility between various educational institutions in the country where they can carry their acquired credits. I am happy to note that the University has been recently accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India (NAAC) with grade "A".

UGC (Open and Distance Learning Programmes and Online Programmes) Regulations, 2020 have mandated compliance with CBCS for U. G. programmes for all the HEIs in this mode. Welcoming this paradigm shift in higher education, Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) has resolved to adopt CBCS from the academic session 2021-22 at the Under Graduate Degree Programme level. The present syllabus, framed in the spirit of syllabi recommended by UGC, lays due stress on all aspects envisaged in the curricular framework of the apex body on higher education. It will be imparted to learners over the six semesters of the Programme.

Self Learning Materials (SLMs) are the mainstay of Student Support Services (SSS) of an Open University. From a logistic point of view, NSOU has embarked upon CBCS presently with SLMs in English/Bengali. Eventually, the English version SLMs will be translated into Bengali too, for the benefit of learners. As always, all of our teaching faculties contributed in this process. In addition to this we have also requisitioned the services of best academics in each domain in preparation of the new SLMs. I am sure they will be of commendable academic support. We look forward to proactive feedback from all stakeholders who will participate in the teaching-learning based on these study materials. It has been a very challenging task well executed, and I congratulate all concerned in the preparation of these SLMs.

I wish the venture a grand success.

Professor (Dr.) Subha Sankar Sarkar
Vice-Chancellor

Netaji Subhas Open University

Under Graduate Degree Programme
Subject : Honours in Political Science (HPS)
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Module - 1

Module - 2

Module - 3

Module - 4

Module - 1

Unit - 1 ❑ Party System in India : History and evolution

Structure

1.1 Objectives

After going through this unit learners will learn :

- the nature of the party system in India.

- phases in the evolution of the party systemin India.

- future trends of the party system in India.

1.2 Introduction

Political party has emerged as an indispensible factor acting as a link between rulers and ruled in modern representative democracy. The working of a system of

representative government largely depends on the nature of political parties operating in a state. They provide a link between state and society by articulating and aggregating societal interest. In India political parties have played a crucial role in the process of political transformation. The interaction of the modern state and traditional society in India has been facilitated by the political parties.

The increasing political consciousness and spirit of nationalism, development of means of transport and communication and spread of education gave birth to political parties in India in the pre independence period. The educated upper middle class gave birth to Indian National Congress and other political parties like Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, Socialist party, Communist party of India and the Forward Block.

In the post-independence period many political parties have come into existence and the Indian party system has evolved from one party dominance to multy party system. The Indian party system is distinctive, showing major difference with its European and American counterparts. It has many paradoxical features like combining of western and modern form of bureaucratic organization and participatory policies like combining of participatory politics with indigenous practices and institutions. The social heterogeneity of India has added to the complexity of the Indian party system. In last few years major transformation have taken place in India's party system. At the center of change in the party system is the rise of the BJP and decline of the congress.

1.3 Evolution of the Party System in India

The origin of party system in India can be traced to the formation of India National Congress in 1885. As a matter of expediency, the British had started experimenting with limited self-rule in issues of minor importance such as municipal administration by the 1880s. This formed part of the British strategy of ruling India with the help of Indian intermediaries. The Indian National Congress was set up in 1885 by Sir Alan Octavian Hume, a retired British civil servant, in order to present Indian interests to the British crown in a systematic and organized manner. The Congress soon became the leading voice of the growing middle class and the liberal professions, demanding more jobs under the colonial government and greater political participation. The successive acts of the British Parliament in 1909, 1919, 1935 extended the franchise and brought in increasing number of Indian into the scope of party politics.

However, periods of extension of franchise and cooperation between colonial rule and elected representatives were combined with ruthless suppression and imprisonment of political leaders. The Congress party itself was often divided in its opinion between collaboration with colonial rule and radical resistance to it in order to fight for full and immediate independence. Gandhi brought these two strands together in its strategy of non-violent, non-cooperation and built a powerful mass movement. By the 1930s, however the national movement was spilt once again on the issue of religion. The majority of Muslims under the leadership of the Muslim League started agitating for an independent homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. As a result, when independence finally arrived in 1947, British India was partitioned into India and Pakistan. The Congress party under Nehru inherited power in India.

This brief historical background partly explains the relative ease with which India developed electoral democracy and a competitive party system. Although the partition of British India into independent India and Pakistan was marked by unprecedented communal violence, parliamentary democracy subsequently became part of the political culture of post-independence India because of the continuity of the institution of state, political parties and election.

1.4 Phases of Evolution

The party system of contemporary India is the result of the six decades of growth under British rule prior to independence. Its institutional base has been considerably reinforced with the political mobilization of society in the course of the last seven decades.It is a complex system characterized by the presence of the Congress Party, the emergence of Bharatiya Janata Party as the ruling party at the center with absolute majority in the Lok Sabha, in the last two successive general elections, presence of elected communist government at the regional level and the occasional lapse into authoritarian rule. The picture becomes much clear if we divide evolution of India's party system in the post-independence period into following phases.

1. First phase from 1947 to 1967

2. Second phase from 1967 to 1977

3. Third phase from 1977 to 1984

4. Fourth phase from 1984 to 2014

5. Fifth phase from 2014 onwards

1.4.1 First phase (1947-1967)

The first phase was characterized by the dominance of the Congress party at the centre and the state level. This phase may be called "the congress system" in Rajni Kothari's terms. Parties of the left and right routinely took part in elections which were by and large free and fair. However, the fragmented character of the opposition and the combination of the first-past-the-post system of voting in single member constituencies systematically resulted in a Congress party majority in the legislature. The main ideological doctrine of the Congress Party such as secularism, democratic socialism, and non- alignment constituted the main parameters of the policy process during this period. The opposition parties were present as active players in the parliament and in national politics but their role were restricted to influencing policy rather than making policy.

The social background of the Congress leadership and its important role in the winning of the country's independence played a key role in winning it a dominant position in Indian politics. However, the most important factor was the efficient functioning of the party organization that ensured survival of Congress dominance. Because of its control of state power Congress Party effectively distribute resources among citizens in exchange for their political support.

In this phase, India had a party system characterized by dominance along with competition but without any change in the position of the ruling and opposition parties. The opposition parties could not prevent Congress party winning majority of states in the union and state legislatures. According to Rajni Kothari, in this phase there was a competitive party system in which the political parties play dissimilar role. He described Congress party as a party of consensus and opposition parties as parties of pressure. There has been a plurality of parties in this phase but that did not make the Indian Party System multi party phenomenon. It reflects rather an environment of multi-party situation with the Congress, despite the rise and fall in its electoral support, remaining a dominant single party.

1.4.2 Second phase (1967-1977)

The second phase is characterized by a dramatic shift from one party dominance

to multi party system. It extended from 1967 to congress party's defeat at the general elections of 1977. In the 1967 election congress lost power in nine states. The setback suffered by the Congress party indicated the vulnerability of the centrist Congress to broad electoral coalition of the left and right. The election marked the trend of political fragmentation sharply. The Congress vote was dropped by about 5 percent. It had managed to win only 54 percent of the Lok Sabha seats. In the previous parliament it had 74 percent of the seats in the Lok Sabha. In as many as nine states non-congress government came to power. These opposition coalitions became the basis of the beginning of a multi- party system. There was a clear shift from "monopoly to competition in India's politics.

Before 1967 competition and bargaining took place largely within Congress. This was now brought into the realm of interparty conflict.

In the aftermath of the 1967 general election centre-state relations became an important issue in interparty bargaining and conflict. State level Congress leader became powerful after Nehru's death. Morris-jones observed that but for the careful handling of the situation by the union Home Minister Y. B. Charan center-state conflict did not assumeserious character.

An important development in the party system after 1967 was the phenomenon of defection. There were incidents of defection both from the Congress and into the Congress. The trend became more pronounced as the conflict between the syndicate and the Mrs.Indira Gandhi grew to a point of no return and finally leading to a split in 1969. Defection from the Congress led to a fall of Congress governments in three states. However, parties to the far right and left kept their organization intact through centralization, discipline and ideological consistency.

The split of the Congress party in 1969 into the Congress (R) and Congress (O) impacted Indian political system in a big way. The faction led by Indira Gandhi brought about radical changes in the programme of the centrist Congress party. A number of new, left leaning policies like nationalization of banks, abolition of the special privileges of Indian Princes and closer ties with the communists were reinforced with a more forceful populist leadership style. These policies brought the party great electoral success in 1971 election but led to the corrosion of its organizational links with the electorate. Mrs. Gandhi initiated personalized and centralized decision making process both in the party and government and in the process weakened the democratic institutions.

Congress, under India Gandhi's forceful leadership turned its new policy of radical populist leadership into its main asset. Its initial success in the 1971 election was further reinforced in the assembly elections of 1972 when India Gandhi transformed India's successful intervention in the liberation war in East Pakistan into the electoral platform of the Congress party. But the radical rhetoric rebounded on the party when industrial workers, railways employees and students started political agitation. The culmination of this period of unrest was the imposition of national emergency in 1975.

During emergency free assembly, freedom of information and movement was drastically curtailed. General elections were postponed and the term of the Lok Sabha was extended. In fact emergency was a response to the challenges to Mrs. Gandhi rule. Elections were announced in 1977.

1.4.3 Third phase (1977-1984)

1977 election ushered in a new phase in the evolution of the party system in India. The period from 1977 to 1984 was characterized by intense conflict and rough felling among political parties. The period also witnessed decay and fragmentation within political parties. From the late 1960s Indian electorate at all levels displayed increasing political consciousness. There were rising aspirations coupled with the expectation that politicians should be responsive to the demand of the people. But the political institutions did not have adequate capacity to cope with societal pressure. This was largely due to Mrs. India Gandhi's authoritarian mode of functioning and consequent deinstitutionalization. This situation according to James Manor, brought about five changes in the Indian Party system.

First since the state assembly election of 1972 incumbent government's inability to respond to societal demands became more and more pronounced. Second change was the decline in confidence in the efficiency of the state as an agent of constructive social action.

Third, with the growing inability of the political institutions to respond positively to the societal demands, divergence between society and state became apparent. Politicians increasingly resorted to vote bank politics rousing primordial sentiments.

Fourth, difference between many political parties in terms of their social bases both at the national and state level was becoming unclear. In this situation it was necessary on the part of the political parties to develop close links with social bases of manageable size.

The last change was the growth of regionalism and emergence of regional parties in different parts of India. This is attributed to excessive centralization of power during Mrs. Gandhi's prime-ministership.

Third phase in the evolution of party system in India began in the backdrop of the above changes. This phase was characterized by more or less free competition among political parties, fragmentation within political parties, personalized control of parties, growing incidence of defection and realignment political parties.

The general election of 1977 ushered in a new period in Indian politics. The defeat of the congress led by India Gandhi and the formation of the first non-Congress Janata government led many scholars to believe that parliamentary democracy in India had matured and a two party system or close to it was on the process. However, the Janata party which held power between March 1977 to July 1979 was in fact a coalition of opposition parties united by their opposition to the Congress led by Mrs. Gandhi. It was a coalition of opposition groups including Jana sangh, Bharatiya Lok Dal, The Socialist Party, the old Congress and the Congress for democracy led by Jagjivan Ram. These five constituents of the Janata Party were a diverse lot having different ideological position, social base and leadership. They were often in conflict with each other. As a result the Janata Party government disintegrated in mid 1979 and many constituents broke away from the party. The Congress split for the second time in 1978 and Congress (I) led by Mrs. Gandhi appeared.

The period witnessed fragmentation of existing parties and formation of new parties reflecting the personal ambition of the political leaders. Congress (I) took advantage of the strong popular reaction against friction and disunity in the opposition camp and it rode back to power in 1980. In fact the 1980 Lok Sabha election was a critical verdict on Janata Party's failure to salvage its mandate.

Anti-Congress parties were in disarray and failed to make any common cause. This trend persisted till 1984. Mrs. India Gandhi's assassination on 31 October 1984 created a huge sympathy wave and Congress (I) achieved massive electoral victory. The situation made opposition unity more difficult to achieve.

This phase is also characterized by acute instability in the party system. With the sudden demise of Mrs. India Gandhi political situation had changed fundamentally. The legislative majority won by the Congress (I) were not used to implement the

radical policy promised by Mrs. Gandhi. This made the government weak and in the long run party's huge support drained away. Congress (I) organization declined rapidly under both Mrs. Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi.

This period also witnessed expansion of support for the Communist parties, Bharatiya Lok Dal and Bharatiya Janata Party. The Congress (I) that emerged as a strong party at the centre could not command same position in states also. The fact remains that from the late 1980s, the party has found itself hard-pressed to command support for its broad centrist and secular appeal in the face of a serious challenge from political formation such as the BJP, Samajwadi Party, BSP and regional parties like TDP, DMK, and AIADMK. Congress (I) leaders adopted the policy of all out confrontation in which the opposition parties were attacked as anti-national forces. After the defeat of the party in the southern states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in January 1983 Congress (I) leaders adopted the strategy of courting the Hindu majority in North India by generating communal sentiments. In fact, Congress (I).

Leaders after 1985 gave up their former policy of arranging accommodation between social groups, sub cultures and regions and actually set them against one another.

James Manor argued that in late 1984. India still had a multiparty system that permitted free competition, in which the Congress occupied a dominant position at the center and in many state assemblies. It was no longer a dominant party system without a trace of attention. Most elections at state and national level since 1972 have led to alterations. With the growing maturity and assertiveness of the Indian electorate reelection was increasingly difficult to achieve.

1.4.4 Fourth phase (1984-2014)

Rajiv era did not alter the trend of political centralization within the Congress. Growing political dissention in the country and controversies of Bofors kick back formed the background of 1989 general election. The Congress (I) was defeated securing only 197 seats in the Lok Sabha. The 1989 election results were not just another repeat of the broad front anti-Congressism of the Janata Party kind, but signified a more far reaching shift in the party system. Congress (I) secured 39.5 percent vote and got 197 seats against the National Front Coalition supported by the BJP and left parties. The change in the party system is rooted in the shifts in party organizational strengths and support bases at the state level and in India's political

economy and changing patterns of political mobilization. The major trends of 1989-2004 are the relative decline of the Congress and the rise of the BJP and regional parties.

Prior to 1989, the BJP and its predecessor the Bharatiya Janata Party had never exceeded 10 percent of the vote or 35 seats nationally. Except in 1977 when it won 99 of the 295 seats won by the Janata Party. Since then its rise has been steady in terms of both vote and seat shares.

In 1989-91, the BJP contested alone with a communally polarizing platform against the backdrop of the Babri Masjid agitation of the late 1980s, the upper caste backlash against the National Front Governments decision to implement the Mandal Commission recommendations for reservation of government jobs for backward classes and the Rath Yatra launched by L. K. Advani and the communal violence that followed. Its vote share rose to 20.1 percent and its own 120 seats. It won UP and Gujrat elections and did well in MP, HP and Rajasthan, winning over 40 percent votes in each.

The BJP emerged as the single largest party for the first time in 1996; its vote share rose to 20.3 per cent. In 1998, the BJP led alliance secured 253 of the 543 seats and in 1999, the National Democratic Alliance, a coalition of 24 parties led by BJP, won 304 seats. The BJP came to power denouncing Nehruvian secularism, advocating militant Hindu nationalism. After September 2001, the fight against terrorism became the centerpiece of BJP's domestic and foreign policy.

The NDA lost control of the government in the election of April-May 2004, and was defeated by the united progressive Alliance (UPA) led by Congress. The Congress emerged as the single largest party with 145 seats and the UPA secured 222 seats. The major change was that the Congress party decided to adopt coalition strategy. The NDA consisted of 13 parties and the Congress led UPA consisted 19 parties. Again in 2009 UPA coalition defeated the depleted NDA by a much greater margin with the Congress winning 206 seats on its own and 263 with its allies.

This phase witnessed a process of bipolar coalition in many states Congress-BJP, Congress-Left, and Congress-regional parties. This process contributed to the fragmentation of the party system at the national level and a potential bipolar consolidation of a Congress led alliance versus a BJP led one. This phase is further characterized by the democratic upsurge among the underprivileged. The creation of

new parties and groups and their pursuit of sectional strategies have led to the fragmentation of the parties over the years. Frequent party splits, merger and counter splits led to a significant increase in the number of parties.

In the seven general election held in 1989, 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2004, and 2009 no party achieved majority. All these elections showed decline in the position of national parties and growth of regional parties. This phase in party politics is characterized by the emergence of two broad coalitions NDA AND UPA, in which two national parties, BJP and Congress, act as central pillars. Balveer Arrora describes this competitive multiparty system as "bi-nodal". According to him there is a trend towards federalization of the party system in this process.

1.4.5 Fifth phase-2014 onwards

2014 general election held in an atmosphere surcharged with serious allegation of scam involving the constituents of the UPA Government, its helplessness and powerlessness and inefficiencies. Very often smaller parties in UPA held the Congress leadership hostage, as they pressed their own agenda and their own interests over government policy. Threats of withdrawal of support hung like the sword of Damocles over the leadership. The constant threat of destabilization led to policy paralysis and sudden change of decision. Dual centers of power within the Congress party impacted the poll scenario in BJP'S favour. Ministers preferred to report to party president Mrs. Sonia Gandhi than to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh which led to the loss of moral authority of the latter. There was wide spread anger against a non-performing and corrupt system. This became evident when Anna Hazare went on fast in Delhi in 2010. People in large number thronged the space where he was fasting and expressed their anger at large scale corruption, unemployment, inflation and rising prices. Mr Narendra Modi exploited this situation and emerged as a national leader on a platform of stability and a thorough shake up of the system. This agenda appealed to the people across casts and classes for its promise to end dithering, compromises and policy paralysis.

Results of the 2014 general election were quite startling. The BJP secured 282 seats on its own. Victory of the BJP and defeat of the non-BJP parties was so complete that a viable opposition which is integral and critical component of parliamentary democracy has been completely wiped out. In order to qualify for the stature of an officially recognized opposition in the 543 member house a party has to secure 10 percent of the total seats. The Congress, with 44 seats simply does not qualify, nor does any other party.

For the first time in India's electoral history a non-Congress party has come into power on its own. Significantly a political party won a majority for the first time in thirty years since 1984. Election results show that the image of a charismatic leader looms larger than his or her party. Narendra Modi has caught the imagination of Indians across class and caste.

The most remarkable aspect of the 2014 election was the bringing back of the one party dominant system which was once used to describe the hegemony of the Congress Party and the lack of opposition. The new one party dominant system, according to Neera Chandhoke, is dramatically different from the original one. The BJP unlike the Congress is a cadre based party and subscribes to a distinct ideology. It is also headed by the powerful figure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi whose image looms larger than the party and his colleagues. In the states the BJP was in power in Madhya Pradesh, Chattishgarh and Rajasthan. It secured majority in alliance with Shivsena in Maharashtra, similarly it made spectacular success in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Tripura and Assam assembly elections. It made significant inroads in the North Eastern states as well. In Jammu and Kashmir, it came to power in alliance with PDP. However, four of India's five Sothern states- Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have eluded the BJP.

But in the assembly elections held in Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh and Rajasthan immediately before 2019 election BJP was defeated and Congress came to power. 2019 general election was held in an atmosphere plagued by the problems of economic slowdown, Joblessness has risen to a record high, farm incomes have gone down and industrial production was slumped, many Indian were hit hard by demonetization and there were complaints about a poorly designed and complicated GST.

However, NDA surprised the entire nations by winning 352 seats out of the 543 seats, where BJP alone bagged 303 seats Congress secured 40 seats only. In a way 2019 election results was a continuation of the 2014 Lok Sabha election result at the national level. Narendra Modi made this election all about himself. A combination of nationalistic rhetoric, subtle religious polarization and a slew of welfare programme helped Narendra Modi to register second successive win. He also exploited national security as a vote getter. While 2019 Lok Sabha election results indicated one party dominance at the national level, Assembly elections held in late 2019 and early 2020 in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Delhi BJP lost power, indicating a counter trend towards federalization of the party system at the state level.

1.5 Conclusion

Indian party system is evolving over successive elections and in the process various trends and counter-trends became apparent. The party system in India is a complex one and one reason for the complexity is the social heterogeneity that has made it impossible for a single set of parties to emerge across the country.

The Indian party system has evolved from one party dominance to multi party system. From 1947 to 1967 Congress was voted time and again with an overwhelming parliamentary majority. Dominance by a single party coexisted with inter-party competition. The opposition parties had little prospect of replacing Congress. The success of the Congress was attributed to the elaborate party structure and extensive patronage networks.

However, the above structure began to crumble as the Congress electoral fortunes deteriorated after 1967. Political change from 1967 to 1977 increased party competition. Opposition parties formed coalition government in several states. The Congress split in 1969 brought about significant changes in the party system. In the 1971 elections India Gandhi faced a united opposition but it won with a majority of 346 seats. However, the country faced serious problems like inflation, acute food shortage, and massive unemployment which led to series of opposition led agitation. After considerable unrest India Gandhi imposed a national emergency.

The emergency threatened liberal institution and created the perception that a crisis of regime had occurred. The 1977 elections ushered in a new era in the party system, creating new opportunities for the opposition parties. This period witnessed an intensification of conflict and competition between political parties.

This period was characterized by acute instability in the party system. After Indira Gandhi's assassination political scenario changed in a significant way, under both Indira Gandhi and her son Rajiv, the organizational decline of the Congress became evident. From the late 1980s it was confronted with serious challenge from BJP, Samajwadi party and BSP. New regional parties have strengthened their position at the expense of the Congress.

By the late 1980s there was a political vacuum in Indian politics. Dedicated to a redefinition of nationalism the BJP began to fill the vacuum created by the decline of the Congress. BJP's rise to prominence has been the defining feature of Indian

politics over the last few decades. It is the only party to win two elections in a row since 1984,. In the 2014 and in the 2019 elections it secured absolute majority in the Lok Sabha on its own, signaling the return of the one party dominant system.

1.6 Summing Up

- The party system in India is a complex one and one reason for the complexity is the social heterogeneity that has made it impossible for a single set of parties to emerge across the country.

- The Indian party system has evolved from one-party dominance to a multi-party system.

- Political change from 1967 to 1977 increased party competition.

- The 1977 elections ushered in a new era in the party systme.

- Growth of regionalism and emergence of regional parties in different parts of India in the 1970s.

- In the seven general elections held in 1989, 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2004 and 2009 no party achieved a majority.

- All these elections showed a decline in the position of national parties and the growth or regional parties.

- The BJP emerged as the single largest party for the first time in 1996.

- After the 2004 general election party politics is characterized by the emergence of two broad coalitions NDA and UPA.

1.7 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Trace the evolution of the dominant party system in India.

2. Do you think that 2014 general elections have ushered in a new phase in the evolution of the Indian party system? Give reasons for your answer.

Long Questions :

1. Account for the breakdown of the Congress domination in the 1970s.

2. Indicate the reasons for fragmentation of the party system in India.

Short Questions :

1. Account for the intense conflict and rough felling among political parties in the period between 1977-1984.

2. Which phase is characterized by the emergence of two broad coalitions? give reason.

3. Write short notes on UPA and NDA?

1.8 Further Reading

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Unit - 2 ❑ Congress System

Structure

2.1 Objectives

After reading this unit students will be familiar with :

- the concept of Congress System
- key features and working of the Congress system.
- factors leading to the crisis in the system and its breakdown.

2.2 Introduction

Party politics in India is unique in the sense that it does not conform to the established model of the two party or multi-party system, nor to that of the one party system. Rajni Kothari coined the phrase "one party dominant system to describe Indian party politics". For almost two decades after independence, the Congress which had led the freedom struggle in the country, controlled central as well as the state governments, Kothari formulated a new conceptual category, the "Congress system" to characterize India's party system. From 1947 to 1967 Indian National Congress dominated a competitive multiparty system. Dominance of the Congress co-existed with inter-party competition, but the opposition parties did not present any credible alternative to the Congress. Elaborate party structure and extensive patronage networks ensured dominance of the Congress Party.

However, in the late 1960s the System was in crisis with deterioration of Congress electoral fortunes. Growing democratization of traditional power relations throughout society, inability of the Congress to maintain the political bases of its coalition, personalized and centralized character of government and the party eventually led to the collapse of the Congress system.

2.3 Basic features and working of the Congress System

Rajni Kothari in his politics in India (1970) made a persuasive analysis of the Indian political system largely from structural functional perspective. He identified the dynamic core of the system of political institution in India in the Congress party which acted as a party of consensus. In this model opposition parties are parties of pressure. The whole system worked through the dominance of the Congress.

In Kothari's formulation, the features of the Congress system are : (a) an open and competitive party system; (b) existence of multiple opposition parties that cannot provide an alternative to the government. However, they can put pressure on government to do certain things; (c) Responsiveness of the system to changes in public opinion and presence of a democratic authority which is open to continuous pressures both form within the ruling party and form outside; (d) an electoral network of faction at every level of political and governmental activity and a system of co-ordination between various levels; (e) absorption of the very basis of opposition and dissent and neutralizing important sources of cleavage and disaffection.

Since the 1920s the Congress brought together a number of interests and identity groups to forge a broad coalition. The party leadership was; however, dependent upon a network of influential men, large landowners, the middle peasants, industrialists, professional classes, castes, religious communities, women and youth organizations, workers and peasants. This network mediated the relationship between the Congress leaders and the rank and file of the party on the one hand and competing views on the other. The network enabled the high command of the party to control popular upsurges that had been launched under its leadership.

Decades of organizational political activity by the Congress in the nationalist movement in different parts of the country accounted for the dominance of the Congress. According to Kothari the Congress was an umbrella party encompassing all the major sections and interests of society and in the process acquired legitimacy.

After independence the inherent composite character of the Congress was

preserved by the accommodation of diverse social interests, and through a continuous search for dynamic equilibrium in the context of internal competition among shifting political coalition within the party. In the first two decades after independence assertions by the subaltern classes were mediated and controlled by powerful leaders who owned land, labour and capital. One important features of this arrangement was reliance on state leaders. Provincial party units enjoyed large degree of autonomy. They were largely financially independent, raising their own party funds for running the organization or fighting elections. The influence and autonomy of the state units in the Congress Party structure was shown most clearly in 1964 when Nehru's successor was effectively chosen by Kamraj as party president in association with the Chief Ministers and party presidents of the state units. National leaders relied on state leaders to manage contentious issues in their own regions such as the formation of linguistic states in the 1950s and 1960s.

Congress system, according to Kothari, exhibited certain key features in its operation in its heyday. First, the Congress after coming to power gave a constructive and primary role to government and politics in the development of society. Second, the power of the central authority was made primary criteria of national survival. Third, legitimacy became the primary issue of politics and this in turn gave to the ruling party and government symbolic value of great importance. Fourth, the Congress by virtue of its control over the government enjoyed monopoly of patronage and had control over economic power and resources. This made it difficult for the opposition parties to compete with it, Fifth, the Congress with its elaborate organizational structure from the central to the grass roots level created broad avenues of political participation. This factor explained Congress Party's ability to absorb groups and movements outside the party and prevent other parties from gaining strength.

The Congress had large number of skilled managers at different levels of party organization who were able to arrange bargain between important social groups and to knit together the varied regions and subcultures of the sub-continent. In Kothari's account the Congress has developed over the year's conciliation machinery at various levels to mediate in factional conflicts and maintain the intricate balance on which the Congress system is based. The federal like structures of the party enabled the decentralization of power as well as control.

The dominant position of the Congress was further secured by the policy of neutralizing some important sources of conflict and discontent in the country. Thus abolition of Zamidari system, linguistic reorganization of states, organizing labour

union along with framing protective labour laws, granting of special privileges to weaker sections of the society etc, all this went a long way to neutralize potential sources of political discontent. All these measures formed part of the Congress strategy to secure legitimacy on the one hand and modernization on the other.

The Indian National Congress was unique in dominating a competitive multi-party system. Most accounts of the Congress Party from 1947 to 1964 emphasize the role of Jawaharlal Nehru in the construction of modern India in which the state would take over charge of economic development and nation building activities with an appeal to the ideas of socialism, secularism, federalism and democracy. Under Nehru's leadership, the party was built upon the nationalist legacy in three ways : its development of a party organizations, its accommodation of diverse interests, and its relationship with other parties. Dominance by a single party co-existed with inter-party competition. By virtue of its elaborate party structure and patronage networks Congress party was able to appeal to the vast middle ground of interests and values. Its image as the party that won independence and popularity of leaders like Gandhi and Nehru as well as the presence of a large number of influential provincial leaders contributed to the success of the Congress system.

Thus Rajni Kothari identified the dynamic core of the system of political institution in India in the Congress Party. The whole system worked through the dominance of the Congress. According to Kothari Congress system developed its character in response to a historical environment. However, that environment underwent drastic change in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The socio economic and demographic context of the Indian polity changed beyond recognition. The intense political mobilization of new groups and subgroups led to the development of more differentiated identities and source of political cleavage. Citizens were searching avenues for effective participation and exhibited maturity to evaluate and make choices.

In his essay the Congress system revisited : A decennial view (1974) Rajni Kothari observed that the Congress system was confronted with serious challenges both from its own field of operation and from without. The composition of the Congress has changed considerably. Similarly, the structure of the opposition has undergone important changes. Many new elements have entered the federal axis of the system and the world environment in which Indian polity has to operate has undergone fundamental changes. Kothari argued that despite all these changes, the Congress system on the whole remained intact. It has survived major shifts in the environment and continued to be identified by reference to certain major features. According to him it was a logical necessity for a certain historical situation.

Kothari's model has been criticized from different perspectives. Critics argued that Kothari overvalued the consensual character of the Indian political system. He overestimated the autonomy of the elite and took far too gradualist view of social and political change. The rise of radical oppositional movement in the 1970s and increasing use of repressive apparatus of the state and declaration of emergency, were clearly indicators that went beyond the consensual model of the Congress system.

2.4 Crisis and breakdown of the Congress System

Congress system sustained one party dominance India till the 1967 election to the state assemblies. The basic element of the system was the dominant role of the Congress in conducting public affairs almost without resistance from the opposition parties. It managed internal opposition by a policy of compromise and consensus and did not allow any challenge to destroy its viability both as a party of governance and an instrument for resolving conflict. The practice of inner party democracy and presence of political leaders with solid social support at the state and district levels helped Congress to achieve hegemonic position.

The 1967 election ushered in major changes in the structure of the political system. Reviewing his model in 1970 Rajni Kothari observed that the overwhelming dominance of the Indian National Congress had started to be eroded after the third general election. Following Sino-Indian border conflict of 1962 Nehru's leadership became subject of criticism from within Congress as well as from without. The politics of the two successors witnessed the increasing fragmentation of the Congress High Command. The intense conflict over the allocation of party tickets for the 1967 elections resulted in major defections from the party in some states. Consensus maintaining mechanism became paralyzed. The absence of an overpowering leader in the image of a Nehru made the working of the congress system difficult.

In his essay "The Congress System Revisited, A Decennial Review (1974), Kothari characterized Congress system as the most effective means of countering the challenges that the country faces. For restoring the Congress system, he suggested rebuilding the Congress party and its regional infrastructure, reinventing the electoral process with legitimacy, restoring opposition party's due role in parliamentary politics and restructuring the communication linkage between government, party units and the people.

Over the years the situation has undergone radical changes. The institutionalization of democracy has produced unforeseen results. In the late 1960s and the 1970s the Congress system imploded. From the 1980s, Kothari himself developed entirely different frameworks for presenting empirical and normative account of Indian politics. He admitted that the Congress system while providing a long period of stable democratic functioning produced a centralized bureaucratic apparatus devoid of effective distributive policies and any sound philosophy of Justice.

The legitimacy of the electoral democracy gradually eroded over the years and the Congress party has become a party to moneyed and mafia interest. The result of all this is undermining of the state and the political system. In fact, Indian politics in the first two decades after independence was built as a sort of consensus based primarily on elite accommodation. The system primarily worked because of its nearness to the mobilization of the national movement and the relation of implicit trust between the Congress leadership and the masses.

The reasons for the breakdown of the Congress system can be attributed to the political changes that occurred during Indira Gandhi's tenure of office. Indira Gandhi in the face of increasing opposition strength rejected the principle of consensus in favour of the majoritarian principle. Her intense desire for personal power and manipulative politics resulted in the suspension of democracy within the congress party. Under her regime Congress Party's roots withered and governance became less institutionalized, more personalized and centralized. Many commentators argue that the erosion of institutional arrangements was ultimately bound up with the deinstitutionalization of the Congress Party and the emergence of genuinely pluralist politics in the post 1977 period.

In the 1970s, the Congress party atrophied organizationally. In the 1971 election, Mrs. Gandhi appealed to the national electorate across regions, castes, religion, and gender on the populist platform of removal of poverty. The federal nature of decision making within the party yielded to a highly centralized from of policy making under a charismatic leader. The party degenerated into a band of courtiers. In the process it lost its capacity either to represent or arbitrate between plural and conflicting views. The mass-based party that mobilized millions of Indians in the cause of national independence has lost its appeal to the people at large.

After becoming unquestioned leader of the ruling party Indira Gandhi changed the mediatory form of politics into a plebiscitary one. The 1967 election showed that

the powerful regional Congress leaders of the earlier period were no longer reliable vote gatherers. By separating parliamentary election from state assembly elections and by relaying on the much higher rates of voter participation, Congress party turned the general elections into a plebiscite on the leadership of Indira Gandhi.

The most important reasons for the breakdown of the Congress system is the inability of the party to maintain political bases of its coalition, especially the loyalty of the socially backward groups. From the late 1980s the party has found it difficult to gather support for its policy in the face of serious challenge from political formation with sectarian appeals and social bases, such as the BJP, BSP and the Samajwadi Party. New parties representing the backward castes are regionally concentrated and have gained strength at the expense of the Congress. Since the late 1980s the party has failed to generate popular leadership capable of accommodating diverse interests.

India Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi sought to build coalitions around their own personalities. In the process, the Congress became a leader-dependent force that adhered to the charismatic appeal of the Nehru-Gandhi family. The decision of the dynastic leader was the decision of the party. This largely contributed to the erosion of its social base in the country side. Mobilization through populist slogans did not work.

Another explanation for the breakdown of the Congress system is the growth in political consciousness and assertion of newly prosperous and newly mobilized section of the electorate. They are primarily intermediate and backward caste peasants in the Green Revolution areas of the North India. These castes had not been part of the core base of the Congress in the northern belt and had not been granted a position of commensurate influence in the party power structure.

Still another explanation is the growing politicization of communal and caste cleavages. This has led to the collapse of the Congress Party in states like UP and Bihar where such politicization led to the gravitation of huge number of electorate Schedule casts, other backward casts and Muslims and upper castes to communal and caste based parties as the BJP, BSP, SP AND RJD.

2.5 Conclusion

Rajni Kothari in his politics in India (1970) identified the dynamic core of the system of political institution in India in the Congress Party. The whole system

worked through the dominance of the Congress. It was a differentiated system operating along the organizational structure of the party but connected at each level with the parallel structure of government. It allowed the dominance of a political centre as well as dissent from the margins. In this model opposition parties function as dissident Congress groups. It emphasized coalition building and consensus making at each level and in the process securing legitimacy of the system as a whole. Kothari defined it as the "Congress system"

The system continued almost uninterrupted till the 1967 election when non-Congress governments came to power in several states. In fact, the 1967 elections were a severe blow to the Congress. The period immediately before and after the elections had seen a tremendous weakening of its internal strength. There was constant dissersion and bitter conflict at different levels of the party organizations, rampant factionalism and large scale defection from the party. The reasons for the breakdown from the Congress system can be attributed to the political changes that took place during Indira Gandhi tenure of office. Under her leadership Congress became strongly centralized with power flowing directly from the central high command. In the face of increasing opposition Mrs. Gandhi rejected the principle of consensus. Her autocratic control of the Congress quickly undermined the organization. The deinstitutionalization of the Congress Party was a major contributor to the erosion of the Congress system. The party lost its capacity to maintain the political bases of its coalition.

2.6 Summing Up

● Rajni Kothari identified the dynamic core of the system of political institutions in India in the Congress Party.

● The whole system worked through the dominance of Congress.

● The system continued almost uninterrupted till the 1967 election.

● The reason for the breakdown from the Congress system can be attributed to the political changes that took place during Indira Gandhi's tenure of office.

2.7 Probable Question

Essay Type Questions :

1. Write an essay on the Congress System as it worked in the 1950s and 1960s.

2. Account for the crisis and breakdown of the Congress system.

Long Questions :

1. Indicate the basic features of the Congress system.

2. Identify the factors behind the success of the Congress system in the 1950s and 1960s.

Short Questions :

1. What is meant by Congress System ?

2. What are the arguments of the crisis against Kothari's model ?

2.8 Further Reading

1. Kothari, Rajni ; Politics in India New Delhi ; orient Longman, 1970.

2. Kothari, Rajni ; The Congress System revisited : A Decennial Review Asian survey, vol.14.

3. Chatterjee, Partha (ed.); state and politics in India. Oxford university press, 1977.

4. Hassan, Zoya (ed.); parties and party politics in India. Oxford University Press, 2002.

5. Kothari, Rajni ; The Congress 'System' in India. *Asian Survey;* Dec., 1964, Vol. 4, No. 12 (Dec., 1964), University of California Press no.12, December 1974.

Unit - 3 ❑ Multi party Coalitions

Structure

3.1 Objectives

After reading the unit the learners will be familiar with the :

● factors contributing to the growth of coalition politics in India.

● different phases in the evolution of coalition politics in India.

● different trends and counter-trends in the evolution of the party system in India.

3.2 Introduction

Coalition is a direct product of the exigencies of a multy-party system in a democratic set up. A coalition government is formed when a number of political

parties agree to join hands on common platform by keeping aside their broad differences. In a parliamentary democracy coalitions arise primarily as a result of political compulsion. It might result from radical, communal, economic, social or political conflicts. It may also be formed due to emergency.

Politics in India has been going through dramatic transformations. With the active participation of hitherto marginalized groups in the political processes Indian democracy has acquired a mass character. The earlier party system is changing rapidly, as are political equation and in the process a new era of coalition politics has begun. A dominant-party system has given way to a multi-party system and coalition governments. Exigency of situation rather than ideological purity has dictated formation of coalition. Parties with distinct ideologies are inclined to form coalition with the object of challenging a common foe. One important aspects of coalition politics in India is the formidable presence of regional parties, which sometimes hold the key to the very survival of the coalition.

3.3 Evolution of coalition politics first phase 1960s and early 1970s

The evolution of political alliances began in the immediate pre-1967 period inspired by the socialist ideologue, Ram MonoharLohia. Anti Congress sentiment constituted the basis of alliance formation. Lohia firmly believed that ideological difference notwithstanding, continued alliance among non-Congress parties would bring them closer. Despite his doubts about the feasibility of cohesion among anti-Congress parties, he argued that alliance among anti-Congress parties would at least inspire the confidence that the country could get rid of the Congress rule at the centre.

In fact, 1967 elections were clearly a break with the past, in the sense that several regional parties realized the importance of a coalition of likeminded political parties for pursuing common goals. The fourth general elections radically changed India's political landscape, with the Congress losing its dominance in as many as nine states. The elections indicate a clear crack in the Congress base in the regions. It also reflects the beginning of a significant process whereby regional parties were united on the basis of distinctly regional interests that the congress failed to represent properly. The non-Congress governments that came to power in nine states ushered in a new era by replacing the Congress governments in the province.

Except Tamil Nadu where the DMK secured an absolute majority, governments

in other states were formed through coalition. Anti-Congressism brought the opposition parties together to form coalition. In order to keep the coalition going, a common minimum programme was adopted that avoided, as far as possible, contentious issues.

However, the coalitions are not stable, primarily because there was no ideological cohesiveness among the constituents of the coalition. Neither did they have programmatic uniformity. In Bihar, a Samyukta Vidhayak Dal elected Mahamaya Prasad singh of the JKD as the first non-Congress Chief Ministers. In Punjub anti-Congress parties like the Akali Dal (sant group), the CPI(M), the CPI, the Jana Sangh, the Akali Dal (Master group), the SSP and the republican party came together and formed the popular united front.

The February 1967 mid-term poll results in West-Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Punjub were an expression of a new wave in Indian politics. The defeat of the Congress indicated its failure to accommodate diverse opinions and interests that had been an important feature of the earlier Congress system. Prevalent circumstances with high anti-Congress sentiments created the possibility of an alternative structure of power on the basis of political expediency rather than ideology.

In West Bengal United Front consisting of fourteen parties came to power. The experiment was unique in the sense that the left parties the CPI, CPI(M), Forward Bloc and RSP joined with dissident Congressmen which formed the Bangla Congress. The United Front definitely ushered in a new era of coalition in state politics. However, the internal feud among its constituents, particularly the unbridgeable gulf between the CPI and CPI(M) disrupted the normal functioning of the UF government. The constituent parties never buried their distinct identities for the sake of the coalition. The front suffered a death blow from the dissident Congressmen who broke away from a Progressive Democratic Front under the leadership of P. C. Ghosh. The UF government was dismissed and PDF government was formed with the help of the Congress. But Congress withdrew its support to the PDF government after three months and President's rule was proclaimed. Two governments in less than a year in West Bengal demonstrated the failure of the coalition to sustain its viability.

In Kerala, a United Front ministry headed by E.M.S Nanboodripad of the CPI(M) held power since 1967, Kerala has been governed by two coalitions, the CPI(M) led Left Democratic Front, and the Congress dominated United Democratic Front. The LDF included CPI(M), CPI, RSP, Mani and Pillai Faction of the Kerala

Congress, the rebel Muslim League and the Congress (URS). The constituent parties of the UDF were the Congress, the Janata Party, the Praja Socialist Party, the National Democratic Party (Nair) and the Socialist Revolutionary Party (Ezhava) while the major parties in both coalitions remained firm, the constituent partners kept changing affiliation for political expediency. In Kerala no religions or caste groups are numerically dominant. Multiplicity of social groups with conflicting interests contributed to the multiplicity of political parties and coalition government is inevitable in such a situation.

In the Hindi heartland of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh anti-Congress sentiments were expressed by those who left Congress. In UP the Congress government headed by C. B. Gupta collapsed within three weeks of its formation. The non-Congress members of the UP legislative assembly formed Samyukta Vidhayak Dal comprising the Jana Congress, Jana Sangh, SSP, PSP, Swatantra, the communist, the Republican Party and independents. The SVD was a combination of heterogeneous elements with clear ideological difference among the partners. The euphoria over the non-Congress coalition was short lived.

It failed to overcome internal contradictions largely because of ideological incompatibility among its constituents.

In Madhya Pradesh, the Congress lost its numerical strength following defection of Vijay Raje Scindia and the government headed by D. P. Mishra collapsed. MP had two SVD coalitions followed by a third led by the Congress. The MP experiment is an example of an uneasy alliance surviving one ministerial crisis after another and gaining fresh lease of life on each crisis moment.

The situation in Haryana was somewhat different. The Congress lost its majority following large scale defection of dissident Congress men.

A United Front was formed with Rao Birendra Singh as its leader and chief Minister.

In fact, 1967 elections ushered in a new phase in Indian politics. It was no longer possible for the Congress to reap electoral gains simply by harping its role in the freedom movement and achievements during the Nehru era. Although anti-Congressism brought the opposition parties to the centre-stage of Indian politics, it failed to ensure stability of coalition governments. There was no ideological policy which could hold together these alliances and hence their instability.

3.4 Second phase' the Janata Experiment

The next phase in the evolution of alliance was the unification of the partners in the Samtukta Vidhayak Dal in the context of protest movement led by Jay Prakash Narayan in 1974-75. In 1974, the Charan Singh led BKD merged with the SSP, Swatantra Party, Utkal Congress and three minor parties to form the Bharatiya Lok Dal.

The formation of the Janata party in 1977 with the merger of the Jana Sangh BLD, Congress(o) and the socialist party, and the CFD indicated experiment of coalition at the national level. It was a hurriedly formed coalition of parties to fight a suddenly called election after the emergency. Other opposition parties such as the CPI(M), DMK and Akali Dal agreed to join hands with the Janata Party in order to give a straight fight to the Congress. Janata Party won 330 seats, while the Congress secured 154 seats.

The establishment of the first non-Congress Janata government was a major turning point in Indian politics. It proved that anti-Congressism can be an alternative strategy for gaining political power. With the breakdown of the Congress system the period of coalition politics seemed to have begun at the national level. The regional parties began to assert themselves in such a way as to become the controlling factors in the mainstream national politics.

However, the euphoria of victory of the Janata Party was short-lived. There was individual bickering within the Janata party government apart from personal rivalry. Conflict erupted with the Jana Sangh over dual membership, which led to a serious crisis when both the BLD and socialist decided to leave the coalition. The Janata government disintegrated in mid-1979, and many of the elements that formed it splintered. The significance of the Janata experiment lay in breaking the long lasting one party domination and forge a national alternative to the Congress.

The disintegration of the Janata Party in 1979 brought the congress back to power at the centre in 1980. The process of broad anti-Congress front formation received a big blow. However, it continued in certain states like Haryana, where the Lok Dal and the BJP formed an electoral alliance to defeat the Congress in 1987.

3.5 The National Front Experiment

With the formation of the Janata Dal in 1988 alliance formation process entered a new phase. Expelled Congressman V. P. Singh along with his supporters merged with the Lok Dal of Ajit Singh and Devi Lal in North India and with the Janata Party of R. K. Hegde in Karnataka. This was an attempt to build a broad anti-Congress informal coalition for seat adjustment for the 1989 elections. The strategy for opposition unity was a three stage process. The first was the unity of the centrist, non-Congress secular parties. The second was the formation of a National Front of all non-left parties, regional and national. The third stage was about seat adjustments with the left parties and the Bharatiya Janata Party.

This was a two level alliance. The first was a formal coalition between the National Front, three regional parties, TDP, DMK and AGP and The Congress Socialists. The second level was a more informal seat adjustment between the National Front and BJP on the one hand and the left parties on the other. The National front stopped short of a 1977 style merger. It was not a purely power seeking opportunities coalition ignoring ideological differences.

The National Front Coalition was a new departure in three senses. First, it did not try to unify very different parties but put together a coalition of distinct parties based on common manifesto. Second it brought in the regional parties like the DMK, the TDP and AGP and the Left parties. Third, it also marked the beginning of interstate alliances of parties where parties do not compete on each other's turf. However, the loose alliance put together by the National Front BJP-Left in 1989-90 did not last long because of ideological incompatibility. This indicated the unsustainability of a broad anti-Congress coalition unless the constituent parties moderate their extreme ideological differences.

3.6 Coalition Experiment in the 1990s

The intensification of competitive politics has changed the party system from being a rivalry between national parties into one between alliances and coalition of national and state parties. The nineties have witnessed a succession of minority or coalition governments.

The 1991 election saw a three-cornered contest with roughly the same electoral alliances contesting, namely the National Front comprising the Janata Dal, regional

and left parties versus the BJP and the Congress, with the Samajwadi Janata Party of Chandrashekhar as a minor fourth side. BJP contested alone and did not have any seat adjustment with the Janata Dal.

In 1996 the same three-cornered battle resulted in a broad front, post election coalition government of United Front. The United Front owed its birth to the Congress, which agreed to extend support to contain BJP in the aftermath of the 1996 national poll. With an informal alliance between the Janata Dal, the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh, CPI, CPI(M) and other smaller Left parties, the United Front succeeded in forming the government at the centre. After the poll several regional parties like Telegu Desam Party, DMK AND Tamil Manila Congress as well as Asom Gana Parishad joined the United front. Deve Gowda led United Front Government had to rely on congress support for survival as it did not have majority to defend it in the Lok Sabha.

The constituents of the United Front were united neither in terms of an ideology nor in terms of attitude. Except for the ideologically well-knit CPI (M), none of the constituents seemed to be as committed in their opposition to the Congress and the BJP. For the DMK, TDP and the Janata Dal(united) BJP did not appear to be as formidable foe as it was earlier primarily because it has watered down its ideological goal due to electoral compulsion.

3.7 The National Democratic Alliance (1999-2004)

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance is a unique experiment with no parallel in India's political history. Although it owned its growth to anti-Congress sentiments, it nevertheless demonstrated pragmatism by accommodating the regional parties holding different political views. By providing a durable national coalition the NDA legitimized coalition politics, NDA was a coalition of 24 constituents. It nevertheless formed a government that brought political stability despite the occasional crisis. Many commentators and scholars held the view that Indian politics has entered the age of coalition and single party rule has become a thing of the past. The national parties have shown their inability to represent diverse interests and opinions in a multicultural society.

The 1999 election is a defining moment in India's political history. After the 1984 national poll, four consecutive elections failed to produce a clear majority for any political party or alliance. After almost more than a decade a pre-poll alliance,

the NDA, formed a government at the centre with absolute majority. The coalition involving the regional parties has strengthened the federal character of the national polity. BJP, the dominant partner in the NDA coalition, was no longer restricted to the North India. It was able to win seats in coalition with other parties in Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

The NDA was a consensual coalition in which a common agenda was prepared with input from all the partners. It avoided contentious issues, which in turn cemented the bond among the partners to such an extent that it was never fragile despite the inherent tensions. The coalition consciously championed regional issues. It was asserted that the NDA represents both national interests and regional aspirations.

The increasing importance of the regional parties is largely attributed to a process of growing democratizations, involving the hitherto neglected section of Indian society. The intense politicization of the different sections of Indian society over the years have made the one-party dominant model irrelevant.

3.8 The United Progressive Alliance (2004-2014)

The 2004 Lok Sabha elections was similar to the 1999 Lok Sabha elections in that both the national parties, the Congress and the BJP failed to secure a majority on their own. The poll results led many scholars and commentators to conclude that India is surely in the age of coalition.

The Congress and its allies won a majority in the 2004 Lok Sabha poll, while the BJP led NDA suffered electoral reverses in most states. Unlike the NDA partners who came together before the poll, the UPA was constituted only after the elections results were announced. These alliances are governed by the exigencies of circumstances despite reservations; the Congress accepted the principle of coalition as an appropriate strategy to gain electoral dividends. The fact that the Congress won only 145 seats of 417 contested clearly indicates the importance of the allies for obtaining a majority in the Lok Sabha.

The regional parties are driven by pragmatic political considerations. Thus the Janata Dal (U) aligned with the BJP led NDA despite its socialist leanings. Similarly, the DMK, the erstwhile partner with NDA endorsed an alliance with the Congress. The regional parties have received the importance of an electoral pact with a national party to enable them to play crucial role at the national level. In fact, the coalition

era has redefined their role in Indian politics and they cannot be ignored as their numerical support remains crucial for government formation at the centre. The crucial importance of the regional parties in the national coalition indicates that the states no longer remain mere constituent of the national policy, but also have become powerful political actors in the formation of the government. State specific issues have assumed importance in national election. This has opened the possibility of bringing politics closer to the people.

2004 and 2009 Lok Sabha elections results confirmed that without coalescing with smaller parties, national parties are unable to form government. In this new political configuration, the BJP and the Congress are forced to look after allies to capture power at the centre. One of the factors that contributed to the rise of these smaller parties is the breakdown of the Congress and its failure to represent diverse social and economic interests at the grass roots.

3.9 Lok Sabha election in 2014 and return of the one party dominant system

The 2014 election gave BJP a majority in parliament and has brought back the one party dominant system that was once used to describe the hegemony of the Congress party and the lack of an opposition. The election was held in an atmosphere characterized by serious allegation of scams involving the partners of the UPA. The BJP led NDA made this along with policy paralysis in the government, terrorism, national security and development main issues of the election. Election results ushered in a new era in the evolution of the multi party election politics in India. BJP won 282 seats on its own and with its allies it secured 336 seats in the Lok Sabha. The Congress won just 44 seats and with its allies took up just 60 seats in the lower house.

After 1989 many scholars and commentators observed that henceforth India would be governed by coalition. The two national parties, the Congress and the BJPwould never be able to secure a majority on their own. The era of coalition politics had brought to the forefront the political agenda of regional parties. In alliance with either of the two national parties, these parties managed to wield considerable influence.

However, the election results represent impatience and discontent with coalition politics at the centre. Very often, smaller parties in the coalition held the Congress

leadership hostage. Threats of withdrawal of support hung like the sword of Damocles over the leadership. The DMK, for example, withdrew its ministers from UPA-II government because A.Raja, who belonged to the party, was convicted in the telecoms scam. The constant threat of destabilizations led to policy paralysis and abrupt reversal of decisions. In the middle of policy paralysis Mr. Narendra Modi emerged as a national leader on a platform of stability. This agenda appealed to the people across caste and classes because it promised to amend endless compromises, reversal of decisions and no decisions. The defeat of the caste based parties in the election illustrates sheer impatience with narrow agenda and a focus on hand-outs such as more quotas for this or that caste. Caste and its petty hierarchies have not gone away. But India seems to have entered a new phase of politics.

In the 2019 Loksabha elections NDA surprised the entire nation by winning 352 out of 543 seats, where BJP alone secured 303 seats. Thus the wheel has turned full circle, with one party dominating national politics and a fragmented opposition that cannot offer alternatives. One party dominant system has returned to Indian politics, but in new form. BJP is nothing like the Congress in its heyday, i.e. a loosely knit coalition of different interest groups bargaining with each other with in the party organizations.

3.10 Conclusion

Party politics in India has been going through dramatic changes, the earlier party system is changing rapidly, as are political equations. A dominant party system and majority governments have given way to a multi-party system and coalition governments. What seems crucial in this process is not ideological purity, but the exigency of the situation, where the former seems to be a liability rather than an asset. Parties with clearly defined ideologies are now inclined to form coalition with the object of challenging a common enemy. Significant in this configuration is the powerful presence of regional parties that hold the key to the very survival of the coalition.

The evolution of political alliances began in 1967, with the formation of coalition governments of political parties opposed to the Congress. Despite being short-lived, non-Congress governments that came to power in 1967 in as many as nine states created history by replacing the Congress party in the provinces. The state level experiment of coalition was tried at the centre in 1977. The Janata Party was

formed with the merger of the Jana Sangh, Bharatiya Lok Dal, Congress (o) and the socialist party when national elections were announced after the emergency. It was a hurriedly formed coalition to fight a suddenly called election. It did not last long because of ideological differences among the partners of the coalition. The Janata Party disintegrated in 1979.

The nineties have witnessed a succession of coalition governments. The governments formed in 1989, 1990, 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2004and 2009 were coalition of several political parties. The minority coalition in 1989 and in 1996 were toppled when their supporters outside the government, the BJP and the Congress withdrew support, whereas the 1998 coalition government fell after AIADMK, a partner of the coalition withdrew support.

Coalition in India is likely to be unstable, unless the constituents agree on a common minimum programme. The NDA was drawn on this and its stability was largely due to the common minimum programme avoiding contentious issues. In 2004 the non-NDA constituents formed United Progressive Alliance. The Congress party which was not so much enthusiastic about electoral pacts with other endorsed the idea of forming strategic regional alliance to gain a majority in parliament. The Congress and its allies won a majority in the 2004 Lok Sabha poll.

The succession of coalition governments since the 1990s led many scholars and commentators to observe that India is surely in the era at coalition. A single party majority does not seem possible any longer. However, the 2014 Lok Sabha election has brought back the one party dominant system. 2019 Lok Sabha election further confirmed the trend.

3.11 Summing Up

- The Indian party system has evolved from one-party dominance to a multi-party system.
- Political change from 1967 to 1977 increased party competition.
- The evolution of political alliances began in 1967, with the formation of coalition governments of political parties opposed to the Congress.
- The state-level experiment of the coalition was tried at the centre in 1977.
- The nineties have witnessed a succession of coalition governments.

● The governments formed in 1989, 1990, 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2004 and 2009 were a coalition of several political parties.

