

Gender, Religion and Caste

Q1: Mention different aspects of life in which women are discriminated or disadvantaged in India?

Ans: In India women are discriminated and disadvantaged in the following ways:

- 1. Education:** Women are not provided adequate education. The literacy rate among women is only 65.46% compared with 82.14% among men. They usually drop out from the educational institutions because their parents prefer to spend their resources for their boy's education rather than spending equally on their sons and daughters.
- 2. Job Opportunities:** The proportion of women among the highly paid and valued jobs is still very small. On an average, an Indian woman works one hour more than average men every day. Yet more of her work is not paid and therefore often not valued.
- 3. Economic Rights:** The equal wages Act provides that equal wages should be paid to equal work. However almost all areas of work, from sports and cinema, to factories and fields, women are paid less than men, even when both do exactly the same work.
- 4. Social Status:** Due to the preference for the boy child, female foeticide is practised in many parts of country. Such practices have led to a decline in child sex ratio in our country to merely 927 girls per thousands boys. There are reports of various kinds of harassment, exploitation and violence against women.

Q2: State different forms of communal politics with one example each.

Ans: Different forms of communal politics are:

- 1. Communalism in daily beliefs:** The most common expression of communalism is in everyday beliefs. These routinely involve religious prejudices, stereotypes of religious communities and belief in the superiority of one's religion over other religions. For Example, Militant religious groups.

- 2. Formation of political parties based on religious communities:** A communal mind of leaders leads to a quest for political dominance of one's own religious community. For example belonging to the majority community, this takes the form of majoritarian dominances of those belonging to the minority; it can take the form of a desire to form a separate political unit. Separatist leader and political parties in many parts of India are an example of this kind of communalism.
- 3. Political mobilization on religious lines:** Political mobilization on religious line is a frequent form of communalism. This involves the use of scared symbols, religious lectures and emotional appeals in order to bring the followers of one religion together in the political arena. For example, this technique is applied by many politicians to influence voters of one religion in preference to others.
- 4. Communal Riots:** Communalism can be the ugliest if it takes the shape of communal violence or riots and massacre. For Example, India and Pakistan suffered some of the worst communal riots at the time of the partition.

Q3: State how caste inequalities are still continuing in India?

Ans: Caste inequalities have not completely disappeared from contemporary India. Some of the older aspects of caste have persisted. Even today most people marry within their own caste. Untouchability has not ended completely, despite constitutional prohibition. Effects of centuries of disadvantages and disadvantages continue to be felt today. The caste groups that had access to education under the old system have done very well in acquiring the modern education while those groups that did not have access to education have naturally lagged behind. Economic status is also closely linked to the caste system. The poor are mostly the low castes while the rich are the high castes, thereby showing that caste inequalities are still continuing in India.

Q4: State two reasons to say that caste alone cannot determine election results in India?

Ans: Caste alone cannot determine the election results in India because of the following reasons:

- 1) No parliamentary constituency in the country has a clear majority of one single caste so every candidate and party needs to win the confidence of more than one caste and community to win the elections.
- 2) The ruling party and the sitting MP or MLA frequently lose elections in our country. It could not have happened if all castes and communities were frozen in their political preferences.

Q5: What is status of women's representation in India's Legislative bodies?

Ans: In India, the proportion of women in the Legislative bodies has been very low. In this respect, India is among the bottom group of nations in the world. Women's representation has always been less than 10% in the Lok Sabha and 5% in the State Legislative Assemblies. In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the percentage of women in the Indian parliament was around 12%. It still remains far below the global average of around 21%. On the other hand, the situation is different in the case of local governmental bodies. As one-third of seats in local governmental bodies are reserved for women. There are more than 10 lakh elected women representatives in rural and urban local bodies.

Q6: Mention any two constitutional provisions that make India a secular state?

Ans. The two constitutional provisions that make India a secular state are as under:

- 1) There is no official religion for the Indian state. Unlike the states of Buddhism in Sri-Lanka, that of Islam in Pakistan and that of Christianity in England, the Indian constitution does not give a special status to any religion.
- 2) The constitution provides to all individuals and communities freedom to profess, practice and propagate any religion, or not to follow any.