● The succession of coalition governments since the 1990s led many scholars and commentators to observe that Inida is surely in the ear of the coalition.

● However, the 2014 Lok Sabha election had brought back the one-party dominant system. 2019 Lok Sabha election further confirmed the trend.

3.12 Probable Question

Essat Type Questions :

1. Examine the factors responsible for the growth of coalition politics in India.

2. Analyse the pattern of coalition politics in India since the 1990s

Long Questions :

1. Account for the failure of the Janata experiment in the 1970s.

2. How would you explain the stability of the NDA coalition government (1999-2004).

Short Questions :

1. Mention any two features of the United Progressive Alliance.

2. Identify the nature of the Coalition in the 1990s.

3.13 Further Reading

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Unit - 4 ❏ Regionalism and Regional Political Parties

Structure

4.1 Objectives

After going through this unit learners will be acquainted with :

- meaning on regionalism in the Indian context
- growth and development of regionalism in India
- factor accounting for the growth regionalism
- different regional political parties and their programme
- impact of regionalism on national politics

4.2 Introduction

The growth of regionalism in India is generally attributed to her cultural diversity. Political theorists view regionalism as a complex of political, economic and cultural phenomena. It is an articulation of growing political consciousness, increasing competition for scarce resources, feeling of relative deprivation arising from policies and programmes of the central government. Besides, there is cultural anxiety among ethnic groups over language status and ethnic balance. In recognition of the country's diversity, the constitution of India provides for a federal structure of government. The constitution also makes provision for the reorganization of states.

However, the centralizing tendency inherent in the Indian federal system has created center-state conflict over different issues. Thus a significant aspect of the issue of regionalism has been the dialectic of centralization and decentralization. Since the 1950s India has witnessed the rise and assertion of regional and state based political parties. Issues of ethnicity and the axes of social cleavage have played significant role in the transformation of party politics of India in recent times.

4.3 Regionalism in the Indian perspective

Regionalism is a contested construction. It has been analysed as an offshoot of asymmetrical centre. State relation; as a product of widening gulf between developed and backward regions; as a manifestation of conflict between political elites; as an outgrowth of compulsions of electoral politics or as expressions of increasing competitiveness among different states in a liberalizing economy.

Regionalism, according to Rashiduddin Khan, expresses the plurality of Indian society. Socio cultural diversity of India cannot be adequately explained in terms of nationality or ethnicity. The regions of India have their own social, cultural, historical, linguistic, economic and political specification.

However, the role of ethnicity in the regional movements in Tamilnadu, Jharkhand, Gorkhaland, Assam and Meghalaya cannot be ignored. Similarly, most of the ethnic groups in the North East and Kashmiri Muslims perceive themselves as distinct nationalities and this runs counter to the India's nation building project. Thus while some regional movements aim to achieve greater autonomy of the states, others seek to resist imposition of a monolithic national unity.

In this connection it would be pertinent to refer to the phenomenon of nativism in India. Nativism indicates conflict between the migrants and the sons of the soil. In Myron wiener's formulation nativism is a form of ethnic identity that seeks to exclude migrants from residing and working in a territory which they consider to be their own homeland. Presence of large migrants from outside, cultural differences between the migrants and the local inhabitants, high level of unemployment among the locals, are some of the reasons for the growth of nativist movement in India.

4.4 Growth and development of regionalism in India

Regionalism in India is a complex of political, economic and ethnic phenomena. Its origin can be traced back to the national liberation movement. The pan Indian national identity could not replace regional identities but grew along with them. In the course national liberation movement pan Indian and regional consciousness appeared simultaneously. The former was based on pan Indian homogeneity of culture. the latter was built upon relevant region's distinctive homogeneity. Demarcation of state boundaries on the basis of administrative convenience played an important role in stimulating regional consciousness. However regional forces remained largely dormant as they were not well organized and all important goal of the national movement was to achieve freedom from British rule. The exceptions were the Dravida and the Akali movements. The establishment and role of the Justice party in Chennai and to a lesser extent, of Akali Dal in Punjub, are examples of emerging regionalism in India.

After independence there are a few major landmarks in the development or regionalism

1. Independent India adopted democratic form of government. Its main aim was nation building on principles of democracy, secularism, national unity and social justice. All parts of the country wanted a fair deal in nation building and started competing with each other for their development.

2. Princely states were integrated into the Indian union. Small states were integrated with big states. However, people continued to nurse loyalties to old territorial units.

3. Reorganisation of states on linguistic basis played a vital role in the development of regionalism. New states were created, for exampale, Bombay was divided into Gujrat and Maharashtra, Punjab into Punjab and Haryana.

But these states were not created entirely on linguistic basis. Many other Factors like ethnic-cum-economic considerations led to the construction of Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Jharkhand, Haryana, Punjab and chattisgarh and Telengana. Language-cum-cultural factors created Maharashtra, Gujrat and Uttarakhand. Historical and political factors are responsible for UP and Bihar, integration of princely states and need for viable groupings gave birth to Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan; language and social distinctiveness led to the creation of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Mysore, Bengal and Orissa.

Thus it was language, ethnicity, culture and religion that became the basis of the formation of regional identity in India. Marxist writer attribute regionalization of Indian polity to the rise of the rich landed peasantry in the aftermath of the great revolution. The widening of electoral democracy in terms of increased participation of the marginalized rural social groups further consolidated the power of this class. Besides intensifying centre-state conflicts, the emergence of this new class also led to the growth of inter-regional tensions. This is primarily because the peripheral sub-regions felt neglected both economically and politically. This partly explain the construction of regional identity in Kutch, saurashtra, Marathawada, Vidarbha, Telengana and Uttarakhand. The feeling of being treated as peripheries

was accentuated by the fact that most of the sub-regions were rich in terms of minerals and natural resources, We may also refer to the assertion of the different dialect communities in the bigger states of the Hindi heartland of India like Bundelkhand, Purvanchal and Harit Pradesh in UP and Mithilanchal in Bihar. Reference may be made to the political and administrative basis of regionalism in India although politics as such does not create regionalism. It only accentuates regionalism. Politicians take advantage of the situation of regional discontent and unrest. They convert it into movements for strengthening their individual support bases. Thus fighting within congress gave rise to Telengana agitation. Regional political parties like TDP (Andhra Pradesh), DMK (Tamil Nadu), Akali Dal (Punjab), AGP (Assam) have been surviving because of regional sentiments.

4.5 Regionalization of National Politics

The increasing role of regional parties in national politics has been referred to as regionalization of national politics. Since the 1990s, the crucial arena of democratic competition has shifted to the regional states. According to Sushil Kulkarni, regional

politics has been reinvigorated by a combination of perceived opportunities and threats.

First,although the constitution does not give important fiscal and economic power to the states, in recent years real economic powers have begun to flow to them. One reason is that central government has preferred to pass to state governments the responsibilities of liberalizing the economy.

Second the regional parties have effectively used the opportunities arising from the decline of the Congress Party. For example, the powers to legislate politics of affirmative action lie with State government. Regional parties based on caste have made it a power tool to get electoral dividend. Third, the fear that the Hindu nationalist forces might form government at the centre and impose a singular definition of Indian identity has led to the development of stronger regional opposition. This has resulted in intense competition for control of the state government.

The increasing role of regional parties in national politics is often interpreted as a force tending towards the disintegration of the Indian union. But in India, regional parties are not even all regionalist in the sense of representing demands for cultural autonomy or grievances against the Indian state. The earlier phase of secessionist sentiment has largely receded, with the exception of Kashmir. The emerging politics of the region is not isolationist, nor does it seek to withdraw from the centre. Regional parties increasingly share the same political space as national parties irrespective of their agendas. They are electoral allies of national parties and participate in coalition governments at the centre. Yet they have rarely questioned the economic agenda of the central government, even though many states may have faced a fiscal crisis as a result of all those policies. Instead, regional parties prefer getting financial deals for their states, in exchange for political support to the government at the centre.

Since 1989, India has been governed by coalition of various sorts, grouped mainly around the congress and the BJP. The 2009 elections further consolidated a two-coalition system. These coalition governments at the centre have forced regional parties to become involved in national issues, even as they work to extract benefits for their own kind.

4.6 Regional Political Parties

Most of the regional political parties barring National Conference of Jammu and

Kashmir and Akali Dal of Punjab are post independence phenomena. The parties which operate within a particular region or state or which represent the interest of particular linguistic, regional, ethnic or cultural groups are known as regional parties. India has a large number of regional parties.

4.6.1 DMK and AIADMK

The DMK and AIADMK are the two regional parties of Tamil Nadu and have become the main contenders for power in the state.

Since the first World War the Dravidian movement has played crucial role in the Populous southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It began with exclusionary ethnic appeals. Self Respect Association was the first mass organization of the Dravidians. It was later renamed the Dravidians Kazhagam (DK), which had small pockets of influence during the interwar period through appeals to Tamil speakers. It claimed that Tamils were descendants of a Dravidian race, distinct from the Aryans from whom the North and South Indian Brahmin were said to have been descended. It held Brahminical Hinduism and religion as being the source of all oppression and articulated its atheism through breaking idols and abusing deities. DK demanded secession and opposed the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religious belief and practice. It argued that free religious practice implies official acceptance of the caste discrimination intrinsic to Hinduism.

In 1949 there was a split in the DK and a new party was born known as Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). In the beginning DMK wanted to achieve an independent South Indian Dravidian state comprising Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Travancore-Cochin. Subsequently it was obliged to change its position and accepted constituent status of Tamil Nadu as an integral part of India. However, It did not abandon its anti-Hindi and anti-north position. It demanded greater autonomy to the states. Right from 60s it has been demanding amendments to the constitution so as to give them more autonomy. It has also demanded the abolition of the post of Governors and abrogation of art. 356.

Like DK, DMK is also an anti-Brahmin Party. It stands for social reforms and its members have to take a pledge that they will remain agnostic. It stands for keeping alive with cultural identity of the Tamil people. Right from its origin it has propagated the legacy of Tamil culture and has been laying emphasis on the Tamil history literature and art.

In 1967 there was a split in the party, The faction led by M. Karunanidhi remained as DMK while the faction led by M.G. Ramachandran became All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. The constitution of AIADMK is almost the same as that of the DMK with the exception that its members are obliged to profess agnosticism. It stands for maintaining cultural identity of the people of Tamil Nadu. It takes pride in Tamil history, language, culture, literature, art and architecture. The prefix All India indicated that its canvas is wider than DMK, although it remains basically a regional party.

4.6.2 Asom Gana Parishad (AGP)

AsomGanaParishad was formed on 15th August 1985. Assam agitation against illegal infiltration of foreigners from Bangladesh constituted the background for its formation. The party has been complaining against infiltration of illegal migrants from neighboring Bangladesh apprehending that it is changing the demographic, social and economic complexion of the state. It has been demanding detection of all illegal migrants, deletion of their names from the country's electoral rolls and their deportation.

The aims and objectives of the party include building up a truly progressive and egalitarian society based on political equality, economic development and social justice. It demands more powers for the state on the basis of truly federal structure. It seeks to strengthen the foundation of the local economy by proper utilization of natural resources of the state and provide full protection to the interests of local people in matters of employment of all kinds. Its declared objective is to ensure amity and harmony among all section of the people and to take all steps for the upliftment of all indigenous language and cultures.

4.6.3 Telegu Desam Party (TDP)

The Telegu Desham party is another regional party active in the Southern states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The party follows a pro-Telegu ideology. The formation of the party was motivated by its resolve to fight Congress hegemony at the centre and in the state by emphasizing on the telegu regional pride. It declares itself as a party of Farmers, backward castes and middle class people. In the economic sphere it has followed liberal policy that has been s pro-business and pro-development party.

4.6.4 Shiv Sena

The Shiv Sena was formed in 1966 in Bombay. The party has been championing the economic interests of Maharashtrian since its formation. It sought to arouse parochial sentiment by claiming that outsiders were usurping local jobs. It emerged primarily as a son-of-soil movement and made Maharashtrian centric politics its front priority. It demands preferential treatment for Marathis over migrants from other parts if India.

The party is known for its anti-communist position. It preaches a version of patriotism that demonizes Muslims as anti-national.

From its formation the Shiv Sena has shown its readiness to use violence as a method of political action. Simultaneously the party organizes various popular programmes like providing services in local areas and slums to get the support of the Maratha speaking male youth.

In the mid-1980s, the party has reordered its agenda to emphasize the themes of Hindu nationalism. The Shiv Sena chief, Bal Thackeray urged his followers to take up a holy war. It sponsored Hindu festival and celebration which over the years have become more expensive and elaborate.

4.6.5 The Akali Dal

The Shiromani Akali Dal is a regional party based on the religious sentiments of the Sikh community. It emerged as a result of the Sikh's resolve to fight against the domination of British patronized Gurudwara chiefs. Right from the days of Mughal rule there developed a feeling of deprivation among the Sikh's. Sikh's had always strived to keep their identity separate from the rest of the population.

In the pre-independence period Akalis under the leadership of Master Tara Singh demanded a separate Khalistan for Sikhs. After partition, the Aklai Dal was divided into two factions under the leadership of Master Tara Singh and SantFateh Singh. In the struggle between their two factions, Fatah Singh Faction became dominant, subsequently the group led by Tara Singh merged with the dominant factions.

In the post-independence period Akalis have a history of division and unity. The anti-center position of the Akalis led them to pass Anandpur-Sahib Resolution, which demanded a separate and independent Sikh state. Terrorism in Punjab was to a large

extent inspired by Anandpur Sahib Resolution. In the preamble to the resolution, it was stated that the Indian constitution was a clever design made by the Hindu Congress to subjugate the Sikhs. The resolution put emphasis on the separate cultural identity of the Sikhs. It is significant that even liberal Akalis had not been able to denounce this resolution. Subsequently militancy to a great extent has declined in the state.In 1997 Punjab election Akalis in alliance with BJP scored a thumping majority in Punjab assembly. It also participated in the BJP led coalition government at the centre.

4.7 Conclusion

Regionalism is one of the major forces shaping the nature and texture of Indian politics. It is a multidimensional phenomenon. Its bases are geographical, historical, cultural, economic and social. The general factors behind the growth of regionalism are the cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of India. It found expression in the formation of Political parties. Sometimes it has taken a communal shape like Akalis in Punjab and National conference in Jammu and Kashmir. some regional parties have emerged to protect the separate cultural identity of the region. DMK and AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, Telegu Desam in Andhra Pradesh, Assam Gana Parishad in Assam belong to this category. Identity politics contributed to political parties with exclusive regional aspirations. The presence of regional parties has given a wider basis to government policies by providing inputs from the areas and regions to which they belong.

4.9 Summing Up

- The general factors behind the growth or regionalism are the cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of India.

- The bases of regionalism are geographical, historical, cultural, economic and social.

- Regionalism is one of the major forces shaping the nature and texture of Indian politics.

- Identity politics contributed to political parties with exclusive regional aspirations.

4.10 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Account for the growth of regionalism in India.

2. Analyze regionalization of Indian politics and its implications.

Long Questions :

1. Define regionalism in the Indian context.

2. Identify the factors responsible for the increasing role of regional parties in national politics.

Short Questions :

1. Write a short note on Shivsena/Akali dal.

2. What is meant by regional party?

4.11 Further Reading

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Unit - 5 ❑ Major National Political Parties in India- Ideologies and Programme

Structure

5.1 Objectives

After reading the unit the learners will be familiar with the :

● concept of National Political party in India.

● ideologies of major national and regional political parties.

● programme of major national and regional political parties.

● differences between the ideologies and programme of different political parties in India.

5.2 Intruduction

Political parties in India are classified in three categories; registered parties, recognized state parties and recognized national parties. The registered parties are granted recognition at the state and national levels by the Election Commission of

India on the basis of their poll performance at general election. A party may be recognized as a national party if any of the following conditions is fulfilled :

   (i) The party is recognized as state party in at least four states.

  (ii) The candidates set up by the party in any four or more states have secured not less than six percent of the total valid votes polled in each of those states at the general election and has returned at least four members to the Lok Sabha.

(iii) The party has won at least 2 percent of the total number of seats in the Lok Sabha at the last general election and the said candidates have been elected to the House from not less than three states.

Until the 1990s there were different types of national parties in India. There were parties that were statusquoist and parties that stood for radical, social and economic transformation. However, this is no longer the case as most parties are more like each other on many issues and are actively engaged in parliamentary politics including the left parties. By and large national parties are more pragmatic than ideological and this makes party boundaries highly flexible.

At present there are six recognized national parties. The Indian National Congress, The Bharatiya Janata Party, The Communist Party of India(CPI), The Communist Party of India(Marxist), The Bahujan Samaj Party and the Nationalist Congress Party.

5.3 Indian National Congress

The party was created before independence as a movement. After independence it got transformed into a party to serve the interests of the people and to take the nation on the path of development. The Congress, therefore expressed itself in favour of agrarian reform, enlargement of public industrial sector and economic planning. In its 68th session in January 1969 in Bhubneswar, Congress accepted the ideal of socialist state by peaceful and constitutional means. In 1971 election the party fought with the slogan of "Garibi Hatao". At present the party is committed to socialism, secularism and democracy. The party professes its commitment to democratic socialism and places special emphasis on the planned development of the country in which the government is expected to play a key role. Broadly, Congress programme is therefore : economic, political and social.

Economic agenda includes basic rights and welfare package for all working people, bring India to 8 percent inclusive growth path, increasing foreign investment, bring "Direct Tax Code" and Goods and

Service Tax. The party promised to create new opportunities for employment, incentivize domestic manufacturing and exports by providing minimum tariff protection and speed up the industrial corridor projects. While formulating monetary policy it was suggested to strike a balance between policy stability and growth. For infrastructure projects it was suggested that the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model must be made more transparent and competitive and more widely used.

Human and social development issue: Since the first general Election Congress advocated free and compulsory education at primary and secondary stages and free education to the poor. The party advocated to raise public spending in education to at least 6 percent of GDP. Congress voiced the need to provide autonomy to universities and institutions of higher learning and reduce pressure for expansion of higher education by delinking degrees for recruitment to jobs.

In matter of health the party suggested the need to bring in right to health, raise health care spending, expand the Rashtriya Swasthya Bimayozana and strengthen primary infrastructure. It lays emphasis on effective integration of family planning programmers with health, nutrition, education and other community welfare programmes.

Since the First General Election Congress has been emphasizing the need to strengthen public distribution system in the poorest and backward areas of the country and to reach food grains to the most vulnerable section of the society. It also suggested the need to ensure food security.

Congress party programme includes suggestion for women empowerment. These are; pass women's Reservation Bill; earmark 30 percent of all funds coming to local bodies for development of women, land rights for women and launch programme to improve child sex ratio.

The party emphasized the need for the implementation of the assurances given to SCs and STs in the constitution. It also suggested the need to amend the constitution to extend the period of reservation to the SCs and STs. The party also favoured reservation in the private sector for SCs and STs.

On the issues relating to minorities Congress advocate the need for continuing scholarship for children of the minority communities, prevention of communal

violence and provide reservation for backward minorities in education institutions and in government employment.

Since the 1990s Congress party has been emphasizing the need to frame an environment policy integrating environment concerns with the need of economic development. In the party programme mention has been made to check pollution of rivers and other water bodies through effective regulation and implement missions under National Action Plan on climate change.

From late 1990s information technology as an issue is being highlighted in the manifestos of the national political parties. Congress emphasized the need to use information technology revolution to improve governance by the computerization of key government department to connect all Gram Panchayats and municipalities with high speed broadband connectivity with a view to improve public delivery mechanism.

On foreign policy Congress party emphasizes on improving relation with Pakistan; continue to extent all possible aid to rehabilitate Sri Lankan Tamils, work with China to resolve difference of perception over Indian border and the Line of Actual Control, mobilize support for Indian permanent membership in the U.N. Security Council; work to strengthen South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

On the Issue of terrorism party promises to fight against terrorism and all other anti-national activities; strengthen the scope to protect our border and prevent infiltration of foreigner.

On the issue of defense congress highlighted the need for rapid modernization of defense forces; encourage indigenous manufacturing, harnessing the atom both for peaceful development as well as manufacture nuclear weapon as deterrent.

5.4 Bharatiya Janata Party

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was formed as an independent political party in February 1980, after split of the janata party on the RSS issue. Erstwhile Jana Sangh member along with few others left Janata Party to form BJP. BJP is a reincarnation of the Jana Sangh, the Hindu Nationalist Party founded in 1951 by Shyma Prasad Mukherjee.

BJP wants to rebuild India on the basis of BharatiyaSanskriti and Maryada as a political social and economic democracy granting equality of opportunity and

liberty to the individuals so as to make India a prosperous, powerful, and united India. It stated its fundamentals as "one country, one nation, one culture and the rule of law. The nationalism must be based on individual allegiance to Bharat as a whole. The party is founded on the ideology of Hindutva. It held that secularism is an expression of the policy of Muslim appeasement, while laying emphasis on the Hindu idiom in its poll manifesto, the party stands for justice for all and appeasement of none.

Its economic agenda includes fiscal autonomy of states, additional tax benefits and higher interest rates for senior citizens, review labour laws; strategically develop industries such as electronic, tourism, textiles, Footwear, food processing. Party promises to rationalize and simplify tax regime, strictly implement fiscal discipline, undertake banking reform, bring all state governments for GST, single window for project clearance, encourage savings as an important driver of investment and growth. Party declares its commitment to protect the interest of small and medium retailer, SMES and those employed by them.

BJP suggested universalization of secondary schooleducation with a focus on rural tribal area to reduce dropouts and improve the quality of education and infrastructure. It raised the issue of restructuring UGC and transforming it into a Higher Education Commission.

On health related issue, BJP declared its commitment to establish one primary health centre for every village. Party promises to bring in "National Health Assurance Mission" with a mandate for universal health care, initiate new National Healthcare policy; encourage Indian System of medicine, modern science and set up AIIMS-like institute in every state.

The party specifically suggested providing incentive for achieving long term demographic goals, effective integration of family planning programme with health nutrition, education and other community welfare programme through persuasive government policies.

Regarding public distribution system, the party was infavour of providing the right to food, provide 35kg of rice or wheat every month to BPL families at Rs. 2 per Kg under a improved and expanded Antyodaya Anna Yojana and improve the functioning of the Public Distribution System.

On the issue of women empowerment, the party promised to pass women Reservation Bill; strict implementation of laws related to rape, rehabilitation of rape victims, make police stations women friendly, and remove gender disparities.

On issues related to minorities party promised to strengthen minority educational systems and institutions; initiate modernization of National Madrasa Programme, empower Waqf boards in consultation with religion bodies, preserve and promote Urdu.

With respect to Jammu and Kashmir BJP promised to make JK an integral part of India by abrogation of Art. 370 OF the constitution. The party emphasized on the return of Kashmiri Panditsto the land of their ancestor.

Since the 1980s, the party has been emphasizing on the need to take effective steps for the protection of environment. It laid emphasis on integrating environmental concern with the needs of economic development and controlling pollution of rivers and other water bodies. The party declared its commitment to work with other countries of the World on the issue of climate change.

On the energy issue the party promised to bring in a responsible and comprehensive "National Energy Policy", focus on development of energy super structure, and take steps to maximize the potential of oil, gas, hydel power, ocean, wind, coal and nuclear resources.

On Ramjanmabhumi BJP promised to explore all possibilities within the framework of the constitution to facilitate the construction of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

The party focused on increasing the penetration of broadband across the country; engage proactively with the people through social media for participative governance.

On foreign policy issue the party declared its commitment to pursue friendly relations in the neighborhoods, work towards strengthening regional forum like SAARC and ASEAN; continue dialogue and cooperation with global forums like BRICS, G20, SCO.

Terrorism since the 1990s found a place as one of the major issues in the agenda of the party. The party emphasized the need to enact a suitable law to tackle terrorism; to improve the intelligence mechanism; to lunch a nationwide drive to identity the influx of arms; to crack down narcotic smuggling, composition and to rationalize the number, structure, composition and role of para-military and Special Forces.

On defense related issue the party promised to set up defense universities to meet the shortage of manpower, appoint a Veteran Commission to address the

grievances of veterans; technology transfer in defense manufacturing will be encouraged to the maximum; encourage domestic industry to have a larger share in design and production of military hardware; revise and update Indian's nuclear doctrine and maintain minimum deterrent that is in tune with changing geocentric realities.

5.5 Communist Party of India (CPI)

According to the party constitution, Communist Party of India is the party of the working class, its highest form of class organization. The party is devoted to the cause of socialism and communism.

The party pledged itself to uphold freedom, fight for the rights and welfare of the people, fight against all separatist forces, struggle for even development of all regions.

In its election manifesto since the 1950s CPI spelt out a series of programmes which include ban on communal and obscurantist propaganda, equal wage, status and opportunity for women, independent authority to inquire into the allegations of corruption against Ministers and other public men. Party suggested that atrocities on women would be put down with a firm hand.

The economic programme of the party includes nationalization of monopoly houses, state takeover of wholesale trade in food grain, radical land reforms, guarantee of free dwelling home to the rural and urban poor, inclusion of right to work as a fundamental right in the constitution and mobilize resources by taxing the rich.

The party promised to ensure need based minimum wage, full neutralization of price rise, ban on wage freeze, lock out, lay off and closure of factories and takeover of existing mills by the government.

The other programme of the party includes: restructuring of centre-state relations to expand the power of the state, ensuring remunerative price to the peasants, planned development of the economy, crash programme for economic and cultural development of the backward regions of the country, wide spread free health care programme, safeguarding the rights of the Muslims and other religious and linguistic minorities; separation of religion from politics. Regarding foreign policy CPI promised for a policy of peace, non-alignment and anti-imperialism, restructuring

international economic relations and strong steps against neo-colonialism and Multinational Corporation.

5.6 Communist Party of India (Marxist)

The communist Party of India (Marxist) was formed in 1964 following difference with CPI regarding party line. The party wanted to bring about a new form of government called "peoples Democracy". The ideological goal of the party is to organize a people's democratic revolution under the leadership of the working class.

In the economic sphere the party promised total liquidation of, land-lordism, cancellation of debts of the peasants, equitable distribution food to the people of rural and urban area and state trading in food grains. Other economic programmeof the party include: increasing minimum wages, for agricultural workers, ensuring equal wage for women agricultural workers, strict enforcement of the minimum wage, social security measures such as pensions, accident compensation with central funding, effect a substantial increase in public expenditure on the rural sector, provide cheap institutional credit to the agriculture sector.

On industrial policy CPI(M) suggested preservation of economic independence and self-reliance. The party also pleaded for reversal of IMF-World Bank dictated economic policy, simplification of the regulatory system and strengthen regulatory bodies to prevent corruption. The party is against wholesale privatization of public sector. Party promised to give priority to the manufacturing sector to create employment opportunities, encourage small and medium enterprise in labour intensive sector, protect domestic industries, prohibit FDI in retail trade, and implement GST only after ensuring a higher rate for the states so as to partially correct the present fiscal balance, drive to unearth black money.

CPI(M) advocated the need to make elementary education a fundamental right and universalize secondary school education. Party also promised to regulate private higher education institution.

On health related issues the party promised to increase public expenditure on health, regulate the private healthcare sector, ensure uninterrupted supply of all medicine free of cost in all public health centre.

On the issue of women empowerment, the party promised to pass Women Reservation Bill, ensure equal pay for women worker, adopt social security measures for working women.

The party promised to provide larger finds for the upliftment and welfare of the SCs/STs. It also favoured reservation in the private sector for SCs and STs. It was also infavour of providing reservation to the backward minorities through legislation and making Minorities Commission a statutory body.

Like all other national parties CPI(M) promised to frame an environmental policy integrating environmental concern with the needs of economic development, makes the system and promises of environmental clearance effective, check pollution of rivers and other water bodies.

Regarding the energy sector CPI(M) promised to review energy and telecom policies in tune with the interest of self-reliant national development, to reverse the trend towards privatizing power production and distribution.

Regarding Jammu and Kashmir the party suggested maximum autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir by keeping Article 370 of the constitution intact and advocated for strong steps to be taken to prevent excesses by security forces.

On RamJanmabhumi issue CPI(M) like CPI pleaded for separating religion from politics, resolution of the controversy through negotiation and preserving the status quo of religious places.

On the issue of terrorism and internal security the party pleaded for revamping the intelligence machinery and better coordination between security and intelligence agencies, amendment of the unlawful activities act to remove draconian provision like detention without trial for 180 days.

Regarding foreign policy and defense CPI(M) advocated continued dialogue with Pakistan to resolve all outstanding issues, promote people to people contact, sever military and security ties with Israel, build relations with Bangladesh, settle Teesta waters agreement and revise Indo-US nuclear agreement. The partypleaded for not renewing defense framework agreement with the U.S., create a national security apparatus, demilitarization of the cyber space, building indigenous capacity to protect Indian interest and telecommunication networks.

5.7 Conclusion

Policy and programmatic statements are central features of political parties. National political parties in India have put on record their political ideas and goals in their party programme. On the eve of election each party issues its manifesto,

outlining its basic beliefs, assessment of situation and approach to different problems and issues. Each party spells out its distinct ideology. Political parties in India try to get electoral support not only through their image but also through articulation of concrete policy proposals.

There is a remarkable degree of similarities in approach to most of the social, economic and political problems by the national political parties. In the context of political issues, all the national parties expressed their commitment to uphold the constitutional provisions relating to secularism. All the parties advocated the need to check corruption by setting up an independent, impartial commission at the centre and the states. In Jammu and Kashmir national parties differed in their approach.

On economic issues all national parties favoured planning as an approach to the various aspect of national life. It was only BJP which advocated abolishing planning commission. All the political parties were in favour of abolition of the Zamidari system, although there were differences in the means to be adopted. On industrial policy in the post liberalization phase, national parties differed in their approach. All major national parties pleaded for redefining the role of the public sector. CPI(M) and CPI, however, were against wholesale privatization of the public sector.

Since the 1970s issues relating to environment, climate change, consumer protection, human rights, black money, zender, corruption in public life, terrorism and security concerns and water have been given pronounced emphasis in the manifesto of the national parties.

5.8 Summing Up

● Programmatic statements and policies are central features of political parties.

● Political partries in India have been classified into three categories; registered parties, recognized state parties and recognized national parties.

● At present, there are six recognized national parties.

5.9 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Write an essay on the ideology and programme of the Congress Party.

2. Discuss the ideology and programme of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Long Questions :

1. Indicate the position of the CPI(M) on Jammu and Kashmir issue.

2. Write a short note on the economic programme of BJP.

Short Questions :

1. Write a short note on the ideology of the CPI(M).

2. What are the conditions to be fulfilled by any political party to become a national party ?

5.10 Further Reading

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Module - 2

Unit - 6 ❑ Voting Behaviour in India-Overview

Structure

6.1 Objectives

This unit will help the learners to :

● understand the meaning and importance to study voting behaviour.

● recognise social cleavages influencing voting behaviour.

● find the sustenance of democracy in a diversified society.

6.2 Introduction

In a democratic country citizen uses voting as a means for communicating his endorsement or objection to governmental decisions, policies and programmes of various political parties. Voting behaviour refers to actions and inactions of citizens in respect of participating in the elections that take place at the local, regional, or national level. Here most important Questions arise that how people decide and why they opt for candidate or party? Voting Behaviour is thus a study of factors influencing voters to vote for one party or candidate. It not simply examines only data, records, past political events and shifts and swings, but it also deals with

psychological aspects such as voters' perception, emotion, motivation etc. This unit discusses the meaning, importance, and significance of voting behaviour in the Indian context.

6.3 Meaning and importance of voting behaviour

Voting Behaviour is concerned with the way people vote and with the reasons why they vote so. Now a further question arises about the pattern of voting of the citizens There is difference between the West and India. West is more homogeneous and India is diverse and heterogeneous. Regions are marked by different kinds of political orientations and participations. Factors influencing voters also differ from region to region. So, it is difficult to find out factors determining voting behaviour in India. Also, in the west, due to long development of democracy and more open society, people show their choice and express why they vote to a particular candidate or party. In India, on the flipside, voters are more conservative in showing reasons why they support one candidate or party. Thus, voting behaviour researches are more conclusive in West than in India. However, the study of determinants of electoral behaviour constitutes a very significant area of empirical study. An empirical study of the determinants which inspire and influence the voters to exercise his right to vote in favour or against a particular candidate is influenced by different factors such as gender, race and pressure groups in invoking religious and communal factors, the influence of money or charismatic personality of a leader.

6.4 Different approaches to study voting behaviour

Different approaches are instrumental in explaining voting behaviour. These are known as structural, ecological, rational and socio-psychological.

1. Structural or socio-psychological approach emphasises on the relationship between individual and social structure. It explains the voting behaviour in a social context. This approach gives importance on the party identification and become very popular in United States in 1950 and 1960s.

2. Ecological approach relates voting behaviour to the characteristic features of a geographical area (word, constituency, state etc).

3. Rational choice approach maintains that political choice is made by individual's rational calculation of self interest. So when one votes, one

votes for something. This approach analyses voting behaviour as the outcome of cost-benefit calculations by the individual. This voting behaviour model denies the concept that voting behaviour of an individual is firmly related to his /her class affiliation or class socialization.

4. Socio-psychological approach takes up social and psychological variables like caste, religion, gender etc, in explaining voting behaviour.

6.5 Studies of voting behaviour in India

Study of voting behavior is firmly related to the study of electoral politics. This study of voting behavior of the people is known as psephology. Basic objectives of the subject is to understand the behavior of the voters at the time of elections. The study of determinants of voting behavior constitutes a very significant part in academic arena. These determinants like caste, class, religion, money, language etc. influence the voters to exercise their right to vote in favor or against a particular candidate. On the question of understanding voting behavior of a particular voter leads to the questions as why a voter prefers a particular candidate or a particular party in the election. Researchers must find out the factors which influence voters to choose a particular candidate. These factors may include economic, social or political. After independence, some studies were carried out on voting behavior, but these studies lack modern techniques. Gradually, quality of studying voting behavior has been improved. In the latter period, Some political scientists like Rajni Kothari, Myron Wiener and Pranoy Roy initiated some systematic studies on determinants of voting behavior. From 1990 onwards some research scholars also carried out election studies. Study of voting behavior has now become a central attraction for the academicians and journalists. For the last few years researchers have started to use survey sophisticated methods which have proved more scientific. Presently, many scholars, journalists, political scientists, and sociologists are now engaged in studying the determinants of voting behavior.

6.6 Conclusion

From the above discussion we may conclude that voting is the main form of political participation in a democratic system. The study of voting behaviour emphasizes primarily on explaining who votes and how they vote. The analysis of

the voting patterns invariably focuses on the determinants of why people vote and how they arrive at the decisions they make. Researchers have pointed out the influence of political factors such as issues, political programmes, electoral campaigns, party loyalty and voter's feelings about candidates etc. The will of the people is expressed through voting and therefore, all undemocratic and unfair means like manipulating and rigging need to be avoided.

6.7 Summing Up

● Voting' is one of the most used terms in contemporary age of democratic politics. In democratic system, each adult citizen uses 'voting' as a means of expressing his approval or disapproval of government decisions, policies and programmes, the policies and programmes of various political parties and qualities of candidate who are engaged in struggle to get the status of being the representatives of people.

● Voting behaviour is not confined to the examination of voting statistics, records and computation of electoral shifts and swings. It also involves an analysis of individual psychological processes (perception, emotion, and motivation) and their relation to political action as well as of institutional patterns, such as the communication process and their impact on elections. It also involves an analysis of individual psychological processes (perception, emotion, and motivation) and their relation to political action as well as of institutional patterns, such as communication process and their impact on elections. The voting behaviour has recently been expanded in the meaning and is taken as one major and broad area of study.

● Various approaches like structural, ecological, social-psychological and rational-choice are instrumental in studying voting behaviour.

● Voting behaviour of the people have been studied in India from time to time. In India, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, media houses and political parties have carried out election studies. In the beginning, particularly in 1950s these studies were not technically very sound. From 1960s systematic study of voting was started with application of improved technique and method. Several Political Scientists, Anthropologists, Sociologists, Psychologists have led research work on voting behaviour. Findings of these

studies are published in national and international academic journals, books and print media which help in understanding the maturity of democracy and about the reasons for that.

6.8 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Explain the significance of voting behaviour.

2. Discuss the meaning and importance of voting behaviour.

3. Analyse the different approaches to the study of voting behaviour.

4. Write an essay on the relevance of study of voting behaviour in India.

Long Questions :

1. Make an evolution of studies of voting behaviour in India.

2. Briefly discuss the effect of voting behaviour in Indian democracy.

3. Discuss relationship between voting behaviour and political parties in India.

Short Questions :

1. Write a short note on importance of voting behaviour.

2. What do you mean by voting behaviour?

3. Explain at least three approaches to the study of voting behaviour.

4. Briefly discuss the evolution of studies of voting behaviour in India.

6.9 Further Reading

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Unit - 7 ❑ Caste as determinant of voting behaviour

Structure

7.1 Objectives

After reading this unit learners would be able to :

● understand the meaning and importance of caste in Indian politics.

- ● to realise the role of caste as an important determinant of voting behaviour.
- ● to explain why caste politics exists in India.

7.2 Introduction

Caste is among the most researched determinant in studies of voting behaviour. It has become one of the most effective determinants of voting behaviour in elections in the post-Independent India. Electoral politics is identified with creating support base and mobilising support in present structure. Caste structure provides ready organisation of people through which politics may be organised. Rajni Kothari in his *Caste in Indian Politics* argues that the questions are what form does caste take under the impact of politics and what form does politics take in caste ridden society? Politics is competitive enterprise, and so its main target is to achieve power by manipulating clusters of people living together in a community following same social norms and practices. Caste structure provides this organised cluster to be utilised by politics. Conversely, castes also want to assert themselves and their identity through politics and dominate over others. Thus, politics and caste come closer what Kothari calls Politicisation of Caste.

7.3 Meaning and importance of caste in Indian politics

Caste is endogamous kinship group and is based on ascriptive status. Once born in a group he must remain same. Status and position of a person is fixed according to his caste. Each caste has different social attributes, rituals, practices, and traditional occupation as a particular social identity. Each caste has different social identity. Caste is vertical and horizontal stratification of Indian society. It is known as Varna as four Varnas are functionally determined. They are Brahmin, Khatriya, Baishya and Sudra.There are also the undercasts, the Pancham or Dalit. With modernisation and various social and political movements, it was believed that caste-based hierarchy will wither away. But caste never disappeared. No social system disappeared in that way. Rather a collective sentiment, an emotion and feeling of caste solidarity appeared. With modernisation, horizontal consolidation of caste took place. When politics looked to caste for mobilising support, castes too used politics for their gains. Initially after independence, the caste structure was polarised between upper and lower caste. Later, castes became more fragmented and inter-caste competition

accelerated. A process of politicisation of caste gathered momentum. After independence the polarisation of castes took shape in the form of Brahmin and Non-Brahmin castes as seen in Tamilnadu and Maharashtra. In Andhra it was between Kamma and Reddi and in Gujrat between Brahmin versus Patidars. This phase of polarisation was followed by a stage of fragmentation which was a product of political competition. Later the inter- caste competition became intra-cast creating different cleavages. Caste groups, caste federations or any kind of caste agglomeration may play dominant role in politics. On the one hand, established political parties vied for support of dominant or powerful castes in different regions, and, on the other, caste-based parties appeared to voice their demands. It is difficult to say how far politics uses caste or caste uses politics. Though it has been observed by Lloyed and Susanne Rudolph that the institutions of castes have undergone modification because of modernisation of political system.

Competition among different castes began for achieving political power. This took place horizontally while vertical solidarity had been weakened. In various parts in India, caste became dominant factor in politics, both in case of political recruitment and in voting. Castes determine Voting Behaviour in many parts of Northern and Southern India. Castes become major avenue to power and to ordinary voter or the collective, it appears, that they will reap much benefits if their caste captures power. Caste based politics and voting behaviour are seen protests against the dominance of upper castes. Especially power can relieve lower, dominated castes from torture and exploitations of upper castes. Thus, caste associations acted as pressure groups to secure upward mobility and benefits. Traditional caste functions are losing grounds. Mainly it happened among Nadar caste in South India.

7.4 Caste Loyalty

Different caste groups show their loyalties to different political parties and their ideologies. People inherit a particular caste due to birth in the same caste and grow up as a member of a specific caste cluster. They belong to either one of the high castes or other backward castes or scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. From his/her childhood a person gradually adopts caste values and caste interests. These caste values and caste interests play a major role in socialisation and consequently his political thinking, awareness, and participation. Naturally a separate identity based on caste politics shape the personality of the concerned person. some political parties have an immediate caste basis whereas others indirectly exercise caste as a basis.

Identity based politics becomes the hall mark in states like UP, Bihar, MP, and Southern states. STs, SCs and OBCs play important role in influencing the voting behaviour. So, on many occasions people voted a person who belonged to his/her particular caste as Jadavs opted for a Jadav candidate. In UP the Bahujan Samajbadi Party 's support base is hailed from dominant dalits and a section of Muslim and Samajbadi Party (SP) was constituted by Jadavs and Muslims. BSP enjoyed massive support from dalits. In 2017 State election BSP got 22% votes and in 2019 it got 19.3% votes. For capturing power the party appealed to Brahmins and other sections of society in 2006.

7.5 Political Parties and Caste

The politicization of caste and casteism in politics has been a well- known reality of Indian political system. The caste-based mobilisation is one of the most important tools of voter mobilisation for all political parties today in India. We find political parties in the length and breadth of the country from the far East to the West and from North to down South. All parties in India draw up a poll strategy on the basis of the constituency's caste profile. Messages in the election are tailored in a way to suit the dominant caste present there and ideological coherence is often sacrificed. Political parties take caste into consideration while formulating their manifestos, programmes and agendas. Caste also makes an impact in policy making of the parties. while nominating a candidate for contesting election, political parties often consider caste of the candidate. Morris Jones thus rightly points out," Politics is more important for caste and caste is more important for politics than before". The concept of caste has become an astonishing matter since 1990s due to Mondal Commission which was introduced by the VP Sing government giving reservation to the OBCSs in the central institution and rise of the parties such as the BSP, the SP and the RJD in north India. These parties have been identified with Dalits, OBCs or the peasant classes. Prior to their rise, the Congress party represented a coalition of various castes. Emergence of these parties underlined the significance of the marginalized castes playing decisive role in electoral politics. Their rise also increased competition among different castes. However, the basic demand of the dalits is to remove all types of discriminations and implementation of the principle of equality in every corner of the nation. Dalits are against upper caste domination and in favour of equality. From Ambedkar to present, they are in favour of

annihilation of caste. They have their own organisations and they oppose upper caste domination parties. They also protest using Dalit vote bank policy by upper caste parties. In 1984 Bahujan Samajbadi Party was established as Dalit party and came to power. Dalits are very much motivated by their identity and Dalit voters are influenced and guided by Dalit interest. They vote for Dalit candidates. Though lately there is a change in goal and policy of BSP. BSP now is not guided simply by caste arithmetic and emphasising on coalition of interests. But when issues become dominant like economic development, dalits support issues and upper caste parties as it happened when BSP suffered huge defeat in 2019 Lok Sabha election. However, caste plays important and dominant role in Voting Behaviour.

7.6 Caste Politics in different states in India

After independence caste added a new dimension at the local and state level politics in India. Caste politics has been firmly entrenched in several states in India like Bihar, Uttarpradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhrapradesh, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra, Punjab, Haryana and Rajashthan. Following analysis reveals as to what extent caste has exercised its influence in the working of the state politics.

7.6.1 Bihar

In comparison to other states of India, Bihar is far ahead in respect dominancy of caste over politics. In Bihar, there is always a conflict between the forward castes and backward castes. A popular message in Bihar is "you don't cast your vote in Bihar you vote your caste". In the first few decades after independence the upper caste dominates Bihar politics. After abolition of Zamindari system backward castes began to emerge as a determinant factor in state politics. As the upper castes started to be weaken, Yadavs, Kummis and Koeri started to play a major role in Bihar politics. Caste politics has strengthen its position from 1990s after Mondal commission's report came into limelight. In Bihar, many political parties gradually have emerged on the basis of castes i.e, Rastriya Janata Dal, Samata Party, Lok Janashakti Party and Samajwadi Party. Major problem in Bihar politics is that none of the parties is in a position to get an absolute majority due to casteism as none of the parties has the capacity to mobilize good proportion of votes of their castes. Small parties form alliance with other parties just to increase vote percentage from various castes. Caste not only plays a major part in loksabha or vidhansabha election

but also in Pachayat election. However, it is observed that most of the Yadavs vote for RJD and upper castes for NDA (National Democratic Alliance).

7.6.2 Uttarpradesh

Caste plays a major role in Uttarpradesh politics. It is very much active in the districts of Meerut, Aligarh and Kanpur. Congress played a dominant role in UP politics for a long period. It was in 1989 that big national parties and the upper caste lost their influence in UP and Bihar. Kanshi Ram, the founder of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), emerged with a slogan, "Vote hamara, raj tumhara — nahi chalega, nahi chalega (Our vote, you rule, will not happen, will not happen)".This slogan succeeded in uniting the backward castes and dalits. As a result, Bahujan Samaj party has appeared as the saviour of the traditionally lower caste known as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. BSP holds a strong position in U.P.and after Kashiram BSP supremo Mayawati has become immensely popular among the backward castes, Scheduled castes, Scheduled Tribes as well as Dalit Chamar (leather worker). Prior to Mayawati, Mulayam Sing yadav on the basis of caste has become a prominent leader of U.P. He ruled the state as Chief Minister for three non consecutive terms.

In U.P. upper castes account 20 per cent, Dalits 20 percent, Muslims 20 per cent and other backward castes 40 per cent of the total votes. In 2017 Assembly elections both Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party have lost their influence on the backward castes and Dalits where as BJP successfully placed itself in a political space among the castes and sub castes unsatisfied with and abhorrent to the hegemony of the intermediaries such as the Yadav among the OBCs and Yatav among the Dalits. It is a well known fact that BJP has a strong base among the upper castes in U.P. In the 2019 Loksabha election BJP breached the non Yadav vote bank among the other backward classes and successfully obtained support of Kurmi and Mauryas. BJP's strategy to expand the idea of 'Samagra Hindutva which seeks to integrate OBCs and Scheduled Castes within the Hindutva fold won the heart of the backward castes and Dalits.

7.6.3 Maharashtra

Castes have always been a part of Maharashtra politics. In Maharashtra, three groups of castes namely Maratha, Maha and Brahamins dominate the caste politics of Maharashtra. These three groups of caste comprise 47 percent of the Hindu population. Traditionally Marathas support the Congress party, lately it is closed to

National Congress Party. Hindu Dalits are divided between Congress, BJP and Shiv Sena. Mahar castes are largely with Congress and factions of Republican party of India. BJP has become a prominent force by organising Mali, Dhugar, Vanjari and Maratha communities in 2019 Assembly election.

7.6.4 Karnataka

Elections in Karnataka means equations and two communities - Lingayats and Vokkaligas - who have influenced the poll scenario for more than three decades. Caste and religion have played a bigger role than any other factor in selection of candidates and their winnability, despite lack of leadership, statesmanship, qualifications or the ability to nurture their constituencies. Even national parties like BJP and Congress have followed the tradition of caste politics in Karnataka, while JD(S), being a party of the Vokkaligas, has played the caste card cleverly. The leaders of the three parties select candidates keeping in mind the dominant role of the two communities. Whether Loksabha or Assembly poll candidates are selected on caste basis — depending on the percentage of Vokkaliga or Lingayat voters (or Kuruba in some) in a particular constituency. If North Karnataka is regarded as the Lingayat heartland, Old Mysore is the Vokkaliga bastion. So, both BJP and Congress have been fielding either Lingayats or Vokkaligas in both these regions.

7.6.5 Kerala

In Kerala religion and caste play a major role in shaping the voting behaviour of the people. After inclusion of Travancore-Cochin Princely states in Indian union Kerala came up as the biggest Malayalam speaking state dominated by the Hindus. Hindus are divided into Brahmins (Mostly Namboodripads) and Nayyars and Ezhavas(a backward class). The majority of the Ezhava community has always been the support base of Communist Party of India (Marxists). The Kerala Pulayar Maha Sabha (KPMS) which represents the Dalit Pulya Cmmunity traditionally support CPM The New Indian Express, 2nd April 2021—'Kerala Elections : Caste groups keep major fronts guessing days before polls'. It is to be noted that Ezhavas constitute 20% of the population. Dalit which constitutes 10% of the population massively supported the Left Democratic Front in 2021 Assembly Election. In 2016 election 51% or half Dalits voted for the LDF. Recently held 2021 Assembly Election Dalit votes for LDF obtained 69% Dalit votes. On the other hand, Nairs and other upper castes favoured Congress led United Democratic Front. (UDF) This is

the only community where LDF did not perform well. (Kerala Assembly Elections | A shift in social basis of voting, Sreyas Sardesai (The Hindu-May 06, 2021).

7.6.6 Haryana

For decades politics of Haryana has been dominated by Jats a land owning community which forms about 25 to 30 percent of the state's population. Previously, three Chief Minister's namely Bansilal, Omprakash Choutala and Bhupinder Sing Hooda were Jats who openly followed pro Jat approach in several matters. It is alleged by the other communities that Jats were benefitted by the proactive government assistance. There was a certain disenchantment among the other backward classes (OBC)and Scheduled Castes (SC) in Haryana. In a state that riddled with caste politics, BJP set out to break free of Jat Identity politics. In Haryana, the OBCs ,the SCs and Brahamins constituted majority population and BJP targeted all such non Jat votes. BJP nominated non Jats candidates in Jat majority areas and non Brahamin candidates in Brahamin dominated regions. This political experiment of BJP yielded positive results in 2014 Lok Sabha election and the party won 7 out of 10 seats. In 2019 Assembly election BJP followed the same strategy and appeared as the single largest party. BJP formed the government in a post poll alliance with the Jananayak Janata Party and seven Independents.

7.6.7 Punjab

Punjab has the highest population density of scheduled castes (SC) almost 32%. On the other hand, Jat –Sikh Population is estimated to be around 20%. Irrespective of the party, Shiromoni Akali Dal (SAD) or Congress, Punjab always had a Jat-Sikh Chief Minister since 1977. This discloses the caste equation and its political importance in Punjab. Jat-Sikhs are the single largest caste in Punjab which comprises one fifth of the total population. But, in spite of being one–third of the population, Scheduled Castes are scattered into different communities like Adhi Dharmic Ravidassia and Valmiki Mazhabis—remain sharply divided socially as well as politically. Their politics remain as divided as their caste. Though Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has a strong Dalit identity, in Punjab its support base largely remain confined to one caste Adidharmi Ravidassia. Even as party founder late Kanshi Ram tried to bring the two communities on the same fold politically, but he could not really succeed. In fact, these are the reasons for which SCs and OBCs are less dominant in Punjab politics where as Jat- Sikhs play a prominent role in the political

affairs of the state. In 2019 Loksabha election Congress improved its vote share among Hindu OBCs ; within this caste group, the party's vote share raised from 34% in 2014 to 61% in 2019.Hindu upper castes favoured SAD—BJP alliance and the alliance has received 55% of votes. Caste divide was also appeared among Sikh-Jat voters. Sikhs, particularly Jat Sikhs, who traditionally voted for the SAD, this time tilted towards others. Close to two out of five (37%) Jat Sikhs in 2019 voted for the congress, which was 14% higher than in the 2014 Loksabha election.

7.6.8 Rajasthan

Caste plays a very prominent role in the politics of Rajasthan. In the state of Rajasthan Scheduled Caste population is 18 %, Scheduled Tribe 13%, Jats 12%,Gujjars and Rajputs 9% each, Brahmins and Meena 7% each. The party which desires to capture power in the state must try to win the favour of OBCs along with other caste groups. It is surprising that while political parties focus their campaigns on public welfare schemes, candidates for election are selected on the basis of caste. North of Rajasthan is Jat dominated where as Meenas and Gujjars have a strong influence in South. The Hadoti (South East of Rajasthan) region is dominated by the Brahmins,Bania and Jats. The Western part of Rajasthan is dominated by Jats and Rajputs. The central region has a higher proportion of Muslims, Meena, Jats and Rajputs. In Rajasthan 89% are Hindus 9 % Muslims and 2% belong to other religions. In Rajasthan, BJP has traditionally been popular among traders, Rajputs and OBCs, where as Congress among Brahmins, Jats, Muslims Gujjars, SC and ST communities. 2018 Assembly election was a contest between Gujjars versus Meenas and Rajputs versus Jats. This can be judged from the fact that they have a history of traditional rivalry. However Congress became successful to create a coalition of caste groups and revive the traditional vote bank within its fold. It is thus clear that the party which is able to obtain the majority support of Rajputs,Gujjar,Jat, Meena and succeeds in creating a broad more acceptable social alliance will get the majority seats in the election. Congress did so and ultimately captured power in 2018 Assembly election.

7.6.9. Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu has made impressive development in the different fields like education, healthcare, infrastructural facilities and socio-political mobility among diverse sections of society. But it is no exception to caste politics. Caste groups and

caste associations immensely influence political parties including Dravidian parties. Many districts and transport corporations have been named after the leaders of the caste groups exposing the role of the caste organizations. 2011 census report reveals that Tamil Nadu has a 7.2 core population of which 68 % are OBCs, 20 % are SCs, 1 percent are STs and the rest are upper castes. Hindus are 88% (which includes SCs and STs). Muslims close to 6% and Christians form another 6%. A significant portion of the 6% Christian population belongs to Dalits. Different caste groups are scattered in the several parts of the state. Gounder community forms between 12% to 15% of the total population of the state resides in the western part of the state. The mukkulathor community, constituting around 10% of the population wields considerable influence in the Southern and central districts of the state. Another dominant caste in the northern part of the state is the vanniyars who constitute around 12% of the population. Dalit constitutes 20% of the state population, the highest for any caste group. Dalit population is seen across the state highly concentrated in the Kongu region, Chennai and Vizhuppuram, Vellore, Tiruvannamalal and the delta districts.

Traditionally, the AIADMK has a strong support from upper castes, Vanniyars, Dalits, Gounders and Thevars. On the other hand, DMK has followers in Vellalars, Mudhaliyars, Udaiyars, Nadars, Naidusand Muslims. However, the emergence of MDMK (Marumalarchi Dravida Munnerta Kazhagam) and DMDK (Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam) has provided these communities with additional options. An unprecedented mobilisation is taking place among intermediary castes in Tamil Nadu to hold political, and economic power as usual. Dalits and marginalised people on the other hand, are demanding equal footing in political, economic and other spheres. In recently held Assembly election (2021) DMK led alliance secured two thirds majority and it is pertinent to look at the caste calculus. Post poll survey reveals that the support of the Dalits, minorities and upper castes led to the DMK alliance win. Majority of the dominant backward castes favoured DMK led alliance where as AIADMK alliance owned only a lukewarm support. In South Tamil Nadu, a majority of the Thevar vote (55%) went in favour of the AIADK alliance where as Nadars, the Devendra Velalars and Christians favoured DMK-led coalition. In respect of the North zone AIADMK, along with the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) obtained a majority (54%) of Vanniyar voters. Parts of northern Tamil Nadu observed a polarisation of Mudaliar and Vanniyar votes in AIADMK alliance's favour. But this could not be regarded as a sweep in favour of AIADMK because DMK coalition

secured at least 4 out of every 10 votes. Major area of gain for the DMK-led coalition in North came from Dalit vote and offset the loss of the Vanniyar and Mudaliar support. In the West, the Gounder voted for AIADMK (.59%). But here, the support of the Arunthathiyar Dalits for DMK alliance was 68%. Dalit votes for DMK thus raised to 21%. Interestingly, all of the gains came from at the expense of AIADMK and other parties. But many activists have accused the AIADMK and DMK for maintaining silence on atrocities against Dalits. It is alleged that these parties remain silent on caste issues, fearing backlash from the intermediate or dominant caste population during elections.

7.6.10 Andhrapradesh

Caste plays a major role in electoral politics of Andhrapradesh . The two politically dominant communities active in the state politics are Reddy and Kammas. Though Kammas and Reddys are about 6 and 10 per cent respectively of the state's population, they are economically and politically powerful. A majority of the state's chief ministers were from these castes.

Caste composition in Andhrapradesh Assembly has undergone a drastic change for the last sixty years. There were good number of representation from the communities like Velamas, Brahmins and Kshatriyas in the Andhrapradesh Assembly. This has come down compared to 1952–1978 and 1983–2014. There were 69 Brahmin MLAs between 1952–1978 and the strength came down to 6 during 1983–2014. Further, there were 74 Khatriya MLAs in 1952–1978 which decreased to 68 during 1983–2014. These representations have been replaced to a great extent by other communities like Kamma, Reddy and Backward communities and marginally by Vysays and Velamas.

Traditionally, Scheduled castes and minorities always support congress party and its leaders which has now been replaced by the YSR Congress (Yuva Sramika Ryth Congress). l Backward castes used to support the TDP (Telegu Deham Party) which always had a Kamma leadership. However, of late, Jagan Mohan Reddy had been trying hard woo members of these communities and break into the Naidu vote bank. Aanother important caste in Andhrapradesh, is Kapus who call themselves as other backward castes and are equivalent to Kurmis or Bhumihars in North India. Kapus are economically and socially strong among backward classes and dominant in region of the Godavari delta. Kapus were a traditional vote bank of Congress. But it shifted its allegiance to TDP in the Assembly election 2014. In the Assembly

election of 2019 Kapus favoured YSR Congress. It is alleged that what seems to have contributed to the TDP's downfall is erosion of its Kama base and not being able to obtain the confidence of Kapus despite promising them backward class status. Further in 2019 Assembly election YSR CONGRESS did well not only among the Reddy but also among the Dalits, Voters from the poor economic class, young persons and farmers supported YSRCongress.

To retain the support of the caste groups, regional political parties, whenever they capture power to rule their respective states always resort to political power for furthering the interests of the caste groups. Due consideration is given to the caste of a person at the time of recruitment to political offices. Caste factor plays a major role in the process of ministry making and the allocation of portfolios.

7.7 Conclusion

In election studies in India, caste has become parameter of assessing the level of democracy. Some scholars have argued that increasing participation of various castes, especially the low caste, Dalits and OBCs are indicative of democratic upsurge or a silent revolution in India. Politicisation of caste has made caste an agent of democratic aspiration for the weaker sections. Despite adoption of democratic values which conceive of a society free from casteism caste continues to characterise politics in India and voting factor populace.

7.8 Summing Up

- Caste is regarded as the most ancient feature of the Indian social system. It has made its special place in the structure and functions of the Indian political system.

- Caste determines the nature, organization and working of the political parties. National as well as regional political parties are predominantly influenced by the caste factor. All political parties in India use caste as a means for securing votes in election. Caste considerations are given a great mileage in the selection of the candidate. Even parties known as secular parties emphasizes on the caste factor at the time of selection of candidates for a particular constituency.

● Caste groups use politics as means to secure their benefits. As a result, Politics has become caste ridden and castes have got politicized. But it is often alleged that caste acts as a divisive force in Indian politics. It provides a basis for the emergence of many interest teams within the Indian system every of that competes with each different cluster within the struggle for power. Thus, it results in unhealthy struggle for power and acts as a fictitious force.

● Caste has become a major cause of serious concern and become an obstacle to the national integration. The eradication of caste system is the only solution to overcome caste politics.

7.9 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Explain caste as a determinant of voting behaviour.

2. Discuss the relationship between caste and politics in India.

3. Explain the significance of caste in India.

4. Do you think that political parties are more important to castes and castes are more important to political parties? Explain

Long Questions :

1. How does caste influence voting behaviour?

2. What are the main features of caste?

3. Why does caste politics exit in India?

Short Questions :

1. Define caste.

2. Write a short note on the caste loyalty.

3. What do you mean by caste?

4. Briefly discuss the role of caste in Indian democracy.

7.10 Further Reading

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Unit - 8 ❑ Class as determinant factor in voting behaviour

Structure

8.1 Objectives

This unit discusses one of the most basic and important aspects of voting behaviour. After studying this unit Learners would be able to :

- understand the meaning and importance of class.

- analyse class as a determinant of voting behaviour.

- realise the relationship between class and politics.

8.2 Introduction

India's social structure is stratified along class lines. Historically, the British rule and its economic policies generated forces which created the basis for the emergence of classes and strata hitherto unknown in Indian society : the capitalists (individual, commercial and financial), working class living on wages in industrial and commercial establishments, and the English-educated middle classes (lawyers, doctors, professors,

journalists, managers and clerks) in urban areas; Zamindars, large-estate owners, peasant proprietors divided into upper, middle and lower strata, absentee landlords, tenants and sub tenants, agricultural laborers, modern money lenders. A notable aspect of this formation is that there was inter caste economic collusion and highly politicized inter-caste consolidation. After independence, the attempt of the national government to industrialize the country on a capitalist basis-public and private-and to transform the backward village communities into a viable prosperous sector of the national economy has led to the reshuffling of the class structure. Some new classes or strata have emerged. Inter-class and intra-class relations have assumed new dimension but in the countryside, class relations are very often medicated through castes or jatis. By using the criteria of ownership of property in the means of production as well as occupation income and status these principal classes may be described as : (1) the bourgeoisie comprising top industrial and business houses (2) the middle class which includes professionals and urban intellectuals (3) lower middle class comprising small traders and shop keepers, middle level employees, clerks and medium level professionals, (4) working class in the urban areas (skilled manual workers, semi-skilled and unskilled workers) (5) peasantry which constitute largest class. But in spite of existing of such classes in India, class identity and class consciousness in true sense of the terms have not yet developed. This is due to underdeveloped capitalist economy and presence of primordial group identities like caste, religion and ethnicity as the bases of political action.

8.3 Meaning and importance of class

The concept of class is very much related with the economic position of a group of people. In other words, classes are groups of people who share common interests. A class according to Marx will always view its own interests and will give priority to the interests and when doing this a conflict with another opposing class becomes inevitable. Hence consciousness, conflict and struggle are inevitably connected with the idea of class. Class has been defined by Lenin in relation to means of production in a particular society and the society is divided between class of owners of means of production and the non-owners. Mainly, classes occupy different positions in society depending on their possessions of wealth, Capital, Labour, Knowledge etc. Classes are different by their own interests. So capitalist class is concerned with the interest of capital and more profit. The workers are concerned with more wages and

better living. The middle class always wishes to reap more benefits from government. So, when they vote they are guided by their own interest. Workers, Peasants are more consolidated and Middle class is fragmented.

8.4 Class as a determinant of voting behaviour

Concept of class is relevant in studying voting behaviour. It is argued that political slogan plays an important role in determining the voting behaviour. In 1971 Loksabha election Congress raised the slogan of "Garibi Hatao" which drew attention of the middle and poor classes people and they favoured Congress immensely. Till 1960s Congress won parliament election at a stretch due to its adoption of social welfare schemes which benefitted lower middle and downtrodden classes. In West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala Left parties followed economic policies which gave relief to the workers and peasants of these states. These policies determined voter's behaviour and led to the historical presence of left parties in power for a period thirty-four years in West Bengal. Trinamul Congrss in West Bengal Assembly election 2021 created a landslide victory due to its adoption of a slew of welfare policies for the marginalised people .All these policies followed by the T.M.C are related to economic issues encompassing almost every major aspect of life ranging from food, shelter, education and health in Bengal. Government schemes like Kanyasree, Rupasree, Sabujsathi, Jubasree, Macanteen became very popular among the people belonging to poor class who extremely favoured Trinomool Congress in the recently held Assembly election.

8.5 Relationship between class and politics in India

In India elections are often fought on economic issues. Political parties attempted to satisfy several classes through different policies the industrialists, traders, and commercial sector – in one word the bourgeoisie always influence and put pressure on government for their own benefits. They support such parties who have pro-industry, business, and traders' interests in their agenda. The Corporate World favours neo-liberal reforms. The associations like ASSOCHEM and FICCI look after interests of capital and pressurise the government to that direction. Here voters vote in favour of non-left pro-bourgeois party. On the other hand the middle class is more concerned with economic development and civic amenities. Middle class voters are

guided by issues apart from allegiance to any particular political party. Party and Media play important role in shaping voting behaviour in urban areas. In rural areas Rich Peasants and Middle Peasants are concerned with more benefits from State, while landless labourers and poor masses are concerned with issues like poverty alleviation and rural development. Like Caste, Class may also be a determining factor in Voting Behaviour. It has been debated among Political Scientists whether Class plays any important role in Indian democracy and also whether it is important in determining voting behaviour ? we have seen class-based politics in 1950s, 1960s and in 1970s in many parts of the country. But class politics and class movements were only possible in the heydays of Left and Socialist ideological politics. In India, workers were united by and through Trade Unions and peasants by Kishan Sabhas. They played important role in organising voters in urban and rural areas along with different Left Parties fighting elections. Voters, as supporters and sympathisers of Left Parties, usually voted in favour of them from ideological constraint. Left ideology attracted many voters both from urban educated class, the intelligentsia, and the rural peasantry. From late1990s onward, Left influence gradually declined. This happened with decline of organised labour and rise of workers in informal sectors.

After decline and fall of Soviet Russia and in the phase of Globalisation Left bastion everywhere has been weakened. Left parties lost earlier ideological appeals. So, class factor becomes weaker in determining voting behaviour. Politics is a market place and classes are bargaining for their benefits. As a result, we find right, and upper caste parties gather so much support of these classes to come to power in 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha Elections.

8.6 Conclusion

Recently, a debate has arisen in the academic field on the question of importance of class in Indian politics. It is argued by a group of scholars that class has lost its relevance in determining the voting behaviour of the Indian people. It is advocated that co-relation between class and voting has become fuzzier to-day and notion of class has been eclipsed by caste. It is true that caste does constitute a very important factor in Indian politics, but caste does not alone matter in all elections. Class is very much alive and working in Indian politics. It would not be very surprising to say that class continues to affect our society and it surely matters in politics.

8.7 Summing Up

● Class came into existence in India due to economic policies of the British rulers. These classes were capitalists, working class and english educated middle classes. Indian industrialists remained aloof from the national movement for a long time due to fear of losing concessions from the British raj. Gradually, after receiving assurance from the nationalist leaders for operating business with freedom in independent India capitalists supported freedom movement.

● After independence, national economy led to the reshuffling of the class structure. New principal classes emerged. These classes are (a) the bourgeoisie the middle class which includes professionals and urban intellectuals (b) lower middle-class (c) working class in the urban areas (d) peasantry which constitute largest class. But yet in India concept of class identity and class consciousness have not developed. This is due to underdeveloped capitalist economy and presence of primordial group identities like caste, religion and ethnicity as the bases of political action.

● The historical conflict between capital and labour is yet to emerge as the principal determining factor in Indian politics. In spite of all these arguments, in India elections are fought on class-based politics. In recently held elections several parties both at the national and state level adopted social welfare policies to gain the support of the middle and poor classes people.

8.8 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. What are the different classes in India? What role they play in Indian politics?

2. Explain the relationship between political parties and different classes in India.

3. Discuss the reasons for the weakness of the working-class politics in India.

4. Discuss with particular reference to the countryside, the role of classes in our political system.

Long Questions :

1. What do you mean by class?

2. Explain class as a determinant factor in India.

3. Do you think that class is still relevant in Indian politics?

4. Are classes mainly organised by the left parties?

Short Questions :

1. Define Marxian concept of class.

2. Write short note on different classes of India.

3. How different classes are functioning in the political system of India?

8.9 Furthr Reading

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Unit - 9 ❑ Gender as determinant of voting behaviour

Structure

9.1 Objectives

This unit discusses the concept and meaning of Gender. After studying this unit Learners would be able to :

● explain the meaning and importance of gender.

● realise Gender as a determinant of voting behaviour.

● understand relationship between gender and politics in India.

9.2 Introduction

In a patriarchal society like ours we lack gender equality. So everywhere in India women are dominated and constrained by men in different forms. It becomes more ruthless in traditional society with established culture strengthening the perpetuation of patriarchy. It becomes difficult for women to come out and raise their independent voice. So, in most of the cases, especially in rural and backward areas their verdict is dictated verdict. It's dictated by men in their families or by leaders in village communities. once a decision is made by the family, any challenge to that

decision is taken as a challenge to culture, family and their values. If women protest, they become victim of violence.

0.3 Meaning and importance of Gender

Gender refers to social and cultural differences between males and females. It also denotes a range of identities. So, Gender is a social construction. It is different from Sex. Sex is biological difference between male and female. But by Gender we mean social and cultural attributes in a particular society. Gender varies from society to society and can change over time. So, Gender in 21st Century is clearly different and distinguished from 19th century by their existence role and initiatives in society. Women are much independent and more resistant to patriarchal domination.

9.4 Gender bias and electoral participation of women

The term gender bias is often used in respect of voting behaviour at the time of election. This in true sense of the term means women's participation in voting. Many research studies have been carried out on gender bias in political participation by analysing women voter turn out in Indian democracy. There is a dramatic increase in women participation in the elections since the 1990s, while men has remained more or less same. It would be pertinent to mention here that election can provide the best possible opportunity to ensure that women's voices are listened, their concerns are addressed and their potential contributions to maintain peace and tranquillity in democracy are maximized. However, There is a steady and a sharp decline in the gender bias in voting over time. In particular, we find that the sex ratio of voters (the number of women voters to every 1000 men voters) increased very impressively from 715 in the 1960s to 883 in the 2000s. According to a information published by Election Commission of India in 2011 and 2016 states particularly Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Kerala, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu have shown immense improvement in women's participation in voting. In 2019, Surprisingly, women's turn out in all these states exceeded than men. This reveals the fact that women are voluntarily exercising their constitutional right of adult suffrage across the states in India is testimony to the rise of self–empowerment of women to secure their fundamental right to freedom of expression. Woman's role in electoral participation has become so significant that political parties adopt welfare programmes and

policies which directly benefit women. These programmes include welfare schemes for women like scholarship for girls, better safety, reservation for women in government jobs, prohibition on alcohol, and subsidised water and electricity. Delhi's women voters play a major role in the Aam Aadmi Party's landslide victory in the 2020 Assembly elections. According to Lokniti CSDS survey (Centre for the study of Developing Societies) women voted to a great extent in favour of Aam Aadmi Party than their male counter parts 60% and 40% respectively .It was this massive gender gap that gave the party an enormous lead of 25 percentage points over the BJP among the women voters. The AAP government has adopted several welfare schemes to woo the female electorates like raise of gender budget at 8.6% in 2018-2019 much higher than the union government, free bus ride for women, water and electricity bill subsidies etc. BJP and its allies were also successful to improve their image and performance among the women voters in 2019 Loksabha election in comparison to 2014 by implementing the schemes like Ujjwala, Beti bachao, Beti Padhao, Jan Dhan, Such Bharat toilets. In Bihar Assembly election held from 28th October to 7th November 2020 women voters led to the victory of the National Democratic Alliance. In 166 constituencies where the women's turn out was more than the men's turn out, the BJP–JDU won 92 seats and other smaller constituents won 7 seats. In other words, 99 seats went in favour of the NDA where the women's turn out exceeded men's turn out. In Bihar, National Democratic Alliance (NDA) obtained 37.26% votes polled and came to power with a narrow victory with 125 seats. Nitish's pro-women policies like 50% reservation for women in Panchayats, the bicycle scheme, benefits for girl students till graduation, 35% reservation for women in government jobs, the state and Central government's direct cash benefit schemes, liquor prohibition have created a major impact upon the women.

Most interestingly, it is observed in recent years that women are taking part in voting process in large numbers in comparison to previous years. Electoral participation among rural women has risen by nearly 13 percentage point s between 1971 and 2014. Another enchanted fact is that women are not only stepping out more to vote, ,their voting preferences are no longer in line with those of their families or communities. The view of the younger women has been drastically changed, they are more educated than their mothers and do not accept the collective decisions of their village or head of the family or social group to caste vote for a given candidate or party. A survey was carried out by Lokniti-Centre for the Study of Developing

Society (CSDS) on 5,000 first time young female voters (between the ages of 18-22) in February 2019. This survey revealed that a little more than three out of five women opined that they would participate in voting process without being influenced by their families. The whole scenario indicates that women are much more politically conscious than before and very firm to caste their votes according to their own choice . Many women voters now believe that their vote matters in the formation of the government. It is thus clear that women are a voting block in their own right. Further, rise of women voters in the rural areas reveals the fact that women are now very much interested in politics.

9.5 Relationship between gender and politics

Participation of women in politics is highly important for their empowerment. Definitely, they are making inroads into formal politics. Though we have seen some very dominant and efficient women leaders in the form of Indira Gandhi, Mayawati and Jayalalitha, but still women participation in Lok Sabha is not worth mentioning. The participation of women as political leaders is not only low in India but around the world. As of now, only 24% of the global legislative members constitute women. And India, out of 193 countries, stands on 150th position in having the total percentage of women as legislators. In the lower house, women constitute 12.6% of total members and in the upper house, they constitute 11.5% of total members. What is more surprising is the fact that the least developing countries like Bangladesh stand in a better position than developed and developing countries like India in giving leadership to women.

State wise turn out of women in 2004 election to Loksabha shows that 43.9% women participated, and it was much lower than 1999. In 1999 73.2% women participated. In 1962 Loksabha election 22 women were elected and in 2009 only 59 were elected. No of women MLAs in West Bengal were 6 in 1971 and 35 in 2011. No of women members in leading parties in West Bengal show that the INC had 200,000, BJP 168,000 and CPIM had 25,440. But no of women participating in highest decision making in same year in leading parties in West Bengal shows that INC had 80, BJP 11 and CPIM had 85. It is no doubt participation of women is increasing in different states, but still much hurdle women face to participate in the political process. They don't find equal space to ventilate their opinions and

decisions. Only in 1993, in 73rd and 75th Constitutional Amendments provided for one-third representation of women in Local Government. Rather women in numbers participate in social movements in Civil Society. Left, Right and Centrist parties have women organisations. Now more women are coming up as supporters of these parties. Left parties always had women participation. Gradually, Congress and BJP are getting more women workers. But still males dominate in politics and in major decision making. Even women are elected at Panchayat level, they cannot work independently. Their voice and demands are thwarted by male counterparts.

9.6 Conclusion

Gender inequality is very much persisting in India. Women are considered to have monetary value and to be the property of male family members in a patriarchal society like India. Men control much of the lives of women, including social relationships. Thus, from the very beginning after birth a woman is growing up under the supervision of the head of the family who is a male person. She could not express her personal choice or opinion. Her every aspect of life is controlled by the members of the family as well as leaders of the society. Several measures have been taken by the government, but the mindset of the male persons more or less remain unchanged.

9.7 Summing Up

● Women in India as elsewhere are subject to gender bias and male domination. India belongs to a patriarchal society. This society has traditionally left the protection of women up to the arbitrary wishes of men who act as their guardians. According to the norms of the patriarchal society women have no rights to decide, once a decision is made by male member/ members of the family any opposition to that decision is taken as a challenge to protect the values of the family.

● Partticipation of women in the political process have been increased and definitely they are making inroads into formal politics. As a result women are participating into power structure. But obviously itis not so impressive even after almost 75 years of our independence. Though we have seen very

dominant and efficient women leaders in our country but still women participation in Lok Sabha is not worth mentioning. There have been several efforts made for higher inclusion of women in the political leadership, but till the men are not sensitized and the social and institutional barriers are not shattered, there is still a long road ahead for thier representation.

9.8 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Explain the meaning and importance of Gender.

2. Is gender becoming a major concern for political parties for winning election?

3. Examine the role of women in politics.

Long Questions :

1. Explain gender

2. Differentiate between gender and sex

3. Write a note on women's participation in electoral politics.

Short Questions :

1. Are women dominated in present society?

2. Write a short note on gender inequality

3. Briefly discuss the performance of women in Parliament Election.

9.9 Further Reading

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Unit - 10 ❑ Religion as determinant of voting behaviour

Structure

10.1 Objectives

After reading this unit the learners will be able to :

- define the concept of religion and politics.
- understand role of religion in politics.
- explain the interrelationship between religion and politics in India historically.
- outline the major aspects of religion and politics in contemporary India.

10.2 Introduction

Religion is a particular system of faith and worship. There is a belief in every religion that a superpower controls human life and nature. It refers to particular socio-cultural system of behaviours, practices, world view, texts, morals, ethics and organisations. Religion is viewed as a form of orientation to the secular world in the sense that it is a source of knowledge, values and norms of a society. It advocates an ideology a system of thought, located in the domain of the sacred. In the name of religion people become united. So, in case of voting this appeals much.

The concept of politics is not as complicated as that of religion. It is generally accepted that politics is a set of activities that are associated with making decisions in groups or other forms of power relations between individuals. In other words, political activities are those which are geared towards the attainment, acquisition maintenance and consolidation of power. Political activities also include those which use symbols and metaphors of the sacred domain and gain ends that are not religious. These are directed towards creating religious effects which is a definite striving for power. Since religion is considered as a dominant factor in people's lives, it emerges as an influential factor in politics too.

10.3 Understanding religion and politics

Religion and politics are concepts that represent two different and interdependent subsystems of society. Social scientist Peter Berger defines religion as a "set of beliefs that connects the individual to a community and in turn to a sense of being or purpose that transcends the individual mundane." The concept of politics denominates the regulative power to make collectively binding decisions, allocate resources, and solve social problems. Religion mobilizes religious sensibilities of people with a view to get their support to capture power; while politics uses intrigue, diplomacy, and makes attempt to win public opinion either democratically, if the system allows it, or usurps power with the assistance of army. Religion often claims that it derives power from the divine authority and therefore its mission is holy. Its basic goal is to motivate people for reform of the society under the spiritual guidance. On the contrary, politics develops its policy for the needs and requirements of society. Through the interpretation of history Social Scientists reveal three models

related to religion and politics. Firstly, When religion and politics both unite with each other in an attempt to monopolize political power, it is regarded as integration and sharing model. In the second model, politics after subduing and overpowering religion, uses it for its interest. Here, religion plays subservient role to politics. In the third model, both come into conflict with each other that subsequently lead their separation. In this model they appear as rivals and compete to struggle for domination. Research shows that neither secularism nor modernity has been successful in minimization of importance of religion in the modern world; so, politics and religion have been in continuous interaction.

10.4 Religion and Politics in India—A Historical Overview

In India throughout its history, it is observed that religion has been used for the achievement of political goals and aspirations. In our country religion always served politics and in the same way politics has also served religion. Here, it is pertinent to say that religion has failed to detach itself from politics. Thus, one finds politicisation of religion in some manifest or latent form at all stages of our history. Historically interaction between religion and politics is noticed in four phases. First phase extended from Indus valley civilization to advent of Islam, the second phase from the advent of Islam to the India mutiny of 1857, the third from 1857 to Indian independence in 1947, and the fourth is 1947 onwards. While there was close interplay between religion and politics during all these phases, the nature, the intensity, and the dynamics of this interaction was different during each of these phases. The sacred and secular perspectives have been inextricably interwoven in precolonial India. Indian society has witnessed continuous changes affecting the political system, occupational structures, culture, and religion. Religions in India have been the prime source of tension, innovation and even modernization. The use of religious idioms has been important in initiating change in India, particularly in political and reform movements.

The beginning of the nineteenth century has been marked by several social reform movements. We may refer some of this political and social reform movements. Though the British rule brought about far reaching changes in administration, transport, communication, and economy, it also disrupted traditional social ties and fragmented culture. It was at this point of time that Raja Rammohan Roy in Bengal, Dayananda Saraswathi in the North, Jyoti Rao Phule in Maharashtra introduced

reforms in education and socio religious pursuits and provided a perspective on national life. They drew upon Indian tradition as well as western knowledge. They were inspired by the rationalist and the liberal doctrines. They used the western methods of organization in sponsoring schools and colleges for men and women. Their aim was to raise the national consciousness in terms of culture. These reform movements led to a mass awakening which paved the way for the political arousal in the twentieth century. In the initial stages the struggle for independence was a product of educated middle classes in Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra and Tamilnadu. In addition to liberal education a religious upsurge stimulated the youth to participate in the freedom struggle. In Maharashtra, Bal Ganghadhar Tilak revived on a large scale the Ganapati puja which then served as venue for political meetings. In Bengal Rash Bihari Basu, Bipin Chandra Pal and their associates used religious symbols centred around the Durga puja to develop a political consciousness. Apart from these socio religious plays in these and other provinces of India conveyed political messages to the public. During the national independence movement Gandhiji used the Hindi notion of Ram Rajya to unify, integrate and mobilise most of the Indian population.

10.5 Role of religion in electoral politics in post-independence India

In post-independence India communalism has strengthen its position due to electoral politics including nomination of the candidates, campaigning, communal representation and so on. Almost all political parties are, in one way or the other, guilty of using religion-related issues for narrow political gains. This is perhaps because religion is a source of identity and a bonding factor in the lives of people, mainly in developing societies like India.' This is why religion becomes a very important factor in electoral politics. According to a prominent writer 'Caste, religious and linguistic communities remained as the most effective factors in political mobilization in India even after decades of the successful experiment of electoral democracy.' Hence, many candidates of various parties use communal strategies and tactics.

After independence Congress ruled the country almost twenty-five years at a stretch with a secular outlook. But between 1970n and 1990 congress faced greater opposition. By the mid-1990s the multiparty competition was emerged. Several regional parties came up which challenged the hegemony of the Congress party.

Religion thus becomes instrumental in the hands of the opposition of congress in electoral politics. Therefore, Indian election studies have mentioned the demise of the so-called "Congress system" in India, and the rise of communal voting patterns based on caste and religion. Here, some cases of the electoral function of religion during post-independence are mentioned.

10.5.1 Religion and vote bank politics

The term vote bank is often used in electoral politics in India. Vote bank politics is the practice of creating and maintaining vote banks through divisive policies, it encourages voters to caste votes on the basis of narrow communal considerations and self interest of certain groups, often against their better judgement. Vote bank politics is used as a tool to invoke regional and religious prejudices among the people of India. Congress among Muslims and Bharatiya Janata Party among Hindus have left no stone unturned to create vote banks. Religious places are often used for political propaganda. Religious sentiments of the people are also exploited for political mileage. Through Ajodhya movement BJP succeeded to consolidate Hindu votes and ultimately increased its seats in parliament from 2 in 1984 to 182 in the year 1999.

10.5.2 Use of religion in Electoral Politics of Jana Sangh and Janata Party

Bharatiya Jana Sangha was established in 1951 as the political wing of the Rashtriya Swayam Seavak Sangha.The party strongly propagated Hindu nationalism. Jana Sangh in Delhi made cow protection an election issue so that the followers of the Goraksha movement should have voted for Jana Sangh candidates. The RSS had mobilized large number of Hindu saints in 1967 and they had demonstrated in Delhi in support of their demand for a ban on 'cow slaughter' in India. Janata Party supported the rights of minorities and religious freedom to gain minorities 'favour so that it could attract some Muslims. For example, its manifesto for elections 1984 contained that the state government or the administration should not intervene with the exercise of religious freedom or engage in or permit propaganda against any element of the religious heritage of any religious group. The autonomy of the minority educational institution should be fully guarded against undue and motivated interference by the administration.

10.5.3 Religion and electoral politics of Congress-I

Under article 25 of the Indian constitution every citizen has the right to profess, practice and propagate their religion. But it is very much difficult to implement the

constitutional ideals into practice in a society as complex as India. However our politicians drove away from this path. They mix religion and politics with vengeance and forget the traditional values.The political role of Congress in early eighties was exploitation of religious sentiments to win over certain sections of Indian society. Indira Gandhi appeared as the protector of the minority particularly Muslims and the community had become a vote bank for congress party. Muslims helped Indira Gandhi to defeat the grand alliance in the decisive 1971 elections to the Lok Sabha. They left congress during the emergency and this was a contributory factor in her debacle in 1977. In his study of the 1980 election, Myron Weiner estimated that in constituencies with substantial Muslim populations the Congress vote in-creased from 29 per cent in 1977 to 38 per cent in 1980. "Without their [minorities'] support, Congress could not have won in 1980, and with their support Congress probably would have won in 1977". However, secularism in India began to face challenges with the revival and strengthening of religion-leaning political parties in the country. The Congress started to follow pro Hindu strategies. Indira Gandhi drew Hindu religious figures into the limelight through her patronage of religious institutions. Congress party during the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi and P. V. Narasimha Rao made compromises with militant Hindu organizations on Temple and Mosque controversies. Opening of temple locks, permitting the brick laying ceremony for the Ram temple, promising Ram Rajya if Congress won the 1989 elections and so on dictated by this thinking.

10.5.4 Hindutva as an Electoral Agenda of BJP

The BJP advocates Hindutva (Hinduism or Hinduness) as an ideology that sought to define Indian culture in terms of Hindu values, and it was highly critical of the secular policies and practices of the Indian National Congress (Congress Party). A significantly powerful section of Bharatiya Janata Party think that Hindi language and political support to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are fundamental elements of a true Indian identity.

From the very beginning BJP is following Hindutva identity politics, it has acquired a claim to appropriate enormous resources including icons, deities myths and symbols related to the great epic narrative of Hinduism.While propagating Ram as a mega religious icon, it is engaging with new, micro local religious cultural icons of various smaller marginalised communities. The great traditions are being used to create larger political narratives. The heterogeneity of Hindu culture has been reinterpreted to provide new meanings. For instance, the campaign to interpret the

local history of Arunachal Pradesh in Hindu religious terms has created an influence among the people of this region. The memories of Bali, Sugriva, Parashuram and Sita are being recreated to associate tribal communities with the broader Hinduvta fold. In fact Bjp raises Hinduvta issues not only because it is a fundamentalist party but also to make an appeal to Hindus to vote.

10.5.5 BJP and Ajodhya Issue

BJP had used the Ramjanambhoomi controversy as a powerful religious symbol to create a sense of unity among the different Hindu castes and it has succeeded in this venture.

The Ram Janmabhoomi movement is directly linked to the political rise of the BJP—from a mere two Lok Sabha seats in 1984 to 85 seats in 1989. BJP raised Ajodhya issue for political gain and had its reverberations across the country. It used all the devises for political use of Ramand drew up a plan to construct Ram Mandir. The demolition of the Babri mosque in the pilgrimage town of Ajodhya enhanced 'the support of the BJP among Hindus and was followed by intensified efforts on the part of its leadership to consolidate the Hindu vote with a view to capturing power in the next elections. Ultimately it captured 182 seats in 1999 Loksabha election.

10.6 Conclusion

In the Preamble to the Indian Constitution, it is stated that our state is a secular state. But religion plays a very significant role in Indian politics and as a result it becomes an important determinant of political behaviour in general and voting behaviour in particular. There are parties like Muslim League, BJP and Shiv Sena who deliberately use religion to win over elections. Extreme right and even liberal parties take recourse to religion to catch votes. Even INC in 1984 election appealed for national integration with Hindu overtone. In 2006 Babri Masjid was demolished., The aggressive Hindutva phase began by attacking "pseudo secularism' of Congress. We find that almost all parties except the Lefts use religion to impress voters. This religious undertone among right liberal parties and religious overtone among extreme right parties and organisations are clearly visible. This open vindication of secularism has started a new phase in Indian politics different from earlier liberal phase. Role of religion in politics becomes stronger and it plays now more dominant and determining role in Voting Behaviour.

10.7 Summing Up

● Religion is an important social structure in most societies, and it has influence among the masses which is historical and is also used in politics and has not been separate from it. In India, although the level of coexistence and tolerance has by far enhanced, in the domain of politics, religion still is important, because of its social basis among the masses.

● Political parties and political leaders often use religion which create an impact on the voting behaviour of the masses. In a country like India, religious ties and beliefs are so strong that parties try to reap benefits from it. From 2014 onward we find a clear majoritarian turn in Indian politics with manifestation of overall domination of religion.

● BJP has started wooing Hindus to come to power. This open vindication of Secularism has started a new phase in Indian politics different from earlier liberal phase. Role of religion in politics becomes stronger and it plays now more dominant and determining role in Voting Behaviour. It is easy to convince voters by appealing to their religion. Also, this overshadows grave economic and social problems. So, religion becomes major determinant in Voting Behaviour in a traditional country like ours as well as the best weapon in the hands of ruling elites to conceal the truth.

10.8 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Explain religion as a determinant of voting behaviour.

2. Discuss interrelationship between religion and politics.

3. Analyse role of religion in electoral politics in India.

4. Do you think that religion acts as a vote bank for political parties?

Long Questions :

1. Discuss meaning and importance of religion.

2. Do you think that the importance of religion is increasing to-day in India

3. Explain the role of religion in India.

Short Questions :

1 Define religion.

2 Write a short note on religion as a determinant of voting behaviour

3. Briefly discuss importance of religion in India.

4. Explain Why our state is a secular state?

10.9 Further Reading

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3. Moyser, George ; Politics and Religion in the Modern World. Routledge, London, 1991.

4.   Hazarika, Biraj ; *Voting Behaviour in India And Its Determinants* : Web

5. Roy, Pranoy and Supariwala, Dorab. R. ; *The Verdict* : *Decoding India's Elections*. Penguin Random House India, Haryana, 2019.

6. Mofidi, Suboh ; The political Function of Religion in Contemporary India (Hinduism and Islam). Swastik Publications, Delhi, 2015.

Module - 3

Unit - 11 ❏ Politics of Secession and Accommodation

Structure

11.1 Objectives

After reading the unit the learners will be able :

● to define and analyse the concept of secession in post-independence India.

● to analyse different factors which were responsible for the rise of secessionist movements in India.

● to present a broad over-view of different important secessionist movements in India.

● to understand the politics of secession.

● to analyse different policies undertaken by the Indian government to accommodate these demands.

11.2 Introduction

Secession that is, when regions seek separate nationhood - has been aptly called a state shattering form of self-determination. Secession (derived from the Latin term secession) is the withdrawal of a group from a larger entity, especially a political entity, but also from any organization, union or military alliance. Threats of secession

can be a strategy for achieving more limited goals. It is therefore a process which commences, once a group proclaims the act of secession (example- declaration of independence). It could involve a violent or peaceful process, but these do not change the nature of the outcome, which is the creation of a new state or entity– independent from the group or territory it seceded from.

Whether a government is democratic or authoritarian does not determine its attitude towards secession. Democratic India and authoritarian China both reject plebiscite as an instrument to decide the claims of regions to nationhood. Their positions vis-à-vis such claims are based on legal and historical arguments, and not on the wishes of the people living in the region. Politicians uncertain of popular support might be more inclined to pursue an aggressively nationalistic agenda, and view all regional claims as threats to national unity.

International factors are important in determining the success or failure of a region's claim to nationhood. Successful secessions do not occur only because of regional movements. Changes in the international environment play a decisive role. In South Asia, this became apparent in 1971 when India intervened in Bangladesh's liberation struggle and ensured its success. Changes in the international institutional environment have in recent years made available attractive alternatives to state-shattering forms of self-determination.

11.3 Politics of Secession in India

India is a land of continental dimension in which diversities abound. The varied ethno communities – linguistic, religious, tribal groups and cultural - are mostly regionally concentrated. Regionalism generally refers to the assertion of distinct identities and interests of the ethno communities living in specific geographical areas of the nation. Regionalism in India is however a complicated problem and the problem is compounded by the existence of sub-regions within regions. There are about 60 sub-cultures and sub-regions marked by their homogeneity and sub-national identity within the framework of seven natural regions of India.

The makers of the new Indian state, probably was aware of the dilemma of building a nation-state in a plural society, explicitly rejected language or religion or any other ethnic criterion for reorganisation of the provinces and the princely states. Instead they devised an overarching political arrangement in the form of a non-unitary state called the Indian Union consisting of several provincial states organised

on the principle of federalism. During the early years of Jawaharlal Nehru's premiership, the policy-makers approached the question of national unity and legitimacy of power of the Indian state through the Constitution imbued with unitary power and inspired by a centralising ethic. But within five years of adoption of the Constitution the national government had to reorganise the provincial states into language-based states to satisfy the growing aspiration of major linguistic groups, living by and large within identifiable regions. Later on, more states have been created.

The most often cited example of 'language devotion' is the instance of Tamil regionalism, which engendered the Tamil regional narrative with powerful notions of community and homeland. The movement gained momentum in the 1950s and the 1960s. But subsequently the demand for a separate Dravida Nadu became more moderate, and eventually the theme of independence disappeared altogether. Tamil speakers acquired a state of their own and regional political parties – offshoots of the Dravidian movement – which continuously formed the state government in Tamil Nadu since 1967.

However, since the closing decade of the 70's there has been a resurgence of regionalism which is manifested in new unrest, in movements for protection of language and cultural distinctiveness, particularly within a number of states; for greater state autonomy; for the formation of new states or autonomous regions; and for reservation in education and employment for 'sons of the soil'. This is expressed in the growth of regional parties and regionalisation of national parties. Regional consciousness is a phenomenon of the era of mass politics which has increased political consciousness through expanding political participation. The forces of nationalisation and centralisation – embedded in the federal state structure of our Constitution have reinforced in the states, particularly in the non-Hindu states, a consciousness of their distinct cultural identity. Such consciousness is nourished by increased competition for a share in the national cake which is aggravated by slow economic growth, by widening regional and sub-regional economic and social disparities, and the sense of relative deprivation they engender. The claims of various regionally-concentrated ethno communities, or of those that are widely dispersed all over India, have a solid regionally concentrated core, which get rooted in secular economic interests. These interests when articulated in the language of ethnicity; becomes a demand for political autonomy or a separate state for fulfilling the aspirations of the ethnic groups involved. For the politicised ethnicities both these

demands are linked, although they emphasise more on culture (as in Assam) or religion (as in Punjab) as a rhetoric than economy. Thus has arisen the complicated phenomenon of regionalism and sub-regionalism, giving birth to political parties, more parochial in their affiliations than nation-wide parties.

Politics of regionalism and ethnicity is partly explained by India's regional/ cultural diversity. It is also a response-cum-reaction to the excesses of the homogenizing trend of the Indian state. The drive towards greater centralisation and personalisation of power by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi and the gradual disintegration of the Congress-dominated system and the increased intervention by the Centre in states, particularly run by non-Congress parties, have led to the assertion of regionalism which manifests itself through opposition to Congress – in regional parties like the Akali Dal in Punjab, DMK and AIDMK in Tamil Nadu, Telegu Desam in Andhra Pradesh and in demands by all non-Congress parties for greater regional autonomy, revision of centre-state relations and the regionalisation of state politics and party system. In1980s regionalism, as it expresses itself culturally in the demand for greater state autonomy, had led to the North-South dichotomy.

Regional aspirations have however been manifested in different ways and for different reasons and continue to persist in some parts of the country. Political aspirations of Sikhs in Punjab and the tribal people in the north eastern region have been fulfilled through a prolonged and violent process. But several issues specific to these ethno communities have been neglected for long, creating problems for the central government. In the tribal regions of north east problems have been severe because of the incursions of non-tribals into tribal lands as the Indian state has used its powers, for economic development, to penetrate into tribal territories and has, in the process, become identified with those who have long been engaged in appropriating tribal lands and rights. Tribals – economically, culturally and politically threatened, have responded with violence. The formation of tribal states has also left some boundary disputes not being recolved. The National Socialist Council of Nagaland had been carrying on terrorist activities for a long time for greater Nagaland through unification of Naga–inhabited areas of Nagaland's neighbouring states.

In Tripura the influx of Bengali refugees has shifted the ethnic balance and reduced the tribals to a minority. Efforts to protect tribal land and culture led to the formation of Tripura Upajati Autonomous Council. However, short of real powers,

this Council failed to fulfil the aspiration of the tribals. In Manipur and Meghalaya, student-led agitation against 'foreigners' Bengalis and Nepalese – have taken their lead from Assam.

The Asom Gana (People's) ethno community which has entrenched itself in Assam state after a protracted ethno communal struggle in recent years has a distinctive feature of its own. It is trying to disenfranchise and deport as foreigners, Bengali-speaking settlers from Bangladesh who have declared Asomiya to be their mother tongue. The Asom Gana Parishad virtually banished the Congress party from Assam with its slogan 'Assam for the Assamese', has been outflanked in the cause of Assamese provincialism by an armed secessionist movement of Assamese Hindus, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) which was troublesome enough to invite the intervention of the Indian army. However, from the turbulent waters of the Assamese provincialism there emerged yet another, unrelated ethnic demand of armed Bodo tribesmen for their own 'Bodoland' state. Furthermore, the Bengali-speaking Cachar district also seek their separate identity.

In Punjab too, the Sikh sub-nationalist aspired to establish Sikhistan in the pre-independence years and Khalistan in the post-independence period, in which the Punjabi Hindu community was required to acknowledge Sikh ideology and social and political supremacy of the Sikhs. This resulted in a prolonged struggle to get a Sikh majority state, which culminated with the formation of two separate states; Sikh majority Punjab and Hindu majority Harayana. However agitation continued over the sharing of river water, common capital (Chandigarh) and demarcation of territores. This led to a crisis due to the Centre's delay and insensitivity, the cynical political manipulation by the Congress and factionalism in the Akali Dal to remain in power in the state, strengthened the hands of the extremists; Sant Jarnail Singh Bhrindrawal being their 'godfather', who went on a killing spree for the realisation of Khalistan, an independent Sikh nation state. The abrogation of the Rajiv-Longowal accord, the killing of Sikhs in 1984 in Delhi after the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by two of her Sikh guards and elsewhere gave the Sikhs a minority consciousness they never possessed. The Central government might have eliminated extremism from Punjab, yet political problem of Punjab in which Sikhs were excluded from power still looms in the horizon.

The cultural distinctiveness, economic and social disparities that nourish regionalism at the state level are found within a number of states. The problem of Nepali speaking Gorkha ethno community settled in North Bengal can be highlighted here. They had migrated from Nepal to work as tea cultivation workers to become

majority. Partly encouraged by the Congress government in the Centre they agitated for a separate 'Gorkhaland' state, in which they would constitute the majority. Under the leadership of Subash Ghising and his party Gorkha National Liberation Front the hills was in fire in the 1980's. The movement could be stalled with the formation of autonomous Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council, however it gained impetus once again, under one time follower of the predecessor – Bimal Gurung, from the beginning of the 21st century. Formation of yet another autonomous council failed to fulfil the aspiration of the Gorkhas. The tribals of the Chota Nagpur Plateau also launched a movement to form a separate state in which they would become the majority. This resulted in the formation of an autonomous council, which failed to satisfy the tribals, which resulted in the formation of a separate state of Jharkhand in the year 2000 (by diving Bihar).

With heightened political consciousness and increased competition for jobs and education opportunities, movements for separate statehood or for autonomous regions within a state also exist in different parts of India. Some examples of these kind of movements are in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, Chattisgarh in Madhya Pradesh, Telengana in Andhra Pradesh and Uttarakhand in northern hills of Uttar Pradesh. These movements have led to the creation of Uttaranchal and Chattisgarh as states, as the millennium was coming to a close. Telengana gained the statvs of statehood in the year 2014.

Nativism, another variety of ethnic regionalism, has arisen in regions where culturally distinct migrants from outside the states are seen as re-blocking employment and education opportunities for the locals. Its first manifestation was the Shiv Sena which emerged in the 60's in Mumbai, followed by Kannada Chaluvaligars in Bangalore and then in Assam which grew in the 1970s. The nativist movements demanded that the 'sons of soil' of a particular state should be given overwhelming preference in jobs and other economic opportunities over the migrants. The Shiv Sena organised the frustrated educated lower-middle class Maharashtrians in Mumbai and started violent movement along fascist lines against the South Indians accusing them for taking away jobs. Shiv Sena succeeded because of the peculiar demographic profile of Mumbai where approximately 43% of the population are Maharashtrians but they are proportionately less represented than the South Indians (8%) in white collar jobs. Shiv Sena however could not swing the youths in other metropolitan areas of Maharashtra because these areas did not share the same demographic structure as that of Mumbai. The Assam agitation was also nativist as the Assam

Students Union targeted first the Bengalis and then the Bangladeshi refugees. The demographic and occupational profiles of Asssam led to the emergence of such movements. Many of the states have enacted laws and adopted practices providing preferences for jobs and educational opportunities on the basis of local residence without reference to Parliament which alone has the constitutional authority to enact such laws. The *mulki* (meaning natives) in the Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh in the late 60's and early 70's triggered the demand for a separate Telengana state, was also nativist in character. The three nativist movements, despite differences in their regional, linguistic and urban/rural context, have origins in the discontent arising from frustrated aspirations or perceived limited life-chances among groups whose members seek desirable positions in the modern middle class sector of the economy. Thus, secessionist movements in India is multi-dimensional phenomenon which has manifested in various forms and has provided the dynamics in Indian politics. These are hard facts in the Indian political scene.

11.4 Accommodation as a State Policy

During the early years after independence – following the partition and the merger of what were native states during British colonial rule – India's provinces and their boundaries seemed incoherent. There was an unmistakable provisional quality to those borders. The provinces were classified into parts A, B, and C states: colonial era provinces, former native states or groups of native states and a third mixed category of smaller territories. It was generally expected that these units would be reorganised. During India's anti-colonial resistance, the Indian National Congress had committed itself to a postcolonial political order of linguistically defined regions. As far back as 1922, it began organizing the branches of the movement not along the colonial structure of presidencies and provinces, but along language lines. In 1928 a committee headed by Motilal Nehru outlined a vision of a future polity organized into linguistic states. But after independence, the Congress rejected linguistic reorganization despite its previous commitment to it. Under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the post-Independence Congress was initially unwilling to bring these identities into the decision-making process at the centre and politicise them, fearing that it might threaten the unity of the fledging new nation. However, the Constituent Assembly had left the task of reorganizing state boundaries to future Parliaments, giving it unlimited powers to take on the task. Eventually, pushed by powerful political pressures from below, Nehru reversed his position on linguistic reorganization because of electoral considerations.

Alfred Stephan's *Arguing Comparative Politics,* puts Indian federalism in a very different context from the literatures on comparative federalism. Distinguishing between 'holding together' and 'coming together' federations, he argues that US style 'demos constraining' federalism is unsuitable for a 'robustly politically multinational' country like India. Requirements of supermajorities – the support of two-thirds of state legislatures for constitutional amendments – make the United States an extreme outliner on the demos-constraining end of federation and far from the norm. Stephen showers praise on Article 3 of the Indian Constitution, which allows Parliament to create new states and redraw state boundaries with a simple majority, barely consulting the relevant state. This is unthinkable in a 'coming together' federation, which must be 'demos constraining' in order to protect state rights. Stephan praisid the way India's political classes used the Constitution's demos-enabling feature. He marvels at the 'relatively consensual manner' in which 'most of the boundaries of the states in India were redrawn between 1956 and 1966, and later a process of creating new tribal states in the North-east was begun.' The demos-enabling features of Indian federalism, Stephen believes, explain 'the survival of India as the world's largest multi-cultural, multi-national democracy.' This feature has 'allowed the majority at the centre, to respond to majority demands from states for greater linguistic and cultural autonomy.' Had India been a unitary state, 'neither the majority, nor the minorities, would have had this constitutional flexibility available to them.'

By the 1960's, it appears that a few discernible rules, albeit not formally articulated, had emerged in the Indian Central governments approach to regional demands. Suh demands had to first, stop short of secession; second, groups making demands had to be linguistically or culturally defined – and not defined by religion; third, be backed by popular support; and forth, be acceptable to linguistic minorities when it is a matter of breaking up a multilingual state. However, there was expectations; and in any case these rules were not applied to the two later waves of reorganization. The special regional dispensation of small and financially dependent states in the northeast India, for instance, was the product of a national security-driven policy process in a border region inhabited by many minority groups. The considerations were also very different when the states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Uttaranchal were created in 2000. While the demands were old, the interests of political parties in the highly competitive political environment of the period pushed the process. According to one scholar, the fact that no trans-border regional

community was invoked and there was no perceived national security threats facilitated the process. 'Ethnic communities in the three new states,' writes Maya Chadda, 'were not connected with foreign enemies or cross border nationalities, unlike in Punjab, Kashmir and Assam.' To her, this latest wave of state reorganization illustrates the value of flexibility that the Constitution gives to the Parliament. The Constitution, she points out approvingly, 'said little about the kind of federal units the Indian Union was to have, or the basis on which they would be created, i.e., geography, demography, administrative convenience, language, or culture. That decision was left entirely to the wisdom of the Parliament.'

The argument for holding together federation being demos enabling is based on the idea of reconciling diversity of policymaking efficacy. However, efficacy can sometimes be in conflict with legitimacy. This idea of divided sovereignty and citizens with dual allegiance – to the national and regional political communities – is central to the federal vision of a legitimate political order. Federalism, as a political principle understood as an aggregate of politically organized territories is arguably the opposite of nation-state. In that sense federation building, and not nation building, is the appropriate project for India. The relative success of the first wave of state reorganization in India was because it was built on the principle of 'security for territorially concentrated linguistic groups' and dual, but complementary allegiances. However, later reorganizations, including 'the belated recognition of a Punjabi state,' were not based on the same principle. A Punjabi Punjab was not acknowledged till 1966, when Haryana was separated from Punjab, because the demand came from a religiously defined – and not a language-based group. Arguably, the decisions and non-decisions of India's central political elites, made possible by the demos-enabling features of Indian federalism, account also for some and most serious regional challenges that India has faced. The persistent political turmoil in northeast India provides another example. The national security-driven process of making and breaking states has reinforced the idea of de facto ethnic homelands, in the imagination of both local activists and tacticians of conflict management, perpetuating a politics of violent displacement and ethnic cleansing.

11.5 Conclusion

In the history of postcolonial India, a number of regional or ethnonational movements have turned into armed independence movements. Confrontations between

security forces and militant regionalist have been deadly. Civilians have paid a heavy price, accounting for serious blots in India's human rights record. Yet, India has also been relatively successful in taming these aspirations. The best-known success story is the Dravidian movement of the 1960s. India's success is explained this way: virtually all the strategic decisions facing multinational India, the rejection of unitary state, the acceptance of multiple but complementary political identities, the spreading of regional languages and the maintenance of English as a link language, the maintenance of polity-wide careers, the constitutional espousal of equal distance and respect for all religions, and the creation of mutually beneficial alliances between polity-wide and regional parties, India made choices and alliances, especially in South India, that increased the chances of peaceful democracy in a potentially conflictual setting.

Regional or self-determination-movements in India are said to have followed an inverse 'U' curve. Heightened mobilization of group identities are followed by negotiations, and eventually such movements decline as exhaustion sets in, some leaders are repressed, others are co-opted, and a modicum of genuine power sharing and mutual accommodation between the movement and the central state authorities is reached. The different trajectories of the Tamil, Sikh, and Kashmiri movements the first being accommodated, and the latter two turning into violent confrontations between the state and militant regionalists – is the result of changes in the level of institutionalization of the Indian state, and a sense of security of leaders at the helm.

11.6 Summing Up

- Secession is a state shattering form of self-determination.

- It is withdrawal of a group from a larger entity, especially a political one, but also from any organization, union or military alliance.

- In India there are about 60 sub cultures and sub-regions marked by their homogeneity and sub-national identity within the framework of seven natural regions.

- During the initial years the policy-makers approached the question of national unity and legitimacy of power of the Indian state through the Constitution - imbued with unitary power and inspired by a centralizing ethic.

- But within five years of adoption of the Constitution the national government had to reorganize the provincial states on the basis of language to satisfy the growing aspiration of major linguistic groups.

- Sine the closing decade of the 7 0' s there has been a resurgence of regionalism which is manifested by new unrests, in movements for protection of language and cultural distinctiveness, particularly within a number of states.

- Indian government accommodated these secessionist tendencies by adopting a policy of federation building and not nation building.

11.7 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Give a broad over-view of different secessionist movements in India.

2. Analyse the different policies undertaken by the Indian government to accommodate these demands.

Long Questions :

1. Discuss the factors which can lead to secessionism.

2. Write a note on the demand for reorganization of states on the basis of language.

Short Questions :

1. What do you mean by secession?

2. In which year did Telengana become the 29th state of India?

11.8 Further Reading

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Unit - 12 ❑ Secularism in India : Concept and Debates

Structure

12.1 Objectives

After reading the unit the learners will be able :

● to define and analyse the concept of secularism in the specific context of political institutions and practices in post-independence India.

● to understand the western concept of secularism.

● to present a broad over-view of the historical evolution of secularism in India.

● to understand the relationship between secularism and minority rights with special reference to the Shah Bano case.

● to analyse the different debates pertaining to Indian secularism.

12.2 Introduction

Alongside democracy, federalism and socialism, secularism was one of the foundational principles on which the leaders of the new state of independent India,

set out in the middle of the twentieth century, to create an economically developed and socially just society. Democracy was of course the legacy of the freedom movement and the animating spirit of the Constitution adopted in 1949; it found prominent mention in its Preamble. The federal structure of the state - an imperative in view of the large size and huge population of the country and its regional diversities - was also laid out in great detail in the Constitution. Socialism and secularism did not find direct mention despite the efforts of many members to have them written into it. B. R. Ambedkar, the presiding deity as it were of the drafting committee, considered it unwise to constitutionally bind the future generations to a socio-economic agenda that may have to be changed with the passage of time.

As for secularism, the liberty of 'belief, faith and worship', inscribed in the Preamble and spelled out in a number of clauses in the chapter of fundamental rights was obviously considered adequate enough for the word secularism also not to be mentioned in the Constitution. But, with rising communal hostility between different religious groups, the word 'secularism' was incorporated into the Indian Constitution by the 42nd Amendment in 1976.

12.3 Meaning of Secularism

Secularism is a Western ideal, a gift of the European enlightenment of the 18th century. It was born out of a long struggle between the Church and the state, which culminated in the triumph of state supremacy over all mundane affairs. A state by definition became secular, concerned with the affairs of the world, not bound by a religious prescription or rule. The religious realm was separated from the secular realm. Secularism which has been spawned over three centuries in the Western World has its intellectual anchorage in rationalism, scientific temper and universal humanism, and expresses itself in essentially in non-religious modes of thought and action.

Secularism is defined as pertaining to things non-spiritual, having no concern with religious or spiritual matters, anything which is distinct, opposed to spiritual or ecclesiastical. It is also defined as an attempt to establish an autonomous sphere of knowledge free from supernatural presuppositions. But, it should be pointed out that there is no precise or formal definition of secularism. There is much ambiguity in regard to interpretation of this term.

12.4 Western concept of Secularism

Much of the ambiguity that attends these debates can be traced to the fact that scholars tend to employ two different interpretations of secularism as a hinge for their respective critiques/defence of the concept. These two meanings are that of secularism as the separation of state and religion, and secularism as equality of all religions. The first interpretation holds that (a) that the state shall not concern itself with religious beliefs, practices and institutions; (b) that the state shall not be associated with a particular religion; (c) that the state shall permit freedom of conscience, belief and religion for all its citizens; and (d) that the state shall not discriminate between citizens on the basis of their religious beliefs. This understanding of secularism comes to us from the history of Western Europe, during the course of which the domain of state policy and that of religion was separated. In particular it has come to us from the United States, in the formulation of President Thomas Jefferson that a 'wall of separation' exists between the state and religion. Jefferson in effect referred to the First Amendment to the Constitution of the US. The established clause to the First Amendment prohibits the establishment of a national religion by the Congress, and prohibits preference for one religion over another. The second part of the clause, known as the 'Free Exercise Clause', states that the Congress cannot prohibit the free exercise of religion. The freedom to believe is part of the general grant of freedom to expression, assembly and association. The second interpretation of secularism, as detailed below, was generated in and through the Indian historical experience; that the state shall treat all religious groups equally.

12.5 Historical Evolution of Secularism in India

In India, however, matters are different. Few would contest that religious sensibilities dominate individual and collective lives to some extent. Politicization of religious identities has inexorably propelled religion into the public sphere. By the 1920's, at the very time when Mahatma Gandhi set out to forge a major mass movement that could take on colonialism, the politicization of religious identities, whether in the form of the Muslim League or that of the Hindu Mahasabha, could have hampered the project of building a pan - Indian freedom struggle. Mahatma Gandhi looked for a principle that could bind people who subscribed to different faiths together, and which could weld them into a mass movement. The principle he

found in the doctrine of *sarva dharma sambhava*, which can be read as 'equality of all religions' or 'all religions should be treated equally'. Given to Mahatma Gandhi's religiosity, the notion of sarva dharma sambhava was not only a pragmatic principle designed to bring people together, it was also a normative principle that recognized the value of religion in people's lives. On the other hand for Pandit Nehru, profoundly uneasy as he was with the kind of political passions that religious identities had the power to evoke, secularism meant something else altogether. Nehru's preferred notion of secularism was that of *dharma nirpekshata*, or that the state would not be moved by religious considerations in enacting policy. It is therefore not surprising that public debate on the issue has been polarized between those who subscribe to the Nehruvian meaning of secularism, and those who subscribe to the meaning that Gandhi gave to the concept.

However, Pandit Nehru continued to believe that the state could abstract the domain of policymaking from that of religion is debatable. For, the recurrent communal riots which culminated in the frenzy of Partition proved that religious prejudices, more than religious sensibilities, had become a constituent feature of Indian politics. To ignore this would have been bad historical understanding as well as bad politics. In the process of coming to terms with this unpalatable reality of Indian politics, Pandit Nehru's understanding of secularism came much closer to the notion of sarva dharma sambhava. Nehru, who by that time had become India's first Prime Minister, made this clear on various occasions. First, secularism did not mean "a state where religion assuch is discouraged. It means freedom of religion and conscience, including freedom for those who may have no religion." Second, for Nehru, the word secular was not opposed to religion. "It is perhaps not very easy even to find a good word for secular. Some people think that it means something opposed to religion. That obviously is not correct. What it means is that it is a state which honours all faiths equally and gives them equal opportunities; that, as a state, it does not allow itself to be attached to one faith or religion, which then becomes the state religion."

For Nehru, the concept of the secular state thus carried three meanings : (a) freedom of religion or irreligion for all, (b) the state will honour all faiths equally, and (c) that the state shall not be attached to one faith or religion, which by that act becomes the state religion. The creed of secularism therefore discouraged fears that one group had the right to stamp the body politic with its ethos, even if it is a majority. Conversely, a religious group would not be disprivileged in any way even though it happens to be in a minority. In effect, the meaning that secularism acquired

in the Indian context added one more dimension to the generic concept of secularism: not only the recognition of faith, but the equal treatment of all faiths.

This understanding has been reinforced in various ways. Crossman and Kapur suggested that the notion that secularism means equal respect for all religions has come to dominate legal and political thought. The former Chief Justice of India P. B. Gajendragadkar, for instance, interpreted secularism as (a) the state does not owe loyalty to one religion; (b) it is not irreligious or anti-religious; (c) it gives equal freedom to all religions and (d) that the religion of the citizen has nothing to do in the matter of socio-economic problems. Justice Sawant emphasised that the state is enjoined to accord equal treatment to all religions and religious sects and denominations.

Accordingly, the judges ruled that the destruction of the Babri mosque by a mob, which had been encouraged in this task by government and party officials, was a clear violation of the equal treatment principle. Secularism, ruled Justice Sawant, was a part of the basic structure and the soul of the Constitution, and could not be infringed in any way. For these reasons the court upheld the dismissal of four state governments ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the imposition of President's rule in these states.

Though on other occasions the decision of the Court have proved controversial- such as the famous 1996 'Hindutva' judgement, where Justice Verma endorsed Hindutva as representing 'a way of life' in the subcontinent and therefore as not violative of secularism-on balance the Court has upheld the understanding of secularism as equal treatment of all religions. The matter, however, has not been settled, and we shall see, interpretations of secularism continue to swerve between the notion of secularism as the separation of state and religion, and the notion that secularism implies equal respect for all religions.

Regrettably the communalization of society has been paralleled by the communalization of the polity. In 1984 the state came to be seen as complicit in the genocidal attacks on the Sikh minority. In 1992, not only was the Central government inactive when mobs demolished and the Babri mosque both the central and the state governments failed to prevent massive riots, which, following the demolition, targeted members of both the communities. In 2002 in Gujarat, about 2000 Muslims were killed in a massive pogrom against the minority. The pogrom followed the death of a number of Hindus when a train compartment in which they were travelling was set on fire by a crowd of Muslims in Godhra station. The inability of the state

to prevent communal riots and the role of the state officials in fomenting communalism, has necessarily caused a great deal of consternation and apprehension. Given the communalism in Indian society and the polity, it is not surprising that scholars wonder whether secularism is appropriate for the country at all.

Ashis Nandy argued that since the modern state seeks to dominate individual and collective lives, it not only banishes rival ideologies such as religion to the periphery, it hierarchizes the two domains by typing religious affiliations as inferior ways of being. This impoverishes understanding within the modern public sphere as well as inhibits dialogue between the two spheres, which might otherwise have proved enriching for both. Second, because religious identities have been exiled to the metaphorical closet, they have come to be frozen in time. This in turn inhibits a dialogue within and between religions. But since religious identities constitute an endearing feature of humanity, Nandy seems to say, they must perforce make their appearance in the public sphere. This is made possible through the democratization of the polity. The problem is that religious identities, which are regarded as de trop by formal politics, make their appearance either in the form of religious instrumentalism, or religious fundamentalism.

T. N. Madan is often lumped together with Nandy as anti-secularist. The four core arguments of Madan are as follows: it was possible to privatize religion in the West because developments internal to Christianity- such as the Reformation- facilitated the process. In South Asia, however, major religious tradition do not assume any radical antinomy between the sacred and the secular. Second, for the inhabitants of the region, religion as the doctrine of overarching ends is more important than any other social or cultural factor. This is because religion establishes the place of individuals in society, and because it gives meanings to their lives. It is both moral arrogance and political folly to impose the ideology of secularism on believers. On the contrary, these beliefs must be taken seriously, and the religious should be given the same place in the society as the non-religious. Third, the denial of legitimacy of religion in social and political life serves to provoke fanaticism or fundamentalism on the part of religious zealots. Fourth, tradition of religious pluralism can help us carry forward inter-religious harmony. For this, suggests Madan, we should see how Gandhi employed the resources of religious tolerance to promote inter-religious understanding. The Gandhian worldview also aids us in placing spiritually justified limitations on religious institutions and symbols in certain areas of collective life, In sum, the only way that secularism may succeed is if we take both religious and secularism seriously, and not reject the former as superstition and reduce the latter to a mask for communalism or mere expediency.

12.6 Secularism and Minority Rights

Matters came to a head in the mid- 1980's with the Shah Bano case. Shah Bano, an elderly woman who had been divorced by her husband, appealed to the High Court of Madhya Pradesh that her former husband pay her maintenance under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC). According to this section the former husband of a divorced women has to pay her maintenance if she is destitute, and if she possesses no means for her own survival for as long as she lives or until she remarries. The High Court ruled in favour of Shah Bano. However, Shah Bano's husband, Ahmed Khan, moved to the Supreme Courtas an appellant on the ground that he was not obliged to pay his former wife maintenance beyond the traditional three-month period of *iddat* under Section 127(3) of the CrPC. On 23 April 1985, a Supreme Court Bench under Chief Justice Chandrachud confirmed the judgement of the MP High Court, and stated that Article 125 of the CrPC overrides all personal laws, and that it is uniformly applicable to all women.

As expected, the leaders of the Muslim community and in particular the ulama opposed the judgement on the ground that it constituted a disregard for the personal laws of the Muslim community, which are based on the *Shariat*. They argued that since the Shariat is divinely sanctioned, it can neither be tampered with nor interpreted by the Court. The controversy snowballed into a major political problem as thousands of Muslims took to streets to demonstrate against the judgement. Ultimately Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's government, then in power at the Centre, bowed before the uproar. In February 1986, the government introduced a Bill in Parliament that sought to exempt Muslim women from the protection provided by Article 125 of the CrPC. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill in essence abrogated the limited right to maintenance under Section 125. The Bill was passed in Lok Sabha on 6 May and in Rajya Sabha on 8 May 1986.

The passage of the Bill aroused massive demonstrations as liberal, Left and feminist sections, who considered the Bill regressive and violative of gender justice, mobilized against it. Oddly enough, the protestors shared a common ground with the Sangh Parivar, which attacked the Bill on the same basis. In fact, the Sangh Parivar argued even more vociferously than the feminists about the need to subordinate the personal laws of the minority to a Uniform Civil Code in order to secure basic rights for all women. Although it became increasingly clear that right-wing forces were less interested in gender justice than they were in subordinating minority identities to majoritarianism, the argument was persuasive for many right thinking Indians.

In the process, defenders of secularism were laden with two more theoretical tasks: one to justify selective state intervention in religion and square this with secularism, and two, fit minority rights into the secular project. Four different kinds of arguments were offered to negotiate the challenge both to minority identities and to the rights of the members within the minority.

Writing against the background of the demolition of the Babri mosque and the subsequent communal riots in 1994, Partha Chatterjee suggested that a better way to protect the minorities is through the establishment of the norm of toleration. But rather than look to the practices of everyday life to discover tolerance, he grounded the concept in the liberal precepts of autonomy and respect for persons, and extended the principle to cover group rights. He negotiated the problem that group rights pose to liberal democratic theory in the following way: provided a group gives reasons for what it does to its own members, it can refuse to give reasons for doing what it does in the public domain, or, that internal accountability or democracy validates the rights of the community over its own members. Chatterjee in effect moves away from the normative principles of secularism to another normative principle, that of democratic accountability within groups, in order to build in minority rights into the principle of toleration.

Bhargava came to an understanding of why secularism necessarily involves differential treatment for different groups from another theoretical direction. He begins his argument by distinguishing between three kinds of secularism. The first kind, hyper-substantive secularism, seeks to bring about a separation between religion and the state in the name of a package of ultimate substantive values, for example autonomy, development, or reason. The second kind of secularism, ultra-procedural secularism, separates religion from the state in the name of purely impersonal, value-free, rational procedures and rules, such as bureaucratic and technocratic rationality. The third kind, and one that Bhargava clearly prefers over the other two is contextual secularism. Contextual secularism implies principled or non-sectarian distance, or non-absolutist separation between the state and religion. In other words, this avatar of secularism combines substantive values and procedures, without any commitment to the priority of either. Bhargava argues that contextual secularism, which is enshrined in the Constitution, enjoins the state to exclude religion for some purposes, as for instance in the decision to exclude separate religious electorates, and to include it for others, as, for example, in accepting personal laws. But contextual secularism, is always guided by non-sectarian principles, which are consistent with a set of values constitutive of a life of equal dignity for

all. Admittedly, in recent times sectarian considerations have become important, as Bhargava accepts, and religion has entered politics where it should not have been allowed to do so, and excluded when much could have been achieved by inclusion. Yet contextual secularism is the only appropriate form of secularism in India. In sum, secularism for Bhargava is (a) fully compatible with the defence of differentiated citizenship rights and (b) the secularity of the state does not necessitate strict intervention, non-interference or equidistance, but any or all of these as the case may be.

Amartya Sen defends secularism as part of a more comprehensive idea, that of India as an integrally plural country made up of different religious beliefs, language groups, and divergent social practices. Secularism, he suggests, is part of a bigger project of recognizing this heterogeneity. Engaging with six strands of critiques against secularism, Sen argues that any re-examination of the difficult question relating to the principle of symmetrical treatment of different religious communities must arise within a commitment of secularism. 'Secularism is basically a demand for symmetric political treatment of different religious communities….Balanced political treatment can be achieved….in rather desperate ways.' Although Sen Accepts that this interpretation raises many questions that need to be explored, this by itself, he insists, does not contradict the overarching argument for secularism.

Chandhoke suggested that secularism cannot be abstracted from the wider conceptual context to which it forms one part. It can only be understood as an intrinsic component of the historical, constitutional and political practices of democracy, freedom, equality, justice and rights. Secularism in other words, is not an autonomous concept. Therefore, in order to unravel the meaning of secularism, we should first try to unravel the implications of the attendant concepts that give it (secularism) meaning-equality, freedom and democracy.

12.7 Conclusion

It can be concluded that the state should have twin objectives, first- protecting everybody's freedom of conscience (as provided for in the Constitution) and secondly, contrary to present practice, denying without exception financial assistance for the practice of religion. It should be remembered what M. K. Gandhi believed, that a religion that depends on state support for its existence does not deserve to exist. Thus would the policy of uniform treatment of all religious communities (*sarva dharma sambhava*) be truly implemented.

12.8 Summing Up

● Secularism is a Western ideal - a gift of the European enlightenment of the 18th century - born out of a long struggle between the church and the state.

● Two meanings of secularism - secularism as the separation of state and religion and secularism as equality of all religion.

● The first is the western concept of secularism while the latter is the Indian concept of secularism.

● Indian concept of secularism stands for – as Gandhi believes in *sarva dharma sambhava* – as contrasted to *dharma nirepeksha*.

● Taking the Shah Bano Case, a thorough analysis has been attempted - to find out the relationship between secularism and minority rights.

● Here different debates have been taken note of. Especially those advocated by Partha Chatterjee, Bhargava, Amartya Sen and Chandhoke.

12.9 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Give an over-view of historical evolution of secularism in India.

2. Analyse the relationship between secularism and minority rights with special reference to the Shah Bano case.

Long Questions :

1. How did Jawaharlal Nehru visualize secularism in India?

2. Discuss the Western concept of secularism.

Short Questions :

1. Define secularism.

2. How far is it correct to identify India as a secular state?

12.10 Further Reading

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Unit - 13 ❏ Communalism in India

Structure

13.1 Objectives

After reading the unit the learners will be able :

● to define and analyse the concept of communalism in the specific context of political institutions and practices in post-independence India.

● to present a broad historical overview of the emergence of communalism as a modern phenomenon.

● to trace the factors responsible for communalism of politics in recent years.

● to find out a non-western meaning of the concept of communalism suitable to the cultural experiences of India.

● to find out the nature and pattern of communalism as practiced in India.

13.2 Introduction

The members of a society or community are divided into vertical or horizontal groups or clusters. They include factors like class, caste, race, religion, language, region and so forth. Religion in this sense constitutes the source of a major cleavage in most societies. It acquires special significance in Third World countries in general, and multireligious societies like India in particular for democratic system can hardly remain insulated from religious influence. The democratic political process is set in motion when some groups make a political demand upon the government. In order to strengthen their position in a competitive situation the group leaders engage in maximizing mass support behind their demands. It is at this point that religion intrudes into the sphere of politics. Given its wide appeal, political leaders often feel tempted to utilize religion as an effective instrument of mass mobilization. Communalization of politics is a by-product of politicization of religion.

A large number of individuals tend to define their political identity in terms of their religious faiths, develop prejudices against those following different religious creed and claim material benefits and privileges on the basis of their faiths. When communal polarization becomes extreme, when the majority of the members of a society develop a communal outlook toward political question, when religious divisions tend to overlap political cleavages, a democratic political system is exposed to serious challenge. Communalism is a festering sore on the Indian body politic as it undermines the cherished ideal of secularism embedded in its constitution, threatens inter-community peace and harmony and thereby hinders the process of national integration.

13.3 Meaning of Communalism

The term 'communalism' was coined by the British in the mid-nineteenth century to describe highly plural, multi-ethnic societies such as those of the Indian subcontinent and Malaya. In the present-day Indian context, it denotes an emphasis on the exclusiveness of a religious group or community, a feeling of superiority for 'us' (i.e. the community itself) and dislike for 'them' (other such groups) and prejudice and hostility towards other religious groups. Communal politics typically means mobilization which foments and feeds upon such antipathy.

The challenge of communalism, involving separatism and violence, is a major threat to the Indian society and the functioning of the secular democratic polity. It

adversely affects the whole process of nation-building. In India the word 'communalism' refers to the belief of a group of people that religion is their basic identity that differentiates them from another group of people professing a different religion and that their interests are opposed. Bipan Chandra writes: "the concept of communalism is based on the belief that religious distinction is the most important and fundamental distinction, and this distinction overrides all other distinctions. Since Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs are different religious entities, their social, economic, cultural and political interests are also dissimilar and divergent. As such, the loss of one religious group is the gain of another group and vice-versa. If a particular community seeks to better its social and economic interests, it is doing at the expense of the other". It is a zero-sum game.

But adherence to a religious system is not communalism. On the other hand, using one religious community against other communities is communalism. Communalism is exploitation of religion, open or subtle, to further certain interests. Communalism exploits both religion and politics, and is born out of hatred or of a real or imaginary fear of the other communities in a plural society. Communalism is a hindrance to integration of multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multilingual societies like India. It is antithetical to secularism as a pattern of social existence. Communalism generates 'false consciousness' as it distorts the objective reality, the reality of class conflicts that are inherent in an unequal society, and by dividing people along religious lines it prevents the forging of unity among the working people in their struggle against exploitation, oppression and injustice.

13.4 Nature and Pattern of Communalism

Communalism in India mainly refers to the Hindu-Muslim communal divide, often giving rise to communal riots, especially in north India where in some towns they have become an institutionalised feature, and increasing polarisation of communal hostilities and feeling and a great deepening of distrust between members of the two communities. Such relations between the two largest communities constitute a set of tension both in our society and in the functioning of the Indian state.

From the mid 1920's localised conflicts, riots between Hindu and Muslim communities became ordinary, recurring events on the Indian political scene. The partition of the Indian subcontinent between India and Pakistan in 1947 was accompanied by a holocaust in Punjab and Bengal. The process of partition have not solved half-a-century of communal politics engineered by the British in collaboration with the most conservative and obscurantist elite of the Muslim community. In

independent India communal riots have become regular and recurrent events, sometimes with low and sometimes with high intensity. Except for certain stray incidents, the situation during the first decade of independence raised hope. But the Jabbalpur riots in Madhya Pradesh followed by those in Aligarh and in other towns of Uttar Pradesh in 1961 signalled the beginning of a new phase of intercommunal animosities. In 1964 there were widespread communal riots in Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. For three years there was quiet on the communal front and then the Ranchi riots spread to other towns in Bihar. This cycle continued till 1970, with riots spreading to Assam, Kashmir, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar and Gujarat. There had been a total number of 1106 incidents. Then followed a downward trend in the period 1972-76, declining to 169 incidents from 521 incidents in 1972. But inter-communal violence registered an upward swing from 1977. Encouraged by increasingly militant, well-financed and ideologically oriented communal organisations, tension between Hindus and Muslims increased, particularly during the 1980's, and the incidence and destructiveness of communal riots reached its zenith in the 1990's.

Shah Bano, a divorced woman from Indore, approached the judicial magistrate in 1973 for a maintenance allowance and the magistrate ordered Ahmed Khan, her estranged husband, to pay the same. Khan challenged the order in the Supreme Court on a plea that the *Shariat* does not require him to pay maintenance beyond the *iddat* (three months following the divorce). The Supreme Court did not agree; it upheld the maintenance order under Section 125 of the Indian Penal Code. The judgement created a furore, and the arch conservative Muslims took to the streets in protest. Rajiv Gandhi's government gave in and passed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act in 1986. However, this was followed by Justice H. N. Tilhari's Judgement in 1994, declaring triple talaqa unconstitutional. Again in 2017 the Indian Supreme Court deemed instant triple talaq unconstitutional and on 30th July 2019, the Parliament of India declared the practice of Triple *Talaq* as illegal, unconstitutional and made it a punishable act from 1st August 2019.

The demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya on 6th December 1992, witnessed worst communal turmoil since independence. Incidents of rampant violence against Christian missionaries in Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Gujrat, the mass slaughter of Muslims witnessed in Gujarat in 2002 for several months which was unleashed in the context of a heinous crime in Godhra marked the beginning of the 21st century. The clashes between the Hindu and Muslim Communities in Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh in 2013 has been described as the worst violence in Uttar Pradesh in recent history.

The pattern of these riots are more or less similar all over India. Most riots begin with a minor incident-typically with a dispute over a Hindu procession near a mosque. Inflammatory speeches are made and a minor incident turns into a major riot. The pattern is familiar, from rumours to blood path. Enters the Government's coercive machinery, followed by accusations of police excesses and then another round of clashes often over a wider area. The situation becomes normal with time.

13.5 Factors responsible for growth of Communalism in India

Communalism is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, and no single factor can furnish a comprehensive explanation of its genesis and evolution. Thus it is important to take note of several probable determinants suggested by different scholars-

13.5.1 Legacy of Pre-Partition politics

Moin Shakir, among others, has argued that communalism of politics in post-independence India has been largely conditioned by the legacy and experiences of pre-partition times. The British rulers, guided by the time-tested dictum of 'divide and rule', played up rival social economic and political claims of Hindus, Muslims, tribals and the 'untouchables'. Introduction of 'separate electorate' on the basis of existing religious and caste divisions in Indian society further reinforced communal identities and differences among the subject population.

Again, some of the Indian political groups and organizations appeared only too eager to swallow the bait dangled by the British rulers. Thus, the Muslim League, which instilled the fear of 'Hindu domination' in an independent India in the minds of Indian Muslims, had its befitting counterpart in the Hindu Mahasabha which committed itself to the ideal of building India into a *Hindu Rashtra* (Hindu state). Amidst it all, the Congress firmly stood its ground as the champion of secular nationalism, but then its approach to national unity was not altogether beyond question. It considered the various communities of India homogeneous and well-knit groups-ignoring the vertical divisions in terms of class, language and region. Naturally it regarded the communal leadership as the authentic spokesman of the community, and whenever it thought of involving the minority communities in national issues it turned towards Muslim, Christian and Sikh leaders and not to the masses of those communities. Thus the Congress approach to national unity was that of 'unity from above'. The close connection between several prominent leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress also caused misgivings among the minorities as to its secular credentials.

The anti-colonial struggle and movements in India also set a tradition of mixing religion with politics. Thus the early resistance against British power organized by the Wahabis, Farajis, Sannyasis, Pagalpanthis of Mymensingh, Birsa Bhagwan and so forth had an outwardly political character, but deeper down they represented the clash of religion and cultures. Again, religion had a key role in shaping both the liberal and extremist political traditions of modern India. The early liberal reformers looked for a new and invigorated religion as the foundation of a new kind of society and polity. The extremists sought to utilize the symbols and idioms of Hindu culture as the basis of political nationalism, although they hardly envisaged the divisive impact it could have on the minorities. Last of all, Gandhi made adroit use of religious idioms to reach, organize and unite the masses. But once again it had the unintended consequence of giving the communalists Hindus and Muslims alike - a pretext for justifying their own reactionary use of religion for divisive political purposes. These diverse forms of intermarriage between religion and politics during the pre-independence days undoubtedly exerted much influence on the post-independence political environment.

13.5.2 Economic interpretation of communalism

The most popular economic explanation of communalism seeks to trace its origin and development to economic underdevelopment and scarcity and the economic aspirations of the petty bourgeois classes. Underdevelopment of the economy often leads to uneven development across communities. In the struggle over scarce resources the middle classes of a community perceive themselves to be locked in a stiff economic competition vis-à-vis their counterparts in a relatively prosperous community. In this situation the middle class elites of the community seek to strengthen their demand by mobilizing the support of the masses of the community. To achieve this end they formulate their grievances not in class terms but in terms of those of the community and add a few religious demands to the down–to–earth economic issues. In this way the economic rivalry between the petty bourgeois elites of two communities assumes the colour of a communal conflict.

This explanation is particularly applicable to the development of Muslim communalism in pre-partition times which was rooted in the increasing competition among the urban middle classes in a situation of colonial stagnation for government jobs, educational placing and political positions in legislative councils and municipal bodies. Organizations such as the RSS, Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League were based preponderantly on the petty bourgeoisie. Similarly, this economic interpretation provides the key to explaining the militant assertion of Sikh communal identity in post-independence India. To follow Asghar Ali Engineer, the 'Green

Revolution' of the 1960's produced enormous wealth, led to the emergence of an agrarian bourgeoisie in Punjab countryside and forced it into conflict with the Hindu industrial bourgeoisie of the state. This new found prosperity generated among the capitalist farmers the quite secular aspiration for having an ever-expanding share in economic development. They raised the demands for greater share of river waters, hydroelectric power and control over Chandigarh. However, it was felt that the quite predictable resistance to these demands from the entrenched Punjabi Hindu bourgeoisie could not be overcome unless the demands could be shown to enjoy the support of the Sikh community as a whole – rich and poor alike. Hence in order to mobilize the support of the wider Sikh population the Akali Dal, the party of the Sikh farmers, in addition to voicing the class demands of the Jat peasant proprietors, had to pose as the defender of the Sikh Panthas well. As a result, the Sikhs stood united behind these demands but this led to greater Hindu-Sikh polarization in Punjab and ultimately precipitated a communal conflagration in the state.

On the other hand, AchinVanaik contends that the most potent social force behind the rise of post-independence Hindu communalism (i.e. the aggressive assertion of a collective religious identity) has been the intermediate castes. In class terms, these intermediate castes comprise the agrarian bourgeoisie and the urban and the rural petty bourgeoisie. This assertion of Hindu conservatism has not been a reaction to economic and social failures. On the contrary, it is the consciously chosen cultural expression of a force which has enhanced its authority and is upwardly mobile on economic and political fronts.

In independent India, the land-based intermediate castes have made considerable economic strides. These groups are now seeking to improve their status by adopting a larger 'Hindu' identity in keeping with their developing self-image as major social actors in modern India.Further rising prosperity has not reduced competition, social alienation or psychological insecurity among the urban middle class. The series of 'public' religio-cultural events and activities particularly the yagnas and yatras organized by the VHP had immense appeal to these sections. This urban petty bourgeoisie, Vanaik concludes, still provides the ideological and organizational leadership within the intermediate castes. But it is the "ruralisation" of Hindu communalism that constitutes the unique factor as far as growth of communal politics in independent India is concerned.

13.5.3 Decline of Political Institutions and Communalism

The systematic decimation of India's democratic institutions, according to Rajni Kothari, offers another clue to the rising tide of communalism in Indian politics since

the 1970's. Till the mid-1960's, Kothari argues, the Indian polity represented a broadly pluralistic and federal structure that sought to accommodate as far as possible the socio-economic grievances of the various classes, communities and regions through parliamentary politics. But this system of governance was dealt a final blow under Indira Gandhi. Mrs. Gandhi, as is well known, suffered from an extreme insecurity about power partly traceable to her precarious position within the party when she first assumed the prime minister's office. Hence her primary concern was to devise a strategy for survival in the seat of power which in turn, had two aspects that produced unwholesome consequences for India's democracy. First, elections were converted into an instrument of maintaining status quo rather than of change. They were reduced to a mere number game - a mode of demonstrating mass support for the leader. Questions of issues and ideologies were driven to the background and communal principle of mobilization became quite handy in manipulating the numbers. Secondly, the political class decided to gradually do away with the democratic structures and institutions of mass mobilization - like local party units, voluntary organizations and the press - and take recourse to making direct appeal to the millions. The institutional vacuum led to depoliticization of the people and decline in the citizens' involvement in politics. Nevertheless the catchy slogans of '*Garibihatao* (abolish poverty) helped build up a supportive coalition of Muslims, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, some depressed castes and large parts of south India behind Mrs. Gandhi's Congress which saw it to a massive victory in the parliamentary elections of 1971 and the Assembly elections of 1972.

But the results of 1977 election - in which the Congress received a drubbing - proved beyond doubt the hollowness of the promise of *Garibi Hatao* had been thoroughly exposed and the above coalition had come unstuck. During the second phase of her premiership in the 1980's, Mrs. Gandhi noted with concern that even the southern states which staunchly backed the Congress during the Janata wave of 1977 began slipping away from its grip. Desperate and disconcerted, the party was looking for a new social base as well as new slogan to mobilize it. This support base was found in the Hindi/Hindu heartland in North India - in the urbanized middle and lower middle classes and the masses at large. And the slogan it coined was that of threat to India's territorial integrity - proved by Sikh terrorism in Punjab and Pakistani machinations across the border - a clever ploy indeed to play upon the sentiments of the Hindu multitudes of the so called 'cowbelt'. Mrs. Gandhi did not live to reap the fruits of this electoral strategy but it contributed in no small measure to Rajiv Gandhi's thumping victory in the Lok Sabha elections of 1984.

Thus, it was the Congress (I) under Mrs. Gandhi-who never missed an opportunity

to swear by secularism - that Kothari holds primarily responsible for deliberately destroying India's democratic political fabric and resorting to communal idiom of politics and particularly for pandering to the Hindu majority for political gain. True, the benefits of the activation of the Hindu vote bank were later cornered by the BJP in an even bigger way, but it has to be kept in mind that the process of communalization of the Indian polity in the 1980's was set in motion by the decline and degeneration of the Congress party.

13.5.4 The Indian Version of Secularism and the problem of Communalism

Partha Chatterjee believes that secularism as preached and practiced in independent India has in its own way stoked the fire of communalism in the country. Secularism as enshrined in the Constitution of India admittedly has an 'Indian' character in that the state has been allowed to intervene in religious matters to achieve the 'modernist' purpose of socio-religious reform. But today, according to Chatterjee, it gives rise to the very real possibility of "the Hindu right locating itself quite firmly within the domain of the modernizing state" and using "the arguments for 'interventionist secularization' to promote intolerance and violence against minorities."

Though the term 'secularism' has been inserted in the preamble to the Indian Constitution only in 1976 (vide the 42nd amendment), the intention of the founding fathers to build a secular state in India was never in doubt. Thus the Constitution (Articles 25 and 26) guarantees freedom of religion. However, all these rights are qualified by the state's prerogative to regulate any financial, economic, political or other secular activities which may be associated with religious practice, to provide for social welfare and reform to throw open Hindu religious institutions to all sections of Hindus, especially to the Dalits. By invoking this limit to the principle of liberty, the Indian state has carried out extensive reform of Hindu Personal law and of the administration of Hindu temples. The Hindu code Bill was inacted in 1955, and the Indian parliment went through the immensely complicated local and sectarian variations of Hindu law and laid down a single code of personal law for all Hindu citizens. Many of its provisions involved gross departure from traditional brahmanical principles.

Of course, Chatterjee contends, the liberal democratic doctrine of freedom of religion does recognize that this right would be limited by other basic human rights. Thus, for instance, it would be perfectly justified for the state to deny that human sacrifice constitutes permissible religious practice. But it does not admit of any attempt on the part of the state to limit the liberty principle by engaging in

interpretation of religious doctrine. For many in India criticize this move since they do not want any official of the state to become an interpreter of Hindu religion, quoting and expounding Sanskrit scriptures in defence of the bills. It was also pointed out that the use of state legislation to bring about reforms only in the religion of the majority was creating a serious anomaly in the very notion of equal citizenship. In this context Chatterjee draws our attention to the live possibility that the arguments for state intervention in religious affairs in the interest of social reform or secularization can very well be hijacked by the Sangh combine for narrow, sectarian political profit.

13.6 Conclusion

It follows from the above analysis that gross political abuse of religion, rise of "competitive communalism" among the major communities and the threat of the emergence of a Hindu state have proved to be the bane of India's secular democratic polity. Scholars and activists have suggested and adopted various approaches and strategies for combating the communal virus. For example, the crusaders for socialist transformation assert that struggle for eradication of communalism is bound up with the question of liberation of the masses from capitalist oppression and hence should be launched from an allied platform of the struggle for socialism. Bipan Chandra has called for waging an ideological war against communalism (i.e. to fight the communalist ideology at the level of ideas) which implies the strategy of de-communalizing the people at all levels. This approach has much in common with Achin Vanaik's plea for contesting communalism at the level of the civil society and Ashutosh Varshney's emphasis on citizen initiative especially through building integrated civic structures. Rajni Kothari on the other hand, feels that the right answer to the communal menace lies in grassroots politics and the movements for democratic rights carried on through various non-party formations. Finally Randhir Singh stresses that the struggle for secularism must seriously consider the social role of religion, that the liberating aspects of religion should be carefully separated from its irrationalities which exposes it to manipulation in the interest of the ruling classes and that this positive side of religion should be astutely utilized in unmasking the forces of communalism. These approaches are divergent and none of them promises any instantaneous success in banishing communalism from our society. Yet they agree on one point: all of them represent the bold face of secularism. They keep the hope alive that, in the foreseeable future, the narrow, divisive and sectarian politics of communalism will not be allowed to triumph as the dormant idiom of India's political landscape.

13.7 Summing Up

- Communalism refers to the belief by a group of people that religion is their basic identity that differentiates them from another group of people professing a different religion and their interests are opposed.

- Communalism in India mainly refers to the Hindu-Muslim communal divide, often giving rise to communal riots - increasing polarization of communal hostilities and a great deepening of distrust between members of the two communities.

- A thorough study reveals that different factors are responsible for the growth of communalism in India.

- Moin Shakir argued that communalism of politics in post-independence India has largely been conditioned by the legacy and experiences of pre-partition times.

- The most popular economic explanation of communalism seeks to trace its origin and development to economic underdevelopment and scarcity - and economic aspirations of the petty bourgeois classes.

- The systematic decimation of India's democratic institutions, according to Rajni Kothari, offers another clue to the rising tide of communalism in Indian politics since the 1970's.

- Partha Chatterjee believes that secularism as preached and practiced in independent India has in its own way stoked the fire of communalism in the country.

13.8 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Discuss the factors responsible for the emergence of communalism in India.

2. Discuss the historical background to the emergence of communalism as a modern phenomenon

Long Questions :

1. How was the economic interpretation of communalism responsible for the growth of communalism in India?

2. Write a note on the nature of communalism in India

Short Questions :

1. Define Communalism

2. What is the pattern of communalism in India?

13.9 Further Reading

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9. Singh, Randhir ; *Nationalism and Communalism in India*. Aakar Books, New Delhi, 2011.

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Unit - 14 ❑ Caste in Politics

Structure

14.1 Objectives

After reading the unit the learners will be able :

● to understand the Indian Caste system.

● to analyse the unique features of the Caste Systemin India.

● to identify the connection and differences between class and caste.

● to analyse the stand of the State on the question of caste.

● to understand thecaste system in the political context.

14.2 Introduction

Politics is about power, that is the ability of a social group to pursue a course of action (to make and implement decisions, and more broadly to determine the agenda for decision-making) if necessary against the interests, and even against the opposition of other groups. Power relationships are built into the very structure of society, characterised by the existence of castes and classes having divergent interests-cooperating, competing and even conflicting. The state acts as a central institution in the political system, which means a body of rules and practices, within

which political activities occur i.e., struggle for power amongst groups, classes and castes in relation to their own interests and to the general regulation and orientation of life. There are also other groups based on religion and ethnicity which are also occasionally engaged in struggle for power, but caste constitute the most important group determining the basic pattern of politics in India.

Robert W. Stern stated that, "caste is the warp and woof of Indian civilization and India's civilization is the warp and woof of caste." Caste is the basic unit of social stratification in traditional rural India, the effective social grouping. Arising in Vedic times it has come down to the present through centuries of adaptation, proliferation, internal schisms, competitions, collusions and combinations.

Caste, the term originally used by the Portugese, refers to endogamous groups which in Sanskrit, are called jatis. Castes are, to quote Andre Beteille, "hierarchically ranked groups or categories based on hereditary membership which maintain their social identity by strict rules of endogamy." Each caste is usually associated with more or less distinct ritual status in the hierarchical system based on the concepts of purity and pollution, i.e., each caste is considered inferior to those above it and superior to those below it primarily in terms of purity/pollution, though the position which caste occupies in the local hierarchy is not clear.

14.3 Features of the Caste System

The caste system rests on the hierarchical positioning of different caste groups. It is some what pyramidal in structure. At the apex of the pyramidal structure can be found the highest caste - the Brahmins. At the lowest end of the pyramid are multiple untouchable castes. In between these two caste groups, arranged at different levels of hierarchy, many other caste groups. Since the position of caste is in relation to the caste system, any effort to understand caste must rest on an understanding of the caste system. The notion of difference amongst the castes underlines the caste system. There is no scientific basis of this notion, and it is totally antithetic to the idea of democracy, yet this system has become virtually synonymous with Indian society.

There are differences of opinion and different theories regarding the time of origin of the caste system as well as the factors that led to its emergence. But then, it may be said that most probably the system emerged from time of the Rigvedic period. According to some, ethnic differences led to the system, while some others claimed that division of labour was at the root of stratification. Still others considered

class considerations were responsible for the emergence of the system. In view of certain analysts, however, not one but several factors were accountable for the origin of this system.

Let us now discuss some of the main features of the caste system.

(i) **Segmental division of society :** The society is divided into various small social groups called castes. Each of these castes is a well-developed social group, the membership of which is determined by the consideration of birth. Children belongs to the caste of their parents. Caste membership is an indisputable and unalterable fact by which a man's position in the social structure is determined. The membership of an individual does not undergo any change even if changes in his status, occupation, education, wealth etc. takes place. Since membership is normally life long, there is practically no social mobility. However as pointed out by M. N. Srinivas, a low-caste has been able in a generation or two, to raise itself in the hierarchy, after acquiring economic and political power, by adopting the Brahmanic customs and ways - through a process of sanskritization.

(ii) **Hierarchy :** Hierarchy is a ladder of command in which the lower rungs are encompassed in the higher ones in regular succession. The castes teach us a fundamental social principle of hierarchy. Castes form a hierarchy, being arranged in an order of superiority and inferiority. At the top of this hierarchy is the Brahmin caste and at the bottom is the untouchables. In between are the intermediate castes, the relative position of which are not always clear. As such disputes among the members of these castes over the social precedence of their respective castes are not very uncommon. Hierarchy is viewed as the principle by which the elements of a whole are ranked in relation to the whole, it being understood that in the majority of societies it is religion which provides the view of the whole. Hence, ranking assumes religious dimension.

(iii) **Endogamy :** The most fundamental characteristics of the caste system is endogamy. All the thinkers are of the opinion that endogamy is the chief characteristic of caste, i.e. the members of a caste or sub-caste should marry within their own caste or sub-caste. The violation of the rule of endogamy would mean ostracism and loss of caste.

(iv) **Hereditary status :** Generally speaking the membership of a caste is determined by birth and the man acquires the status of a caste in which he

is born. In this connection, Ketkar has written that the caste is limited to only those persons who are born as the members of that caste. Thus membership in the caste is hereditary and one's membership does not undergo any change even if change takes place in his status, occupation, education and wealth etc.

(v) **Hereditary occupation :** The traditional caste system is characterised by hereditary occupation. Members of a particular caste are expected to follow the occupation meant for the caste. Traditionally a Brahmin was allowed to function as a priest. In some cases the name of the caste is dependent upon the very occupation, as for instance, Napita (barber), Dhobi, Mochi, Mali, etc.

(vi) **Restriction on food and drink :** There are rules for example, what sort of food or drink can be accepted by a person and from what castes. Usually a caste would not accept cooked food from any other caste that stands lower than itself in the social scale. A person belonging to a higher caste believes that he gets polluted even by the shadow of a person belonging to the low caste or by accepting food or drink from him.

(vii) **Cultural differences :** Since each caste has its own set of rules and regulations with regard to endogamy, pollution-purity, occupational specialization, each caste develops its own subculture since the behaviour of an individual is governed by the requirements of his caste. The doctrine says that it is better for a person to follow the 'dharma' (religious obligation) of his own caste, no matter how low, than the 'dharma' of another caste, no matter how illustrious. The result has been different 'style of life' for different castes. Hence castes are to quote Prof.Gharya, "small and complete worlds in themselves, marked off definitely from one another, though subsisting within the larger group."

(viii) **Social Segregation :** Social segregation is an aspect of caste differentiation. According to Ghurye; "segregation of individual castes or a group of castes in village is most obvious mark of civil privileges and disabilities, and it has prevailed in a more or less definite form all over India." Segregation is more severe in South India than in the North. In some parts of the country such as in the Marathi, Telegu and Kanarese speaking regions, it is only the impure castes that are segregated and made to live on the outskirts of the villages. In the Tamil and Malayalam regions, very frequently different castes occupy distinctly different quarters or sometime the village is divided

into three parts, the first part is occupied by the dominate caste or by the Brahmins, second part is allotted to the Shudras and the third is reserved for the untouchables.

(ix) **The concept of pollution :** The concept of pollution plays a crucial part in maintaining the required distance between different castes. "A high caste may not touch a low caste man, let alone accept cooked food and water from him.Where the two castes involved belong to either extreme of the hierarchy, the lower caste man may be required to keep a minimum distance between himself and the high caste man." The pollution distance varies from caste to caste and from place to place.

(x) **A particular name :** Every caste has a particular name through which we can identify it. Sometimes, an occupation is also associated with a particular caste. We will come to know the profession or occupation of a caste with the help of the name of the caste.

(xi) **Jati Panchayat :** The status of each caste is carefully protected, not only by caste laws but also by the conventions. These are openly enforced by the community. In every region of India there is a governing body or board called Jatipanchayat. These Panchayats in different regions and castes are named in a particular fashion such as Kuldriya in Madhya Pradesh and Jokhila in South Rajasthan. Some of the offences dealt by it are adultery, violation of any prescribed taboos, the killing of sacred animals (the cow), insulting a Brahmin and the punishment awarded are out casting, fines, feasts to be given to the caste men etc.

(xii) **Taboo :** Another important characteristics of the caste system is the taboo (prohibition) by which the superior castes try to preserve their ceremonial purity and endeavour to neutralize the potentialities for evils believed to exist in every person. These potentialities are supposed to be more active and harmful to others during certain crises of life.

14.4 Caste and Class

The relationship between caste and class and between both categories and other group identities is a complex one in India's highly stratified and pluralist social system. As all observers of India have noted, Indians have cross-cutting, multiple identities. A member of the Yadav caste may be a landlord, a cultivating peasant

proprietor, a tenant, or an agricultural labourer. An untouchable may be Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Sikh or Muslim. Jatiis usually are bounded by linguistic region, so castes generally share a linguistic and regional identity. Which identity is politically salient can vary over time. In the1950s and 1960s, for example, supporters of the linguistic reorganization of states attempted to build regional identities and third to minimize caste identities. In the early 1970s Prime Minister Indira Gandhi won popular support and attracted the left with a campaign to eliminate poverty and to emphasize class-based issues. And in the 1990s Hindu nationalists attempted to forge a national identity based on Hindu culture and played down caste and regional identities. Politicians pick and choose which identity they want to use as the basis for political and social mobilization. Whichever identity they emphasize, the rhetoric is invariably one of "social justice' and equality.

All the group identity-based movements demand greater equality, but they each have a different conception of what it is that needs to be equalized. For caste-based movements, it is their place in the social hierarchy. Though caste leaders often employ a rhetoric that seems similar to a class-based rhetoric, caste and class are not the same. It might be otherwise if all the members of the same caste engaged in the same traditional occupation, and there would have been little or no difference in property ownership, education, wealth and income. But the reality is that castes have become economically more differentiated. Many members of castes classified as OBCs have become economically better off as a consequence of the zamindari abolition legislation which transferred property ownership from the zamindars to peasant proprietors in Northern India. The Green Revolution also differentially benefited members of the same castes since those with land gained from the introduction of high-yielding varieties and subsidized fertilizers, water and electricity, while agricultural labourers belonging to the same castes did not reap these benefits. But class differences are also developing within the scheduled castes as some individuals reap the benefits of preferential access to education and employment in government service. None the less, caste solidarity overshadows class differences. Lower-caste political leaders have been particularly effective at creating a loyal following by symbolic appeals to caste solidarity and opposition to forward castes. Violent attacks by the higher castes, the desecration of statues of lower-caste leaders, real or imagined insults, and high-caste opposition to reservations, all help lower-caste political leaders blur intracaste class divisions by appeals to caste solidarity. Caste political leaders argue that by organizing along caste lines the entire community

will gain material benefits and social respect. Caste once an instrument for the maintenance of hierarchy is paradoxically seen as a vehicle for egalitarianism between castes, though not within them.

One can argue that both class and ethnic identities are social contracts or alternatively they both have their basis in some "objective" reality, and it is hard to distinguish one from the other in this regard. We can say that individuals everywhere have class or ethnic group identities or both, these identities are often fluid and contested, they do not rest on something "real" or at least measurable and observable (e.g., occupation, income, language, religion), these identities may or may not generate conflict, but are often the basis for political action, and that people who are unhappy with their lot may express their discontent by organizing themselves (or being organized by others) along any of these identities.

Caste has been a far more potent form of social identity and political action in India than class, notwithstanding the history of kisan (agricultural and farming) movements and trade unions. India now has a plethora of caste-based educational institutions, caste associations, and caste-based political parties. Indeed, it is the kisan agitations that have proven to be episodic and less institutionalized than caste movements. Caste-based movements are based not only (if at all) on material demands but on demands for respect from others. They thus have a hard edge to them, for unlike other forms of ethnic identity they cannot be based on pride, but must emphasize their antipathy to those castes that fail to grant them respect and often continue to torment them.

14.5 Constitutional System, Politics and Caste

Under the constitutional law of independent India, caste based discrimination is prohibited. All citizens, irrespective of their religion or caste, are equally entitled to constitutionally guaranteed fundamental rights. Every adult citizen has the right to vote and can also be a candidate for an election. The prohibition on untouchability is one of the fundamental rights. These apart, there are special constitutional provisions to help the members of the untouchable castes to overcome their age-old social disabilities and exclusion. Resting on these constitutional provisions many laws have also been enacted. As a result certain improvement in the condition of the oppressed castes has taken place but it has not led to the abolition of the caste system or caste oppression. Many people continue to be victims of untouchability and caste violence.

In the political sphere caste identity is extremely important. On the one hand, there is an effort to hold on to the existing socio-economic layout and the lower castes trying to change it or challenge it. Much of this socio-economic struggle is undertaken politically in the political space. Parliamentary democracy being largely dependent on votes that is numbers, and caste identity being vital in the moulding of collective group decisions, different political parties try to build up their own respective caste-based vote banks.

In 1953 and 1979 two backward class commissions were appointed in India to identify the 'Other Backward Classes'. The first commission was headed by Kaka Kalekar, the second by B. P. Mandal. The commissions mainly attempted to find the roots of class conflict and socio economic disparity of caste groups. The first commission had submitted its report in 1955 and the second in 1980. Neither of the commissions could deny the links between backwardness and position in the caste hierarchy. The government did not accept the recommendations of the first commission. After a long time the second commission was appointed. The constitution itself had provided for the appointment of this sort of commissions. The second commission, i.e., the Mandal Commission, identified 52% of India's population as backward. Different groups of people were included in this category. A large section comprised of low castes; apart from them some other castes and sections of the Muslim population were also included. For the advancement of this section of population, the Mandal Commission made a variety of recommendations. These included reservation in the field of jobs. However, keeping in mind a fifty percent ceiling on reservation imposed by the judiciary, the commission recommended 27% reservation for the OBCs. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that already there was reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of 15% and 7.5% respectively. With the addition of the 27% reservation for the OBCs the total quantum of reservation stood at 49.5%. In 1990 the central government decided to partially implement the Mandal Commission recommendations. The decision evoked sharp debates. A caste-wise polarization took place between those for and against it. The Other Backward Classes or OBCs became much more conscious and organized than before. Moreover, despite the existence of differences, disagreements and conflicts, a degree of shared feeling developed between them and the Scheduled Castes and tribes.

Reservation was not granted on the basis of religion in the central educational institutions at the national level, although reservation was extended to religious minorities in some states. The Tamil Nadu government had allotted 3.5% of seats,

each to Muslims and Christians, thereby altering the OBC reservation. The government of Andhra Pradesh introduced a law enabling 4% reservations for Muslims in 2004. Kerala Public Service Commission had a quota of 6% reservation for Muslims. The Central government too provided for reservation of socially and economically backward section of the Muslim population in line of the Andhra Pradesh government, especially after the Sachar Committee report, which highlighted the plight of Indian Muslims, who in some regions were more backward than the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

From the 1980's in particular, in different parts of the country the low and middle castes began gaining importance. This became all the more evident since the decade of the 1990s. Along-side middle caste leaders like Lalu Prasad Yadav, Mulayam Singh and Nitish Kumar, we have witnessed the rise of a dalit leader, Mayawati in Indian politics.

14.6 Conclusion

Perhaps there is an indication that no initiative is being taken for eradication of caste or gradual lessening of its importance in the public sphere in India. Instead, in recent times, greater thrust is being laid on caste-based political mobilization in every arena of the statecraft. The spirited endorsement of the Mandal Commission by a large number of "Backwards" is an indication of the fact that reservation for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes has met with demonstrable success, no matter how limited the spread of beneficiaries may have been. Thus, caste remains a major arbiter in contemporary Indian politics.

14.7 Summing Up

- Caste constitutes the most important group determining the basic pattern of politics in India.
- The caste system rests on the hierarchical positioning of different caste groups - it is somewhat pyramidal in structure.
- Several factors are accountable for the origin of this system.
- The relationship between caste and class is a complex one in India's highly

stratified and pluralist social system - caste has been a far more potent form of social identity and political action in India than class.

● Under the constitutional law of independent India, caste-based discrimination is prohibited - special constitutional provisions also help the members of the untouchable caste to overcome their age-old social disabilities and exclusion.

● In 1953 and 1979 two backward class commissions were appointed in India to identify the Other Backward Classes.

14.8 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Analyse the different features of the Indian Caste system.

2. Critically analyse the difference and connection between caste and class.

Long Questions :

1. Write a note on the recommendations of the Mandal Commission.

2. What is the constitutional stand on caste?

Short Questions :

1. Define the Indian Caste system.

2. When was the Kaka Kalelkar Commission formed?

3. Is the Caste system hereditary in nature? Argue for and against your answer.

14.9 Further Reading

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Unit - 15 ❑ Politicization of Caste

Structure

15.1 Objectives

After reading the unit the learners will be able :

- to understand the Nationalist perspective of the caste system in India.

- to identify the different factors responsible for the rise of caste politics.

- to analyse how political co-optation was responsible for politicization of caste.

- to understand political mobilization of caste.

- to present a broad over-view on caste reservation.

15.2 Introduction

More than one hundred years of social reform movements, public pronouncements by political leaders, constitutional declarations, and legislation have undermined the ideological basis of caste in India. No political parties, and no political leaders, no intellectuals support the idea that caste is part of a natural moral order based upon

hierarchy and sustained by endogamous consanguinity and rules of commensality, the caste is occupationally linked and hereditary, that each caste (*jati*) embodies its own code for conduct (*dharma*), and that low-caste membership is the consequence of transgressions in one's previous life. There is no public opposition to the preamble to the constitution of India which calls for "equality of status and of opportunity" or to the constitutional provisions that prohibit discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth and call for equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office. Indian scholars and social reformers have argued that there is a long history of opposition to the ideology of caste within and outside the Hindu tradition. Long before colonial rule, it is said, Buddhism and Virasaivism frontally attacked Brahminical supremacy, while the Bhakti devotional movements undermined the Brahminical emphasis on scriptures, knowledge and rituals as the only means to salvation. Throughout the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries religious reform movements not only sought to undermine Brahminism but attacked the ideological foundation of caste. Opposition to caste came from both the highest and the lowest castes. In the nineteenth century the Brahmo Samaj, founded by a Bengali Brahmin, Ram Mohan Roy, rejected caste and the concept of transmigration. In the 1920's a non-Brahmin, anti-Brahmin, anti-caste movement, known as the Self Respect movement (later, the Justice Party), emerged as a major political force in South India. The scheduled caste leader, B. R. Ambedkar, created the Scheduled Caste Federation (later the Republic Party) which called for the removal of barriers and greater economic and political opportunities for the untouchables. India's nationalist leaders of all political persuasions opposed the caste system and called for the creation of a more egalitarian social order. Even those who defended Hinduism from its Western Christian critics, such as Dayananda Sarasvati, the founder of the Arya Samaj in 1875 called for a return to the Vedas including the belief in the consequence of former deeds (*karma*) and transmigration, did not support caste.

There were some orthodox movements, such as the Sanatan Dharma Sabha and Ram Rajya Parishad, founded by Swami Karapatri in 1948, issued an election manifesto in India's national parliamentary elections in 1952 promising to provide untouchables with "high posts" in the management of the sanitation departments and leather and hides trades – traditional occupations for outcaste Hindus – and called for a return to the "blessed days of Lord Rama's reign", but the party was ignored by the English-language press and intelligentsia. The pre-independence Hindu nationalists who wrote of "Hindu rashtra" and "Hindutva"- Madhav Golwalker, Veer

D Savarkar, Keshev Hedgewar, founders and leaders of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh – did not support the caste system, nor does the contemporary Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Perhaps no other society in recent history has known inequality so gross, so long preserved or so ideologically well entrenched. In the traditional civilizations of Islam or China, the ideal if not always the practice of equality had an honourable and often commanding place in the culture. But in India the notion that men should remain in the same occupation and station of life as their forefathers was enshrined in religious precepts and social custom. While life was not as immobile as theory prescribed, and from time to time revolts against the dominance of Brahmins and other high castes broke out, the idea of social equality never became as widespread in Hinduism as it did in other great traditions.

The principle of equality implied a revolutionary transformation in India. The nationalist elite that took power in 1947 wrote a constitution that contained the full panoply of democratic institutions – parliament and legislatures, elections, universal suffrage, freedom of assembly, freedom of press, legal rights – all based on the principle of equal political rights. Equality was to be achieved in part through democratic institutions and procedures, particularly universal suffrage without a literacy requirement, equality before law, legislation banning discrimination, and through the establishment of a system of reservations that would guarantee representation to members of scheduled castes and tribes. Equality was also to be achieved through socialist planning, broadly understood as an activist state that would do what the elite believed the market could not do in a developing country – accelerate investment and growth that would ultimately benefit all social classes. Equality of opportunity, they said, would come through universal and compulsory elementary education and an expanded system of higher education. The nationalist elite did not promise a classless society, but they did offer a promise of a casteless society in which a social status would not be based upon hereditary social rankings and individuals would not be denied opportunities because of their birth.

15.3 The Rise of Caste Politics

The revolutionary transformation did not of course take place. Caste as an ideology may be (almost, but not quite) moribund, but as a lived-in social reality it is very much alive. The demise of orthodoxy, right beliefs, has not meant the demise of orthopraxy, right practice. Castes remain endogamous. Lower castes, especially

members of scheduled castes, remain badly treated by those of higher castes. But the gap between beliefs and practices is the source of tension and change. The lower castes no longer accept their position in the social hierarchy, no longer assume that their lower economic status and the lack of respect from members of the higher castes are a "given" in their social existence. But the movement for change is not a struggle to end caste; it is to use caste as an instrument for social change. Caste is not disappearing, nor is "casteism" – the political use of caste – for what is emerging in India is a social and political system which institutionalizes and transforms but does not abolish caste. Politicization of caste takes place in three ways. The different ways can be identified as :

15.3.1 Political Co-optation

The political elite which assumed power in 1947 was drawn from the upper castes: disproportionately Brahmins, Rajputs, Kayasthas, Bhumihars, Vaishyas and other "forward castes." Members of these castes were in every respect privileged. They dominated the colleges and universities, the senior civil service in the state and central governments, and the higher ranks of the military and the police. The key institutions that shaped political power, social status and economic privilege in India – the nationalist movement, the educational system, the bureaucracy and the system of land ownership – were largely in their hands. The senior leaders of all of India's political parties – even those on the left – were recruited from the higher castes, were often educated abroad, and with few exceptions came from families that were well placed.

Several factors mitigated against the perpetuation of political power by the higher castes. One critical factor was the mobilization of the lower castes by the Indian National Congress. Before independence the British warned that independence would mean the subordination of the lower and middle castes to the upper castes who dominated the nationalist movement. E. V. Ramaswami Naicker, leader of the non- Brahmin movement in Madras, and B. R. Ambedkar, national leader of the scheduled castes, were hostile to the nationalists whom they regarded as representing the interests of the upper castes. From the early 1920's onward, Congress set out to win the support of all social strata. The Congress leadership was predominantly high caste, but by the late 1930's many of the presidents of the district and *taluka* Congress committees were drawn from the lower and middle castes. By the 1950's many of these individuals moved into positions of political power in the state governments. In India's first parliamentary elections in 1951-2, three opposition

parties sought support from the lower castes – the Peasants' and the Workers' Party in Bombay, the Dravida Kazhagam (DK) in Madras, and the Scheduled Caste Federation – but Congress defeated all three by a strategy of incorporating elites from their would-be supporters.

The capacity of the Congress Party to incorporate members of the middle castes and the scheduled castes – much less so far the other backward castes – was strengthened by intra-party factionalism and rivalries among members of the upper castes. As party leaders from the upper castes competed with one another for positions within the party and for seats in parliament and the legislative assemblies, they set out to broaden their own base by recruiting new members. The result of interparty factionalism, as well as competition between political parties, was to induce party leaders to mobilize caste leaders at the local level and to create vote banks. These recruitment efforts brought into the elite structure social groups that were previously excluded from the political process.

The process was a slow one and not uniform throughout India. In UP, for example, the upper-caste Congress leadership won the support of the scheduled castes and the Muslims, but failed to attract the middle castes – notably the Jats – or the backward caste peasantry. Congress was not alone in seeking to mobilize supporters along caste lines. In North India the Praja Socialist Party, following the lead of their strategist and leading theoretician, Ram Manohar Lohia, set out to mobilize the backward castes, while Charan Singh, a Jat, a former Congressman, and an articulate spokesman for the peasant proprietor class, brought large number of members of the middle and backward castes into his political party, the Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD).

In both UP and Bihar, the opposition parties proved to be particularly skilful in undermining the electoral strength of the Congress Party by building a coalition of the middle and the lower castes, then pulling in large numbers of Muslims alarmed by the growth of the Bharatiya Janata Party. In both states, non-Brahmin, non-upper-caste elites took power, first the Jats, then the Yadavs, and by the latter part of the 1990's UP had a Dalit Chief Minister. By the 1990's two new lower-caste political parties, the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party, were part of the governing coalitions in UP and Bihar.

In South India the mobilization of the non-Brahmin castes was earlier than in the north. In neither Karnataka nor in Tamil Nadu were the non-Brahmin movements seeking radical change, but rather aimed to gain greater power in administration and

in elected local bodies and state legislatures. In Karnataka, the Kaligas and the Lingayats became the political base of the ruling Congress Party. Devraj Urs, the paramount Congress leader in Karnataka in the 1970's, broadened the social base of the party by appealing to the more disadvantaged backward castes and scheduled castes. In Tamil Nadu the Dravidian movement was committed to the destruction of the caste system but, in practice it used caste as a means of political mobilization and ultimately increased the political importance of caste. Though Congress initially succeeded in gaining the support of non-Brahmin elites, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), an offshoot of the Dravida Kazhagam, was ultimately able to win control of the state, largely by transforming its anti-Brahmin ideology into an anti-northern Tamil nationalism, a strategy which could be adopted by a regionally based political party but which was obviously not possible for the nationally oriented Congress Party in Tamil Nadu.

Indian politics became the arena within which group identities were sharpened, and individuals sought material benefits through group membership. Factions and parties were often based upon these identities, and leaders vied with one another by appealing to these "fissiparous" tendencies. Thus the competitive democratic system provided mechanisms for the incorporation of groups and elites that had previously been excluded from political power.

15.3.2 Political Mobilization

A second factor in the rising political consciousness and organization of the lower castes was the widespread rejection of the ideological foundations of India's hierarchical social order. Once caste lost its moral legitimacy the upper castes no longer had the moral authority and the political will to stand in the way of lower castes who sought greater political power, access to education, and social respect. The destruction of the ideology underlying caste politicized the scheduled castes and other backward castes. With the erosion of the moral basis of caste, the self-imposed barrier to protest by the lower castes, that is, their acceptance of their place in the hierarchy, was also eroded. Some middle and lower castes sought equality with the upper castes through the process of Sanskritization, that is, by emulating the orthopraxy of the higher castes, but, paradoxically, at the same time proclaimed their status as backward castes and demanded greater political power. Activists among the scheduled castes called themselves Dalits, literally "oppressed' or "grounded down." They rejected what they regarded as M. K. Gandhi's paternalistic call for the abolition of untouchability but supported the *varnasystem* (*varnashram*), and called

instead for the mobilization from below of the untouchables. Many Dalits followed B. R. Ambedkar's call to leave the Hindu fold and became Buddhists. In the mid-1970's the Dalit launched a series of political campaigns aimed at improving their economic and social status. In the 1989 parliamentary elections, the newly formed Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), under the Dalit leader, Kanshi Ram, built a coalition of "oppressed" groups, Muslims, scheduled castes, and other backward castes. In 1995the BSP joined with other parties to form a government in UP, with a Dalit woman, Mayawati, as chief minister. Her tenure was short, but in 1997 Mayawati returned as chief minister in an unusual (and also short-lived) coalition with the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

Seventy years after independence, the chief ministers of most of India's states were non-Brahmins, some from the middle castes, but many drawn from the backward castes. The chief minister of UP was a scheduled caste woman. Members of the Yadav, Kurmi, and other OBC's were prominent figures in the politics of UP and Bihar, India's most populous states. In August 1997, a half-century after independence, India elected K. R. Narayanan, a member of a scheduled caste, as the country's president.

15.3.3 Caste Reservation

A third factor that facilitated the rise to political power of the lower castes was the Indian system of affirmative action known as reservations. The system of reservation was initially put in place by the British over the objection of the nationalist movement, but in time it was embraced by Congress and virtually by all political parties in India. The pre-independence nationalist leadership supported the liberal notion of one man, one vote and no representation along communal lines and opposed the British proposal for communal electorates under which Muslims, Christians and Sikhs could only vote for candidates of their own community. Congress nationalists, led by Gokhale, ultimately agreed to separate electorates for Muslims, but balked when the British sought to create separate electorates for the scheduled castes. Gandhi was particularly adamant in his opposition and began a threatened death fast that ended in the "Poona Pact" of 1932 which provided for proportional representation for scheduled castes, but not separate electorates. The reservation provision was subsequently incorporated into the Indian constitution, along with a constitutional commitment to ensure more adequate representation of the scheduled castes in government service, though no quota was established.

There is a tension between, on the one hand, the goal of a casteless society in

which the individual is the unit of public policy and, on the other, the concept of reservations for scheduled castes and tribes with the group as the unit of public policy. However there was a consensus that two groups were so disadvantaged that they ought to be beneficiaries of a system of affirmative action. One was the scheduled castes, comprising about 15.7 percent of the population. The other was the scheduled tribes, 7.7 percent of the population. The Indian Constitution also contained a provision that special benefits could also be provided to other backward communities; it did not specify who these other communities were or what the benefits might be. The other backward classes (OBCs) or, as they were sometimes designated, the socially and educationally backward classes (SEBCs), were conceived basically in terms of caste. According to most estimates, the OBCs constitute about half of the Indian population, so that along with the scheduled castes and tribes they form about three-quarters of the country's population. The OBCs are highly differentiated in terms of their income, occupation, and education, and for this reason many who supported reservation for the scheduled castes and tribes opposed giving benefits to those who belong to the OBCs.

The reservation provisions were not without controversy. India's left intellectuals and left parties were not advocates of caste-based policies. They argued instead that a more egalitarian social order could be built through property redistribution and the expansion of the public sector. Land reform, they argued, was the key to equality, since caste was sustained by unequal property relations which permitted the upper castes to maintain their social, political, and economic dominance. Some Marxist theorists argued that caste and ethnic identities were epiphenomena created by the ruling classes to prevent the rise of class consciousness. The false consciousness could be overcome by fundamental structural changes in the economic order, and through the efforts of the left to instruct the masses as to what constituted their class interests. The caste system could be smashed, not through an attack against orthodoxy, or ameliorative measures such as reservations, but through changing the mode of production.

The post-independence government was committed to reservation. The government set a quota for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes for all government appointments, including representation in the public sector. Quotas were established for admission into elite educational institutions such as medical schools and the national universities. A national commission was appointed to consider whether reservation should be granted to the "other backward classes." Though the commission recommended reservations in government service and education, the chairman, Kaka

Kalelkar, declared his opposition and the recommendations were not acted upon. None the less, several state governments – most notably Karnataka – did extend reservations to other backward classes.

In 1979 the government of India appointed another commission, known after its chairman as the Mandal Commission, to consider the proposal for extending reservations to the OBCs. The Mandal Commission, like its predecessor, defined backward classes in caste rather than class terms, enumerating specific castes as "backward" by virtue of their social as well as their economic status. Given the material benefits from reservations, there was considerable lobbying to be classified as backward since, unlike the socially defined and widely accepted category of untouchables, there was no agreement as to which castes were backward. The commission drew up a list of some 400 castes they classified as "backward," most of whom belonged to the labouring or *shudravarna*. The principles implicitly put forth by Mandal Commission and previous commissions that recommended reservations for the backward classes were : (1) that caste membership rather than individual class characteristics should determine the beneficiaries; (2) low social ranking in the caste system rather than average per capita income or other economic criteria should be the principle consideration for inclusion on the OBC list; (3) religious and linguistic groups, no matter what their economic condition, should not qualify for inclusion in the backward category; and (4) reservations should be in the public sector, including college admissions, government employment, and, for the scheduled castes and tribes, seats in legislative bodies. The central premise of the Mandal Commission was that India should proceed from an ideology that rested upon hereditary hierarchy to an ideology that emphasized equality of outcomes – not quality of opportunity.

Though the government approved the recommendations of the Mandal Commission, no action was taken at the time and reservations at the national level remained limited to the scheduled castes and tribes. The central government's policy continued to be one of balancing a commitment to equal rights for all with special benefits to some.

In August 1990, Prime Minister V. P. Singh, then the leader of a fragile coalition non-Congress government in need of solidifying his electoral base, announced that 27 percent of central government positions would be set aside for other backward classes in addition to the 22 percent set aside for the scheduled castes and tribes. The 400 castes enumerated in the Mandal Commission report were to be given reservations. But, the government's announcement triggered large-scale violence across northern

India, especially in the universities. Though many of the opponents of reservations did so because they were excluded, there was also a growing sense that a moral injustice was being committed and the government had extended the benefits for political reasons. Though the country was divided, none of the major political parties openly opposed V. P. Singh's reservation policy. It was widely understood, however, that the leaders and members of the Bharatiya Janata Party regarded caste reservations for the OBC's as a policy that divided Hindu society and weakened it against its Muslim adversaries.

So many groups within the electorate now benefit from reservations that a policy reversal is politically unlikely. Once a system of group preferences was introduced, leaders of political parties regarded support for preferences as a strategy for winning political support.

15.4 Conclusion

To recapitulate, the political mobilization of the lower castes, their increasing incorporation into the Indian political system, and their rising political power can be attributed to the demise in the ideological legitimacy of caste among the upper castes; the inclusive character of the Indian National Congress as a mass-based political movement; the intrafactional conflicts within the post-independence Congress; the Congress strategy of building vote banks among the scheduled castes and tribes, the Muslims, and the middle and upper castes; the counter-strategy of the non-Congress opposition parties to win support among the other backward castes and to build their own caste-based alliances; the system of reservations which provided opportunities for access to higher education, administration, and elected bodies to members of the scheduled castes and tribes; and finally the extension of reservations to hundreds of other backward castes.

The increasing political clout of the lower castes should also be seen in the context of an increase in social mobility. The abolition of the zamindari system and land redistribution plus the introduction of the Green Revolution improved the economic position of many lower-caste tenants who gained title to land; the expansion of the system of mass education, though very limited, along with the system of reservations, enabled some individuals to obtain employment which brought them into the middle class. However, the low public investment in primary and secondary schools, the country's slow economic growth, and the limited

expansion of employment opportunities have left large sections of the OBCs, the Dalits, and the tribals among the poorest in Indian society, notwithstanding their rising political power.

Keywords : Nationalist perspective and Caste, Rise of Caste, Sanscritization, Politicization of Caste, Mobilization of Caste, Caste Reservation.

15.5 Summing Up

● Caste is not disappearing, nor is casteism – the political use of caste - for what is emerging in India is a social and political system which institutionalizes and transforms but does not abolish caste.

● Politicization of caste takes place in three ways – political co-option, political mobilization and caste reservation.

● The competitive democratic system provided mechanisms for the incorporation of groups and elites that had previously been excluded from political power.

● The destruction of the ideological foundation of India's hierarchical social order politicized the SC's, ST's and OBC's.

● Rise to political power of the lower castes was facilitated by the Indian system of affirmative action known as reservation.

● Reservation was provided to SC's and ST's and national commissions (like the Kaka Kalelkar Commission and Mandal Commission) were appointed to consider whether reservation should be granted to Other Backward Classes.

15.6 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Discuss the factors responsible for the rise of politicization of caste in India.

2. Analyse how political co-optation was responsible for the rise of caste politics in India.

Long Questions :

1. Write a note on the recommendations of the Mandal Commission.

2. What is the constitutional stand on caste?

3. How did India's left intellectuals and left leaders view the policy of reservation?

Short Questions :

1. What is Sanskritization?

2. When was the Mandal Commission formed?

3. How many categories of caste did the Mandal Commission identify as backward?

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Module - 4

Unit - 16 ❑ Affirmative Action Policies : Women

Structure

16.1 Objectives

On reading this unit, the learners will be able to :

● define the meaning of affirmative action.

● present a broad overview of the status of women in India.

● identify the status of women in ancient India.

● highlight women's position during the British Rule and Freedom Movement in India.

● enumerate the provisions in the Constitution of India regarding women's equality.

● describe women Political Participation in the democratic institution and structures.

● explain the growing problems of violence against women and its solutions.

16.2 Introduction

Women constitute roughly half of the world's population. According to the United Nation's The Population Reference Bureau, 2004, in its data sheet, it revealed that out of 3209 million women living in the world, the share of India is 531.9 millions. This amounts to nearly half of India's total population. As per India's Census 2001, the ratio of females per thousand males was 933 and in the Census Report of 2011, the number of women for every 1000 men came down to 914. Different statistics shows that this half of humanity possesses 1/100th of the world's property. Nearly 70 percent of the women live below the poverty line. Two thirds of them are illiterate. According to Human Development Report 1995, "poverty has a woman face. Of the 1.3 billion people in poverty, 70 per cent are women". Taking the economy as a whole, Indian women perform two-thirds of the work, but earn only one-tenth of the income. Women do have unequal access to land and property rights; where as nearly 89 per cent of the women earn their livelihood from agriculture. Compared to male members, women have low life expectancy at birth, low educational attainment and low income and gender disparities. In 2005, women made up twelve percent of the World's Parliamentarians, while India at that time was only 8 per cent, though the 15th Lok Shaba represents 10 per cent women members.

Studies on Indian women in politics, in aggregate, indicate that women in Indian society have been deprived of fundamental social, economic and political rights. The social hierarchies and inequalities that exist in Indian society have deterred the women for centuries from playing an active role in the societal functions including participation in political institutions.

Women constituting half the population of our country have been an integral part of our social structure mainly due to their contribution to the socio-economic spheres of life. Notwithstanding the fact, women in India face discrimination and exclusion because of the gender bias of the prevalent patriarchal values of Indian society. As man started believing everything under his control taming the most furious and deadly animals with force and technology and using them for its own benefits, so he similarly, enslaved women and the tool he used was the ideology of patriarchy. This recounts us Simon de Beauvoir's statement that "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman". So, patriarchy is a socio-cultural construction in which a false consciousness makes women to accept all forms of oppression, discrimination and exploitation. The dominant patriarchy has denied women equality of status and opportunities in the socio-economic and political spheres. Rural Indian women are still treated as "object" of development rather than the "subject" of development.

The involvement of women in the development process and political decision making process has been advocated by social and political thinkers. The Report of the Committee on Status of Women in Indian Women, 1974, a significant document on the socio-economic conditions of Indian women, says that though political participation of women in the political process has created a space but their ability to produce impact on the political process has been negligible because of the inadequate attention paid to their political education and mobilization by both political parties and women's organization. Parties have tended to see women voters as appendages of the males. Among women, leadership among women has become diffused and diverse with sharp contradictions with regard to inequalities that affect the status of women in every sphere – social, economic and political.

Historically, in India, women have been praised greatly in the literature and religion as 'Devi' or 'Shakti' or 'ardhangini' and a portion of man. This finds expression in the famous epic in The Mahabharata glorifying them as the "light of the house, mother of the universe and supporter of the earth and all its forests". In ancient India, women used to participate equally along with men in the religious rituals. So women were equal to men. But with the advent of Muslim rule, mediaeval India witnessed steady dependency of women on men. The Islamic custom of

'purdah' (veiling of women) had created the two worlds – public and private world with women confined to the latter. Virtually, Indian women lost their earlier status and were at lowest ebb.

In the colonial era, the British rule hardly intervened the socio-religious spheres. Their mission was economic rather than social and political. Despite the civilizing missions, many inhuman social evil were carried out in the name of custom, culture and tradition. 'Sati', the tradition of widow immolation was one of it. Society conspired to inherit the widow from her husband's property. Though reformers like Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar tried their best to cleanse the society and elevate the status of women to a considerable height, the women had a little role in it. The Britishers along with the Indian reformers brought the brutal practices against women on the margin in society. The British rule, in order to raise the status of Indian women gave birth to a number of socio-religious reforms in the country.

The Indian women's concern for political equality emerged during the national movement in which women, especially from the upper strata of the society, actively participated, but their participations were not directed against the traditional patriarchal system as such. However, women during the freedom struggle, raised the issue of representation in politics as early as 1917 along with the demand for universal adult franchise. By 1935, under the Government of India Act, all women over 21 could vote provided they fulfilled the conditions of property and education. In the post independence period, though the affirmative concept bearing welfare, development and empowerment/reservation relating to the status of women with the principle of 'Gender Equity and Equality' had been constitutionalised in free India and through other legislation to uplift their status. Yet politics proved to be a very inhospitable terrain for women and continues to be the male bastion into which the entry of women is severely restricted. In contemporary India, women have been experiencing derivation, brutality and exploitation in different situations and most importantly, at the hands of the persons whom they trust more. Society as a whole has still not accepted women is being equal to men and crimes or abuses against women are on the rise. For that change, the society's age-old deep rooted mindset needs to be changed through social conditioning and sensitization programmers.

16.3 Affirmative Action : Women

In a heterogeneous society, there are multiple identities among people, culture

and community. Because of the multiple identities in such a society, there is also a presence of inequality prevalent in the multiplicity of identities. To ensure equality in any unequal society, there is need to create a ground for level-playing so that huge disparities do not exist. The affirmative action is a response to secure equal rights in a differentiated society to reduce disparity. The entire idea of affirmative action is about recognizing the fact that in society everyone is not equal, some groups or people need support in the form of affirmative action from the state in various ways putting the disadvantaged groups or people in an equal footing with the rest of the competing groups.

Thus, affirmative action is a policy in which an individual's color, race, sex, religion or natural origin are taken into account to increase opportunities provided to an under-represented part of society. Affirmative action seeks to overturn historical trends of discrimination against an individual's identity by providing assistance to groups identified as subject to past or present discrimination in areas of education, employment and representation.

Conditions of women in India have not been historically very good. Women are physically weaker than men and due to this fact they have been exploited, oppressed and under-privileged. Due to such continuous unfavourable treatment, the social status of women has become really degraded. It is argued that "neither growth nor strong market orientation alone reduces or eliminates inter-group disparity and discrimination". Therefore, affirmative action becomes essential in a differential society such as that in India.

Originally, the overall affirmative policy in India was nameless; the various measures that embodied it were referred to as 'reservation', 'special treatment' or 'preferential treatment' or 'concessions'. But most of those terms have referred to this policy but these have no connection with the wider principle or goal. In the 1950s, Professor Alexandronicz proposed 'positive discrimination' and Marc Galanter proposed 'compensatory discrimination'. There were also other terms as 'benign discrimination' and 'reverse discrimination' 'empowerment' etc. Many writers and judges have used it treating them as synonyms. The term, 'affirmative action' came to be in use in the early 1980s, borrowed from the United States. In India, the term was used in the case of disadvantaged section of the population.

The women are naturally a weaker sex was first acknowledged by U S Supreme Court in the case of Muller vs. Oregon, 1908. In this case, U S Supreme Court observed that due to physical structure and performance of maternal functions,

women are at a disadvantage in the society and thus it is society's responsibility to implement favourable laws to bring them on the same level as men. The makers of the Indian Constitution also understood this fact and have provided several provisions for elevating the status of women and giving them a level playing field.

16.4 Status of Women in India

The low position of women in society is as old as patriarchy. Women constituting half the population of our country have been an integral part of our social structure principally due to their contribution to the socio-economic spheres of life. Notwithstanding the fact, women in India have been discriminated because of the gender bias of the prevalent patriarchal values of Indian society. The dominant patriarchy has denied women equality of status and opportunities in the socio-economic and political spheres.

There is a famous phrase coined by Simon de Beauvoir that "one is not born a woman but becomes one". The phrase underscores the point of dividing mankind on the basis of gender as 'man' and 'women'. Such distinction has both psychological and physiological aspects. In most societies, biological differences are translated into socially institutionalilsed roles and positions. To simply speak, society takes up the task of converting a biological male into a man and a biological female into a woman by prescribing masculine and feminine qualities to them respectively. Society has over the ages evolved beliefs, ideas, values and expectations through which children right from a very tender age, internalize the traits of masculinity or feminity in their behavior, attitude and roles they take up. So, gender is a cultural construction transmitted from generation to generation through the process of socialization. It has nothing to do with one's biology, rather the qualities of being masculine or feminine and its root of these differences lies in one's culture.

Thus, society becomes the field of the domination of men over women. Patriarchy refers to this male domination and female's acceptance of internalization of that dominance. Patriarchy is in fact, a 'male rule'. It is a system of social structures and practices, in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. Most of the institutions of the society are patriarchal in nature, whether it is the state, religion, educational institutions, family or the media. The ideology of patriarchy is so deep rooted in our society that all kinds of violence and women subjugation are a reality. In a heterogeneous society, like India, divided on caste, language, religion, community etc., such domination and subjugation take place in various forms and

manifestations. Violence against women is one of the innumerable incidents which have kept them as an excluded category from political participation and socio-economic developmental process.

The discrimination and exclusion of the women from the mainstream of life have created the world of a man and a woman dividing into two halves, forming many pairs of binary opposites. It is a world of body versus mind, nature versus culture, emotion versus reason, and private versus public. These dichotomies stand in chain to each other that shape the culturally constituted roles for men and women. This dichotomy is perpetuated by patriarchy itself.

The culturally constituted roles for men and women reflect in the following social, political and economic areas.

1. A woman's existence centers on her body. She is destined to gratify man. She is to bear and rear children. Motherhood which is socially constructed has been imposed upon women. She has been made appendage of man, a parasite, a domestic animal, a pleasure resort. Our culture with its patriarchal ideology has been exploiting women in the name of motherhood. Women also suffer from various stigmas due to her body. Simon de Beauvoir says that menstruation interrupts a woman's routine, putting her in a stigmatized state, involving various restrictions on her activities and her social contacts. Simon concludes that "the female is more enslaved to the species than the male, her animality is more manifest".

2. The male-dominated society and culture prescribe that dominance is the male temperament and subordination of the women. Women are assigned domestic service whereas men are the natural proprietors of religion, politics and other realms of cultural thought.

3. The Private/Public dialogue further extends to another dichotomy of the world of men and women. In a gender-hierarchically society, the private sphere popularly known as the domestic sphere has no economic, political or historical significance. The private sphere needs to be nourished with understanding, cooperation, care, selflessness and of course, bundles of emotions. On the other hand, the public sphere is a competitive world which requires being aggressive, reasonable and ambitions with no trace of emotions. This is because emotions are the greatest hindrance to the profit-making motive of the public sphere. Therefore, women who are in charge of the private sphere, stand in a subordinate position to men. The value of

the labour put in household is never estimated; rather it is branded as useless, whereas the man in the public sphere is given more importance. Besides, the state has also closed its eyes to the gross injustice, taking place within the four walls of the domestic sphere, calling it 'personal'. This has resulted in the growing rates of wife-beating, dowry deaths and marital rapes and molestation of young girls by other male relatives. This is why feminists have blown the clarion call,"Personal is Political". Things get even worse with working women.

4. Women subjugation starts at family. The tradition of 'Stridhan' got transformed into dowry. Dowry became a nightmare for parents. Daughters became a burden to their parents. Birth of a daughter in a family is still despised. Daughters are 'Parayaadhan'. One fine morning, they would be married into another family with a substantial amount of dowry. Therefore, daughters are looked down upon. As she grows up, she is married off. Her education is stopped if at all she is studying. Once married she has reached the destination of her life. She starts another life again. It can be seen that in a family it is the womenfolk who fight among themselves. The mother-in-law is the greatest enemy of the daughter-in-law and daughters are deprived of many facilities that a son has access to. Thus, patriarchy in alliance with other institutions in the society formed a vicious circle of deprivation. The traditional way of thinking upholds the man as the 'breadwinner' and the woman as the 'bread maker'. They have also been labeled as the fountainhead of affection and care, but in return, they are not reciprocated with such love and attention. They are required to maintain silence to all kinds of injustice else she would be branded as a 'bad woman'. Things get extremely difficult for women who are working outside home because they have to bear the double burden of domestic work as well as work-place.

The facts mentioned above signal that "the scales of world's equality are out of balance. The side marked 'women' is weighed down with responsibility, while the side marked 'men' rides high with power…….". So, violence against women is the manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women. Women's increasing demand for freedom and equality still meets with violent resistance from conservative social forces reinforced by neo-liberal policies and socio-economic processes. The incidence of violence against women has intensified and become more pervasive in the recent past. It has taken on more brutal forms, like

the deaths of the Delhi Gang rape victim and the suicide of the 17 year-old victim in Chandigarh. The recent even in Unnao in U.P. and Hyderabad points to the heinous acts of violence against women in recent times.

16.5 Status of Women in Ancient India

From ancient to modern period, women's conditions – socially, politically and economically, has not remained same and it kept changing with times. In ancient India, women were having equal status with men; in early Vedic period, they were very educated and the women scholars like Gargi, Moitroyi, Lopamudra, contributed many hymns to Rig-Veda. Not only the scholarship was the hall mark of the Vedic women, friendly behavior with her husband earned her much reputation in society. But with the coming of famous treatise of Manu i.e.Manusmriti, this bright picture of the Hindu women was dimmed and the status of women was relegated to a subordinate position to man. All kinds of discriminatory practices started to take form such as child marriage, devadasi pratha, nagar vandhu system, sathi pratha etc. Women's socio-political rights were curtailed and they were made fully dependent upon the male members of family. Their right to education, right to work and right to decide for themselves were taken away.

Like the women of the Vedic age, the women of epic period also enjoyed an honorable status. The classical epics of India; 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata' used to treat women with great honour. 'Sita' of 'Ramayana' and 'Draupadi' of 'Mahabharata' represent two different aspects of feminine ethos in ancient India.

The period of Medieval India has been depicted as a dark period of Indian history. This period was a disappointing phase as far as the status of women was concerned. With the firm grip of Brahmanism in society after the death of Harshavardhan, her freedom was curtailed, reducing the status of women to that of an appendage of man. The revival of 'Sati', the prohibition of remarriage, the spread of 'Purdah' and the greater prevalence of polygamy made her position very bad. Though the 'Bhakti' movement gave a new life to women, but in the economic structure of the society women continued to hold low status.

16.6 Status of Women during British Rule

The establishment of British Rule made metamorphic changes in the Indian social system. Along with the advent of Western ideas, education was one of the field

to which the British attached special importance. In fact, it is the British rule which provided for equal opportunities in education to women in India. The British in collaboration with the 19th century social reformers, attempts were made to do away with the evils like child marriage, 'Sati' system, 'Devadasi' system, 'Purdah' system, prohibition of widow remarriage etc.

The important forces which were responsible for the betterment of status of women during the British period were a change in the attitudes and values and stress on quality of life and individual freedom.

The great reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Maharshi Karve, Jyotiba Phule, Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, Dedabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Mahatma Gandhi and others played pioneering role.

The women leaders like Sister Nivedita, Anne Besant, Sarojini Naidu, and Ramabai Ranade. Toru Datta, Kamalabai Chattopadhyaya, Swarna Kumari Devi, Raj Kumari, Amrit Kaur and so on are of immense importance.

Thus, in order to raise the status of women, the British rule led to number of socio-religious reforms in the country.

16.7 Women in the Freedom Movement

The Indian women participated in the freedom movement as good partners of their male counterparts for the recognition of their identity in the political sphere. Women took the challenge of standing peacefully against the atrocities of the British forces. The peaceful protest of Mahatma Gandhi not only trained a large number of women in Satyagraha and Ahimsa but also made them committed that participation became a necessity for the success of struggle against British might. Swadeshi Movement could not have succeeded without help of women.

The year of 1914 witnessed the beginning of the First World War. During this period, women had started taking interest in civil and political matters concerning India. Annie Besant and Sarojini Naidu took part in the movement. Annie Besant prepared the ground for Home League agitation (1914-1915) in which women played a prominent part. During the Baroda Satyagraha of 1923-24 and the Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928, the participation and support of women was memorable. In the 'no tax campaign' and the Dandi March, the saga of women' heroic participation was overwhelming.

As early as 1917, the Indian women raised the issue of representation in politics which meant a demand for universal adult franchise. By 1929 women had the right to vote on the basis of wifehood, property and education.

Apart from the participation of women, during the freedom movement, various social legislations also played important role in uplifting the status of women. These legislations were related to marriage, property rights and employment opportunitiesunder the Government. The prevention of Sati Act 1829, The Widow Remarriage Act, 1856, The Special Marriage Act, 1872, The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, The Married Women's Property Act, 1874 and the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act, 1939 were passed.

16.8 Post-Independent Period : Women and the Constitution of India

During the freedom Movement, almost all the leaders of the freedom struggle were of the view that women should be given equal status in the free India and all types of discriminatory practices must stop. And for that to happen, the founding fathers of the constitution thought to include such affirmative action and policies in the provisions of the constitution of India that would help eliminate age-ole exploitative customs and traditions and also such provisions which would help in empowering women socially, economically and politically.

The status of Indian women has radically changed since independence. India's constitution makers and our founding fathers were very determined to provide equal rights to both women and men. The constitution of India is one of the finest documents in the world. It provides provisions to secure equality in general and gender equality in particular. The adoption of the constitution on 26th November, 1949 and its coming into force on 26th January, 1950 can be considered as a remarkable achievement with regard to emancipation and empowerment of women. Various articles in the constitution, several laws, legislations, policies and institutional reforms have been enacted to carry out the gender action plan for the development of women.

Preamble :

The preamble to the constitution of India assures justice, social, economic and political; equality of status and opportunity and dignity to the individual. Thus, it treats both men and women equal.

Fundamental Rights :

The policy of women empowerment is well documented in the Fundamental Rights in our constitution. For instance, Article 14 ensures to women the right to equality. Article 15(1) specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.

Article 15(3) empowers the state to take affirmative actions in favor of women. The purpose of Article 15(3) is to eliminate the socio-economic backwardness of women and to empower them in such a manner as to bring about effective equality between men and women. Similarly, Article 15(1) and 15(2) prevents the state from making any discriminatory law on the basis of gender alone.

Article 16 provides for equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office.

Article 21 of the constitution states "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law". This article is the backbone for the protection and promotion of women rights. For example, the apex court in a series of cases held that right to life enshrined in Article 21meaning something more than survival or animal existence. (State of Maharashtrav. Chandrabhan, 1983). It included the right to live with human dignity. This article has been interpreted over the years to provide speedy trial, especially in cases of rape, free legal aid, health care, education, protection of insane persons.

Article 21(A) provides right to free and compulsory education to the children of both sexes, looking into the socio-economic set up of the Indian society it can be said that the girl child will be more benefited from this act. The state in pursuance of the above provision has enacted the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in women Act, 1956 which has been recently amended, is known as the PITA. Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, the indecent representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 etc.are the milestone in ensuring the dignity of Indian Women. Sexual harassment at workplace is a violation of Article 21 of the constitution. This verdict was made by the apex court of the country in the case of Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan and laid down detailed direction and guidelines on the subject which are to be strictly observed by all employees, public or private. Right to life is now recognized as a basic human right. It has to be read in consonance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, the Declaration on the elimination of violence against women and the Declaration and Covenants of Civil and Political Rights and the covenants of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to which India is a party having ratified them. Article 21 also states that rape violates the right of women.

For centuries, women have been humiliated, exploited, tortured and harassed in all walks of life-physically, mentally and sexually. To safeguard and protect women against exploitation, Article 23(1) of the constitution prohibits traffic in human beings and beggar and other similar form of forced labour. "Traffic in human beings" means selling and buying human beings as slaves and also includes traffic in women and children for immoral or other purposes. In pursuance of this Article, the state of Andhra Pradesh abolished the Devadasis (Prohibition and Dedication) Act, 1988.

These rights being fundamental are justifiable in court and the Government is obliged to follow the same.

16.9 Role of Directive Principles of State Policy in Protecting the Rights of Women

Although the Directive Principles of State Policy are not enforceable by the Court, they are fundamental principle for guidance to the various organs of the state. However, in recent time, judiciary has broadened the concept of directive principles and given a wider definition to them.

Article 39, provides that the citizens, men and women, equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood; that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women; that the health and strength of workers, men and women, are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter a vocation unsuited to their age and strength.

In furtherance of these principles, suitable provisions have been included in various Labour Laws passed from time to time e.g. the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, the Factories Act, 1948, the Mines Act, 1952 and several other statutes. In this regard, various international Labour Conventions and recommendations of International Labour Organization (ILO) have been kept in view.

Article 42 provides that the state is to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.

The cumulative effect of these articles is that "the state is under obligation to provide suitable legislation to ensure just and humane conditions in various industries and maternity benefits to women".

16.10 Fundamental Duties

Fundamental duties are enshrined in Part IV-A of the constitution and are positive duties for the people of India to follow. It also contains a duty related to women.

Article 51(A)(e) expects from the citizen of the country to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

16.11 Other Constitutional Provisions

Though 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments of 1993, a milestone in the history of India have been achieved not only in the sphere of decentralisation but it paved the way for empowering the poor people as well as women. With this amendment, women were given 33.33 per cent reservation in seats at different levels of elections in local governance i.e. Panchayat, Block and Municipality elections. It also reserved no less than one-third of seats of Chairpersons at any level for women. Many commentators remarked that in the light of the marginalisation of women in Indian polity, reservation of one-third seats for women at this level marks a significant turning point giving voices to the "emerging millions" who constitute nearly half of the population.

But the constitution 81st Amendment Bill was introduced in the Parliament way back in 1996 to reserve one-third of seats for women in Parliament and state legislatures. But the fate of the bill is still pending. The Bill in its current form envisages reserving 181 seats out of 543 in the Parliament for women. Securing 33% reservation for women in opening the doors of opportunity for political empowerment to almost 50% of our population has been a dream for many visionaries in India. If the Bill gets cleared it will go a long way in ensuring political equality through active participation of women from both urban and rural areas. In this respect, affirmative action would help women to get their fair place in the political bodies to right the wrong and change the societal imbalance.

Apart from those constitutional provisions for women's cause, Indian plan documents emphasised on women issues or welfare. The Second Five Year Plan 1956-61, recognised special needs of women workers such as maternity benefit and facilities for their children. It also suggested the implementation of the principle of

equal play for equal work and training to women in order to enable them to complete for better paid jobs.

The fifth plan 1974-79 overlapped with the UN International Decade for women (1976-85) and for the first time there was a shift in the approach from women 'welfare' to 'development'. But the concept of women's development received recognition as a specific development sector for the first time in the Sixth Plan (1980-85) in which a separate chapter on 'Women and Development' was provided. The plan conceived of a multi-pronged strategy for women's development including: employment and economic independence; education; access to health care and family planning; support services to meet practical gender needs; and the creation of an enabling policy and institutional and legal environment. In the Seventh Plan (1985-90) emphasis was shifted again from 'development' to 'empowerment' of women. Consequently, in 2001, National Policy for Women Empowerment was adopted (1) To create an environment so that women feel involved in the making of economic and social policies (2) To give equal share in social, economic and political aspects (3) To remove discriminations against women by enacting various laws and (4) To encourage equal treatment of women in the society. It may be mentioned that the year 2001 was declared as The Year of Women empowerment.

After conferring some positive discriminatory policies in the constitution, steps were taken to reform the laws which were violating the right to equality on the ground of sex. The Hindu Code Bill was brought before the Parliament. In 1955 and 1956, it was decided to pass the Bill in piecemeal and four enactments viz. the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956, the Hindu Minority ad Guardianship Act, 1956 were passed. The object of these enactments was to bring about a change in status and position of Hindu Women and put them at par with men in the matrimonial home.

Several Acts were also passed for the improving of the conditions of women from time to time. These are: (1) Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961. (2) Contract Labour Act 1970 as well as Factories Act, 1948, provides that women cannot be employed in the night between 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. Women cannot be required to work more than 9 hours. (3) Equal Remuneration Act, 1976. (4) The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986. (5) The commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 (6) Protection of women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (7) Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (8) Child Marriage Prohibition Act, 1929 (9) The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 (10) The Preconception and Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 (11) The sexual harassment of women at workplace (Prevention, Protection) Act, 2013.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development is the nodal agency for all matters pertaining to welfare, development and empowerment of women. It has evolved schemes and programmes for their benefit. These schemes are spread across a very wide spectrum such as women's need for shelter, security, safety, legal aid, justice, information, maternal health, food, nutrition etc. as well as their need for economic sustenance through skill development, education and access to credit and marketing.

Besides the above legislations, The Indian Penal Code, 1860, the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and Indian Evidence Act, 1872 along with other 54 major legislations are in existence to protect and promote women rights. These include different sections :

Sl.No. (1)	Name of Offences Punishment (2)	Sections Punishment (3)	Minimum (4)	Maximum (5)
1.	Obscene acts and song in public place	294	———	3 months or fine or both
2.	Rape	376	7/10 years	10 years also fine
3.	Dowry, Dowry death	302/304B	7 years	Life imprisonment
4.	Torture	498-A	———	3 years also fine
5.	Assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty	354	———	2 years or fine or both
6.	Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman	509	———	1 year of fine or both
7.	Intercourse by Superintendent in Jail	376-C	———	5 years also fine
8.	Bigamy	494	———	7 years and also fine

Sl.No. (1)	Name of Offences Punishment (2)	Sections Punishment (3)	Minimum (4)	Maximum (5)
9.	Wife beating	325	———	7 years and also fine
10.	Selling and buying minor for prostitution	372/373	———	10 years and also fine
11.	Transportation of girls from foreign country	366-B	———	10 years and also fine

Indian Penal Code and in its various sections lay down guidelines for meeting special treatment to women in varied situations.

The lives of millions of women worldwide are affected by violence. During the Fourth World Conference September, 1995 on women in Beijing, the Governments declared that "violence against women constitutes a violation of basic human rights and is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of peace, equality and development". But the alarming global dimensions of female-targeted violence were not explicitly acknowledged by the international community until the UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW) in 1993. Now UN in its specialised organs has been making efforts towards ending violence against women. India has set up in pursuance of the protection of Human Rights Act of 1993, the National Human Rights Commission. It deals with the backlog of women cases for violation of their human rights. As a watchdog of women's issue, the National Commission for Women (New) was formed to monitor the Government's non-implementation of laws enacted to provide protection to women. It is a statutory body concerned with advising the Government on all policy matters affecting women.

The constitution of India guarantees to women equality in all spheres, besides making special provision for them. Progressive legislations by successive governments have sought to undo the injustice of the past. And yet, even today there is a great big gap between her 'de jure' and 'de facto' status.

In India, the census report reveals that female population has been steadily declining since 1901. The data on sex composition are not only a demographic characteristics but sex ratio is an important social indicator of prevailing equity

between males and females in a society at a given point of time. In India, the sex-ratio of the human population can be seen from Table – 1.

Table – 1
Sex – Ratio of Females

Years	No. of Females per thousand Males	Percentage of Decline/Increase
1901	972	———
1911	964	0.82 (–)
1921	955	0.93 (–)
1931	950	0.52 (–)
1941	945	0.53 (–)
1951	946	0.10 (+)
1961	9412	0.53 (–)
1971	930	1.17 (–)
1981	934	0.43 (+)
1991	927	0.75 (–)
2001	933	0.64 (+)
2011	943	1.07 (+)

Source : Census of India – 2011.

Table–1 point out that the sex-ratio has been falling almost continuously since 1901. However, except the sex-ratio in 1981, 2001 and 2011 recorded a marginal increase, otherwise, from 1901 to 2001, the female population has decreased (from 972 to 933). Though India's 2001 and 2011 censuses show increase of female sex-ratio from 933 to 943 per 1000 males, it is far below the world average of 986 and much lesser than that of the advanced countries like the US (1029), Japan (1041) and the developing countries like Brazil (1025) and Indonesia (1004).

The reasons for declining sex-ratio of females are accounted for differential mortality between males and females, sex selective migration and manifestation of patriarchal ideology resulting in discriminatory treatment towards females. The pre-natal tests to eliminate unwanted girls link the persistence of difference between males and females sex-ratio. The mortality rate among females across all ages was

6.2 and that among male was 7.1 in 2014. But in the same year, the infant mortality rate (IMR) of females was 40 while that of males was 37. The rate of decline in the IMR of females was faster than that of IMR among males. The urban mothers received 1.27 times more medical attention at the time of delivery as compared to rural mothers (urban 93.2%, rural 73.2%). Due to medical health facilities the life expectancy for females was 69.6 years and for males was 66.4 year during the period 2010-2014 depicting higher life expectancy of females as compared to males. Despite higher life expectancy of females, in society they are still discriminated as more than 70,000 foetuses were killed through medical tests and a considerable number of women dying before they attain the age of 40, higher than that of males.

16.12 Literacy and Education

Despite constitutional provisions and legislations, as per Census 2011, the literacy rate at all India level was 72.98% and the literacy rate for females and males are 64.63% and 80.9% respectively. Adult education rate of females and males in the age of 15+ years at the all-India level was 76% and that among males were 78.8% and females was 59.3%. Rural-urban gap existed in adult literacy for both females and males. In rural areas was 50.6% vis-a-vis 76.9% in urban areas whereas for males the same in rural areas was 74.1% vis-a-vis 88.3% in urban areas. So, it appears that in adult literacy rate, females are lagging behind males, though in the Gross Enrolment Ratio during 2014-15 at primary level females are more ahead than their male counterpart. The enrolment of females and males at the primary level is 101.4 and 98.9 respectively, at middle class level the corresponding figures are 95.3 and 87.7 and at the secondary level, the status was at 65.8 and 63.8 respectively. The number of females per 100 males in University education in major disciplines was highest in Medicine (90.9), followed by Arts (86), Science (72.7), Commerce (67.3) and Engineering and Technical (40.3).

In spite of this change in the trend towards higher literacy rate among women, some other problems have cropped up. There are regional differences. In states like Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra, high rate of women education are found to be satisfactory, whereas in states like Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, women education rate is not optimistic. In higher, middle and high schools a substantial increase was reported but as per data furnished by the Ministry of Education, New Delhi, a significant drop outs occurred between the age group of 6 – 14 years among women/ females in middle and high schools.

16.13 Women Participation in Economy

It is true that relatively a large number of women are entering the employment sector. In 2011, the Workforce Participation Rate at all-India level was 25.51% for female and 53.26% for males. While there was no rural-urban gap for males (53%), but there was considerable rural-urban gap for females-rural 30%, urban 15.4%. The 6th Economic Census (2013-14) showed that 21.49% of the rural establishments are owned by females and 18.29% of the workers employed in establishments are females. As per 2011 census, in 2011-12, the rural work force participation rate for females 24.8 and 54.3 for males in rural areas. Whereas such female and male figure in urban areas stood at 14.7 and 54.6 respectively. Thus, it reveals the fact that majority of women who are ready to work are not finding work. Despite their commendable service in various fields, they are still marginalised and discriminated. As a result they are now engaged in agriculture and unorganised sector in large number.

16.14 Political Participation of Women

Women's participation in the political process is critical both to the strengthening of democracy and to their struggle against oppression. The Government of India has declared the year 2001 as the year for the Empowerment of Women but the struggle to reach the stage is yet to be fulfilled. Empowerment contains the word 'Power'. The control of power leads to control over resources and control of ideology. So, the entry of a large number of women into decision making process can rapidly change the existing situation. The involvement of women at different levels is bound to have positive impact on public policy. Women issues will be transformed into societal issues. The most critical role for women will be to resist inequality and injustice not merely for women, but for all. Our constitution gives equal rights to women. They are participating in the election process as voters, as candidates contesting election, in deliberations in state assemblies and national parliament and holding public offices at different levels. Yet, politics proved to be very inhospitable terrain for women and continues to be the male bastion into which the entry of women is severely restricted.

The question of reservation of seats was left to the National Perspective Plan for women to take up. It recognised thatpolitical participation of women is severely restricted and suggested that a 30% quota for women be introduced at all levels of

elective bodies. The entire issue took on a political hue as it became a moot point whether the introduction of reservation at the level of Panchayats and urban local bodies was really meant to give increased representation to women or a populist measure aiming to create women's constituency at a time when the Congress Party needed to resurrect its image. These doubts notwithstanding, the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution in 1992 and 1993 which provided for 33% reservation for women in Panchayats and urban local bodies. These amendments as a strategy of affirmative action served as a major breakthrough towards ensuring women's equal access and increased participation in political power structures.

Political participation and grassroots democracy have been strengthened considerably by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments that have created new democratic institutions for local governance. The last 20 or more years of Panchayati raj in India have seen many women go from strength to strength in terms of their political participations. Of the 28 lakh elected Panchayat representatives, around 10 lakh or 46% up to 2016 are estimated to be women.

Women have, however, not found adequate representation in the Lok Sobha. The percentage of elected women Lok Sobha members has not exceeded 12%. Table-2 shows representation of women in LokSobha since 1952.

Table – 2
Women Presence in the Lok Sobha

Year	Seats	Women MPS	% of Women MPS
1952	499	22	4.41
1957	500	27	5.40
1962	503	34	6.76
1967	523	31	5.93
1971	521	22	4.22
1977	544	19	3.29
1980	544	28	5.15
1984	544	44	8.9
1989	517	27	5.22
1991	544	39	7.17

Year	Seats	Women MPS	% of Women MPS
1996	543	39	7.18
1998	543	43	7.92
1990	543	49	9.02
2004	543	45	8.03
2009	543	59	10.86
2014	543	61	11.23
Average	531.06	36.87	6.91

Source : Election Commission of India, 2017.

Table-2 shows that representation of women in Lok Sobha works out to only 36.87 and average percentage of women representation in Lok Sobha is not more than 6.91 per cent.

The presence of women in the Upper House (Rajya Sobha) has been slightly higher over-all probably due to indirect elections and nomination of some women members. It was highest in 1990 at 15.5% and shows a declining trend thereafter. It is significant to note that the Deputy Chairperson of the Rajya Sobha at least for more than 25 years has been a woman, yet women face increasing competition from male politicians for nomination.

Table – 3
Women presence in the Rajya Sabha

Year	Total Seats	No. of Women	% of Women
1952	219	16	7.3
1957	237	18	7.6
1962	238	18	7.6
1967	240	20	8.3
1971	243	17	7.0
1977	244	25	10.2
1980	244	24	9.8
1985	244	28	11.4

Year	Total Seats	No. of Women	% of Women
1990	245	38	15.5
1996	223	20	9.0
1998	223	19	8.6
2004	245	27	11.1
2009	245	22	8.97
2014	245	29	11.83
Average	238.21	22.92	9.62

Source : Electoral Statistics Pocket Book, 2017.

Women contesting election have always been low as it may be observed from Table-4. The highest number of women contestants has been merely 636 in 2014, while the number of male contestants has always been on the increase, the highest being 13,353 in 1996. Yet, it is interesting to note that the percentage of winners among women has consistently been more than that of the men, notwithstanding the fact that more often the losing seats are offered to women candidates by the respective political parties. For instance, in 1996, only 3.8% of male candidates won in comparison to 6.7% of female candidates. Likewise, the percentage of winners was 11.2% for men and 15.7% for women in 1998, 12.3% and 17.3% in 1999, 6.44% and 10.61% in 2009 and 6.39% and 9.74% respectively in 2014 (16thLokSobha).

Table – 4
Women Contestants

Year	Males	Females	Total	% of males winning	% of females winning
1952	1831	43	1874	26.05	51.16
1957	1473	45	1518	31.7	60.00
1962	1915	70	1985	24.0	50.00
1967	2302	67	2369	21.3	44.80
1971	2698	86	2784	18.5	24.40
1977	2369	70	2439	22.1	27.10
1980	4478	142	4620	11.5	19.7

Year	Males	Females	Total	% of males winning	% of females winning
1984	5406	164	5574	9.2	25.60
1989	5962	198	6160	8.5	13.60
1991	8374	325	8699	5.9	12.00
1996	13353	599	13952	3.8	6.70
1998	4476	274	4750	11.2	15.70
1999	3976	278	4254	12.3	17.30
2004	5080	355	5435	9.8	12.30
2009	2514	556	8070	6.44	10.61
2014	7527	636	8163	6.39	9.74

Source : Indian Journal of Public Administration, Vol.LX, No.3, July – September, 2014.

The representation of women in the Union Council of Ministers between 1985 and 2014 as shown in Table-5 is dismal. The data show that women have remained underrepresented in the Council of Ministers. Since Independence, India had so far 15 Women Chief Ministers and 23 women Governors. Only one woman served as President of India but no women as Vice-President. In 2015, the share of women judges in Supreme Court was 4% (1 out of 26) and it was 10% (54 out of 517) considering all High Courts in India. Only one woman has got opportunity to serve as Chief Election Commissioner and one as UPSC Chairperson.

Table–5
Representation of Women in the Union Council of Ministers (1985-2014)

Year	Number of Ministers			Number of Women Ministers		
	Cabinet Minister	Minister of State	Deputy Minister	Cabinet Minister	Minister of State	Deputy Minister
1985	15	25	00	01	03	00
1990	17	17	05	00	01	01
1995	12	37	03	01	04	01
1996	18	21	00	00	01	00
1997	20	24	00	00	05	00
1998	21	21	00	00	03	00

Year	Number of Ministers			Number of Women Ministers		
	Cabinet Minister	Minister of State	Deputy Minister	Cabinet Minister	Minister of State	Deputy Minister
2001	30	07	35	03	02	04
2002	31	45	00	02	05	00
2004	28	38	00	01	06	00
2009	34	45	00	06	01	00
2014	23	23	00	06	01	00

Source : Electoral Statistics, 2017.

The scenario of women representation at the State Legislature Assemblies in different states of India is far from satisfactory. There are a few instances of women holding portfolios of finance, industry etc. And are relegated them to 'women specific' departments. The following table–6 shows women's presence in the state legislatures.

Table-6
Participation of Women in select Legislative Assemblies

State/UTS	Year of General Elections	% of Women contestants	Seats won by Women
Andhra Pradesh	2014	08.08	09.2
Arunachal Pradesh	2014	03.87	03.3
Assam	2016	08.55	06.34
Gujarat	2012	05.82	08.8
Haryana	2014	05.65	10.0
Jharkhand	2014	09.77	09.9
Madhya Pradesh	2013	07.74	13.0
Punjab	2012	08.63	12.0
Uttar Pradesh	2012	08.52	08.7
West Bengal	2016	10.19	13.92
Kerala	2016	09.14	05.71

Source : Electoral Statistics, 2017.

The Table–6 reveals that the highest percentage of women in Legislative Assemblies has been in West Bengal 13.92% in 2016 followed by Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Andhra Pradesh, 13.00, 10.00 and 9.2 respectively. The lowest or zero percentage of women in Legislative Assembly is in Nagaland in 2013. The lack of adequate representation of women in State Legislative Assemblies in India except a few states is not up to the expectation considering their position in population. Thus, it is seen that despite constitutional guarantee of equality, women still are not equal with men. The sphere of politics is still dominated by men. The success of affirmative policies taken to ensure women's position and dignity in society is still a distant dream.

16.15 New Problems of Women

The age-ole problems of Indian Women such as child marriage, 'Sati' system, Prohibition on widow remarriage, 'Purdah' system, and 'Devadasi' system have almost disappeared. But their disappearance have now given place for some other problems of modern times such as atrocities against women, rape, dowry, harassment of women, sexual harassment and death, immoral traffic, torture, sexual harassment of employed women etc. Despite draconian legislations in favour of women, these problems have made it difficult for women to lead an equal life with men. There has been a constant increase in the violence against women and hardly a day passes without reports in the newspapers. Violence on women creates harmful physical and emotional impact on the victims leading to the death of the victim.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the crimes against women rose from 3,793 per million in 2016 to 3,886 per million in 2017. This means, 100 more crimes took place per million people in 2017 compared to previous year. Though crimes such as murders and rapes have somewhat come down, other forms of violence are on the rise. The states like Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and West Bengal showed a decrease in crime rates, but in other states such as Uttar Pradesh with 16.8% share of country's female population has reported nearly 10.9% of total crimes committed against women at all India level, by registering 35,527cases. Delhi UT has reported the highest crime rate 184.3% compared to 56.3% at all India level during the year 2015, followed by Assam 148.2%, Telangana 83.1%, Odisha 81.9%, Rajasthan 81.5%, Haryana 75.7% and West Bengal 73.4%. The fastest rate of growth of crimes among all states in India is Delhi as it shows 11,500 crimes reported per million. Crime head-wise cases committed against women can be summarised in the Table–7 below :

Table–7
Year wise Status of Crimes Committed against Women

Crime Head	2014	2015	2016	%share in 2016	% increase in last one year
Rape	36735	34651	38947	11%	125
Kidnapping & Abduction	57311	59277	64519	19%	09%
Cruelty by Husband & Relatives	122877	113403	110378	33%	–3%
Dowry Death	10050	9894	9683	3%	–2%
Assault on Women with intent to outrage her modesty	82235	82422	84746	25%	3%
Insult to the modesty of Women	9735	8685	7305	2%	–16%
Total Crime against Women	337922	327394	338954	100%	4%

Source – NCRB – 2016.

Table–7 shows that more or less crime against women in some forms or other has been on the increase. The brutal rape and murder of the veterinary doctor in Hydrabad followed by killing of four rapists in a Police encounter has stirred the conscience of the nation. In July 2019, a young woman who accused Uttar Pradesh Lawmaker Kuldeep Singh Sengar of raping her in 2017 is a blot on the nation. Similarly in December 5, 2019, a 23 year old rape victim is set ablaze by a gang of men in Unnao district in UP has seriously disturbed the public mind in the country. Though after the 2012 Nirbhaya Case in Delhi, in an effort to assuage mounting public anger, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013 was passed by Parliament containing stringent provisions of punishment for rape and further, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2018 provided death penalty for the rapists, unfortunately, the stringent legal provisions did not reduce the incidence of rape in the country. In India, it is also a fact that a large number of rape cases are either unreported or unregistered. The delay in court cases has proved to be counter-productive. Consequently, there is now a growing demand for setting up special courts for trial of rape cases and other violence against women.

So, it may be reiterated that side by side with the constitutional and legal provisions, social awakening as well as the consistent and honest efforts on the part of people's representatives and social leaders are required to persuade people to accept new challenges and situations giving women a respectable and meaningful social status. In this direction, building of powerful women organisations from the national to the grassroots level is of imperative necessity to protect their rights and opportunities in India.

16.16 Conclusion

In our patriarchal society, the beliefs that women have secondary status and they play inconsequential role, are mainly responsible for the low status of women. In the past, women could enjoy equal status with men. But over the years, the status of women has been reduced to the appendages of men. Despite constituting almost 50% of the total population, women have always been subjected to inequality, discrimination, exploitation, subjugation and in many cases inhuman treatment at the hands of men. In independent India, various constitutional and legislative measures have been adopted to provide women equal status in society. But instead of improving their status, they are still under represented in the political structures of India.

In modern times, women have been facing the increasing incidences of violence. This violence against women has to be perceived from a multi-dimensional perspective. In order to mitigate this social evil, the constitutional guarantee and legislative measures are not enough. The creation of suitable awareness among women is disappointing in this respect. To curb violence against women, the investigating machinery, criminal justice system, welfare and voluntary organisations and above all the general public should play effective and concerted role. There is urgency to change our values and belief system including the attitude like that woman is the asset of a man. In this task, the women organisations and movements can to a great extent go a long way in establishing balance between men and women in India.

16.17 Summing Up

● Women's welfare has become the focal point in the development programme

in India. While women have made significant advances in many societies, still women's concerns are given second priority almost everywhere. Women represent 50 per cent of the world adult population and a third of official labour force, they perform nearly two thirds of all working hours, receive only a tenth of world income and own less than one per cent of the world property.

● In India, despite developmental planning and special status accorded through affirmative action, there has not been a substantial qualitative improvement in the large majority of women living particularly in rural areas. Moreover, women in fact, continue to remain invisible and marginalized in decision-making bodies, leading to lack of a frminist prespective in political decision-making.

16.18 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Discuss the salient features of the status of women in India.

2. Describe the affirmative policies as enshrined in the Constitution of India.

3. Examine the major Legislative measures in combating the violence against women.

Long Questions :

1. Explain the Political Participation and representation of Women in India.

2. Analyse the major causes of violence against women.

3. Identify the role of the Directive Principles of State Policy in protecting rights of women.

Short Questions :

1. Write a short note on the status of women in ancient India.

2. Explain briefly about the causes of the decline of sex-ratio of women in India.

3. What is IPC ? Enumerate the problems of increasing rate of rape in India and its solution.

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Unit - 17 ❑ Affirmative Action Policies : Class

Structure

17.1 Objectives

On reading this unit, the learners will be able to understand :

● the concept of class and its features.

● the difference and interconnections of caste and class.

● the structure of class in India.

● the interplay of caste and classes in power structure and politics in India.

● the Constitutional provisions incorporating affirmative action policies for Backward Classes and Mandal Commission's stand on the question of class and caste.

- the welfare schemes for the Backward Classes.
- implementation of reservation policies.

17.2 Introduction

Social structure in India is undeniably the most stratified society in the world. In this social stratification, there exists the differentiation of the population into hierarchically superimposed classes manifested in the existence of upper and lower layers. The basis and essence of stratification are construed by an unequal distribution of rights and privileges, duties and responsibilities, social values and privation, social power and influences among the members of society. The caste, kinship, occupational groups, factory and administrative structures that constitute distinctive fields of social interaction reflect the structural realities. Innumerable particularities of values, customs and cultures are underlying the structural realities and form their basis.

The real picture of social stratification of India is very complex. In these complexities, apart from class, caste as an important social institution is predominant in social structure. Despite modernization, urbanization and industrialization, physical labour and intellectual work are decided by the accident of birth. The upper caste avoids labour work and receives all the authority upon the production created by the lower caste menial work. Instead of breaking down, caste still persists in the process of continuity and change in India.

The caste system, apart from birth, is based on the concepts of purity and pollution, superior and inferior position. It is associated with religion. Four varnas are described in the religion. Moreover, caste is completely a psychological concept having no scientific base. Yet, caste has emerged as the dreadful denomination of socio-political mobilization in post-colonial Indian society.

According to the Indian Marxist thinkers, the institution of class did not exist prior to the British rule. Hence, caste is a pre-class institution of exploitation and administration in India. With the colonial regime, two modes of production, that of caste and class, came to co-exist with each other.

But ever since the issue of Mandal Commission reservations in governmental jobs for the OBCS, it came to the national agenda in 1989. Since then it has left an impact on the evolution of national politics. For Marxist or a Communist, the two modes of production or a mechanical distinction between caste and class is not only a vulgar simplification but divorced from the present day Indian reality. The caste

stratification of our society is something that has come down to us from centuries. Despite all the refinement and changes within castes and between castes that have taken place over the years, the basic structure in society so far as the oppression of the dalits or the backward castes is concerned remains. It is within this social stratification that class formation is taking place. Capitalism is still developing in India and the process of the development of society divided into modern capitalist classes, is taking shape constantly within the existing caste stratification. The question is, therefore, not one of class versus caste. It is the formation of classes under modern capitalism within the inherited caste structure. To a large extent, the most exploited classes in our society constitute the most socially oppressed castes. And to that extent, the struggle against class exploitation and the struggle against social oppression complement each other.

With the advent of modernization under the British rule, particularly the railways and western education, many including Karl Marx, had thought that the old order would crumble paving the way for a class division of modern society. However, this did not happen as envisaged. It was so because it was not in the interest of the colonial ruleto transform Indian society. Its interest lay in exploiting the Indian people and its economy on the basis of their backwardness. This required keeping the rural land relations intact, in class terms, modifying them only to advance colonial revenue collections without disturbing the economic or social relations. The British also required that a powerful indigenous Indian capitalist class does not arise. The result was an alliance with the feudal landlords for its political survival and the superimposition of minimum modern capitalist relations on the existing feudal land relations which sustained the caste system.

At Independence, all these currents put together had created a situation where the tasks of democratic revolution- chiefly the agrarian revolution remained unfulfilled under the bourgeois leadership of the freedom struggle that compromised with landlordism. The process gets manifested in a concrete expression in post-independent India. The Indian bourgeoisie in order to capture state power compromised with imperialism on the one hand and compromised with landlordism and semi-feudal forces on the other. Thus, instead of sweeping away the feudal and semi-feudal land relations along with the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle, the ruling classes perpetuated these relations including caste structure and institutions.

Consequently, the centrality of caste as an agent of politics and its dominant role in Indian socio-political life have neither been removed nor firmly challenged. Rather, recognition of caste through affirmative policies as a socio-political change

by the Mandal Commission and caste-centric socio-political movements of the 1980s and 1990s, such as Dalit and Backward class movements have not only enlivened new debates in India, but have reinforced a caste-centric public-political life, giving it a modern value and a secular purpose. But the demands and recognition of backward classes for reservation was partly an expression of upwardly mobile lower cultivators' efforts to challenge the literate upper castes or what may be called as challenge to the upper classes in India.

Whatever may be the fact, it is clear that class has yet to become a reality as in advanced capitalist societies, the basis of mobilization because of the underdeveloped capitalist economy and importance of primordial group identities like caste, religion and ethnicity as the bases of political action.

17.3 Conceptualizing Class : Interlinkages of Caste and Class

The word 'class' refers to economic divisions in society. It is derived from Latin word 'classis'. Class refers to a set of phenomena with common attributes. It connotes a set of shared economic, political and cultural attributes. Both Sociology and Economics normally use the term to refer to certain kind of shared characteristics which are essentially economic. Marxists, Weberians and many Sociologists are of the opinion that foundations of class lie in the economic realm. But Karl Marx and Max Weber are widely recognized as the most influential commentators on class.

Karl Marx's interpretation of 'class' is useful because he scientifically analyzed the economic basis of classes and the antagonistic relations between them. He defines classes in terms of their relation to the means of production. He divides the society into two broad categories: the capitalist and the proletariat. Capitalists are the owner of the means of production and the proletariat work for wage or salary. They possess only labour power. Thus, Marx's concept of social classes is basically in terms of the system of production.

On the basis of the idea of Marx about class, the theory of class conflict/ struggle had been evolved and lies at the core of the Marxian critique of the capitalist mode of production and the ultimate demise of the capitalist societies.

In the strict Marxian parlance, class is understood as a group of people standing in a common relationship to the means of production. Ordinarily, the ownership of wealth along with the particular type of occupation are seen to be the two major components on which the various classes in the society are differentiated.

Applying this notion of class in the historical perspective, Lenin defines classes 'as large groups of people which differ from each other (1) By the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production; (2) By their relation to the means of production; (3) By their role in the social organization of labour, and consequently, (4) By the dimensions and mode of acquiring the share of social wealth'. In Marxian perspective, class is defined absolutely in terms of its relation to the economic parameters prevailing in the society. Marx claims that the class which owns the means of production can determine the character of a society.

Though classes are defined by their common economic position, an essential condition for the existence of a class, according to Marx, is that there must be an element of class consciousness an elementary sense of common interest and shared opposition to other classes. A class may exist 'in itself' without being a class 'for itself'. Marx clarifies that a class which has come into being but is not yet conscious of its fundamental interests is a class in itself. When it becomes aware of its real community of interest manifesting in practice and organizes itself, it is then a class for itself. This subjective dimension of class is very important, for, as Marx wrote in the 18th Brumaire, the vast mass of peasants living in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another do not form a class. Without class consciousness a class has no more than a potential existence. In fine, to be class the 'objective' common economic situation must be supplemented by 'subjective' class consciousness of common interest in order to wage a common battle against other common special interests which are antagonistic

Thus, the individual is born into a particular class, just as he is born into a particular caste. The position upon a person is forced by birth in the caste system. In the class system, an individual in his life time may rise and fall in the class hierarchy. He may acquire upper or lower position with a particular economic or occupational role. There is a possibility for upward mobility for an individual in the class system which is not so in the caste system.

Max Weber, a German Sociologist, built his theory of class on Marx's analysis, but he modified and elaborated it. He accepts Marx's view that economic relations form the basis of class. But Weber conceptualized class as a product of the economic relations in society being conditioned by the factors like 'status' and 'party'(power+ prestige) in society.

Status refers to the differences between social groups in the social honour or prestige they are given by others. Status groups are groups of people sharing a

similar status, e.g. doctors, teachers, castes and sub-castes in traditional Hindu society. Possession of wealth normally tends to confer high status, but they are exceptions. Weber cites the case of the newly rich businessman who does not possess the education or culture but commands high status.

Whereas class is objectively given, status depends on people's subjective evaluation of social differences. Classes derive from economic factors associated with property and earnings, status are governed by differences in 'styles of life' groups follow. In short, status groups are stratified according to the principles of their consumption of goods as represented by special 'styles of life'.

If the above conceptualizations of class as an economic group and caste as a status group as provided by Marx and Weber are used, it could hardly capture the social reality in India. While Sociologists and political scientists consider both class and caste to be important in the Indian social system, they do not however, share similar views regarding their similarities, dissimilarities and mutual interlinks. Some scholars have the view that castes contain class within it and vice-versa. To unravel these caste-class connections or their distinctiveness it requires a glance at the logic of the viewpoints of the social scientists produced in India on the issue.

The social scientists are not unanimous as to whether caste and class are synonymous or distinct entities. In pre-Mandal phase, caste-class relations were dominated by tradition and modernity characterized by exclusiveness of caste and class and fusion of caste and class. Those who believed in the dichotomy of tradition and modernity and tended to subscribe to cultural perspectives of caste, highlighted its uniqueness and favoured the exclusiveness of caste and class while others argued that caste and class belong to different social realities. They explained caste as a unique traditional phenomenon of Indian society and class as a universal phenomenon of modern society. Caste is portrayed as a backward social institution whereas class belongs to advanced industrial societies. Since tradition and modernity are perceived as mutually exclusive, caste and class maintain a distinct reality. They also pointed out that caste as a cultural practice maintains dominant ideas and values, such as pollution and purity, rules of social intercourse and endogamy while class linking itself to the ideology of individualism, competition and equality, put caste and class into polar opposites Such scholars also considered caste as a closed and rigid system, whereas class is perceived as open and flexible. Therefore, in the caste system units of ranking are groups, status is ascribed and there is legitimacy of ritual hierarchy. In a class system, the units of rankings are individuals; status is achieved and legitimized through material achievements.

Andre Beteille found caste-class convergence in his studies citing the fact that caste riots are often pronounced class conflicts between upper castes/class and lower castes/class. Caste conflicts, particularly attacks on landless low-caste labourers and their counterattacks, not only in feudal, backward and economically less developed states such as Bihar, but even more in modern capitalistically developed states like Punjab, Gujarat and Maharashtra, created reasons to believe that underlying factor behind such caste conflicts is the summation and articulation of class interests.

So, these scholars view that tendency among the western scholars to locate class in Indian society at par with the early industrial society is meaningless. Clear polarization of classes, however, is not evident in the agrarian society in India. To a large extent, caste and class thus represent the same structural reality. Since caste incorporates class and class incorporates caste, they are overlapping with each other. Neither the caste view alone, and nor the class view on its own can explain the entire gamut of India's social reality.

17.4 Class Structure in India

Along with the traditional caste system, India's social structure is stratified along class lines. Historically, the British rule and its economic policies such as the introduction of new type of land tenure and a few machine-based industries to serve the interests of the Empire generated forces which created the basis for the emergence of new classes and strata hitherto unknown in Indian society: the capitalists included in it individuals, commercial and financial, working class living on wages in industrial and commercial establishments, and the English-educated middle classes such as lawyers, doctors, professors, journalists, managers and clerks in urban areas; zamindars, large estate owners, peasant proprietors divided into upper, middle and lower strata, absentee landlords, tenants and sub-tenants, agricultural labourers and money-lenders in the rural areas.

The Indian working class, on the other hand, came to be formed by pauperized peasants and ruined village artisans. The process of self-organization of the workers was retarded for a long time mainly because of their cultural backwardness and caste and communal divisions. Nevertheless, during the first two decades, the workers developed trade union consciousness which was reflected in a series of strikes in a number of industrial centers forthe fulfillment of their demands, even in the face of government repression. The most notable event, for example, was the working class

strikes in Bombay and other industrial centers to protest against the infamous Rowlatt Act which ushered in the working class entry into the nationalist movement. The working class organization and consciousness reached a new stage with the entry of the communists and socialists.

Since Independence, the attempt of the national government to industrialize the country on a capitalist basis with public and private sectors and to transform the backward village communities into a viable prosperous sector of the national economy had led to the reshuffling of the class structure. Changes occurred in the hierarchy of classes created during the British Raj. In the changes, some old classes were eliminated while some had been deeply entrenched and some new classes emerged. Inter-class and intra-class relations assumed a new dimension, especially it was found in the countryside. Class relations were very often mediated and determined through castes or jatis.

On the basis of the criteria of the ownership of property in the means of production as well as occupation, income and status, the principal classes that are found today in India are : (i) the bourgeoisie comprising top industrial and business houses who have substantial holding of productive wealth but constitute only a small percentage of the total population (0.7%); (ii) the middle class which includes professionals and urban intellectuals including politicians, managers and other higher salaried executives in modern industry and commerce; (iii) lower middle class comprising small traders and shopkeepers, middle-level employees in government and public and private sectors, clerks and medium-level professionals; and (iv) working class (skilled manual workers, semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers) in the urban areas. But the peasantry constitutes by far the largest class. The peasantry are, however a highly heterogeneous social class comprising mainly (i) capitalist farmers or rich peasants who look upon agriculture as a business enterprise-the rural bourgeoisie; (ii) middle peasants who own or lease land which is operated by family labour as well as wage labour; (iii) poor peasants who often have to work as part-time labourers or share croppers; and (iv) landless peasants the rural proletariat. The landless peasants constitute a large segment of the agricultural population.

17.5 The Interplay of Caste and Class in Power Structure and Politics in India

The principal classes in our society, as mentioned above, have differential

access to power and to understand the relation between caste and class and political system, it is required to examine the nature of the distribution of power in the wider political system and the nature of class-caste entry into politics. In Pursuit of Lakshmi, Rudolph and Rudolph have argued that India has a 'weak-strong state' and the Indian economy has its 'rich-poor quality'. Consequently, 'the historic adversaries of class politics, capital and labour, are politically marginal and the centrality of the political process is captured by the state'. Private capitalism in India depends on the state for its profits as well as for its security because the private sector is overshadowed by the public sector which occupies the economy's 'commanding heights'. So, the private capital does not have a strong public voice. No political party except the Swantra party opposed the Congress's project of a 'Socialistic pattern of society', because it was the Swantra party alone who favoured the private capital.

This explanation assumes the autonomy or relative autonomy of the state and its leadership at Independence who are seen as not the creature of a dominant class, but acting relatively independently, from a powerful state and political base in adopting an economic development strategy they preferred.

Class polarization between wage workers on the one hand and capitalist farmers in India's massive agriculture sector and rural society on the other, is constrained by the leading role played in production and politics by small-scale, self-employed 'bullock capitalists', cultivators who benefited from land reforms and the 'green revolution' and who rely more onfamily labour and their own human capital than on wage workers and machines. The bullock capitalists opposed both industrial capital (state and private) and urban workers in the name of remunerative prices and better terms of trade between the countryside and the city. Under such a situation, the Congress party which has been the principal aggregative force played centrist role-in amalgamating caste and class forces.

Thus, the green revolution vastly expanded agricultural production generating surplus helping some parts of Northern India' whereas the vast stretches of many Indian states remained underdeveloped and poverty-stricken with the persistence of semi-feudal relations in agriculture. Hence, the bulk of the poor who are not only landless peasants and unorganized workers but also the SCs, backward classes and STs, remained marginalized and sidelined from the power structure and politics in India.

The Marxist scholar, Pranab Bardhan, denied the existence of a single dominant

class in India's political system. He, instead, emphasizes multi-class hegemony. In his view, there are three dominant or 'proprietary' classes whose common interests and conflicts of interests have influenced the state policies since Independence. The three classes are the industrial bourgeoisie, and urban professional class and the rural hegemonic class of rich farmers. The professional class comprises primarily civilian and military and public bureaucracy personnel. Together these three classes constitute the dominant class coalition, though it is an uneasy coalition. The conflict of interests among them tends to pull in different directions but none of them is individually strong enough to dominate the process of resource allocation. Consequently, this had led to the proliferation of subsidies and grants to placate of them with the consequent reduction in available surplus for public capital formation. Bardhan further views that the system of bargaining and patronage dispensation fostered corruption, waste and mismanagement and this led to fiscal and management crisis. The dominance of the three classes in course of time began to weaken as the conflict of interests among the three classes began to sharpen so as to separate the rural rich farmers from the urban industrial and professional classes.

Achin Vanaik in supporting the Bardhan's understanding of the dominant coalition, points out that there is a problem in considering the professionals as a class because their interests are linked to the expansion and consolidation of structures of education and administration. He argues that they have no interests that really unify them other than in their quest for more jobs. The dominant coalition is, therefore, not a stable fixture.

Sudipta Kaviraj also discussed theme of ruling class coalition, but emphasized how in countries like India, reproduction of capital depends critically on the state. Kaviraj insists that the bureaucratic elite should not be seen as a category subservient to the bourgeoisie. In fact, he points out that this class provides the political intelligence to the bourgeoisie.

Thus, the conflicts between the ruling class who are fully shielded by the state which did enjoy a considerable degree of relative autonomy and the subordinate classes comprising certain organized and urban working class segments of which did enjoy support mainly through trade union organizations, from political forces in the communist movement, socialist parties and even the Congress party has not produced 'class politics' in the traditional sense though the hiatus between the haves and have nots has increased. This is not only because of the centrality of the Indian state in the nation's political economy which has allowed enough space for the ruling classes to prosper but at the same time, has gained the allegiance or passive support of the

majority of the governed, making some compromises while protecting the vital interests of the ruling classes. There are also serious weaknesses of the left forces, the working class movement and disorganized poor peasantry and the agricultural labourers. The Communist parties except a few radical groups in scattered rural pockets in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh have tended to become reformist, though they have not eliminated from their party programmes the explicit reference to the conflict of class interests and the achievement of socialism as their final goal.

The Communists particularly the CPI(M), for the most part have retained their political support in three small states of the Indian Union; they had to adapt themselves to the new economic and social circumstances, resulting ultimately in the decline of the working class movement relative to the burgeoning growth of the middle classes which have come to be seen as a crucial factor in electoral politics; the increased assertion of caste and community as the modern political and economic idiom in national politics. All these processes and factorshave retarded the development of a distinctive class consciousness in the working class and the diminution of its role in politics while the national bourgeoisie with a clearly class political orientation and its increases power accumulated under the protective umbrella of mixed economy has become more and more assertive in determining the politics of the state.

Over the decades, the organized working class has experienced unrelenting pressure from industry and government alike, while the leadership of the communist trade unions has failed to withstand the pressure of fragmentation and deep-running structural changes of the labour force. These phenomena lead to the fact that the working class consciousness has been a casualty of political divisions within the communist movement as well as between the communists and the Congress. Ideologically, the two Communist parties are committed to class analysis of society but the analysis has proved less and less susceptible to realization as they are bent upon sustaining themselves as a political party in a competitive political system rather than as a social movement engaged primarily in class-based mobilization. The left and Democratic Fronts in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura became, in reality, a coalition for winning power like other coalitions. The Communists' newly felt enchantment with electoral politics as a part of the 'war of position' have catapulted them to parliamentarianism which Gramsci regarded as the only way forward in capitalist democracies.

On the other hand, the ideology and class character of the new agrarian relations in the countryside that have emerged in the post-independence period is varied from

region to region, state to state which according to Andre Beteille, because of the complex hierarchical rural society in which the interests of the farmers are overlaid with various kinds of cleavages of caste. Firstly, in every region, there are groups of landed castes who control most of the land, the primary productive asset, and other economic resources and who are also politicallypowerful. Secondly, these caste groups constitute politically, solidarity groups in relation to other castes whether of the elite. Lower or untouchable status. Thirdly, these relatively solidarity caste groups do often compete among themselves for access to scarce resources and political power. Fourthly, the untouchable castes, the Dalits- standing at the lowest rung of the caste hierarchy-form the largest number of the landless and wage labourers and being mostly unorganized are vulnerable to attack by the landed caste-men and their caste senas (armed goons).

Within three decades after Independence, there has been a gradual shift of political power from the landlords and upper peasants of the traditionally dominant castes to peasant cultivators of the middle castes. The principal political struggle until the mid- 1960s was concentrated between the upper and middle peasantry. While consolidating their power, the middle peasant castes formed an alliance from below by sharecroppers and landless labourers, most of whom are dalits (scheduled castes). This has signified the potential for agrarian conflicts. During 1966-71 and onwards such potential conflicts have manifested in two aspects. Firstly, the struggle involving land claims and harvest shares occurred in pockets of Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal (the uprising in the Naxalbari sub-division of Darjeeling district) in 1967 and some other 'Naxalite' inspired incidents in small areas in Andhra, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, of which the uprising in Srikakulum in Andhra Pradesh was the largest. Secondly, by the late 1970s and 1980s, the dynamics of power process had acquired a new pattern. Class and caste forces had evolved their own methods of manipulating liberal democratic politics. The oppressed social groups had acquired greater awareness of their democratic rights. So, during the 1980s and 1990s, there was a reassertion of upper class and upper caste power on the one hand, and regrouping of backward classes, tribals and dalits, on the other hand. The demand by 'backward classes' for reservation of posts in government services and seats in educational institutions was the expression of upwardly mobile lower caste cultivators' efforts to challenge the literate upper castes.

But the salience of class as a tool of political mobilization declined significantly as drastic economic reforms by way of liberalization and privatization diluted the state-based modes of working class politics and as a new politics of cultural difference began to find a new and vigorous reception in the polity.

The rise of the BJP and the intensification of the caste-based mobilizations did not markedly alter the class character of the Indian state. In a sense, it relegated class issues to the back burner since masses stated to respond to communal and group-based identity articulations as never before in the past. The new age of capitalism underway in India since 1991 however did not produce a rightist onslaught from the Right in the more classical economic sense. This corroborates to the relevance of Rudolps' theses regarding the nature of class politics in India being based on a broad centrist consensus.

From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that class does not play an important role in politics in the country. It means that class has not yet become, as in advanced capitalist societies, the basis of Indian party politics, because of the underdeveloped capitalist economy and importance of primordial group identities like caste, religion and ethnicity as the basis of political action.

17.6 The Indian Constitution andthe Affirmative Action Policies : Mandal Commission

While the earlier discussion on caste-class relations was based by the theory of social stratification, recently the caste-class discourse has been triggered by the state policy of affirmative action or positive discrimination for socially and educationally backward classes relegating tradition-modernity paradigm of analysis to dysfunctional due to consequences of increasing political instability, political fission, proliferation of parties, rise of dalits and backward classes and their socio-political assertion in the 1980s and 1990s. Because, it may be noted that in the years following independence, the traditional upper castes continued to rule in most parts of India. Until 1977, upper castes continued to hold prominent elected positions in Uttar Pradesh. Until 1962, as many as 63% of ruling Congress members of the Legislative Assembly came from elite castes. Soon, however, traditional peasant castes such as Ahirs, Kurmis, Koeri, Lodh Rajputs, and Jats began to dominate the political scene of northern India. In the southern state of Tamil Nadu, the Vanniyars and Thevars became assertive, and in Karnataka, control was wrested in the mid-1950s from the traditional rural elite within the Congress party by the Vokkaligas and Linagayats. In the North Indian Hindi speaking belt, upper caste members of parliament fell below 50% for the first time in 1977. The challenge to the established Congress was mounted in Uttar Pradesh rather effectively in the late 1960s by a coalition of peasant castes led by Charan Singh. In Bihar also, there was a significant decline of upper caste members of the Legislative Assembly after 1977.

In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, Yadav caste gained a great degree of salience. In Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi party is headed by Maulayam Sing Yadav and in Bihar; the Rashtriya Janata Dal had Lalu Prasad Yadav at its helm.

The decline of the traditional elite castes in Indian politics has been a fact giving rise to peasant castes as 'bullock capitalists' who challenged the hegemony of the traditional Kshatriya castes such as the Rajputs and Bhumiyars. These peasant castes constitute 34% of the population but control about 51% of land. The political emergence of these bullock capitalists coincides with the emergence of the backward class movement in large parts of India. According to Srinivas, the bullock capitalists are small owners of land, yet they exercise considerable political power in contemporary India.

The factors behind the emergence of the OBCS in post-independence India is that though the Green Revolution vastly expanded agricultural production generating surplus, but there were vast stretches of poverty, deprivation and inequalities, affecting mainly the bulk of the poor, landless poor peasants and unorganized worker along with the scheduled caste, backward classes and schedule tribes who were suffering more and more from poverty.

These developments intensified the contradictions in the societies and further weakened the capacity of the polity to cope with challenges of economic development on the one hand and demands of emerging social groups on the other. Hence in the 1980s, India experienced a democratic upsurge of dalits, adivasis, women, peasants and regional identity groups. It is in this situation; the dynamics of power process had acquired a new pattern. Class and caste forces had evolved their own methods of manipulating liberal democratic politics. At the same time, the oppressed social groups had acquired greater awareness of their democratic rights of the Constitutional provisions facilitating regrouping of backward classes, tribals and dalits. The demand by backward classes for reservation of posts in government services and seats in educational institutions was an expression of upwardly mobile lower caste cultivators' efforts to challenge the literate upper classes.

These backward classes are now known as Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and in general comprise largely peasant and other agrarian communities. These castes are not untouchables but are considered backward as they lack a culture of learning on account of their lowly peasant status. In recognition of this fact, the Constitution of India recommended that the state intervene and help these communities by legislating some measures that would break the cycle of poverty and backwardness. The

Constitution provided clear policies of positive discrimination and reservation for the SCs; it did not do so in the case of backward castes. It only expressed an intention of intervening in some form and left it at that in meeting the growing tension posed by them.

In pursuance of Article 340 of the Constitution, the kalelkar Commission was set up in 1953, but it could not come to any satisfactory conclusion about who should be legitimately considered as OBCs. Even the Nehru government declined to accept the recommendations of the commission, arguing that the basis of classification should not be caste. Thereafter, following the ouster of Indira Gandhi government, the Janata party came to power. To deliver, what theycalled, as 'social justice', they formed the Second Backward Commission headed by B. P. Mandal in 1980, known as Mandal Commission and it promptly came up with a long list of 3743 backward castes on the basis of social, economic and educational backwardness, allotting 27% reservation for them other than SCs and STs, in educational and government jobs. Like its predecessor, Mandal Commission defined backwardness on the basis of caste rather than class terms. The Commission argued, 'caste is also the class of citizens and if the caste as a whole is socially and educationally backward, reservation can be made in favour of such a caste'. The Mandal Commission's recommendations were implemented in 1990 by the then Prime Minister V. P. Singh. The implementation set off a furore of protests resulting in Pan-Indian caste polarization for and against reservation.

With the general recommendation, the Commission proposed the following overall scheme of reservation for OBCs :

1. Candidates belonging to OBC recruited on the basis of merit in an open competition should not be adjusted against their reservation quota of 27 per cent.

2. The above reservation should also be made available to promotion at all levels.

3. Reserved quota remaining unfulfilled should be carried forward for a period of three years and dereserved thereafter.

4. Relaxation in the upper age limit for direct recruitment should be extended to the candidates of OBC in the same manner as presently done in respect of SCs and STs.

5. A roster system for each category of posts should be adopted by the concerned authorities in the same manner done in respect of SCs and STs.

These recommendations in total are applicable in all recruitment to public sector undertakings, both under the central and state governments as well as to nationalized banks. All private sector undertakings which have received financial assistance from the government should recruit personnel on the aforesaid basis. All universities and affiliated colleges should also be covered by the above scheme of reservation.

In this connection, it is worth mentioning that in no case, the reservation should extend 50 per cent as per the Supreme Court judgment in 1963 in Balaji case. But with the reservation for economically weaker section (EWS), the total reservation it now stands at 59.5 per cent.

In the case of Indira Sawhney versus Union of India, the Supreme Court on 16 December 1992 upheld 27% reservation subject to the exclusion of socially-advanced persons/sections (creamy layer) from amongst the OBCs. The Court also directed to evolve criteria for identification of this creamy layer. In response to the Court directives, the Government appointed a committee which suggested the rules of exclusion involving doctors, engineers, chartered accountants, actors, consultants, media professionals, writers, bureaucrats, defence officers of colonel and equivalent rank or higher court and supreme court judges and all central and state government class A and B officials as creamy layers. In August 2017, NDA government has raised from Rs. 6 lakhs a year to Rs. 8 lakh ceiling as creamy layer in financial terms.

17.7 Constitutional Provisions and OBCs

The Constitution of India guarantees protection from social injustice and all forms of exploitation empowering the state to make provisions for reservation through proactive mechanism with a view to accelerate the development of the oppressed sections.

Article 14 states equality before law. The state shall no deny to any person equality before law or equal protection of the law within the territory of India. The principle of equality is the essence of democracy. Equality before law implies the absence of any discrimination without rational basis. Equal protection of laws would mean that among equals, the law should be equal. Reasonable classification of the citizens is permissible. The exclusion of creamy layer in Backward Class is not to be treated violation of the provision. The state can treat the creamy layer on par with the forward classes and is not entitled to benefits of reservation. So, the equality that is contemplated under Article 14 is equality among equals but not unequal.

Article 15(4) states "Nothing in this Article or in Clause 2 of Article 29 shall prevent the state from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizen or for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes," including admission to educational institutions.

Article 16(4) : "Nothing in this Article shall prevent the state from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the state, is not adequately represented in the services under the state".

Article 340 of the Constitution provides "that the President may by order appoint a Commission to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes".

The Directive Principles of State Policy as enshrined in part IV of the Constitution enjoy a very high place in the constitutional scheme and it is in the framework of the socio-economic structure envisaged in the Directive Principles that the Fundamental Rights are intended to operate. It is only then they become meaningful and significant for the millions of our poor people and deprived people who do not have even the bare necessities of life and who are living below the poverty level.

This is why in Article 38, it has been laid down that "The state shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of national life".

17.8 Welfare Schemes and OBCs

Apart from the Constitutional measures in protecting the interests of the OBCs, there are some welfare schemes for OBCs being implemented since 1998-99. The policy makers have underlined the need of educational and economic support for backward classes in order to reduce the disparity between them and the non-backward sections of the population. The welfare schemes are:

(i) Pre-matric scholarship to the OBCs for studies in India :

The aim of this scheme is to motivate the children of OBCs studying at pre-matric stage scholarships are awarded to students belonging to OBCs whose parent's/ guardian's income from all sources does not exceed to Rs. 44,500/- per annum.

The physical and financial achievements under the scheme during the periods of 2011-12 to 2013-14 are as follows :

Year	Budget Allocation (Rs. in crore)	Achievement No. of Beneficiaries in lakh	Financial Rs. In crore
2011-2012	50.00	24.65*	40.69
2012-2013	50.00	24.29*	47.01
2013-2014	150.00	25.00	115.99

*provisional Source-Reference Division, Lok Sobha Secretariat, Newdelhi, November 2014

(ii) Post-matric scholarships to OBCs for studies in India :

This scheme in intended to promote higher education by providing financial support to OBC students studying at post-matric/post-secondary levels leading to their earning PhD degrees. The scholarships are awarded through state governments/ union territories administration to which the applicant belongs for study in recognized institutions.

1	Year (Rs. in crore)	Budget Allocation No. of Beneficiaries in lakh	Achievement Rs. In crore	Financial
2	2011-2012	535.00	19.85*	527.99
3	2012-2013	625.00	24.02*	666.86
4	2013-2014	900.00	25.00 (Estimated)	768.56

*Provisional. Source : Lok Sobha Secretariat, New Delhi, Nov. 2014

(iii) Construction of Hostels for OBC boys and Girls :

The scheme aims at providing hostel facilities to students belonging to socially and educationally backward classes especially from rural areas to enable them to pursue secondary and higher education.

The following table shows the physical and financial achievements from 2011-12 to 2013-14 :

Year	Budget Allocation (Rs. In crore)	Achievement No. of hostels	No. of seats	Financial Rs. In crore
2011-2012	45.00	33	2578	16.07
2012-2013	45.00	21	2100	14.76
2013-2014	45.00	28	2050	23.19

Source : Lok Sobha Secretariat, New Delhi, Nov. 2014

(iv) Assistance to voluntary organizations for welfare of OBCs :

The main purpose of the scheme of grants-in-aid to voluntary organizations is to involve the civil society and non-government sectors for improving the socio-economic conditions of OBCs, through skill up gradation in various trades to enable them to start income generating activities on their own and get gainfully employed. Under the scheme, financial assistance is provided to non-governmental organizations for imparting vocational training in various trades like craft, type and shorthand, carpentry, dari-making, electrician, motor / fitting / plumbing, printing / composing / book-binding, spinning and weaving, TV, VCR and Radio repair etc. The government of India meets 90% of the approved expenditure of the training programme.

The physical and financial achievements under the scheme during the last three years are as follows :

Year	Budget Allocation (Rs. in crore)	Achievement No. of Beneficiaries	Financial Rs. In crore
2011-2012	5.00	2250	1.02
2012-2013	5.00	1310	0.46
2013-2014	5.00	5345	2.97

Source : Lok Sobha Secretariat, New Delhi, Nov. 2014

(v) Scheme under National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation :

The National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) were set up in the year 1992 as a company, not for profit under section 25 of the Companies Act 1956 under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The main objective of the corporation is to provide concessional financial assistance to the members of the backward classes for their socio-economic development and to upgrade the technological and entrepreneurial skills of the individuals or groups belonging to backward classes through state channeling agency nominated by respective state government / UT.

The following activities are implemented by NBCFDC :

1. Loan scheme—loan maximum Rs. 10 lakhs per beneficiary.

2. Margin money loan maximum Rs. 10 lakhs per beneficiary.

3. Micro Finance maximum Rs. 50,000 per beneficiary.

In addition to these, there are several such other schemes such as New Swarnima scheme for women, Educational loan scheme, Saksham scheme, Silpa sampada scheme, Mahila Samriddhi Yojna, Krishi Sampada scheme etc.

At a glance, NBCFDC financial and physical achievements during the financial years 2011-12 to 2013-14 are as under :

Year	Achievements Loan amount disbursed	No. of beneficiaries Rs, in crore
2011-2012	215.65	1,39,100
2012-2013	225.20	1,45,970
2013-2014	285.27	1,64,717

Source : Lok Sobha Secretariat, New Delhi, Nov. 2014

(vi) Rajib Gandhi National Fellowship Scheme :

This scheme is launched during the financial year 2014-15 to increase opportunities for the students of Other Backward Classes for pursuing higher education leading to their acquiring degrees such as M.Phil. and Ph. D.

(vii)   National Overseas scholarship scheme for OBC candidates in the fields of engineering, management, agricultural science and medicine. Twenty-five awards per year are available under the scheme.

17.9 Implementation of Affirmative Action Programme

There is no doubt that the affirmative actions recommended by the Mandal Commission and Government's Welfare programme have stirred the sensibilities of both socially and educationally disadvantaged sections of society, providing a powerful input that has brought about radical changes in Indian polity and society. The grammar of entitlement has become an integral part of the language of politics in contemporary India. Viewed in this perspective, Mandal Commission takes forward the process of transfer of social and political power to the majority community. In the context of Mandal II, V. P. Singh characterized it as 'macro-process that has acquired its own dynamics. Hence, no matter which party forms a government, it has to take the process further.' In fact, a decision by the then Prime Minister V. P. Singh to offer preferment to Other Backward Classes (OBCs) forced politicians to cultivate broader social coalitions-including blocs of caste which leaders sought to mobilize in exercises that are often called 'social engineering'. So, the centre of gravity in Indian politics is now defined by 'quota politics'.

But there has been a constant question about actual implementation and empowerment. Many writings and instances suggest the negative picture. Some scholars have opined that after Mandal, caste as a basis of collective struggle for gaining equality in positions and social status became a respectable term among the marginalized. It is now being used as an empowering device to enhance one's meager entitlements in society. The reservation thus, represented the politics of caste assertion or the politics of identity instead of class consciousness. So, caste has become the right to power. Sudipta Kaviraj has argued that caste groups instead of crumbling adapted themselves to the demands of parliamentary politics. It thus, created a democracy of castes in place of a hierarchy.

Though there are Dalit millionaires who went into establishing the Dalit Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DICCI), a Dalit Chief Minister in U.P., yet we still encounter instances where violence and atrocities are perpetrated on the basis of caste. We still witness that jobs that are largely considered inhumanlike manual and scavenging or sweepers have a definite caste pattern. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), U.P. represents the highest number of crimes against Dalits and low castes as per its report in 2015. Naked parading of Dalit and

low caste women still comes to light from time to time. Along with the rising violence and rape against the SCs and STs, similar rising trend is also evident with regard to rape cases against the OBCs. Although SCs / Dalits including OBCs are unable to confront the upper castes, even they fear to register protests with the police to ensure their legal protection. They are sometimes divided among themselves on sub-caste lines. It is also worth mentioning that they are landless and depend on the very castes that violate their rights to earn livelihood.

Gopal Guru is of the opinion that dalit and obc issues make only a token appearance in the election manifestos of leading political parties and when they get inducted into a political hierarchy, he is given an unimportant portfolio like the Ministry of Social Welfare. In educational institutions low caste students are normally assigned to Dalit guides. Thus, these students are denied access to the larger teaching community. Similarly, Dalit teachers are denied access to general students.

In the case of representation of OBCs in parliament is not satisfactory in relation to the proportion of their population. The OBCs representation in parliament in 1989 in the Lok Sobha was 11 percent; it jumped to 20 per cent and continued to grow in the Post- Mandal phase accounting for 26 per cent. The 2009 General Election again marked decline to 18 per cent. In 2014 Lok Sobha election, it shot up to 20 per cent only.

Representation of the OBCs in the Central Services is less as compared to the percentage of reservation for them. Though the Union Minister of State for Personnel said in the Lok Sabha that representation of the OBCs as on January 1, 2012 was 16.55 per cent and this has increased to 21.57 per cent as on January 1, 2016, but it is far less than their percentage of reservation. The Union Minister, Jitendra Singh further said that 10 ministries and departments having more than 90 per cent of the employees in the Central government, including PSU banks and financial institutions, out of the 92,589 backlog vacancies for SC, STs and OBCs, 63,876 vacancies remained unfilled as on January 1, last year.

The Times of India on December 26, 2015 reports that more than two decades after the Mandal Commission Report which mandates 27% reservation for OBCs, less than 12 per cent of employees of Central government ministries, departments and statutory bodies are from OBCs as on January 1, 2015. The Ministry of Human Resources, which is a major employer of group Some employees like professors in IITs and other central educational institutions. Going by the data available, under the group A, B, C and D categories of employees, out of 79,483 posts, there are only 9,040 OBCs in the staff.

A closer look at the data indicates that there is not a single OBC grade A officer in the President's Secretariat, less than 9 per cent of the 651 Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) staff is from the OBC category. The Higher Education Department employs only 5 per cent OBC in grade A officers and 10 per cent OBC staff.

Out of 41 grade A posts in the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, there is only one OBC officer.

The candidates from SCs, STs and OBCs are still heavily underrepresented in Government jobs despite reservation. At the high ranks, the situation is more acute. In fact, the situation is that 95.2% professors, 92.9% associate professors and 66.27% assistant professors are from general category in Central Universities. OBCs form only 14.38 as assistant professors in higher education.

Among the non-teaching staff, only 10.17% are from OBC category. As many as 76% belong to the general category in this segment. In the Cabinet Secretariat, 80% posts are occupied by the general category; there are no OBCs in this segment.

The representation of OBCs is worst in Indian Railways, India's biggest employer. It shows that there are 8% among officers of group A and B. SCs, STs and OBCs are underrepresented.

All in all, it may be said that in the higher echelons, the higher castes or upper castes continue to dominate. Even the political leadership and governmental power is totally usurped by the upper castes and despite more than 50% of population, the OBCs could not get power in proportion to their population. Since political parties are under the control of upper castes, they invariably allot party tickets to upper castes and tend to ignore the interests of OBCs and other depressed castes.

17.10 Conclusion

Caste and class are viewed as the two most significant dimensions of social stratification. They are considered as closely related, almost inseparably, basic processes of social life. But caste and class are not synonymous. They differ from each other. Caste is the evolution of centuries' old system in India as a unique traditional phenomenon of Indian society and class as a universal phenomenon of modern society. For a Marxist and a Communist, the two modes of production or a mechanical distinction between them is not only a vulgar simplification but divorced from the present day Indian reality.

Caste has gone through various refinements and changes from the traditional stratificatory system of the idea of ritual purity and impurity and hierarchical structure to social identity caused by India's liberal democratic state and the institutions of competitive, representational democracy. As a result, the hierarchically ordered strata of the traditional caste system now function as horizontal groups, competing and cooperating with one another for the new economic and political power released in society through the process of modernization of its economy and democratization of its political institutions. The form of consciousness is also changing subjectively in terms of community consciousness. The sense of belonging to a high or a low status in ritual hierarchy is gradually fading away, augmenting in the process to identity claims.

In the villages too, the traditional social relationship are being refined in economic terms. The 'green revolution' and with the increasing role of the state and other outside agencies in the food production and distribution system of a village, the social organization has substantively changed. From the system of ritual status hierarchy, it is becoming an economic organization.

The stratificatory system as it functions in India today can, therefore, no longer be characterized as a hierarchy of ritual statuses. The ritual status system has disintegrated and castes as individual self-conscious communities continue to survive.

Consequently, the discourse of caste and class represents same structural reality where domination and subjugation, surplus and exploitation, privileges and deprivations are universally found in caste and class. The question is, therefore, not one of class versus caste. It is the formation of classes in the weak capitalism in India within the inherited caste structure.

The contemporary discourse on caste, class and politics in India has been liberated from the straitjacket debate of modernization vs. traditionalization and dichotomous vs. dynamic relations, the centrality of caste as an agent of politics and its dominant role in Indian socio-political life have neither been removed nor firmly challenged. Rather, recognition of caste as an instrument of socio-political change by the Mandal Commission and caste-centric public-political movements of the 1980s and 1990s, such as Dalit and Backward class movements have not only enlivened new debates in India, but have reinforced a caste-centric public-political life, giving it a modern value and a secular purpose. Hence, the contemporary discourse is deeply interested in investigating the changing landscape of socio-political life as a result of the political assertion of Dalits and Backward classes and its overall impact on Indian politics.

While the pre-Mandal discourse on caste-class relations was framed by the theory of social stratification, the recent debates have been triggered by the State policy of positive discrimination for socially and educationally backward classes.

17.11 Summing Up

● Social structure in India is the most stratified society in the world. In this stratification, there exists the differentiation of the population into hierarchically superimposed classes manifested in the existence of upper and lower layers. Apart from class, caste as an important social institution is predominant in this social structur epersisting in the process of continuity and change in India. According to the Indian Marxist thinkers, the institution of class did not exist prior to the British rule. Hence, caste is a pre-class institution of exploitation and administration in India. With the colonial regime, two modes of production, that of caste and class, came to co-exist with each other. It is within this social stratification that class formation is taking place as capitalism is still developing in India. The question is therefore, not one of class versus caste. It is the formation of classes under modern capitalism within the inherited caste structure. To a large extent, the most exploited classes in our society constitute the most socially oppressed castes. And to that extent, the struggle against class exploitation and the struggle against social oppression complement each other.

● The centrality of caste as an agent of politics and its dominant role in Indian socio-political life fot recognition by the Mandal Commission through affirmative action. In this respect, it may be mentioned tha the demands and recogition of backward classes for reservation was partly an expression of lower cultivators' efforts to challenge the literate upper castes or what may be called as challenge to the upper classes in India. It is clear that class has yet to become as in advanced capitalist societies, the basis of mobilization because of the underdeveloped capitalist economy and importance or primordial group identities like caste, religion and ethnicity as the bases of political action.

17.12 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

 1. Define class. Distinguish between caste and class

2. Discuss the inter-connection of caste and class in power structure and politics in India.

3. Bring out the Constitutional provisions relating to affirmative actions for the OBCs

Long Questions :

1. Make an assessment on the implementation of the reservation of OBCs in India.

2. Mention the Mandal Commission's recommendations for the OBCs.

3. Do you think that the two terms caste and class overlap with each other in India? Give reasons for your answer.

Short Questions :

1. What does the term 'class in itself' and 'class for itself' signify? Explain.

2. What was the 1992 Supreme Court judgment in the case of Indira Sawhney versus Union of India?

3. What are the criteria for identifying the creamy layer?

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Unit - 18 ❑ Affirmative Action Policies : Environment

Structure

18.1 Objectives

On reading this unit, the learners will be able to :

● explain the term 'environment' and its importance in our life.

● find out the relationships between man and environment.

● understand as to how the economic prosperity at the cost of Earth's supportive systems engenders environmental degradation.

● appreciate the debate between the developed and the developing countries over the issue of sustainable development.

● enumerate the Global scenario of environmental deterioration and risks.

● show India's vulnerability to various environmental problems.

● know the Global measures for environmental protection under the initiative of the United Nations.

● understand the affirmative policies pertaining to environment in India through the constitutional, legislative and judicial measures.

● focus the Indian Judiciary's active role in the protection of environment.

● learn the creative and innovative aspects of the Public Interest Litigation relating to the area of environmental protection.

18.2 Introduction

In the twenty-first century, the conservation, protection and improvement of human environment are major issues all over the world. Human world consists of both physical environment and biological environment. Physical environment covers land, water and air. Biological environment includes plants, animals and other organisms. Both physical and biological (biotic and a biotic) are interdependent. Industrialization, urbanization, explosion of population, over-exploitation of resources, disruption of natural ecological balances, destruction of a multitude of animal and plant species for economic reasons are the factors which have contributed to environmental deterioration. One country's degradation of environment deteriorates the global environment for all the countries. As a result, the problem of environmental pollution has acquired international dimension and India is no exception to it.

It is not to be out of context to point out the fact that alongside advances in civilizations, there is disjuncture in set of relationships between men and nature. This disjuncture is manifested through considerable downgrading the quality of basic natural resources like air, land and water and other supportive life systems like forests, marine resources and the like. Some scholars have described the current

conditions within environment and its potential directions as truly alarming and counter-productive to the advancement of human race. They are using such terms as 'crisis', 'disasters', 'irreparable losses' etc. to highlight the situation.

But it is to be noted that the setbacks conceived and perceived in the arena of environment are not left unanswered or unchallenged. All over the world, the people at the local levels and beyond it or larger entity who have been directly victimized by depletion of natural resources like water, fuel, fodder etc. are organizing themselves to raise voices against the menace. There are instances of people's movements in all parts of the world for articulation of their demand for restoration of status quo and total abandonment of the capricious ways of modernization. In this emerging, ever-increasing battle of the common masses in urban and rural areas, a new paradigm of environmental management discourse is on the anvil to focus or envisage a new global economy where industry, society and ecology do not vie with each other in mutual hostility, rather it ushers in the ethos of human development essentialising the philosophy of sustainable society based on a balance between economic growth and ecological protection. There is no denying the fact that the degradation of our environment is linked with the development process and ignorance of men/people about retaining the ecological balance. It is essential to environmentalise the development issues with a world-view that man is not above nature. Such a strategy of balance between economy and ecology for the protection of environment is a broader road map to meeting the needs of the present without jeopardizing the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs.

It may be mentioned that various efforts aimed at protection of environment have been a recent phenomenon. Systematically, in the 1970s and by the end of 1980s, the Stockholm Declaration of 1972 and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held at Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, especially the "Agenda 21" sparked off the growing concern for the degradation of environment worldwide. It made a significant progress in arousing sensitivity towards environment and its protection, placing the concept of sustainable development at the centre.

As a consequence of these declarations, in India the Environment Protection Act of 1986 brought more effective environmental legislation. Accordingly, Indian Parliament inserted two Articles, 48A and 51A(g) in the Constitution of India in 1976 as the affirmative measures to protect and improve the environment. 'The Right to Life' contained in Article - 21 of the Constitution of India include the right to clean and human environment.

Apart from the constitutional mandate to protect and improve the environment, there are a plenty of legislations on the subject as the preventive measures or policies for environmental protection programme. These Governmental Policies are meant to act as safeguards for ensuring the life and dignity of the people in India. The Supreme Court's path-breaking initiatives have also led to setting new paradigms in environmental protection in India. Likewise the issue of environmental degradation has caught the attentions of agencies like media, NGOs, Social activists demanding for just and equitable development without undermining the natural support system.

18.3 Meaning of Environment

The word 'environment' is derived from the French Word 'environner', which means 'to encircle' or to surround. The most suitable definition of environment is as follows: "It is the sum total of water, air and land and the interrelationships that exist among them with human beings, other living organisms and materials".

The geographical meaning of environment is that "It is a combination of living and non-living things and their mutual interaction with each other which leads to an eco-system". The environment encompasses all living and non-living things occurring naturally on earth. The Supreme Court of India defined environment as "Environment" 'related to the surroundings, but obviously, that is a concept which is relatable to whatever object it is, which is surrounded. Environment is a polycentric and multifaceted problem affecting the human existence'.

Thus, environment is the sum total of all conditions and influences that affect the development and life of all organisms on earth.

The crisis of environment engenders when in the sum total of all conditions and influences are in disequilibrium causing harmful effects on the living and non-living objects. Environmental degradation implies disequilibrium or imbalance or pollution or decrease in the quality of environment resulting in deleterious effects on the living and non-living objects.

18.4 Man and Environment

The earth provided the right environment – pure air, pure water, pure land, Carbon dioxide which in presence of strong sunlight helped the development of the living world consisting of plants, animals and man. Nature through its own cycles

has readily helped in the evolution of life forms. These natural cycles – water cycles, oxygen cycles, nitrogen cycle, carbon cycle etc. are conducted in harmony with nature, but over the years this equilibrium was disrupted by man as he tried to improve his life style with the help of science and technology and as population grew beyond control which increased the need for more and more food, water and shelter. Man's greed and needs led to exploitation of natural resources which caused environmental degradation and world-wide crisis threatening human survival.

Primitive man looked at nature with wonder and awe because of its terrible forces as manifested from time to time as lightning, thunder, cyclone, volcanic eruption, flash flood, landslides etc. In order to tide over the terrible forces and man's constant efforts for better living standards, he developed science and technology over the years. The Industrial Revolution of 1780 was a landmark in the history of human civilization. It started with the invention of stream engine in England. By 1840, England was transformed from an agricultural country into a predominantly Industrial one. The Industrial Revolution along with colonial rule made Britain the most prosperous country in the world in the 19th century.

With the development of science and technology man continued to plunder natural resources and pollute the environment. He destroyed forest, degraded lands, threw toxic wastes into rivers and seas and also harmful gases into the atmosphere. The continuous load of pollutants into the environment brought about changes in it which ultimately backfired into series of disasters from time to time.

Our earth called mother is the most precious gift of the universe. It is the sustenance of 'nature' that is a key to the development of the future of mankind. It is the duty and responsibility of each one of us to protect nature. The degradation of our environment is linked with the development process and the ignorance of people about retaining the ecological balance. It is, therefore, essential to environmentalise the developmental issues with a world-view that man is not above nature. This leads to the recognition of the fact that a balance between ecology and economy based on a win-win strategy or a synergy between development and environmental protection may be a broader roadmap to meeting the needs of the present without jeopardizing the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs.

18.5 Philosophy of Development

It is a fact that behind every great success of the world economy, science and technology, there is a crime, crime against nature. We are proud of our large scale

hydropower, industrialization, urbanization, scientific inventions, but they tell tales of environmental as well as social disasters; indigenous folk are displaced, bio-diversity is destroyed, acid is released out of flooded soil and pollution; all these poison the eco-system. Similar is the tale of the 'miracle' crop varieties introduced in Asia or of the large grazing projects of Africa financed by the international lending agencies, such projects crowd out wild life, diminish the diversity of traditional crops and destroy local markets. We, thus, mean growth, economic growth at the expense of earth's natural systems.

Such a philosophy betrays our greed underneath the façade of apparent prosperity. It also betrays our lack of vision – the vision without which we perish. What is ignored is a Grim Paradox inherent in the situation; that every phase of economic prosperity at the cost of the Earth's supportive systems releases subversive forces that bring in poverty. There is even a greater paradox, as the economy grows, ecological systems suffer severe jolts, growth thus involves decaying; it might even mean dying, contamination of water resources, pollution, deforestation, desertification, soil erosion, extinction of various species, acid rain, lethal storm, global warming and ozone depletion etc. All these are only a few of the innumerable symptoms that indicate stress on the earth. They warn us against disaster and insecurity.

Looking at the burgeoning global human population scenario, we will be witnessing an explosive situation. The world population 6 billion at present might have crossed 7 billion mark by 2015. The earth is, in fact, burdened and overburdened. The needs of this huge number of human beings cannot be supported by the earth's natural resources without degrading the quality of human life. And the hour of our faith on equitable distribution in the neo-liberal global economy is over. Now we think we have to go after growth. This 'greed'; it is called 'need' is without limit that leads to ironically degrading the environment by telling upon ecological system which by implication, upon our lives. The torture on environment implicates self-torture, even self-killing. The evidence of this torture is present everywhere, both in the biotic and theabiotic components of our environment. As Lester R. Brown observes, "our economic policies that have yielded the extraordinary results in the world economy are the same ones that destroying ecological support system".

In the neo-liberal theories, growth implies yielding to market forces – a shift to the industrial economy where the nation state is likely to have minimal control. Intellectually and historically, the shift gained in force from the philosophies of Francis Bacon and John Locke as well as those of the Enlightens and the ethics of the protestants/puritans, all justifying nature-domination or nature exploitation by

promoting their idea of 'progress' and upholding it apparently with the prospect of a future.

Nature-domination can be traced further back to ecclesiastical teachings, where God is said to have created nature for man to use. So, the environmental degradation or ecological imbalance is due largely to this disposition long nourished through Christian traditions and tend support to the anthropocentricity of the philosophy of development which justified, still does, man's role in dominating everything around. But we ignore the common lesson that nature cannot be dominated, it can only be cooperated with. Nature domination risks being annihilated. The threat we have been experiencing now. It is not difficult to see that some of the threats foretell disaster.

To get rid of the forthcoming disaster, then is 'Zero growth' recommendable? Or should we look back to the "golden days of yore in the manner of Rousseau, when man and nature were in ideal state without any ripple or murmur of discord? Perhaps, we cannot stop growth. On the contrary, we can no longer let suffer our earth to be flayed and tormented in the name of growth. Logically then; we need reconciliation. We need to broaden the goals of development by incorporating new mechanisms to prevent environmental degradation. It is recognized that ecology involves self-regulatory systems, provided our intervention does not go beyond the tolerable limits, and ensures the possibility of growth within natural limits. The economy based on market forces needs to be restructured in keeping with the principles of ecology. The economists and ecologists must work together to foster development without endangering the climate, air, water and forests. They should take responsible, eco-friendly decisions devising a way out to the establishment of an eco-economy imperative to anchor our mother earth from degradation/pollution/extinction.

18.6 North-South Debate

In respect of sustainable development and eco-friendly environment, much discussion has been taken place, but to little effect. It involved the nation into a battle of arguments. The developing countries (South) argue that since the increasing carbon dioxide emission by the developed countries (North) overfills the space, theirs is largely the responsibility of space-evacuation or that since 25% of the world population consumes 85% of its wealth and produces 90% of the total wastes causing trouble so much so that the burden of space-evacuation should naturally fall on them. The developing countries are, on the other hand, blamed for the alarming increase in carbon emission for the growing population that generates negative externalities.

The polemics thus advanced lead us to nowhere. It is not effective enough to deal with the knotty problem of global environmental pollution. What, then, is needed is to evolve a common mission working together for environmental security, if we are eager to avert any magnum extinction. The emission of green-house gases and global warming has to be reduced considerably; even if it be with a change in the pattern of industrial activity in any country, be that developed, underdeveloped or developing. As regards, the sharing of 'pollution space', a strategy has to be reinvented calculating needs on the basis of equality and justice along with the removal of structural imbalances in the global and national economy as well as the unequal terms of participation in the global economy.

18.7 The Global Environment Scenario

According to the study of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) published in 2016 under the title Global Environmental Outlook (GEO – 6), provided assessment of the environmental issues affecting each of the world's six regions: the Pan-European region, North America, Asia and the Pacific, West Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa. The assessments find a host of common environmental threats that are rapidly intensifying in many parts of the world. The study warns that "if the current trends continue and the world fails to enact solutions that improve current patterns of production and consumption…. The world environment will continue to decline". The study further reveals the fact that "there is still time to tackle many of the worst impacts of environmental change such as the damage to marine ecosystems and the rising level of air pollution which has become one of the world's most widespread environmental health risks". It also states that "Across the world, climate change, the loss of biodiversity, land degradation and water scarcity are growing problems that need to be urgently addressed if the world is to achieve the goals set out in 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development".

The key findings on Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) state that green house gas emissions are growing in the region as a result of urbanization, economic growth, energy consumption, land use changes and other factors. The emission of nitrogen oxide and carbon dioxide from agriculture increased by about 29% air pollution. The region's urban population increased by more than 35 million people between 2010 and 2015 in Mexico and expected to climb to a total of 567 million persons by 2015. More than 100 million people already live in areas where they are at risk from air pollution. The report notes that Andean Glaciers which provide vital

water resources for millions of people are shrinking and an increase in the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events are affecting economics.

As regards Asia and the Pacific regions, the report reveals that unprecedented economic growth, which has lifted millions out of poverty in Asia and the Pacific, is putting heavy pressure on ecosystems. Increasing unsustainable consumption patterns have led to worsening air pollution, water scarcity and waste generation, threatening human and environmental health. Increased demand for fossils fuels and natural resources – extensive agriculture, palm oil and rubber plantations aqua culture and the illegal trade in wildlife – are causing environmental degradation and biodiversity loss.

The Asia-Pacific region continued to be the world's most disaster prone area, accounting for about 41% of all natural disasters over the last two decades occurred in this region causing 91% of the world's deaths attributable to natural disasters in the last century.

The area witnessed the number of record-breaking rainfall events accounting for 56% over the 1981-2010 periods. By the 2070s the top Asian cities in terms of population exposure to coastal flooding will be Bangkok, Dhaka, Guangzhore, Kolkata, Mumbai and Shanghai, threatening hundreds of millions of people with displacement. It is estimated that about 30% of the population uses drinking water contaminated by sources of human and industrial wastes. Water related diseases and unsafe water contribute to 1.8 million deaths annually and 24.8 million disability-adjusted life years in the region.

Uncontrolled dumping as the main waste disposal method in the region is also the major source of disease. In Mumbai, about 12% of total municipal solid waste is burned either openly on the street or in landfills that release carbon, dioxins and carcinogenic furans. Along with this, growing middle class and urbanization has also led to unhealthy, polluting and carbon-intensive lifestyles. The main driver for accelerating domestic material consumption is the expanding middle class from 21% in 1990 to 56% in 2008. The size of this class is projected to increase from 1.8 billion in 2009 to 4.9 billion in 2030 in Asia.

In the case of West Asia, a rise in the amount of degraded land and the spread of desertification are the "most critical challenges", having profound economic and environmental impacts on the region, according to the UNEP report.

West Asia is suffering from an increase in water demand, over exploitation of ground water resources and deteriorating water. Water demand in the region is

increasing while water quality is deteriorating. Due to over-exploitation of ground water, only 4 out of 12 countries in West Asia are above the water scarcity limit of 1000 cubic meters per person per year.

Continuous conflict and the mass displacement of people throughout the region are also triggering severe environmental impacts that are endangering the health of people. Heavy metals from explosive munitions and radiation from missiles have leached into the environment. The 2.97 million refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Yemen and Iraq are placing an immense environmental burden producing about 1,440 tones of waste per day in 2015, overwhelming governments and increasing the risk of disease out-breaks. The air pollution, lack of access to safe water and adequate sanitation, climate change, exposure to hazardouschemicals and wastes and exposure to radiation became the top environmental risk factors. More than 229,500 people die prematurely each year because of this specific environmental risk and 8.24 million healthy life years are being lost. Every individual in this region is losing 17 days of life annually because of environmental risk factors.

Almost 90% of municipal solid waste in West Asia is disposed of in landfills sites and leachate from these is contaminating scarce ground water resources. It is estimated that air pollution alone which has increased steadily over the past two decades was responsible for more than 70,000 premature deaths in 2010.

In Africa, land degradation, air pollution and the provision of sanitation and safe drinking water are among the main problems of the continent. Indoor air pollution is responsible for 600,000 premature deaths every year in Africa. The continent's reliance on the use of bio-mass for cooking, lighting and heating means that 90% of the region's population is exposed to this health threat.

More than half of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa still does not have any access to improved sanitation. African mega cities such as Cairo, Kinshasa and Lagos and emerging mega cities such as Dares Salaam, Johannesburg and Luanda face challenges from poor management of sanitation services.

In Africa, land is the most prized asset for food production and economic development. But about 500,000 square meters of land in Africa is being degraded due to soil erosion, sanitization, pollution and deforestation.

In North America, environmental conditions in the region relatively have improved due to policies and regulatory frameworks. However, environmental challenges have emerged recently. Climate change is generating impacts across the region. Aggressive hydrocarbon extraction methods bring increased emissions, water

use and induced seismicity. The coastal and marine environment is under threat due to ocean acidification, Ocean Warming (ELNINO), sea level rise and new forms of marine debris.

Despite environmental regulatory measures, 140 million people exposed to pollution. Apart from this, climate change is damaging the environment, human health and wellbeing and human security in the region.

The Arctic adjacent to this region is experiencing a profound transformation impacting on North America and the world as a whole. The climate change, global warming has gripped the environmental condition adversely. The largest contributions to global glacier ice loss during the early 21st century were from glaciers in Alaska, the Canadian Arctic and the periphery of the Greenland ice sheet. Together these areas account for more than 80% of the total ice loss. The melting of sea ice has also created new expanses of Open Ocean, allowing large population of phytoplankton to bloom and alter the marine food chain.

18.8 The Indian Environment Scenario

As per United Nations Environment Programme Report in 2019, India, as the World No. 3 emitter of green house gas, tops after China and the United States. According to World Health Organization, India is also highly air-polluted country which is adversely affecting the life span of its citizens reducing Indian lives by over three years. Over half of its population lives in areas where fine particulate matter pollution is high. Of the world's top 20 polluted cities, 13 are in India compared to just three in China. Among the cities in India, Delhi and Kolkata are the highest polluted cities.

Yale University's The Environment Performance Index, has bracketed India among "bottom performers" in terms of its air quality, water and sanitation. India lags behind Brazil, China, Russia and South Africa in this respect.

The Ganga and Jamuna are ranked among the world's 10 most polluted rivers. Some 345 million gallons of raw sewage and 70 million gallons of industrial waste flows into the Ganges every day Diseases that have been caught bathing in the river include dysentery, jaundice and cholera even hepatitis amoebic dysentery.

Mindless concretization of ground and green belts are destroying the green cover changing the land use and shrinking of natural conservation zones such as forests, waste lands, sanctuaries and ground water rechargeable areas in Aravallis and Wetlands in Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

According to report by the Centre for Science and Environment, a Delhi based NGO, say the decline in the country's overall environmental standards was because of river pollution, piling garbage in cities and increasingly toxic urban air.

India is vulnerable to various environmental problems. An estimated 60% of cultivated land suffers from soil erosion, water logging and salinity. For about 4.7 to 12 billion tons of topsoil are lost annually from soil erosion. Exploitation of Ground Water has become problematic in the states of Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.

Forest area covers 19.4% of India's geography area (63.7 million hectares). Nearly half of the country's forest cover is found in the state of Madhya Pradesh (20.7%) and the seven states of the North East (25.7%). The Northeast is experiencing net forest loss. Forest cover is declining because of harvesting of fuel wood and the expansion of agricultural land.

Along with these trends, increasing industrial and motor vehicle pollution output have led to temperature increase and declining intervals of drought recurrence in many areas.

In West Bengal, due to massive mangrove loss, salinity in soil is increasing making it unfit for agriculture.

Global warming is blamed for causing droughts, floods and water shortages. It could disrupt the monsoons and cause vital rains to disappear from some places. The Mahanadi, Narmada, Tapi, Cauvery, Krishna, Godavari and Ganges river deltas are threatened by rising sea levels caused by global warming. The Ganges delta and the cities of Mumbai, Madras and Calcutta are particularly vulnerable to sea level rise.

Global warming is being blamed for melting glaciers. The Gangotri Glacier in India is retreating at a rate of 30 meters per year.

The use of Ozone-layer – depleting chemicals in India and China threatens to cancel out their progress, damaging the environment considerably. These are a few facts out of innumerable environmental problems facing India.

18.9 Global Environmental Protection Measures

Global inter-government action began with the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. This led to the 'Stockholm Declaration' and an action plan with over 100 recommendations on environmental assessment, management and support measures. The Stockholm slogan was "only one Earth".

The Environmental debate centered around the club of Rome Report on the 'Limits to Growth' and talk of economic development. The Report highlights the consequences of unrestrained growth and linkages between several global problems.

The Post Stockholm Concerns for the environment continued to grow in view of the widespread deforestation, industrial pollution and environmental degradation. The ozone hole, the warming of the earth, increased carbon dioxide in the environment all added to the growing environmental concerns, especially the link between the environmental degradation and industrial development and growth. With this in mind the United Nations in 1983 established the "World Commission on the Environment and Development" and it is commonly referred to as the "Brandt land Commission". The Commission in its Report "Our Common Future" in 1987 defined "sustainable Development" – a "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs".

Twenty years after Stockholm, the United Nations conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, known as "The Earth Summit" or 'it was called the "Rio Declaration" which adopted an action plan of 40 chapters called Agenda 21 was adopted by over 100 Nations.

Agenda 21 was geared towards achieving sustainable development in the 21st century. The 'Rio concept' follows :

1. Equal consideration of environment, society and economy;

2. Intergenerational solidarity keeping in mind the needs of the future generation;

3. A global consensus and political commitment at the national and international levels;

4. Improvement of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO);

5. Provides a blue print for the governments to attain a balance between the environment and the needs of the population; and

6. A Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was established to follow up the Rio agreements and it monitors the agreements of the Earth Summit at the local, national and international levels.

As a follow up to the Rio agreements, several other conferences to focus on sustainable development were held in Barbados in 1994, "The World Summit on Social Development" in Copenhagen in 1995, "The Fourth World Conference on Women" in Beijing, 1995 and the "Second UN Conference on Human Settlements,

Habitat II and Istanbul in 1996. In all these conferences, the focus was on following the Path of sustainable development and maintenance of ecosystem whether on land, water or air. The effort was an all inclusive development covering all sections of the population with a special focus on the vulnerable sections like women, children or the marginalized.

A five year review of the progress of the 'Earth Summit' was held by the UN General Assembly in 1997. This was followed by a ten year review in 2002 by the World Summit on Sustainable Development held at Johannesburg, South Africa. It urged the Nations to make progress in the formulation and implementation strategies for sustainable development by 2005.

In addition to those conferences, the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, Delhi Mandates in 2004, Kyoto Protocol in 2005, Montreal Protocol in 2007, Green Economy in 2008, Copenhagen Climate Negotiation in 2009, the G-20 Pittsburg Summit in 2009 and later at Durban 2011 and United Nations Climate Change Conference in Doha 2012 etc. were held to negotiate on world environmental problems and protection. The goals were to green the planet and to develop clean energy solution not at the cost of the future generations.

18.10 Affirmative Policies Pertaining to Environment in India : Constitutional, Legislative and Judicial Measures

The year of 1972 marked a revolution in the history of environmental management in India. It was the year in which a conference on Human Environment was held in Stockholm in response to the initiative of the United Nations. To implement the decision taken at the conference, the Indian Parliament introduced a landmark change in the field of environmental management. The then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi in the first – International Conference on Human Environment at Stockholm in 1972 voiced deep concern about the degradation of the environment and eco-imbalances. She also emphasized that pollution, population and poverty are interrelated problems and there must be an integrated approach to deal with them. India being signatory of the Stockholm Declaration which is known as Magna Carta on human environment, the Indian Parliament passed the forty second amendment to the constitution in the year 1976 and incorporated specially two Articles relating to protection and improvement of environment. Article 48 A and 51 A(g) were inserted making state as well as the citizens, both under constitutional obligation to conserve, perceive, protect and improve the environment.

Initially, the judiciary's response to the problems of the environment had been far from ideal and the courts outlook may be regarded as insensitive towards environmental issues and problems because of the unstable political scenario in the country in the wake of emergency rule., Till 1980s, not much contribution was made by the courts in preserving the environment, but one of the earliest cases which came to the Supreme Court, formed the foundation of judicial response. In RatlamMunicipality vs. Vardhich and A.I.R. 1980 S.C. 1623, Judge KrishaIyer highlighted the need for environmental consciousness and elaborated the scope of the Criminal Law Concept of Public nuisance. In this case, the Supreme Court increased the range of section 133 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CPC) to uphold a magistrate's order directing the municipality to carry out its duty towards residents. The municipality was ordered to remove the nuisance of open drains and of public refuse from nearby slum dwellers. The court observed that the non-availability of funds cannot be pleaded as ground for non-performance of municipality's statutory obligations. The case put forth the need of clean environment in all aspects.

In early 1980s, Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act were passed. But the authorities had shown reluctance to use their statutory power against the polluters which resulted in the acceleration of degradation of the environment. Therefore, the judiciary took the lead and played a key role in protecting and preserving the environment through its judicial pronouncements. The development of environmental jurisprudence in India through the innovative judicial decisions of the Supreme Court and the High Courts is a reaction towards the failure on the part of the Governmental agencies to effectively enforce the environmental laws. It needs to be pointed out that the new activist role of judicial policing over environmental issues triggered specially after the Bhopal Gas Leak Tragedy.

18.11 Constitutional Measures

The Indian constitution is amongst the few in the world that contains specific provisions on environment protection. In the Articles 48 A and 51 A(g) in the Constitution of India, the phrase 'Protect and Improve' environment are definitely the affirmative Government action to improve the quality of environment and not just to preserve the environment in its degraded form. Article 48 A reads as follows: "The state shall endeavor to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forest and wild life of the country". The amendment inserted Part VI A (Fundamental Duty) in the constitution which reads as follows :

Article 51 A (g) "It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes and wildlife and to have compassion for living creature".

The cumulative effect of Articles 48 A and 51 A(g) binds the 'state' as well as the 'citizens' both under the constitutional obligation to conserve, perceive, protect and improve the environment. But, through Article 51 A (g), protection of environment was made a fundamental duty of all citizens. As a result, it is a fundamental duty of all citizens. As a result, reference to the environment has also been made in the Directive Principles of State Policy (Part –IV) as well as the Fundamental Rights (Part-III) of the constitution. The department of Environment was established in India in 1980 to ensure a healthy environment for the country. This later became the Ministry of Environment and Forests in 1985.

Apart from the above constitutional provisions, the Article 'Right to life' contained in Article 21 of the Constitution of India includes the right to clean and human environment. It means that citizens have the right to live in a clean and healthy environment. It is a fundamental right.

Following the constitutional mandate to protect and improve the environment, a plenty of legislations were passed on the subject. The relevant enactment are the water (Prevention and Central of P:ollution) Act, 1974, the Water Cess Act, 1977; the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981; the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991; the National Environmental Tribunal Act, 1995 and the National Environment Appellate Authority Act, 1997; the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and The Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000; The Ozone Depleting Substances (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000 etc.

The Water Act 1974 provides for the Prevention and Control of Water Pollution and the maintaining or resorting of the unwholesome of water. The Act prohibits any poisonous, noxious or polluting matter from entering into any stream or well. The Act Provides for the formation of Central Pollution Control Board and the State Pollution Control Board. Both the Boards Constituted under the Water Act shall also perform the power and functions under the Air Act.

Noise has been taken as air pollutant within the meaning of Air Act. Sound becomes noise when it causes annoyance or irritates. The use of crackers in marriages, religious ceremonies etc. cause not only noise pollution but also air pollution.

Among the Acts, the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 is an 'umbrella' legislation designed to provide a framework for Central Government coordination of the activities of various Central and State authorities established under previous laws, such as Water Act and Air Act.

The Parliament passed the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991 with a view to providing immediate relief to the persons affected by accident occurring while handling any hazardous substance and for matters connected therewith. The availability of immediate relief under this law would not prevent the victims to go to courts for claiming large compensation. For this purpose, The National Environment Tribunal Act, 1995 was enacted to provide for strict liability for damages arising out of accidents.

The Wildlife (protection) Act, 1972 was enacted to provide for the protection of animals, birds and plants. The Act provides for State Wildlife Advisory Board to advise the State Government in formulation of the policy for protection and conservation of the wildlife and specified plants.

The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1986 was passed to check deforestation of forests. It must be enforced strictly for the benefit of the general public.

But it is clear that despite the constitutional mandate and elaborate legislations on environment, the enforcement of these legislations has been far from satisfactory. What is needed is the effective and efficient enforcement of both constitutional mandates and environmental legislations.

18.12 Judicial Activism for Environment Protection in India

In recent years, there has been a sustained focus on the role played by the higher judiciary in devising and monitoring the implementation of measures of Pollution Control, conservation of forests and wildlife protection. Many of these judicial interventions have been triggered by persistent incoherence in policy making as well as the lack of capacity building amongst the executive agencies. Devices such as Public Interest Litigation (PIL), Public Trust Doctrine, and Polluter Pay Principles etc. have been prominently relied upon to tackle environmental problems. In addition to the statutory remedies such as under section19 of the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986, under area 133 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 and Section 268 for open irritation under IPC 1860, a Writ Petition can be filed under Article 32 in the Supreme Court of India or under Article 226 in the High Court. It may be mentioned

here that the new activist role of judicial policing over environmental issues triggered specially after the Bhopal Gas leak tragedy.

Besides the Article 32 and 226, the right of a person to pollution free environment is a part of basic jurisprudence of the land. Article 21 of the Constitution of India guarantees a fundamental right to life and personal liberty. The Supreme Court has interpreted the right to life and personal liberty to include the right to wholesome environment. The court through its various judgments has held that the mandate of right to life includes right to clean environment, drinking water and pollution free atmosphere.

18.13 Some Remarkable Principles and Doctrines Propounded by the Indian Judiciary

1. Doctrine of Absolute Liability :

In the Bhopal case, the Union Carbide Corporation vs. Union of India, the Court held that where an enterprise is occupied with an inherently dangerous or a hazardous activity and harm results to anybody by virtue of a mishap in the operation of such dangerous poisonous gas, the enterprise is liable to repay everyone of the individuals who are affected by the accident. The risk factor is not subject to any exemptions. It needs to be mentioned that in 1984, Bhopal mass disaster took place due to 40 tons of deadly toxic Methyl IsocynateCarbon (MIC) gas leaked into the atmosphere from Union Carbide's pesticide factory (U.S. based Company), causing 3500 casualties and injuring 200,000 people. Apart from this, M. C. Mehtra vs. Union of India is also a pointer to the threat of hazardous elements to the health of man by the Supreme Court justifying Article 21 of the Constitution.

2. Polluter Pays Principle :

It means that "If anyone intentionally spoils the water of another ….. Let him not only pay damages, but purify the stream or cistern which contains the water". Lately, this principle has become a very popular concept. The fundamental basis of the slogan is "If you make a mess, it is your duty to clean it up". In environmental law, it only supports a remedial method in repairing natural harm. But in International environmental law provides that the polluting party pays for the harm or damage done to the natural environment. In our country, the Supreme Court in Vellor Citizen's Welfare Forum vs. Union of India has declared that the polluter plays principle is an essential feature of the sustainable development. The remediation of

the damaged environment is part of the process of sustainable development and as such pollution is liable to pay the cost to the individual sufferers as well as the cost of reversing the damaged ecology. In this case, The Supreme Court further held that the pollution pay principle also means the 'Precautionary Principle' mandating the State Government to anticipate, prevent and attack the causes of environment degradation. Thus, this principle is closely associated with doctrine of sustainable development. Regarding the sustainable development, the court also dealt with the issue relating to the environment and development in the case of Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra Vs. State of UP and held that it is always to be remembered that the permanent assets of mankind are not intended to be exhausted in one generation.

3. Public Trust Doctrine :

The Public Trust Doctrine rests on the Principle that certain resources like air, water, sea and the forests have such a great importance to people as a whole that it would be wholly unjustified to make them a subject of private ownership. The Doctrine imposes three kind of restrictions on the state:

1. The property must not be used for a Public purpose, it must be available for use by the General Public;

2. The property must not be sold; and

3. The property must be maintained for particular kind of uses such as navigation, recreation or fishery.

In Banglore Medical Trust Vs. B. S. Muddappa, the Supreme Court set aside the decision of the Banglore Development Authority granting permission for converting the place reserved for Public Park for the establishment of a nursing home. The Court observed:" The Public interest on reservation and preservation of open spaces for parks and playgrounds cannot be sacrificed by leasing or selling such sites to private persons for conversion to some other use".

18.14 Public Interest Litigation

Around 1980, the Indian Legal System, particularly the field of environmental law, underwent a sea-change in terms of discarding its traditional approach and it was marked by not only administrative and legislative activism but also judicial activism. 'Judicial Activism' refers to the active role played by the courts in India by adopting new creative and innovative interpretations of the constitutional rights

expanding their ambit. This activism of the courts have been strengthened by the tool of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) which has enable the courts to entertain cases from public spirited individuals and NGOs active in the area of environmental protection.

The concept 'the right to life' under Article 21 of the constitution gave the courts in India in making the expanded meaning of the term by playing active role. The ability to involve the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and the High Courts under Articles 32 and 226 is a remarkable step forward in providing protection for the environment

The landmark judgments in protecting environment have come through the means of public interest litigation.

The alarming air quality in Delhi and the surrounding region was heard by the Supreme Court highlighting the air pollution caused by vehicles by emitting dangerous smoke as a result of petrol and diesel. The result was pollution-related illness. The court ordered to ensure that the public transport vehicles playing on the roads of Delhi must use CNG as fuel. This could be realized through PIL (The Delhi Vehicular Pollution Case, 1985).

Through the means of PIL, the Supreme Court has also undertaken the task of Pollution in the river Ganga (M.C.Mehta Vs. Union of India, Ganga Pollution Case, 1998).

The Supreme Court in Bichhri Village Case, 1988 applied the 'Polluters Pays Principles' and asked the polluting industries to compensate for the environmental damage caused by it. It was also a PIL case.

The Supreme has also undertaken the task of forest preservation very actively through the means of PIL in T. N. Godavarman Tirumulkpad Vs. Union of India, 1997. Mining License in forest area without proper approval by the Government is violative of the Forest (Conservation) Act. All ongoing activities under such invalid license must cease. The State Governments have to take necessary remedial measures, the Supreme Court added in its decisions. The fundamental right to water has evolved in India not through legislative action but through judicial interpretation. In Narmada BachaoAndolanvs. Union of India and others, the Supreme Court upheld that "Water is the basic need for the survival of human beings and is part of the right to life and human rights as enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution.

The order passed by the Supreme Court clearly demonstrates the failure of executive to ensure compliance with the forest laws of India.

These PIL cases became examples for the many developing countries looking to India as a country where human rights championed by an independent judiciary in the area of environmental protection through PIL were the remarkable achievements. It shows the commitment of the courts in India towards the cause of environmental protection:

The decisions of the courts have widened the scope of the right to life by reading into it, the right to a clean environment. Thus, the courts in India have lived up to the needs of the time and have made significant contributions in evolving new principles and remedies.

In most cases, courts have issued directions to remind Government authorities of their responsibilities to protect the environment. The directions were given to local bodies, especially municipal authorities to remove garbage and waste for clean towns and cities. The Swachh Bharat Mission (Clean India Campaign) launched on Gandhi Jayanti, Oct. 2, 2014 is a point in this case as an example.

The directives of the Supreme Court went to the extent of spreading environmental awareness and education as well as launching of environmental education at the School and College levels. In this connection, the court also directed every State Governments and Education Boards to take steps for environmental education.

Finally, in order to cut down delays of judgments in courts which are hindering the implementation of environmental laws, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) was established on 18th October, 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010, for effective and expeditions disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources including enforcement of any legal rights and giving relief and compensation for damages to persons and property connected therewith. It is a specialized body equipped with the necessary expertise to handle environmental disputes involving multi-disciplinary issues. Initially, the NGT was proposed to be set up at five places of sitting and follow circuit procedure for making itself more accessible. New Delhi is the principle place of sitting of the Tribunal and Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai are the other four places of sitting of the Tribunal

Such courts may be vested with the jurisdiction to decide both criminal prosecution cases under the various environmental laws and civil cases for compensation to victims.

The NGT consists of one judge and two experts from ecological and other sciences. The judge must be or has been a judge of the Supreme Court of India or Chief Justice of a High Court.

18.15 Summary

The earth is unique in the solar system in the sense that it is the only place that sustains life. But starting from the evolution of human being man has tried to achieve progress disregarding the sustainability of the earth. The concept of development has been equated with growth. Growth can bring money to individuals. It can ensure prosperity in terms infrastructure, transport, urbanization, industrialization fulfilling multi-dimensional needs. In fulfilling man's needs, man did not probe the linkages between development and environment. As a result, man's actions were having negative impact on the environment on a global scale leading to the degradation of ecological balance. The environmental degradation are now causing air pollution, deforestation, acid rain, Global Warming leading to climate change and other problems that are dangerous both to the earth and to ourselves. Today, the Conservation, Protection and improvement of human environment are major issues all over the world.

Though numerous positive measures both at the global and local levels have been taken to tackle the environmental issues there is still a lack of its effective implementation. In India, it is evident, there are ample of constitutional and legislative provisions on environmental protection. But despite these rules and regulations, protection and preservation of the environment is still a pressing issue. Even the Courts in India have taken affirmative actions pertaining to environmental protection and preservation with phenomenal success.

But mere legislations, rules and environmental activism by the judiciary would remain ineffective unless the people are awakened and political will is absent in its effective enforcement. In fact, what is needed is social awareness from below not from above. The protection of the environment and keeping ecological balance unaffected is a task which not only the Government but also every individual, association and cooperation must undertake. It is a social obligation and fundamental duty enshrined in Article 51 A (g) and Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

18.16 Summing Up

● Environmental and ecological issue has assumed not only a national but global dimension totay. The relationship between culture and nature has been punctuated with ecological degradation and crisis. The history of human civilization can be described as the history of ecological degradation and crisis.

● The environmental degradation is anthropocentric. It is man's greed rather than need caused heightered adverse pressure on environment, generating ecological degradative shadows globally and putting man's existance in the world on the brink of extinction. The common lesson now is that nature cannot tamed and dominated it has to be nourished. Thought her care amplem measures nationally and internationally for the preservation of environment but it is not enough. What actually needed is a war of awareness among the people to protect and keep ecological balance.

18.17 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. What do you mean by Environment? Point out its importance in our life.

2. Enumerate the global scenario of environmental problems with special reference to India.

3. Discuss the affirmative action policies relating to environment in India through Constitutional, Legislative and Judicial measures.

Long Questions :

1. Mention briefly the global measures for environmental protection under the initiative of the United Nations.

2. Write a note on the relationship between man and environment.

3. Explain in brief, the Indian Judiciary's activism in protection of environment in the wake of Bhopal Gas Disaster in 1984.

Short Questions :

1. Write a short note on the creative and innovative aspects of Public Interest Litigation relating to the area of environmental protection.

2. What is Agenda 21? Mention its basic features.

3. What are the 'Doctrine of Absolute Liability' and 'Polluter Pays Principles'?

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Unit - 19 ❑ Affirmative Action Policies : Caste

Structure

19.1 Objectives

This unit will enable the students to learn :

● the meaning and nature of caste delineating the origin of the word 'Caste' and its structural and cultural practices in society.

● the distinction between caste and class identifying the comprehensiveness of caste within which class resides in India.

● the Colonial account of caste highlighting the colonial role in reservation for 'divide and rule'.

● the nature of change of caste in Independent India experiencing the deretualization of caste and appearing as a new 'avatar'.

● identifying the role of Indian Constitution by incorporating different provisions for reservation in favour of caste.

● the role of Mandal Commission describing the politicization of lower castes (OBCS) as deepening of democracy.

● the role of the Supreme Court's direction in evolving criteria for identification of the creamy layer.

● the implementation of Reservation Policies in India and a critical estimate of Caste reservation.

19.2 Introduction

Among the divisive forces which afflict India's national life, disrupt the bonds of unity among people and affect its development, caste is the major issue. It is India's most complex and unique system of social stratification. In this social stratification, the glaring practice of inequality has been the oppression and denial of rights on the basis of caste. It has evolved for thousand years in India. During the evolutionary course of history, reform movements such as Charuvaka, Buddhism, Bhakti etc. could not make a dent in its exploitative nature of the system of caste based on Brahminicalsupremacy. B. R. Ambedkar, being frustrated at the fate of repeated attempts to annihilate caste within the Hindu framework ultimately opted for mass conversion movement – "Dharma chakra Parivastan". Though his conversion also did not succeed much to undermine the social marker of caste. During colonial period, as a result some secular reform movements and with the progress of modernization brought by the colonial rulers themselves there started some process of emergence of consciousness among oppressed castes as also some changes in the caste system. Yet, no significant change occurred as the lower echelons in the Hindu social hierarchy of caste system were deprived of access of jobs or education. The upper castes, especially the Brahman cornered the most prestigious jobs and received the best education.

In the Post-Colonial India, caste continues to remain significant though the members of the Constituent Assembly firmly believed that with democracy and modernization, it would lose its importance. Far from losing importance, caste continues to exert determining influence in Indian society. Not only is the caste most conspicuous marker of social privileges in India as an insulated system of ritual-status hierarchy embedded in the religions culture of India, caste is able to maintain its autonomy and stability of status hierarchy by accommodating the changes without losing its structural and cultural integrity as well. So, it still survives by bringing in the process of 'Casteisation of Politics' within the democratic matrix on the one hand, and political mobilization of caste groups by the Political Parties in competitive politics has made them a politically significant variable on the other. The process is one of politicization of castes. The singular impact of competitive democratic politics on the caste system is that it delegitimized the old hierarchical relations among castes, facilitating new horizontal power relations among them. In such a process, ever-increasing demand for justice for the numerically dominant caste especially the OBC caste brought fore the need for affirmative action which is known in India as reservation. Thus, almost all political parties in modern India in order to consolidate their support have aligned with one caste group or another. Caste has, therefore, become a significant criterion of electoral politics in contemporary India.

19.3 Meaning and Nature of Caste

While caste reigns supreme in the innumerable classes and divisions encompassing all aspects of the life, no precise definition of caste is available. Scholars are not unanimous in arriving at a commonly acceptable definition. Even there is a lack of accurate distinction between 'Varna' and 'Jati'. The prevalence of different perspectives to the analysis of caste stratification leads the scholars to locate the precise place of caste very difficult in Indian society.

The word Caste originated from the Spanish and Portuguese word 'Casta' meaning 'race, lineage or breed' or 'a group having hereditary quality'. The term was applied to people of India by the Portuguese to denote 'jati' and 'Varna'. There are four 'Varnas'- Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Sudra and about 4000 'Jati'. The Portuguese specifically denoted caste to 'Jati'. In this sense, castes are to quote Andre Beteille, "hierarchically ranked groups or categories based on hereditary membership which maintain their social identity by strict rules of endogamy". Each caste is usually associated with more or less district ritual status in the hierarchical

system based on the concepts of purity and pollution, that is, each caste is considered inferior to those above it and superior to those below it primarily in terms of purity/pollution.

But as the concept of 'Jati' originates from the root word 'Jana' which implies taking birth, caste is thus concerned with birth. According to Anderson and Parker, "Caste is the extreme form of social class organization in which position of individuals in the status hierarchy is determined by decent and birth".

Caste system is thus extremely elaborated and varied in its structure from area to area – so much so that it does not really constitute one 'system' at all, but a connected diversity of varying beliefs and cultural practices, though certain principles are shared by all the caste.As the 'Varna' system dividing into four Varnas may have existed in the stratificatory system in the past. In course of time, the fragmentation within them led to the emergence of hundreds of jatis. But Varna stratification had existed only at the level of theory, it was never a reality. The stratification that is prevailing is seen as jatis not of four varnas. Sometimes, both the concepts are used/treated as synonymous, within the four-fold category of varna system, there is another group known as Ati-Sudra or untouchables, new categorized as backward castes or classes.

Caste can now be defined as hereditary endogamous group, having common name, common traditional occupation, common culture, relatively rigid in matters of mobility, distinctiveness of status and forming a single homogenous community. A caste is a horizontal segmental division of society spread over a region, district or the whole state and also sometimes outside it. In the context of India, caste is not only a horizontal segmental division of society because various castes found in India are equal; there is an element of inequality prevalent in caste system originating particularly on the basis of inequality concept of Varna system. So, it can be apt to term caste system in India as vertical segmental division of the society also. Caste is closely related to the unequal distribution of power. It is not only a cultural system concerned with ideas and values but also a structural system concerned with domination and subjugation, privileges and deprivations, surplus and exploitation.

From the above, it is evident that there are some features in the caste system. The 16th Century Portuguese visitor Duarte Barbosa provides an empirical account of caste. He identified the main features of the caste system: (a) as a hierarchy, with Brahmins at the top and 'untouchables' at the bottom; (b) as the practice of untouchability premised on the idea of 'pollution'; (c) as the existence of a plurality

of 'castes' separated from each other by endogamy, occupation and commensality; (d) as a system in which sanctions are applied to maintain customs and rules; and (e) as a relationship of caste with political organization.

The distinctiveness in Barbosa's account of caste reveals the fact that he did not use the religions scriptures as the source of caste information. There is no reference to the Varna Theory of Caste in his narratives. He related the idea of pollution to the practice of untouchability and not to the functioning of the whole system. He saw caste not exclusively in ritual – status terms but also as a plurality of self-governing cultural communities.

19.4 Caste and Class Distinction

Some scholars are of the view that castes are essentially class. The earlier ethnographers were interested in the question whether caste can be called class and whether they are interchangeable. Sociologists hold the view that caste and class are two distinct entities. The caste and class are the two forms of social stratification in India. Caste is a hierarchical division of society. A sense of highness and lowness is associated with this gradation or ranking. A class system on the other hand allows both exogamy and endogamy, permits mobility either up or down the system. Caste is a social category, whereas class is an economic category. Caste is based on ritual criterion whereas class is based on secular. Ritual criterion means it is based on religious myths, secular means non-religions criterion like economic, political and social criterion. While caste is hereditary, a class is non-hereditary in nature. Though caste and class are not identical; but can be an important ingredient to identify the backward class.

So, unlike class, caste is the basic pillar of the Indian social system. Caste in India may be taken as an example of social hierarchical system which has been serving for long time in India as social institution. Caste is not only an institution that characterized the structure of social stratification; it represented the core of India. It was both an institution and an ideology. Institutionally, caste provided a framework for arranging and organizing social groups in terms of their statuses and positions in the social and economic system. As an ideology, caste was a system of values and ideas that legitimized and reinforced the existing structures of social inequality. It provided a world view around which a typical Hindu organized his/her life. Apart from being an institution that distinguished India from other societies, caste was an epitome of the traditional society, a 'closed system' where generation after generation

of individuals did similar kinds of work and lived more or less similar kinds of lives. Louis Dumont who approached the Hindu Caste system from a structural perspective, subscribed the above view and he further defined caste in terms of pure and impure, especially the superiority of the pure over the impure. Dumont also referred to 'status' in caste society as a principle of social organization superior to power. According to him, "status encompassed power". So, individual's position in the hierarchy is determined by status. But caste hierarchy has never been static throughout history. Though the upper castes have successfully tried to improve their status, having improved economic condition, a dominant section of some of the lower castes including the groups which were at one time treated as untouchables imitated customs and norms of the upper caste; what M. N. Srinivas conceptualized it as the process of 'Sanskritisation'.

Yet another change witnessed in the caste system is the process of de-sanskritisation. K. L. Sharma who worked in the villages of Rajasthan informs that the higher castes are giving up their Sanskritic values in order to have interaction with the lower castes. He gave evidence showing the fact that the Rajputs, Jats and Brahmins now do not hesitate to touch the untouchables or even to sharing smoking with them.

Commenting on this nature of change being experienced in caste with the rise of non-Brahmin movements in Southern India, G. S. Ghurye had argued that the attack on hierarchy by such mobilization did not mean the end of caste. It is a new kind of collective sentiment, "the feeling of caste solidarity" which could be "truly described as caste patriotism".

19.5 Caste in Colonial India

The significant change in caste system took place after a "second discovery" of caste by the Europeans. The Western Orientalist scholars, The Christian Missionaries and the British administrators began in their different ways to make sense of this complex phenomenon. A new discourse placed by them marked an important departure from pre-colonial accounts of caste. This new discourse was the product of a historical encounter between India and Western (British) Colonial Rule. The changes that brought about in caste were the unintended consequences of colonial policies.

The oriental scholars reconstructed caste on the basis of Hindu religious

scripture depicting it as the prism through which the colonial rulers began to see Indians and the whole of Indian society. To the British rulers, caste Hindus and untouchables and other low castes could hardly expect to work together as equals in a democratic political order as the former would maintain the rigidity of traditional hierarchies and caste discriminations which would prevent the poor and disadvantaged low castes from participating effectively in politics. Nevertheless, during the colonial period itself the existential realities of caste system began to be different from its typical ideal form. On the one hand, the traditional aspects of the caste system were getting changed and on the other hand, caste was acquiring new dimensions and functions – political. For administrative purpose, the British Government had brought a good deal of improvement in communication. The immediate effect of his, Writes Srinivas, was that it increased caste consciousness and inter-caste competition. This happened because now it was possible for the caste relations to outgrow its regional constraints and develop caste associations so as to bargain for some concessions from the British Government on the plea of backwardness in order to catch up with the advanced castes. Under such a situation, the colonial state assumed dual role: "that of a super-Brahmin who located and relocated disputed statuses of caste in the traditional hierarchy, and that of a just and modern ruler who wished to recognize the rights and aspirations of this weak and poor subjects".

Thus, colonialism was for instance, instrumental in 'politicizing caste' for its own 'divide and rule' strategy that was articulated through its well-calculated reservation scheme. The nationalist's insistence on caste-based reservation had given the legitimacy which the colonial state needed to justify the scheme as beneficial to the peripheral majority who remained marginalized in the Hindu social hierarchy due to their birth in so-called lower castes. This scheme also helped the colonial state to protect its colonial political economy from incursion of the emerging nationalist movement.

On the whole, the colonial regime not only introduced new terms of discourse on caste but also brought about some changes in the caste system itself. The most important among the changes was the formation of a new trans-local identity among lower castes collectively by forming caste association. Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph looked at the caste associations as agents of modernity in a traditional society like India. Rajni Kothari argued against the popular notion that democratic politics was helping traditional institutions like caste to resuscitate and reestablish their legitimacy. But this could lead to disintegrative tendencies that would disrupt the democratic and secular framework of Indian polity.

Alongside the colonial dispensation of caste, during this period various socio-religious movements attacked the caste system. The social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, M. G. Ranade, Swami DayanandSaraswati and Jyoti Rao Phule etc. took up pioneering role through various organizations as well as the Rama Krishna Mission by Swami Vivekananda for abolishing caste system. However, these personalities and their movements could not succeed in removing the rigidity of the caste system in this period.

19.6 Caste in Independent India

After independence many qualitative changes were introduced in the political system. The post-independence political leadership took a clear stand and position against giving caste any legitimate place in the political organizations of the new democratic nation. It was imagined that with the unfolding of the processes of industrialization, urbanization and modernization, the caste would disappear. But instead of disappearing; it was experiencing as a new 'avatar' in the democratic politics after India's Independence. The changes that occurred in caste, especially after independence, amount to "de-ritualization of caste". It means the delinking of caste from various forms of rituality which bounded it to a fixed status, an occupation, and rules of commensality and endogamy. Caste now survives as a kinship-based cultural community operating in a differently new emergent system of stratification.

The modernization of India's economy and the democratization of its political institutions have changed the hierarchically ordered strata of castes into a horizontal groups competing for power and control over resources in society. The feeling of belonging caste consciousness is expressed more in the nature of community consciousness rather than in hierarchical terms. This disintegrating system of traditional statuses into the new power system were created by elections, political parties and social policies – such as that of affirmative action of the state.

Moreover, occupational structure based on traditional hereditary ritual status – pure and impure, undergoes changes due to income levels and life-styles. Along with this, the caste rules of commensality that is restrictions on accepting cooked food from members of other castes have become inoperative. The rules of endogamy have relaxed resulting in inter-caste marriage.

Thus, the ideology and organization of the traditional caste system have become vastly eroded. This phenomenon is not only visible at the macro-level and urban

areas, the rural areas are also subjected progressively to the same process. The traditional 'Jajmani' relationships which once regulated economic transactions between castes in social ritual terms, have been replaced by the relationships of employer-employee, of capital and wage labour. The consciousness created among members of the caste groups a perception of common political interest and modern status aspirations. The entire process is known as de-ritualization of caste system.

19.7 Politicization of Castes

The deconstruction ideological foundation of India's hierarchical social order of caste politicized the Scheduled Castes and other backward castes. Some middle and lower castes sought equality with the upper castes. The compulsions of democratic system to mobilize the illiterate people particularly the poor and marginalized who had hitherto remained untouched by political processes, were politicized and began to participate in electoral politics. In this process, the universal adult voting rights is the most potent weapon of all in its hands. Due to the numerical strength castes got representation in decision making bodies and the strength of traditionally dominant castes was weakened. Political parties of all hues in modern India prefer to consolidate their support by aligning with one caste group or another. Therefore, the 'casteism in politics' is politicization of caste: By drawing the caste system into the web of organization, politics finds material for its articulation and moulds it into its own design. In making politics their sphere of activity, caste and kin groups get a chance to assert their identity and strive for positions. Caste has therefore become a significant criterion of electoral politics in contemporary India.

IrawatiKarve rightly points out that politician who enjoy privileged position aimed at perpetuating the operation of caste to seek sanction for their power in social system which possesses a great inequality in status, worldly goods and opportunities. In the rural context, 'Caste in Politics' has been the instrument of mobilization, a channel of communication, representation and leadership which links the electorate to the new democratic process. This inter-relationship frees the lower castes from exploitation and victimization by other castes. In this way, caste has provided 'substance of politics'. The resultant factor is that the meaning of caste itself has changed in the encounter between tradition and modernity. By creating conditions in which a caste's significance and power is beginning to depend on its numbers rather than on its ritual and social status and by encouraging egalitarian aspirations among its members, the caste association is exerting a liberating influence. In this sense,

politicization of caste is creating a new cohesion which is making caste perform roles which are new and secular, based not on ascription but community outlook and aggregation of interest. Thus, politicization brought about some important changes in the "grammar of Indian politics". It shifted the democracy from the 'politics of ideology' to the 'politics of representation'.

19.8 Caste Reservations and The Indian Constitution

In independent India, the affirmative actions significantly facilitated the rise to political power of the lower castes. This affirmative action is known as reservations. India gained her independence from the colonial rule of Great Britain in 1947. The new Indian state was modeled on British lines – a parliamentary democracy was established.

Nehru and Ambedkar were both committed to the idea of an egalitarian India. These men were cognizant that a religion and caste-based would be contrary to egalitarian principles and would evoke discontent among the lower castes. Ambedkar expressed his view that "Anything you will build on the foundation of caste will crack and will never be a whole". The opening pages of the constitution, its preamble, envisaged a nation where the values of "equality, liberty and fraternity" would be supreme.

Following the practices in democratic regimes of the western world, the Indian Constitution invented all legislative powers in Parliament and Legislative Assemblies in a federal system which was to be made up of elected representatives of the Indian people by strictly following the principle of universal adult franchise.

While caste was decried by the middle class leaders of independent India, the mainstream Indian political leadership recognized the crippling impact that the working of the system over the centuries would have had on the subordinated sections of the Indian people and the implications of this ancient system on building a true democracy and individual citizenship. Against this backdrop, the Indian Constitution instituted certain legal and institutional measures in the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles to enable groups and communities of people who had been historically disadvantaged in the social system to participate in the game of democratic politics on equal terms.

There will be no denying the fact that the positive effects the Indian policies and programmes of affirmative action have had in enabling the historically deprived

sections of Indian people to participate in the economic and political life of the nation. India has also been successful in having been able to institutionalize a healthy system of democratic governance at different levels of its political system. While these achievements are no doubt commendable, they have not meant an end of caste in the social and political life of the nation. Caste has become politically more active institution today than it ever was in the past. The caste has got vibrancy largely due to the present electoral processes and competitive politics. This democratic and electoral experience has belied the hopes of the founders of modern nation. Though the Indian Political Scientists have defined the democratic process but the "deepening of democracy" questions have been raised as to the contradiction between the place of caste and democracy. The survival of caste clearly points out the flawed understanding of the reality of caste and that of the sociology of democratic politics.

The Indian Constitution explicitly incorporates Compensatory Discrimination Politics in its different articles of the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as well as socially and educationally backward classes in order to bring them into the mainstream and also to compensate them for centuries of discrimination.

The key article 14 of the Constitution which guaranteed equality before law and equal protection of the law for all of India's citizens, would aid in fulfilling the objectives of the democratic principles. But, the idea of reservation was accepted through provisions of fundamental rights for equality mainly in Article 15. Article 15(4) however, allows the state to make special provisions in the form of reservation for the advancement of both socially and educationally backward classes and those who are designated as scheduled castes or scheduled tribes. Correspondingly in Article 334 and 332 made guarantees in the form of reservations in legislatures, claims in services and posts in Article 335.

Article 16(1) further provides equality of opportunity to all but adds that the state can make special provisions for SCs and STs [Article 16(4)]. Their interests are also taken care in the Directive Principles of state policy specifically in Article 38 and 46 which aim at securing social justice to the deprived sections of the population.

Before 2019, the reservation was provided mainly on the basis of social and educational backwardness of castes. But after the 103rd Constitutional Amendment in 2019, economic backwardness is also considered, resulting in 10% reservation for economically weaker sections of the society, especially for the general people.

Table–I
Reservation Quota in India for Government Jobs

Reservation Category	Reservation Quota %
Scheduled Tribe (ST)	7.5
Scheduled Caste (SC)	15
Other Backward Classes (OBC)	27
Economically Weaker Section*	10
Total	**59.50%**

*103rd constitutional amendment.

As seen from the above table, about 60% of seats are reserved in India for various sections like ST, SC, OBC and EWS (economically weaker section) with respect to Government jobs and Higher Education Institutions. 3% of seats are also reserved for differently abled persons across all categories. This means that only 40% of seats are available under merit. In the merit of seats, not only the general category candidates but all other categories like SC, ST, OBC and EWS can also compete (EWS in Articles 15(6) and 16(6).)

Reservation is provided not only with respect to direct recruitment but also with respect to promotions for SC/ST category (Article 16(4A).

The constitution in Article 17 abolishes untouchability and forbids it's practice in any form and obligates the state to make special provision for the betterment of the SCs and STs.

The two most contentious issues in the application of Article 15(4), which is now also the case with Article 15(5) as well as Article 16(4) have been the question of identification of other backward classes and the extent or quantum of reservation because of the absence of any constitutional definition or exclusive method or agency for their designation. After three decades of independence for the lower castes of peasants, artisans, the untouchables and the tribals – these groups intermediate between the Scheduled Castes at the bottom and the Brahmins and Rajputs at the top, were vociferous in reserving their seats and sharing representation in political power. Their rise has radically altered India's political texture in recent times. It was around the mid-1970s that upper caste hegemony over national politics began to be seriously challenged. This was largely due to the social policies of the state, particularly that

of reservations (affirmative action). Despite tardy implementation, towards the end of the 1970s the reservation policy had created a small but significant section in each of the lower caste groups which had acquired education and economic power for land reforms and the Green revolution and which had entered the bureaucracy and other non-traditional occupations. In the process, a small but highly vocal political leadership emerged from among the lower castes.

The process of second politicization of castes, however, came to a head at the beginning of the 1980s. In this connection, as per Article 340, the President of India, as per the constitutional order appointed a Commission to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes of citizens within the territory. The Commission's task is to identify the OBCs as well as recommend measures for their social and educational advancement.

19.9 The Commissions and Reservations

Before the appointment of the Second Commission for Backward classes, the Government of India in 1953 appointed the First Backward Classes Commission headed by Kaka SahebKalekar, consisting of 11 members. The Commission used four criteria for identifying the OBCs: (a) Low social position in the traditional Caste hierarchy of Hindu Society; (b) Lack of general educational advancement; (c) inadequate representation in government services; and (d) inadequate representation in trade, commerce and industry.

On the basis of those above criteria, the Kalelkar Commission identified 2399 castes/groups as backward classes. But there was difference of opinion among the members of the Commission. Finally, the Chairman himself repudiated the entire report in his covering letter to the President of India. The Government did not accept the recommendations.

19.10 The Mandal Commission

As a result of development of agriculture, abolition of Zamindari system, introduction of electoral politics etc. some of the intermediate and lower castes have been becoming socially and politically important. In view of their numerical strength in some states they had been able to influence the election outcomes. Thus, in 1960s and 1970s their role in politics became significant. It was in view of this development

that some state governments started accepting their demands for reservations to give them due share in government jobs. In December 1978, the Janata Government appointed the Second Backward Classes Commission headed by Bindhyeshwari Prasad Mandal; the former Chief Minister of Bihar. It had five other members.

The Mandal Commission identified caste as the main denominator of backwardness. On the basis of state survey, the Commission suggested that OBCs forming 52% of country's population required special concession to correct the social imbalance. But The Supreme Court ruled that reservations cannot exceed 50% of the jobs. So, the commission reluctantly agreed to accept 27% jobs for the OBCs though they constituted more than half of India's population. The 27% reservation for the OBCs also included educational institutions. In contrast with the Kalelkar Commission, which took into account economic variables among other criteria, the Mandal Commission Report changed the original philosophy of reservations by clearly indentifying caste as the sole criterion for backwardness.

Thus, the so-called Mandalised politics, a euphemism for the politicisation of lower castes has resulted in radically altering the social bases of politics in India. Scholars have described this phase as "deepening of democracy". Recommending 'quota' for the OBCs, the report is broadly a scheme for 'affirmative action' for socially under-privileged sections of society. By deciding to implement the Mandal Commission Report, submitted to the Government of India in 1980, the V. P. Singh Government accepting it in 1990, attempted on August 7, 1990 to implement the Mandal Commission's recommendations relating to job reservation to the extent of 27%. This meant now that reservations in jobs were 22.5% for the SC and ST and 27% for other Backward Castes. The Commission reminded the fact that candidates belonging to OBCs recruited on the basis of merit in an open competition should not be adjusted against their reservation quota of 27%. In addition, the Commission also followed the Supreme Court judgement in 1963 in Balaji Case that total reservation should be less than 50%.

Whatever the advantage the Mandal formula may have, reservation for the backward castes and for the religious minorities are directed towards maintaining a balance of power in the India's caste-divided social structure. As a scheme striving to strike a balance between the privileged upper castes and the hitherto neglected OBCs, The Mandal Report deserves appreciation. In reality, the better-off sections of the OBCs would reap the benefits at the cost of the more deserving sections within these castes. In this respect, reservation in educational institutions, the Supreme Court abolished all caste-based reservation in unaided Private Colleges. But on 21

December 2005, the LokSabha passed the 93rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2005 rolling back the Supreme Court judgement by introducing a new clause into Article 15 to allow for reservations for SCs and STs as well as other backward classes in private unaided educational institutions other than minority institutions. In 2006, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government agreed to introduce 27% reservations for OBCs in Central Government funded higher educational institutions like Indian Institute of Management, Indian Institute of Technology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences and Central Universities. The proposed design in fact is meant to introduce 27% 'quota' to all institutions of higher learning.

However, in the case of Indira Sawhney vs. Union of India, the Supreme Court on 16 November 1992 upheld 27% reservations subject to the exclusion of socially-advanced persons/sections (creamy layer) from amongst the OBCs. The court also directed the government to evolve criteria for identification of this creamy layer. In response to the court directives, the government appointed a committee which suggested the rules of exclusion to children of persons holding different constitutional positions, Class-I Officers and the defence personnel who hold the rank of colonel and above. Children of persons with annual income greater than 100,000 were to be excluded. The limit was later revised to Rs.250, 000 in 2004. In a landmark judgement in April 2008, in the case of Ashoka Kumar Thakur vs. Union of India validating the 93rd Amendment Act, the Supreme Court endorsed the demand for reservation for the demographically preponderant OBCs in higher educational institutions by excluding 'the creamy layer'.

The political imperatives behind reservations are clear. What prompted the ruling parties to accept the 'mandalisation of politics' is possibly a well-calculated design aiming at mobilising the support of the OBCs elite. The OBC elites by virtue of their unique status in the OBC society, its wealth, relatively high education and hegemony in a majority of caste councils, became the most significant power-brokers in the Hindi heartland. So, the Mandal formula, designed to ensure social justice, is virtually a scheme for creating and sustaining a secure vote bank for the V. P. Singh – led National Front Government. Since number counts in franchise today, parties irrespective of ideology strive to win the support of caste groups for electoral gains by promises of whipping up caste sentiments. The decision to implement the Mandal Commission Report is just another effort to effectively draw on caste sentiments for victory in elections. The Commission is thus described as a 'Caste Commission' which is seen 'as a passport to power'.

The Mandal Commission formula has thus polarised the contemporary political

forces more sharply than before. So, it is not strange that elections are calculated on caste basis, the candidates are nominated on caste ratio and as a consequence, patronage is to be distributed on caste basis and public policies are also tilted in favour of caste support base.

Despite sharp criticisms and violent student agitation against the Mandal Commission Report, the formula deserves serious attention as it tries to correct the injustices of centuries inflicted on the downtrodden in the name of the discriminatory Varna system.

Being armed with the reservations, the categories of OBCs, SCs and STs have acquired a strong social and political content and surfaced as new social formations. They are now operating in politics with the self-consciousness of socio-economic groups. Not content with proxy reservation by the upper caste – middle class elites, they are viewing for political power for themselves. Politics has now become a contest for representation among horizontal power groups, representing social collectivities as identified by the policy of reservation. Whatever survived of the hierarchical dimension of the traditional stratificatory system in politics has thus effectively been horizontalised. So, the 'Mandalised Politics' by generating aspirations among the lower castes to attain 'middle class' status and life-styles, prevented the process of class polarisation in India.

It would not be an exaggeration to point out the fact that the centre of gravity in Indian politics is now defined by 'quota politics'. The reservation through quota translates 'protective discrimination into reality. In contrast with 'affirmative action' practised in the US, it is the combination of quotas and lower eligibility criteria that defines protective discrimination in India. So, the Mandal Commission was not merely a political statement, it also meaningfully redefined the nationalist goal of a more equal and just society by empowering the disadvantaged and recognising the socially denigrated groups in addition to reduction of socio-economic disparities.

19.11 The Implementation of Reservation Policy

In addition to constitutional provisions, the Government of India has pursued a two-pronged approach to narrowing the gap between the socio-economic status of the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes and the national average: one prong involves regulatory measures which ensure the various provisions to protect their rights and interests are adequately implemented, enforced and

monitored; the second focuses on increasing self-sufficiency of the caste populations through financial assistance for self-employment activities through development programmes to increase education and skills.

The protective component of this strategy includes the enforcement of those legal provisions that make up the Protection of Civil Rights Acts, 1955 and the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe (Prevention and Atrocities) Act, 1989; of other State and Central Government laws; and of 'positive discrimination' through reservations in the areas of government employment and higher education.

These protective measures are monitored by the National Commissions for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes set up pursuant to Article 338 of the Indian Constitution and entrusted with the responsibility to ensure the implementation of the safeguards and protection given to Scheduled Castes and tribes. The development measures for the educational, social and economic upliftment of Scheduled Castes are administered by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

There have been a lot of plans made for the empowerment and development of SCs and STs till now, but still a lot hard work has to be done in order to imagine for the equality on the ground. Despite a lot of plans, the people are not getting proper education, employment, health, sanitation facilities. Actually the problem is not that the development plans are lacking, but they are not properly implemented.

It can also be seen that the various provisions of the Constitution and subsequent constitutional amendments and legislations that the government is trying to use reservation as a tool for the upliftment of backwardness. But now the question arises as to how far this tool of reservation has been successful in its aim. It may be admitted that reservations are an attempt, however, imperfect to equalise opportunity in the face of social structure that is antithetical to equality of opportunity. But reservations alone constitute insufficient remedy to the problem of caste discrimination in India as the reservations have in itself been subject to criticisms by various masses of people.

But for about 70 years after Independence, India still remains one of the world's most inegalitarian societies. By some estimates, 350 million people – like nearly the whole population of India in 1947 – remain below the poverty. But if the current data are analysed, it would depict the picture different from the above estimates. Between 2004-2005 and 2011- 2012, more people among the deprived social classes – Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward classes (OBC) – were brought above the poverty line, compared to other segments of society as per data

released by the Planning Commission. In 2004-05, more than half the SC and ST population in rural areas was below the poverty line. By 2011-12, poverty among SCs in rural areas fell 22% from 53.5% in 2004-05 to 31.5%. For SCs in urban areas, the fall was of 19% i.e. from 40.6% in 2004-05 to 21.7% in 2011-12. The following Table gives us an overall situation of social groups in India.

Table–2
Poverty Ratio among the Social group (%)

Rural

	1993-94	2004-05	%	2011-12	%
Scheduled Castes	62.4	53.5	– 8.9	31.5	22.0
OBC	—	39.8	—	31.5	17.2
ST	65.9	62.3	– 3.6	45.5	17.0
Others	—	27.1	—	15.5	11.6
All Population	50.1	41.8	– 8.3	25.7	16.1

Urban

	1993-94	2004-05	%	2011-12	%
Scheduled Castes	51.7	40.6	– 11.1	21.7	18.9
OBC	—	30.6	—	15.4	15.2
ST	41.1	35.5	– 5.6	24.1	11.4
Others	—	16.1	—	8.2	7.9
All Population	31.8	25.7	– 6.1	13.7	12.0

Source : Planning Commission.

As regards in government employment or University admission is that the main beneficiaries of reservations are the children of Dalits or lower caste people who have previously won a place in society, thereby checking off the entry of the less advantaged. Both SCs and STs who initially benefited and uplifted themselves economically and socially are enjoying the maximum benefits of reservations. Those who are placed at a more disadvantaged position are failing in competition with the greater advantage in terms of education. Every member of an OBC, STs and SCs who works for government on studies at a University comes from this microscopic

minority. Reservations are thus an advantage of the tiny elite and to the educationally more backward castes it is a mirage. Consequently, reservations still do not reach down to lower 96% of the OBCs. As redistributive efforts, reservation policies have produced substantial development, but it has not spread evenly to the intended beneficiaries.

The distribution of IAS (Indian Administrative Service) Officers by caste shows that among 3235 Hindu Officers, the largest single group is that of Brahmans at 37.6%. The second largest number is claimed by the Kayasthas at 13.3%. These two traditional literati castes together including Kshatriyas and Vaishyas make up 68% of the total. The Sudras by contrast are represented at a minimal level of 2%.

But a significant change can be noticed in the Parliament with regard to its caste composition of the LokSobha. Not surprisingly, in the first three Lok Sobha, the upper castes constituted nearly 50% of the MPs. By the 14th Lok Sobha, the percentage of upper castes had dropped to below 40%. In particular, the number of Brahmins who made up nearly a quarter of MPs in the first Parliament had declined dramatically to around 10% by 2004. This mirrors the trend of the decline in prominent Brahmin leaders in Indian politics and a concomitant rise in the influence of other upper castes, such as Thakurs and Rajputs.

At same time, the percentage of other Backward Classes (OBCs) – a category that encompasses the lower castes but not the former untouchables or Scheduled Castes (SCs) – has progressively risen from 12% in the first Lok Sobha to around 25% in the 9th Lok Sobha – a level at which it still remains. The doubling of the share of the OBCs in the Parliament was a result of the forces unleashed by the Mandal Commission Report recommending 27% reservations for the OBCs.

The percentage of SCs and STs has however, remained fairly steady due to the system of reserved constituencies. The percentage of Muslims in the Parliament has consistently been lower than their share of the population, reaching a high of around 10% in the 7th Lok Sobha before declining subsequently. In the current Lok Sobha, the share of Muslims in the Parliament is the lowest ever at 5%.

(The above data have been from Yogendra Yadav, 'Electoral Politics in Times of Change : India's Third Electoral System, 1989-99', Economic and Political Weekly, 34; 34/35, 21 August – 3 September, 1999.)

In spite of some positive side of the affirmative benefits, many writings and instances suggest the negative sides of it. The atrocities on Dalits in various places of the country especially the killing of two Dalit children in Faridabad in UP on 20

October, 2015, naked parading of Dalit women still comes to light from time to time. The age-old custom barring the Dalit women from entering the Sabarimala Mandir recently is an incident in this respect.

In addition to it, violence against lower castes is perpetrated on purely caste basis. We still see that instances of inhuman jobs like manual scavenging or sweepers are being in practice on a definite caste pattern. According National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2013, the total number of crimes committed against SCs is on the increase. 14,646 in 1991, 35,501 in 2001 and 33,594 in 2009 have happened in the country. The total number of reported cases of SCs being murdered by the Non-SCs rose from 493 in 1981 to 624 in 2009. A similar rising trend is evident with regard to rape cases as well. Although SCs/Dalits account for nearly 16% of the Indian population, they are too small in number to comfort the upper castes' oppression. In this respect, the Ranavir Sena, the upper caste army against the lower castes, may be mentioned.

Despite improvements in some sectors of Indian political and administrative representation of the OBCs, it appears to be not up to the expectation. What the founding fathers of the Constitution envisaged to make India casteless and free from socio-economic disparities of the disadvantaged sections of the population through the affirmative action policies, the scenario is yet to be achieved fully. With the introduction of liberal market oriented policies, it is anticipated that the higher rate of economic growth and the expansion of employment opportunities that should provide some benefit for the lower classes/castes. But in the absence of a system of mass education and an adequate health care delivery system to rural areas and above all monitoring the poverty reduction programme, the most members of the lower castes would lack the human capital to enable them to take advantage of whatever opportunities the expanding economy provides. "Unless that is done, India would remain a ranked hierarchical social order but without the ideological legitimacy and social stability that undergirded the old social order. The paradox in India lies in the fact that old order has begun to disintegrate but new order has not yet risen".

19.12 Conclusion

The discourse on the subject of caste and the affirmative politics for the amelioration of inequality highlights the fact that the caste groups instead of crumbling have adapted themselves well to the demands of the Parliamentary politics. Their participation in electoral politics also transformed the structural properties of

caste in one fundamental respect: it created a democracy of castes in place of a hierarchy. Thus, the democratic equality, the experience of participating in electoral politics, has mainly been translated as equality between caste groups, not among caste-less individuals.

The notions of modernity and democracy that guided the visions of the nationalist leadership at the time of India's Independence from colonial rule, have been of little value as the caste and its removal through equalisation process have brought about the strengthening of caste and its polarisation in lieu of ending of caste.

The preamble to the Constitution of India commits itself to secure justice, social, economic and political, equality of status and opportunity. But merely declaring that all citizens are free and equal was not sufficient and there was need to create a mechanism of law for achieving social change.

It is really a paradoxical situation that on the one hand, constitution is having a foundation of social change; but on the other hand, India is hiding the real segregation, exploitation and other forms of abuse by not allowing further studies into the condition of backwardness. Despite a large body of legislations, the laws have benefitted few and still there are a large number of people who suffer from discrimination, social exclusion and oppression; the people are still besieged with the mind-sets of superiority and inferiority of caste.

While equality in opportunity is being emphasised, gross inequalities have been produced by the forces of globalisation. Dalits, who are already at a disadvantage in an egalitarian social order, are bound to lose more when there is intervention from a free market which actually is not free in the true sense of the term.

19.13 Summing Up

- The predominant feature of the social structure in India is the caste system. It is pervasive and all embracing and is known for controlling and defining all social, economic and political relationships for the individual. Caste is so tacitly and so completely accepted by all, including those most vocal in condemning it, that it is everywhere the unit of social action. It is also a major variable of the Indian political system assuming new functions like influencing politics and their role in political dynamics is gradually increasing. To put it in Kothari's words that 'it is not politics that gets caste ridden; it

is caste that gets politicized'. The operation of competitive politics has drawn caste out of its a political context and given it a new status and identity.

● Similarly, caste associations have contributed significantly to the communication, representation and leadership in politics, making bargaining and jockeying for power. Despite deritualization of caste system, it continuous to play enduring role in democratic politics in India.

19.14 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Define Caste. In what respects is Caste a modern phenomenon?

2. Critically assess the impact of Caste on Indian Politics.

3. Describe the different provisions for caste reservations in the Constitution of India.

Long Questions :

1. Explain the factors that led to the politicisation of Caste in Independent India.

2. Identify the criteria of the Mandal Commission's recommendation for reservation of the Other Backward Classes in India.

3. Make a critical estimate of the implementation of reservation policy in India.

Short Questions :

1. What is creamy layer? How did the Supreme Court of India redefine it?

2. Discuss the process of the deritualisation of Caste in Independent India.

3. Do you think that Caste system is disappearing in India? Give reasons in support of your answer.

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Unit - 20 ❑ The Changing Nature of the Indian State : Developmental, Welfare and Coercive Dimensions

Structure

20.1 Objectives

This unit will enable the students to get an understanding about the nature of Indian state and its changing dimensions. It highlights the following points :

- to examine the identity and ideology of the Indian state by highlighting the legal and constitutional features and the controversy surrounding the nation-state system in India.

- to focus on the legacies of colonial practices and change in the modern state formation in India and political development in the wake of globalizing neo-liberal world impacting on the Indian State.

● to understand the different trajectories of the Indian State as interpreted by the Liberals, Marxists and from the political economy perspective.

● to discuss the welfare and developmental characteristics of the Nehruvian State in India and the factors leading to India's journey from plan to market-model of development.

● to analyze the Indian State's coercive nature and its hegemonic apparatus showing the modus-operandi of maintaining dominance in society and politics.

20.2 Introduction

The understanding of the nature of state requires a theoretical approach as to how the state acts and reacts within the relationship between state, power and social classes. In this pursuit, there exist two basic approaches to the study of the aspects: one is the Liberal and other is Marxists. Studies conducted within the liberal framework are primarily concerned with power, the role of pressure groups, the institutional elites and the influence of the decision-makers. Recently, however, a new focus has been made explicitly on the 'architectural role of state in society', its impact on social and political processes through its policies and the patterns of relationship evolved with various groups.

The Marxist paradigm, on the other hand, takes serious note of the relationship of the state with the ongoing social process of reproduction and transformation. In addition to addressing itself to the nature and character of the state, the Marxists seek to identify the relationship of classes to the state within the matrix of the dynamics and contradictions of capitalism. They do so in order to unfold the dynamics of the social structure, mainly to explore the relations and interests which are promoted by the material force of the state power.

The Marxists recognize the fact that the character of state denotes the societal contents of the state, especially the dominant classes in society. In a sense, therefore, class and state condition each other in class societies. Marxists emphasize the point that the state as such has no power; it is an institution where social power is concentrated and exercised. State activity is thus a process of intervention in a society affected by institutions which are a condensation of material power and the relations of power within society. There is no doubt, about the impact of the state on

society, but such impact is done through the given modes of production and reproduction.

Thus, the character and the nature of the state has to be understood by situating the state within the socio-historical context, the paradigm of state intervention and the changing character in state strategy in different periods.

Notwithstanding the centrality of the concept of state, it cannot be discussed in isolation from the social context. Most formulations, especially on the Indian state, have often emphasized the primacy and independence of the political process. This is evident in the writings of Rajni Kothari. Likewise, Francine Frankel, Baldev Raj Nayar and Reinhard Bendix have highlighted the role of political initiative in development and transformation.

It can be admitted that the Indian state has played an important role in socio-political change. At the same time, it is also evident that the state has faced major constraints in moving the process of modernization owing to the predominance of private control of productive resources which curbed both the scope and effectiveness in its intervention. It thus, necessitates to turn to a close examination of the nexus between the social forces and the state. This does not imply substituting the relative autonomy of the state as the potent organizational actors. The Marxist scholars like Hamza Alavi emphasized the mediatory role of the state apparatus in creating an autonomous space for it. The argument of state autonomy is buttressed by the fact that irrespective of an economy of socialism or capitalism, the demands of national security, modern technology and bureaucratic hierarchical 'steel frame' have contributed to the growth of state activity. In the case of India, Congress dominance for nearly four decades has helped to strengthen the political base for the emergence of a strong state. But it cannot be ignored the fact that Indian politics in the Nehru period and in later periods, was coalitional in the class sense, the political order prevailing then was based on a coalition of classes including the professional groups, the landlords and the rich peasants. It was this content of coalition rather than functional arrangement of political order operating as a loosely organized Congress coalition accommodating the pressures of the much smaller opposition at the periphery, which played a decisive part in influencing the structure of dominance and the strategy of governance and development.

Thus, the modern Indian State, its performances, salience and its changing character/nature is vivid and complex. This complexity arises because of India's unique context. Though India emerged as an independent modern state from the

colonial rule and eventually adopted all the features of modern state, it departs from the archetypal western state. There was a considerable influence of the colonial state in shaping Indian State and its changing directions. Because, there are certain elements of the modern Indian state that were inherited from the colonial state as well as the discontinuities arising out of India's own context. The three dimensions of the modern Indian state—welfare, development and coercion—are marked by the features of both colonial and post-colonial developments. There have been some remarkable shifts in all these dimensions since 1990s due to the globalizing world. With the whole world going neo-liberal, Indian state has also to be a neo-liberal state. In thisneo-liberal project, the Indian state has to make transition from the earlier ways to what may be called from 'plan to market'. The Indian state would witness a 'retreating state', shifting away from its welfare and development orientations.

20.3 The State in India

State is generally defined as a territorial form of political organization with territorial demarcation that is strictly legal and not natural. The state is a sovereign entity as it alone has the supreme powers within the territory and outside it. Apart from this, the state in India is no exception, but the Indian state is markedly different from the Western understanding of legal-formal structure. In terms of ideology and content, Indian state is a constitutional democratic state in which the idea of constitutionalism proceeded at a great pace establishing not only democratic but also federal, secular and welfare state. The constitutionalism limits the power of the state in order to prevent the abuse of state power. The Indian Constitution has provided a complex web of checks and balances to ensure accountability and responsibility of every public institution and public functionary.

The constitutional democratic state in India is the exact example of Carl J. Friedrich's concept of constitutionalism. The foundational principles of the Indian state are enshrined in the Constitution adopted in 1950. The key institutions of the modern state—liberal democracy, universal adult franchise democratic decision-making and modern citizenship-are put in place. The Constitution also provided participatory parliamentary democracy to ensure popular control over the executive. The political executive is dependent on the verdict of the voters and it has to seek mandate to protect individual rights and freedoms. Thus, Indian state is a limited state as it is a consented organization committed to the development of a liberated

individual as the goal of promoting individual personality and potentialities. Such a limited concept of the Indian state unlike the modern liberal state in Britain and USA is notbased on authoritarianism. In India, the state's interference with the society or individual rights would amount to authoritarianism.

India's journey to state-formation is different from the West. India's heterogeneous social composition, parochial practices and economic estrangement caused by the British rule had created an unprecedented situation. Under such a context, it was imperative for the emerging state to interfere in the socio-economic domains as a 'therapeutic agency' or simply an agency to heal the social wrongs. This intervention of state may be tantamount to authoritarianism, but though there is an obstacle to the state becoming authoritarian. Despite provisions of sanctioning the interference of the state in society, in India, the state is poised to maintain a balance between the individual and collective rights.

The Western scholars are of the view that it is difficult to identify India as Nation-state because it comprises many nations rather than one. The term 'state' is a political construction signifying the political control. But the term 'nation-state' is a psychological construct implying commonality of cultures, religions, languages and symbols etc. In this aspect, India is not a homogenized state, nor has any effective homogenization project been undertaken. Moreover, nationalism during the colonial period was neither deep nor socially broad based. Anti-colonial movement could not emerge as the felt needs of the oppressed people; they evolved around a contest for power between the indigenous elite and the colonial state. The millions of people who struggled for Indian Independence were not motivated and mobilized on the basis of their actual consciousness of the real meanings of oppressive and exploitative foreign rule, but they were involved in some inter-elite conflict for the transfer of power. As a result, the nation-state, according to Partha Chatterjee, is in western mould. In the West, nationalism actually emerged as a homogenizing agency suppressing the other loyalties such as religion, culture and ethnicity in order to create a uniform political community. Given such a formation of the nation-states in the West, it was logical for the people like Winston Churchill or early nationalists to raise doubts on the potentiality of India to form a nation-state in the modern sense of the term and therefore its continuity.

But this doubt was rooted mainly in Western understanding of nation-states. India, after seventy years later remaining as a unified nation has falsified the skeptical claims. India's working Constitutional democracy has survived more than

six decades of its continuity of nation-state identity. India worked out and reworked its programmatic design of integrative capacity in accommodating the diverse cultures and identities through institutional means and constitutional provisions. Yet, the intellectuals belonging to the Right or Liberal traditions agree that nationalism has exhausted its potential of providing emotional satisfaction to its members, and the state systems created along with the development of nationalisms have outlived their utility to either provide national security or national economic development. If the real economic decision-makers are trans- nationalized or global capitalist corporations, then the political needs of the particular social groups which revolve around their identity can be met by community-based authority arrangements. The Indian nation-state should vacate spaces from the economic and productive spheres of social life and India as prison house of nationalities should allow a right of self-determination. Thus, India is an artificial construct, a mythical abstraction and something external to the vast majority of people living in the territorial boundaries of this country. From this standpoint, India is not a nation-state but one in the process of making.

20.4 The Modern State in India : Continuities and Changes

The Modern Indian State is the outcome of a mix of different experiences and practices inherited and continued with some significant features and elements of the colonial state systems and changes introduced at Independence. Suhas Palshikar treats the Indian state as the outcome of three inter-related factors colonial, constitutional and post-independence practices. The state intervention and the structural aspects of the colonial state were heavily incorporated in the new Indian state by Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. For example, India inherited colonial police system, census, civil services, parliamentary system and the Government of India Act, 1935. Likewise, India discontinued with many colonial legacies such as communal electorates or proportional representation system etc.

Among the legacies were the long experiences of British rule itself which extended more than two centuries and of various institutions, ideas and practices introduced by the British. Of particular importance at Independence was the Government of India Act of 1935, which was the framework of rule in independent India under which the country was governed and which included a responsible government for Indians in the provinces. A second legacy was that provided by the shared experiences of those Indians who participated in or identified with the

nationalist movement and its great leaders. A third was the existing social order, the social structure and social conflicts which surrounded and influenced political movements, ideas and practices. Finally, there was the great body of traditions and cultural practices which preceded the British rule in a civilization of great depth, complexity, and diversity.

In the evolution of India toward representative government, it dates back to the Indian Councils Act of 1861 and continued through the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 and finally the Government of India Act of 1935. At each of these reforms, the participation of Indians in the Central and State Legislatures and in the executive councils was increased and the franchise was extended to ever larger numbers of people.

The other features of continuity included the adoption of a federal system of government with three legislative lists of powers to be exercised exclusively by the Union, States or concurrently, and a considerable degree of provincial autonomy with extensive powers left to the Centre, including Emergency powers which made it possible to convert the federal system into a unitary one.

In several respects, however, the Constitution of India makes a sharp break with the British colonial past, though some British practices still persists. Firstly, the Constitution adopts in totality the Westminster form of parliamentary government rather than the mixed parliamentary bureaucratic authoritarian system which existed in India. Secondly, the Fundamental rights were included in the Constitution of India. Thirdly, the Constitution introduced universal adult franchise.

Though the Constitution of India did not articulate any coherent conception of state,but a faint conception of state finds resonance in broader ideological goals enshrined in the Preamble of the constitution. The two ideals stand prominent in the Preamble---democracy and welfare state which create an expansive conception of state involving the positive role of the state. Such a positive role of the state, apart from upholding the individual rights and group rights as incorporated in the fundamental rights, would ensure social and economic democracy along with political democracy. This positive role of the state was necessitated in order to deal with a history of social maladies, social fragmentation, unequal social status that characterized the then India. There was a strong apprehension that an isolated state in a typical Western sense would create a superficial state incapable of dealing with the social wrongs. As India was the only country where political revolution had

preceded social revolution. The Constitution enshrined in its Preamble such a state that would be able to interfere in the society to grapple with this problem democratically, not in the manner of authoritarian way. In this way, the state was assigned the task of bringing about what Granville Austin has termed a 'social revolution'. The resultant fact is that the Constitution of India envisaged a liberal state with a welfare orientation. This liberal state is an interventionist state as evident in the policies of affirmative actions, land reforms, planned development and so on.

The Constitution also contains some unique features that reflect a departure from strict British parliamentary practices by introducing into the Charter of the country a program of social and economic reform. Most notable in this respect is the presence in the Constitution an interventionist document. This is the non-justiciable Directive Principles of State Policy. Earlier the Directive Principles emerged in the form of 'instruments of instruction' in the Act of 1935, in free India these principles were included to create an economic democracy in the otherwise poor country.

The reason behind the introduction of the Directive Principles in the Constitution is that the framers of the Constitution understood the fact that fundamental rights were not enough, would be meaningless in a land where the mass of the people were extremely poor, illiterate, tied to traditions and exploited by merchants, moneylenders and landlords. It was feared that such rights might be used to protect the exploiters rather than the exploited. In a society based on hierarchy, caste inequality and blatant discrimination, equality of opportunity as existed in Britain and United States would not be enough to provide the means of enhancing the well-being of the poor. Instead, special measures would be required, such as reservation of places in representative institutions, government agencies, and public institutions for backward and disadvantaged classes and groups. There was a desire also not to merely protect the rights of the people, but to eliminate certain features of social practices, such as untouchability and beggar or forced labour, which were explicitly abolished in the Constitution. And finally, there was a desire to limit the role of private enterprise in India and freeing of the protection of private property provided in the Constitution which might prevent the Indian state from attaining the goals of economic justice, which some thought could be achieved through social ownership of the means of production, identified with state ownership. Though the Constitution recognized the right to hold property as a fundamental right, but also included in the Directive Principles stating to promote the common good and avoid excessive concentration of wealth.

Those who argue that India's independence should not be seen as marking a great break with the past also point out to the preservation of such characteristic features of British autocratic rule as the Indian Civil Service (ICS), renamed as the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) at Independence. The small, enormously powerful, elite cadre of ICS officers was seen as the "steel frame" that had held the British Empire in India together. At Independence, the leaders of the country quite self consciously maintained the entire bureaucratic structure that evolved during the colonial times and was retained en masse through which the state was to exercise its powers as an executive agency. Along with this, army and police were also retained. But despite these structures, the modern Indian state broke with the past and adopted almost all features of the modern state. The Nehruvian state as is sometimes called was based on broader agreement or consensus among Nehru, Patel and Ambedkar. The conception of state emphasized nation-building through the instrument of modernity, secularism, rule of law, opportunity, dignity, minority rights etc.

One of the vital facets of this modern state was the question as to how would Indian state act as a neutral agency keeping itself separate from society and how can it act as instrument of social change. It has been argued that it is the Indian national movement that influenced the neutrality and instrumentality of the emerging state. Two quarters of a century of thought and struggle over defining the Indian nation, over freeing the country from alien occupation, and over the desirable shape of the social and economic order in a future independent India had provided the nationalist leadership at Independence with a set of ideas and goals that helped to structure their responses to the question and problems of governing the newly independent country. At the top of their goals for everything else was an abiding faith in and determination to preserve the national unity and integrity of the country against all potential internal and external threats to it as the sine qua non. The very fact that this first priority was given importance as the centre of the dreams of the Congress nationalists, had to be sacrificed at independence itself, with the partition of the country reinforced the determination of the leaders never to make such a sacrifice again. This democratic struggle and determination of the leaders representing the popular will is seen to have acted as the elixir to play as a neutral agency or as a tool of instrument for bringing about socio-economic change and political development for the benefit of all. Such a neutral role of the Indian state changes as Indian state ventured into the period of globalization wherein the states have increasingly adopted neo-liberal policies.

20.5 Debates On the Nature of State in India

Scholars of political science are not unanimous about the essence of the nature of modern state in India. It has been approached in many ways. To begin with, the liberals usually prefer to prescribe the method of analysis to the constitution and the nature of government thereon. Though such an analysis may reflect the nature of the governmental system, but it is not to fully manifest the social basis of power and also the process of legitimization. Hence, a great deal of other aspects such as the material foundations of society which impinge the structure and process of governance are to be a missing. Therefore, while analyzing the constitution, its character is to be determined by examining the mode of production and by assessing which class or classes own and control the means of production. The basic criterion in which are the classes for whose benefit essentially the power is exercised to be indicated by the overall direction of state policy. This method is used by the traditional Marxian analysists

Some writers believe that the state is not an instrument of class rule because there is a specific autonomy of the political structures from the economic institutions, of political power from economic power. But the Marxists believe that the state, however, independent it may have been politically from any given class but cannot in a class society rather, it remains the protector of an economically or socially dominant class.

For an objective and proper analysis of the nature of modern Indian state, we have to take into considerations of the various aspects simultaneously. Prof. Rasheeduddin Khan writes about different conceptions of state in India by examining the constitution and the governmental structures and processes such as participatory parliamentary democratic state, welfare state, a cooperative commonwealth state, a socialistic (after 42nd Amendment) socialist secular democratic state, soft state, a neo-liberal state, a bourgeois democracy and independent national democracy. Participatory parliamentary democratic state argument can be substantiated by understanding the formal features enshrined in the Constitution of India such as universal adult franchise, periodic elections, various competing political parties, representative institutions, responsible government etc. and the processes enunciated in the Constitution. The second, third and fourth ideals and terms are manifestations of which have been emphasized in the Preamble of the Constitution, Directive Principles of state policy and references can be drawn from the various types of

policy legislations. The welfare state orientation had its heydays of Nehruvian state when the state was endowed with the interventionist role sought to ensure full employment, equalization of opportunities, sharing in the national welfare, and placing of financial burden on the privileged classes by governmental measures and administrative procedures. Cooperative commonwealth was the term formally incorporated into the Congress constitution as a proposed goal of independent India in the Avadi Congress session, 1955 where the means of production are to be under social ownership and control, production is progressively speeded up and there is equitable distribution of the national wealth. 'Soft state' is appellation given by Gunnar Myrdal and others like Francine R. Frankel and LIoyd I. Rudolph and Susanne H. Rudolph pointed out that democracy has not enabledthe majority of poor people to grasp and organize themselves for utilizing political power to advance their own interests. In this regard, due to inability of the state to help in their mobilization he called Indian state as "the Soft State", by which he particularly meant a state that was so dominated by vested interests that it had failed to achieve its own ideasof creating a just and egalitarian society.

Similarly, Rajni Kothari who initially eulogized the Indian state to have achieved the autonomy in dealing with the demands and pressures on a high degree of legitimacy and authority, an elaborate institutional edifice and the capacity to perform but his later views are that the Indian state has lost its autonomy to the narrow interests of the new-rich and its allies who control and manipulate it. This has resulted in the crumbling of the institutional edifice, criminalization of politics, and violence and repression by the state both in its internal functioning and its dealing with the people. Rajni Kothari further writes that the autonomy of state in its relationship to civil society has suffered a marked decline. The institutions of the state have got permeated by both the sources of money power—domestic and international, private and public and professional go-betweens including the bullies, who know how to extract how much and from whom and through what modalities. Some of these new operators function from within the state structure which in fact is the best indicator of the decline in the autonomy of the state. In line with Kothari, V.K.R.V. Rao pointed out that the state was a political alliance of the intermediate classes with the upper classes, resorting to socialist ideology to win mass support but issuing all levels of power to facilitate a type of capitalist development in the interest of a narrow section of Indian society.

This leads us to the Marxist analysis of the Indian state which is an instrument in the hands of the ruling class and its primary function is to maintain and defend

class domination. The Marxist analysis terms the state as bourgeois democracy and an independent national democracy. This terminology is used by the Communist parties and ideologues. They called the post-colonial Indian state as 'neo-colonial' till 1954, then 'bourgeois democratic State' between 1955 and 1969 and they began to call it 'Independent National Democracy' at its 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' parties held at Moscow.

According to the Communist party of India (CPI), the Indian state is the organ of class rule of the national bourgeoisie as a whole in which big bourgeoisie holds powerful influence. This rule has strong links with the landlords. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) characterizes Indian state as the organ of class rule of the bourgeoisie and the landlords, led by big bourgeoisie who are increasingly collaborating with the foreign finance capital in pursuit of the capitalist path of development.

It needs to be mentioned here that during the colonial phase, the agrarian structure of India was shackled completely by colonial exploitation and plunder. The burden of land revenue imposed by the colonial state, and exploitation of the peasantry by the feudal, semi-feudal and landlord classes created a situation where productive forces and production relations in agriculture remained primitive based on manual labour and acute exploitation of the toilingmasses. India was structurally linked with the world capitalist system; the impact of this linkage was economic and social disaster for the peasantry. In urban India, along with dominant colonial capital, the indigenous capitalist class gradually emerged on the shoulders and under the shadow of colonialism. The formation of these indigenous capitalist classes was different from the formation of the capitalist classes of western European capitalist countries, making it a specific capitalist class of a colony. Many opportunities to start capitalist enterprises opened up before traders, contractors, speculators and entrepreneurial families in the late 19th and 20th centuries, but every such opportunities were constrained by the presence of colonial capital and the role of the colonial state.

The upshot of colonial development was marked by three important features : (1) the whole Indian society was linked with the world of capitalist system and subjected to exploitation because of structural linkages of the metropolis and the periphery. (2) Within India the linkages between the capitalist factory system and society was extremely weak. Manual labour was employed in agriculture but the millions of manual labourers in rural India gained nothing in terms of development of the productive forces from the development of the market. (3) The development

of the indigenous bourgeoisie was constrained because of the presence of colonial capital and the colonial state. And India inherited all these features on the eve of independence and India has since been involved actively in building capitalism on the basis of such an inheritance.

The anti-colonial national movement was concretized on the basis of multi-class platform led by the Indian National Congress. In spite of its multi-class character, a bloc of exploiting classes asserted itself very clearly when power was transferred to the Indians by the British. The social dialectics of pre-independence phase of development of India left a direct mark on the post-independence phase of development of the Indian state and society. Thus, this bloc of exploit ting classes found itself in a central position in the State which emerged after the transfer of power. The post-independent state led by the professionals, bourgeoisie and landlords was active to set right the colonial distortion in the Indian economy by a large-scale intervention by the State for economic and social reconstruction. This is why the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) also contends that the Indian State is the state of big landlords and comprador-bureaucrat capitalism. Apart from this, the Post-colonial state of India now has to grapple with the challenges posed by socially traditional structures, especially from the organized religious groups which threaten its democratic and secular character. Thus, the state in India has to become an interventionist state to meet the challenges from classes, castes and religious social groups internally and imperialism externally.

Another crucial aspect of the modern state in India as shown by Aejaz Ahmad Wani and Rupak Kumar is patriarchal in nature. The Indian Constitution puts women and men on the equal footing by guaranteeing all, adult franchise, right to freedom of speech and expression, life and liberty, right to equal opportunity etc. The Constitution to improve women's status in society adopted various Acts but the Indian State does not acknowledge any moral responsibility for the grave social injustices perpetrated by the traditional oppression of women and perpetuation of caste system. It ignores the wider issues of social exploitation inherent in the patriarchal mode of society. The notion that women constitute the weaker sex is a familiar aspect of patriarchal ideology and used to assign women subordinate roles in the social structure. The Indian State is still to provide a uniform civil code.

From the foregoing discussion or debate it is evident that instead of becoming deterministic about the exact nature of state in India, we get a plethora of viewpoints on the nature of the state. These viewpoints appeared in different times and contexts in the trajectory of Indian State. To accredit Indian state's nomenclature as a particular state or nature of state is very difficult because of its changing nature in

different periods. The assessment of the nature of Indian state depends on the political processes that give its shape and formation. Political processes in post-independent India have given different terrains in terms of policy formulation, legislation and implementation. Different governments have given primacy to different modes of policymaking in terms of caste, culture, religion and gender which shaped and reshaped many times in terms of identity politics, redistribution of resources, representation of various social groups and recognition of people across the country. One thread with which the changing nature of Indian state can be captured is to distinguish it into three categories, namely, the 'welfare dimensions of Indian State', 'Developmental dimensions of Indian State' and 'Coercivedimensions'. The advent of neo-liberal policies in 1991, retreat of state in the market and business affairs is popularly known as the 'rolling back' of the state, designating a 'neo-liberal nature of state'.

20.6 Welfare State in India

Philosophically, welfare state is a system of government in which the responsibility of government is well-being of all citizens. At the time of independence, the Constitution makers were highly influenced by the feeling of social equality and welfare of the people. They incorporated such provisions in the Constitution of India guaranteeing equality of opportunity and equitable distribution of wealth along with the intention to provide a 'corrective mechanism and compensating for market-generated inequalities'. These were necessitated due to the acute poverty, dismal literacy rate, hunger, periodic famine, plundered masses etc bringing in socio-economic inequalities across the country. The Preamble of the Constitution reflects its form as a welfare state. Except the Preamble, there are so many other provisions in the Constitution which enable India to act as a welfare state.

Firstly, the Fundamental Rights incorporated in the part 111 of the Constitution are essentially individual rights for the better development of their personality, but the welfare rights of citizens are included in the part iv of the Constitution of India in the Directive Principles of State Policy. This part 1V is the foundation of welfare state enumerated from Articles 36-51. However, these principles are neither enforceable nor binding on the State but are simply guidelines for the state which the state has to consider at the time of policy making. Since this part cannot be legally enforced by the courts, the entire matter is left on the whims of the state to follow it or not, proving thereby the welfare rights as hollow in its essence. In addition to it,

according to Niraja Gopal Joyal, philosophy of state welfare in India is grounded in ideas of charity and benevolence unlike the idea of rights the West followed. So, in the case of India, welfare activities by states cannot be claimed as a right. It was viewed in terms of need; this is why the State launched welfare activities in the first two decades of independence on the need to alleviate poverty, malnutrition and hunger as an imperative for welfarism.

Secondly, in a sense, Directive Principles epitomize the ideals, the aspirations, the sentiments, the precepts and the goals of our entire freedom movement. After independence, people looked towards the state for the fulfillment of the dreams of the people in eradicating their poverty and inequality as rights not on the basis of charity and benevolence. The state, though adopted a developmental thrust and welfare concerns to remove public wants, put on a need based conception of justice instead of rights and obligations. In this respect, Niraja Joyal further argues that rights enshrined in the chapter on Fundamental Rights are essentially the liberty rights enforceable at courts whereas welfare rights in the Directive Principles are non-justiciable. This disjuncture between liberty rights and welfare rights in the Constitution makes the welfare program me relegating to a secondary station.

The intricacies of welfarist orientation of Indian state would be clear by looking into the two different components. First, India adopted social protection scheme or social safety net instead of right based social program. In this connection, Davesh Kapur and P. Nangia argue that India has focused disproportionately on the social protection scheme in the last two decades i.e. since 1990s. By contrast, the basic public goods such as primary education, public health and water and sanitation have languished further. Partha Chatterjee shows that in the era of liberalization the large chunks of people are impoverishing in the country. Indian economy after liberalization is undergoing a process of primitive accumulation that is displacing peasants from lands and artisans from their means of livelihood. In this growing social crisis, the state has resorted to increased expenditure to enable people to meet their basic needs.

This need-fulfilling social protection programs are like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Public Distribution System to all Below Poverty Line(BPL), National Social Assistance Program (NSAP) which provide immediate relief to the poor in case of life-cycle vulnerabilitiessuch as old age and widowhood, Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAS), Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), Aam Admi Bima Yojana (AABY), Non-Net Fellowship, Rajib Gandhi Fellowship, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) etc.

Thus, in pre-liberalization period, social programs were a matter of charity as it was based on need-oriented selective in its approach to those who came under 'defined categories of disadvantage'. But in the pos-liberalization era, citizens are demanding social protection programs as rights particularly by those who are losers of reforms.

Though social protection programs as welfare activities of the state are noteworthy, but these welfare policies are not monitored and implemented properly, rather it has given an effective corruption and partials. Government hospitals are inadequately serviced due to crisis of management and faulty policies. After a decade of liberalization, the promise of economic growth with justice seems eternally postponed. It was 6.1 in 1990-91 the percentage of GDP and in 1994-95 it reduced to 4.6 percent.

There is increasing inequality between the rich and the poor. Dalits and tribals are increasingly marginalized. Almost 265 million Indians live below poverty line. According to National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) figures, the poverty figure for Orissa is 47.15%, Bihar 42.6%, Madhya Pradesh 37.43%, Sikkim 36.55% and Tripura 34.44%. The poverty alleviation programs have not reached the poor. According to the provisional figures of Census 2001, literacy rate has gone up to 65.38%, but at the same time nearly 25% of men and about 45% of women are illiterate. Government expenditure for education which was 2.75% of GDP in 1998/99 has declined or remained stagnant. Central and State Government expenditures on health at 1.11% of GDP in 1998/99. Actually, liberalization has betrayed the promises of poverty alleviation and social developmenthave created only delusions of development. Instead of promoting and guaranteeing human rights, social justice and people's welfare, the State has abdicated and withdrawn from its welfare responsibilities. The ten years of reform facilitated the withering away of the welfare State

20.7 Developmental Dimension of State in India

Developmental State is a term used by international political economy scholars to refer to the phenomenon of state-led macro—economic planning and development. Post-colonial Indian State began its journey by adopting rapid industrialization with social equity as the two primary objectives under the leadership of Nehru. Indian economy at the time of independence was mainly rural and agricultural in character with almost 85 per cent of the population living in rural areas depending upon

agricultural activities. Around 70 per cent of the population was engaged in agriculture; even then India was not self-sufficient in food and raw materials for industry. The growth of the food grains output was negative. The colonial system perpetuated traditional technology in agriculture except in the case of few export-oriented commercial crops. The development of infrastructure through irrigation, roads, markets etc. was extremely limited. The intermediaries in agriculture, like zamindars and jagirdars, had grown in the colonial period in large parts of the country, denuding the investible resources and sapping the motivation of the actual tillers of the soil. So, the initial phase of independent India inherited a stagnant agriculture with a deficient infrastructure, traditional technology and out-moded and exploitative institutions.

Under such a circumstances, any strategy for industrialization of a predominantly agrarian country with a heavy load of backwardness required direct intervention of the State. So, it also needed a link between the agriculture and industry. The development of agriculture was a necessity in order to provide raw materials for industry. All these ideas implied centralized economic planning and direct State intervention.

At this period, under pressure from the Left in India for initiating radical land reforms as immediate measure in order to curb the monopoly capitalists, paved the way towards planned development. In order to rejuvenate the agricultural sector, land reforms measure was adopted and began implementing. But the land reform measures helped big landlords. It was merely a socialist rhetoric because it never took place in a radical manner, resulting thousands of tellers rendered landless. Except in four states of Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, and Tripura and West Bengal land reforms failed despite socialism becoming the slogans for the Indian planners.

India went for planned development since 1951 by constituting Planning Commission in 1950 which supervised the task of planning. It was Nehru's ambitious project influenced by the development strategy of erstwhile Communist USSR. The First Five Year Plan covered the period of 1951-1956 followed by the Second planning during 1956-1961 and Third plan from 1961-1966. Thus, until 2014, before the planning commission was dissolved, so far twelve Five Year Plans have been launched with some intermittent plan holidays; draught between 1966 and 1969 and regime change in 1990s. The First Five-Year Plan made a delailed analysis of the nature of India's development issues and laid emphasis on rural mass mobilization and land reforms. In this plan, radical steps such as redistribution of wealth and

incomes were rejected. This plan was only successful as it yielded good harvests and made India food self-sufficient. The Second Five-Year Plan (1956-61) as also called Mahalanobis plan emphasized on rapid industrialization of heavy and basic industries and advocated for huge imports through foreign loans. The Industrial Policy of 1956 was based on the establishment of a 'Socialistic Pattern of Society'as the goal of economic policy. Similarly, the Third Five-Year plan was adopted when the Indian economy had entered in a 'take-off stage', a stage of 'self-reliant' and 'self-generating' economy. But, this plan failed miserably due to Chinese aggression, Indo-Pak war and severe draught.

Along with the above phenomenon, the crisis of the path of economic development of India and the crisis of politics created new challenges for the political and administrative state functionaries who were expected to consolidate the Nehruvian model of economic development and social justice. The Report of the Government of India Committees clearly proved that the goals of development with social justice have not been achieved. On the contrary, the planning activity during the phase of 1947-1964 had resulted in concentration of economic power in a few hands and distributional aspects of economic growth had been a total failure. P. C. Mohalanobis Report of the committee on 'Distribution of Income and Levels of Living' (1964), especially its observations on 'Concentration of Economic Power', Report of the Monopolies Enquiry Commission (1965) and The Industrial Licensing Policy Inquiry Committee (1969) clearly suggested that all the stated goals of economic development for egalitarianism had been completely distorted. Related with the failure of the economic development of the Indian State, poverty in India persisted in spite of development growth. The trickle-down approach to economic development had been falsified in the Indian situation.

In the context of failure of economic development, it is pertinent to note that Indian state had adopted the path of capitalist development. This capitalist development required a restructuring of agrarian social relations so that a national capitalist market could develop in unity between agriculture and industry. The State intervened in the restructuring of agrarian society with a view to changing the ownership pattern but the special factors linked to land ownership like caste, ethnicity and religiosity remained out of reach of state intervention. The reform, in fact, did not lead to the transfer of land to the tillers, marginal, small and medium farmers, share-croppers, tenants-at-will and landlords continued to constitute the agrarian power hierarchy. Thus, property relations remained unchanged and agrarian exploitation continued.

The land oligarchy exercised their social and political power to retard and sabotage the implementation of land reforms mainly with a view to maintaining their property interests. On the other hand, in spite of the Monopoly and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, indigenous monopoly capitalism has been strengthened as a leading group of capitalist classes. The laboring classes because of their low economic status were surviving on the basis of non-economic authority structures based on caste, ethnicity, and religion and so on. Because of these characteristic weaknesses of the developing capitalist economy, the State is still struggling to integrate the society. A situation of states within a state still exists in India due to social challenges to the legitimacy authority of the state in the form of organized religions, castes and communities. As a result, Indian state became weak.

With the advent of Indira Gandhi in 1971 after her father's demise in 1964, as the Prime Minister, a several changes took place due to mounting external pressure. The balance of payment crisis and a stagnant economy compelled her to make substantial policy level transformation such as devaluing the rupeewhich several economists and national industrialists were skeptical about it. Amidst of these situations, agriculture remained neglected. However, between 1965 and 1970, Green Revolution contributed a lot to the country's overall development and agriculture in particular. Despite this, Green Revolution only benefited the big farmers. Mrs. Gandhi after consolidating her political power in 1971 launched her programs of economic development through planning on the basis of her full control over bureaucracy and all critical institutions of governance. She came out with a industrial policy giving full faith on the public sector and the leading role of the state functionaries in the economic development of India. In the process, she curbed all private sector activities by strengthening MRTP Act (1969) and the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA), 1974 which restricted the maximum equity participation in the Indian Farm to 40 per cent and finally nationalization of banks. This period was described as 'license-permit-quota raj'. Gandhi in her second Government in 1980s initiated several pro-business policy reforms by withdrawing some constraints on big business. Gandhi declared labor movements, protests and gheraoes illegal. All these measures antagonized the laboring classes. Since, Mrs. Gandhi turned her attention to the agrarian sector by accelerating the Green Revolution strategy of agricultural modernization which brought new social and political changes in the balance of forces in the country because a surplus generating peasantry had emerged due to the Green Revolution technology. These new strata of socially powerful agrarian class came into conflict with the social class coalition of dominant industrial, commercial and other powerful social groups.

Mrs. Gandhi's strategy during the first half of 1980s abandoned the commitment to redistribution and recommitted herself to a 'growth first' model of development. This automatically tilted the policy in favour of big business by adopting pro-business strategy of State intervention. The shift in the development strategy has its repercussions on the political processes of the country. Gandhi, to win the majority poor, came up with the slogan of 'Garibi Hatao' adopting the socialistic rhetoric and at the same time started experimenting with various sorts of ethnic politics such as Sikh politics and Hindu chauvinist groups. The crisis situation emerged because socially disaffected masses lost their faith in the state as the state failed to fulfill its promises. The state-led and state-controlled path of economic and social development left out more than 350 million people in the country from any hope for the future. Social inequalities increased in India and many basic problems of the laboring classes remained unresolved and this led to social volatility in the country.

During the regime of Rajib Gandhi, the same path was followed by adopting growth first strategy, pro-business and anti-labor policies. He openly embraced two-faced approach flouting the Bombay Meeting of the AICC in 1985. He then harped on the Nehruvian legacy, the 1956 industrial policy and socialism. Apart from tinkering with the powers and functioning of the powerful regulatory, bureaucratic, administrative state of India, he took a few steps towards deregulating the Indian economy but all these efforts were half-hearted and the old arrangements remained intact. The problem of fiscal and balance of payment remained the same at all the time leading to the liberalization in 1991 through Structural Adjustment Programme and Washington consensus.

The failure of developmental state in India led to the economic reform in 1991, making economy free from developmentalist state. The state-led capitalism transformed into market-led capitalism. The role of the state reduced to facilitate and regulate the market. The new economic reform made the state to 'retreat' from its role as a producer and investor to the 'rolling back' of the state in contrast to the earlier dirigistic developmental state.

Liberalization signaled the breakup of the previous balance between dominant classes and the industrialist capitalists backed by state machinery. The political process under the liberalization witnessed quite other dimension of the nature of state as the rise of OBCs across the country forced the state to implement Mandal Commission recommendations. Along with the rise of the right wing Hindutva brigade and the abrupt riots across the northern Hindi belt in order to garner vote

bank became a matter of concern in Indian politics. The discontent among different sections of people began questioning the government's motive of development. Thus, 'from plan to market' has become a guide to the functioning of the Indian state in tackling their problems of transition from state-led model of development to free market model for economic growth.

20.8 Coercive Dimension

Modern State is essentially based on hegemonic apparatus to ensure its continuity and maintenance. Indian state is no exception in this respect. In politics, this hegemonic apparatus is bureaucracy, the police and the military used as a coercive power of the state which are meant for punitive measures against states, groups, and individuals in order to force them to maintain or desist from actions. According to Max Weber, the state is primarily an organization which can be said to be possessing the unshared and exclusive right to use or authorize physical force against citizens residing within its territory. This use of coercion is, however, supposed to be legitimate or legally sanctioned. The traditional instruments of coercion constituted and exercised by the modern state are army and police. In recent times, with the increasing rise ofthe terrorism and mass violence all over the state, various legally based security measures in the form of legislations have emerged in many states including India.

Indian state continued to adopt the colonial coercive apparatus in the post-colonial period. There are several reasons for the inheritance of the colonial coercive apparatus in independent India. Firstly, the partition brought about unprecedented communal violence across the state. It provided an immediate context in maintaining the coercive apparatus. Secondly, immediately after independence, India saw the rising expectation of the people reflecting in the protests and demonstrations of 1950s and 1960s, thereby creating law and order problems. And thirdly, the insurgency in the North-East of India and Naxal struggles resulted in widespread violence. All these factors resulted in riots, protests, movements leading to internal disharmony and disturbances. This is why the Indian leaders thought it fit to inherit the colonial coercive apparatus and keep it unchanged in the volatile situation in post-independent India.

The Indian rulers, instead of indianization of police services, kept it in toto in terms arrest, seizure and preventive detention. Certain sections of IPC such as

sections 41 to 56 clearly highlight the colonial markings on it. It allows the police to arrest anyone without seeking a warrant on the pretext of reasonable suspicion. Likewise, 165 CPC empowers the police with the searching power on reasonable grounds. These arbitrary powers of the police have led to corruption and misuse of authority across the country on the basis of patronage and kinship.

The important aspect of India's coercive apparatus is the number of coercive legislations such as Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, (UAPA) 1967, Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1985, Prevention of Terrorist Act (POTA) etc. that have evolved since Independence to deal with violence, terror, disruptive activities and so on. These are no less than the colonial coercive legislations. In those legislations contained controversial provisions such as arrests without warrants, extension of pre-trial remand period up to one year, stringent bail provisions, confession before police as credible evidences etc. During 1990s, the controversy around those laws aggravated when National Human Rights Commission conducted a fact-finding report which suggested that the Acts especially TADA was not only selectively used against Muslims and Sikhs, but also applied to tribal movements. Till 1994, about 76,166 persons were arrested as per this Act. While 18,708 had no charges at all, only four per cent were found guilty. Under popular protests, it lapsed in 1995.

But the TADA enlivened in the form of POTA enacted in 2002. In the wake of 11 September attacks in USA and US declaration of 'war on terror', created a global consensus for the need of enhancing the security within the state and acting tough on terrorism. In India, the need was catapulted by 2001 Parliament attacks. In this backdrop, a new Act known as POTA was promulgated in 2002 as a part of international efforts to fight terrorism. Along with this, UAPA was amended in 2004 by bringing it closer to POTA and TADA. Again it was amended in 2008 in the backdrop of Mumbai terrorist attack. It was accompanied by a series of centralized laws such as Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act (AFSPA). Recently, in February 2012, the UPA government proposed to set up National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) to bolster anti-terrorism regime. The NDA government in 2014 has sidelined this bill for now.

These coercive legislations were created and aimed at dealing with particular situation but they persisted over time with more intensity. The gravest of all, these laws prefer coercion to democratic negotiation. Though all these laws serve the purpose in the short run but prove detrimental to the democratic credentials and

future in the long run. Several studies have shown that these extraordinary laws very often dealt with harshly against struggle for rights imputing false charges against them in the name of national sovereignty, national security and national interest.

20.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, it may be said that Indian state has a long journey with colonial markings after independence. In this journey, the post-colonial state in India has changed its character i.e. from welfare to developmental to coercive nature according to changing time and situations. While most of these markings such as welfare, developmentalism and corecive have persisted in one or other from, there have been additions and subtractions to it ever since independence. It is also evident that developmental and welfare orientation has changed over time especially with the Indian state moving towards the neo-liberal mode in the dawn of the 21st century. The coercive state appratusses are not in tandem with the society-state relationship. In this connection, it my be identified that there are continuities and discontinuities of colonial and modern state features within Indian state structure. But to characterize the Indian state to any particular nature becomes difficult due to its changing nature. To cope with the political processes in different times, the state in India had to venture into different terrains in terms of policy formulation, legislation making and implementation in terms of caste, culture, religion and gender and also is terms of identity politics, redistribution of resources and representation of various groups and recognition of people across the country. Different governments have given primacy to differenet modes of policy making identifying and distinguishing the India state into three categories such as welfare, development and coercive state.

20.10 Summing Up

● In sum, it is clear that Indian State has in its journey to post-colonial nation-building borne with clear colonial markings. While most of the markings such as coercive and developmentalism have persisted in one or the other form, there have been additions and modifications or a changing character ever since the Independence.

● It is also clear that with the Indian State moving towards the neo-liberal orientation in the dawn of the 21st century, the developmental and welfare

orientations have taken backstage. In this neo-liberal era, the Indian State has lost its directive and interventionist role.

20.11 Probable Questions

Essay Type Questions :

1. Discuss the nature of the State in India.

2. Explain the colonial, constitutional and post-Independence practices of the modern State in India.

3. Analyze the Welfare and Developmental dimensions of the Nehruvian State with special reference to the political processes of his period.

Long Questions :

1. Describe, in brief, the Liberal and Marxist interpretations on the nature of State in India.

2. Bring out the coercive dimension of the Indian State indicating the modus-operandi of maintaining its dominance.

3. Trace out the provisions in the Constitution that characterize the Indian State as welfare State.

Short Questions :

1. Write a short note on the socio-political processes of India that led India to shift its policy from plan to market economy.

2. Elucidate the aspects of how did the modern State in India represent patriarchal character.

3. Point out Rajni Kothari's views about the nature of the Indian State.

20.12 Further Reading

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