

Society Class 04

13th August, 2024 at 9:00 AM

ROLE OF CASTE IN POLITICS (9:04 AM)

- **Pre-independence:** Christian missionaries spread the message of Christianity as a reformatory movement against dogmatic practice.
- With the English language, secular education led to the emergence of an educated elite who wanted to reform society with respect to discriminatory practices. e.g. caste system.
- Opportunities with respect to jobs were initially reaped by the upper caste and hence their position got consolidated both with respect to ritual and secular hierarchy.
- **Post-Independence:**
- **Phase 1:** Land reforms led to the rise of the Dominant caste. Hence it was marked by the struggle between the "Entrenched caste" and "Dominant caste" with respect to power.
- **Phase 2:** Lower caste started mobilization on caste lines to strengthen their vote bank known as the Politicization of caste. e.g. distribution of tickets based on caste composition, once the govt. is formed then representation of all caste groups in govt., political parties supporting the caste groups to gain their vote.
- **Phase 3:** It was believed that due to the rise of multiple caste alliances, caste-neutral jobs, and secular patterns of living, caste identities will cease to exist.
- But the objective of this phase was not achieved due to the Casteization of politics (caste-based political parties).
- **Question:** Critically analyze to what extent the politicization of caste and casteization of politics are threat to Indian democracy.
- **Answer:**
- 1) It has allowed marginalized communities to gain political representation and assert their rights.
- 2) They have been able to challenge the hegemony of upper-caste elites.
- 3) Democratization of political space when power is not concentrated in the hands of a few dominant groups.

- 4) Socially inclusive policies.
- However, it has also led to the fragmentation of society when caste identity often take precedence over national identity.
- Political parties in their quest for votes exploit caste divisions leading to the entrenchment of identity politics.
- Casteization of politics undermines the principle of democracy as caste loyalties are more important than competence.
- When politics becomes overly caste centric it may perpetuate social inequalities.
- It can also pose a threat to national unity as it can lead to social polarization which can result in caste-based clashes.
- Hence, the challenge for Indian democracy lies in balancing the need for caste-based representation with the imperative of fostering a political culture that transcends caste divisions.
- Andre Beteille: in The Hindu, wrote: "India's destiny is not cast in stone"
- Caste-neutral jobs (No Division of labor)
- Secular pattern of living (No SoC)
- Commensality rules are diluting (Anonymity + Heterogeneity)
- Rise in Inter-caste marriages.
- People are achieving mobility with respect to secular hierarchy.
- Caste has been dislodged from the ritual domains because the principles of purity and pollution are weakening. Although caste has entered the psyche of people during electoral politics the hype is created by media.
- Counter Arguments (By Gail Omvedt) (9:53 AM)
- According to IHDS: Only 5% of marriages are intercaste, remaining prefer to get married within the sub-caste which implies that caste endogamy is still a reality.
- According to MoSJE: 66,696 are manual scavengers out of which 97.25% belong to the SC community which implies that caste-based division of labor is still a reality.
- According to a study by Amit Thorat and Omkar Joshi, states that 30% of urban households practice untouchability. Hence it refutes the concept of a secular pattern of living due to urbanism.
- According to a study by Satish Deshpande, covert untouchability is prevalent in society. e.g. separate utensils, not renting the accommodation.
- According to ActionAid NGO, 25% of surveyed villages didn't allow lower caste people to work on their land as casual labor. In 3/4th of the surveyed villages, they were not allowed to sell milk either to cooperatives or people directly.
- Rural caste and Urban caste:

- Refer to the infographic drawn on the board.
- It was predicted that with development and better education and opportunity caste would cease to exist however on the contrary it has shown immense resilience and has acquired associations. e.g.

-

Political Association
BSP, SP, Bheem Sena, Maratha Kranti Morcha, etc.

Economic Association
DICCI(Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry), NSCFDC(National SC Finance and Development Corporation)

Social Association
Marriage; Brahmin matrimony, Rajput matrimony
Education: Dalit Sahitya, Vaishya Education Society.

- Question 1: "The caste system is assuming new identities and associational forms and hence caste system cannot be eradicated in India". Comment.
- Question 2: Has caste lost its relevance in understanding Indian society? Elaborate your answer with examples.
- Question 3: Why has caste identity in India both fluid and static?

RESERVATION (10:37 AM)

- **Concept;** It is a concept, where a certain percentage of seats are reserved for socially and educationally backward communities.
- **Rationale:**
 - 1) To correct the historical injustice.
 - 2) To Ensure equality of opportunity.
 - 3) To give effect to redistribute the agenda of the State.
- **Debate concerning reservation:**
-

Arguments For	Arguments Against
Meritocracy is meaningless without equality of opportunity.	Merit will be compromised
In a democracy, it is a political necessity to give representation to all sections.	Administrative efficiency is negatively impacted
To achieve above mentioned rationale	It may further strengthen the stereotype by discrediting the success as a result of reservation
To correct the stereotypes	It has been reduced to the status of political tool in the hands of politician to serve their vested interest.
Strengthening the Cultural capital.	It has further widened the divide in society

and few believe
it has become a
tool for reverse
discrimination.

**Promote
diversity at the
level of jobs
and education.**

It has created a
Domino Effect.

**Inclusive
development**

Class within
caste has
widened the
grounds for
intra-caste
disputes

**Reduce gaps
between haves
and have-nots
to achieve
social justice.**

Instead of
means,
reservation has
become an end
for many.

**Helps to
achieve social
empowerment**

caste
consciousness
has been
strengthened
which has led to
in-groupism.

**To achieve the
objectives of
the
Constitution.**

The problem of
brain drain. It
goes against the
capability
approach of
Amartya Sen.

**To achieve
Sustainable
development
goals.**

Social unrest
creates a fiscal
burden on the
govt.

- **Way Forward:**
- **A new yardstick needs to be developed to determine the backwardness. e.g. NALSA judgment 2014 to include transgenders under OBC.**
- **Give reservations through social mapping. e.g. apex court in M. Nagaraj and Jainail Singh case stated to introduce creamy layer in SC/ST.**

- Complete overhauling of the education system. e.g. widening the ambit of RTE to incorporate secondary education, and bringing the public at par with private education.
- Promote a culture of entrepreneurship(self-employment). i.e. transforming youth from job seekers to job generators, making agriculture lucrative for youth.
- Periodic evaluation of the policy of reservation and plug-in the loopholes.
- Perception management is the need to the hour.

DALIT CAPITALISM (11:10 AM)

- **Concept:** When capitalism is seen as a solution for the liberation/emancipation of Dalits, it is referred to as Dalit Capitalism.
- The term was coined by Chandra Bhan Prasad.
- **"Dalit":** Refers to a section of people who are socially discriminated against with economically marginalized. The term was first used by Jyotirao Phule and popularized during the 'Dalit Panther' movement in the 1970s.
- **Question:** What is Dalit Capitalism and to what extent it can be considered as a panacea for the emancipation of Dalits?
- **Answer:**
- **Arguments For:**
 - 1) Upper social mobility.
 - 2) Position in the secular hierarchy will improve.
 - 3) Community empowerment can happen.
 - 4) It will help in breaking the stereotypes.
 - 5) Emergence of Role models.
 - 6) It can reduce the discrimination in the society
 - 7) It can also help in strengthening social capital.
 - 8) It will challenge occupational division of labor
 - 9) It will help in reducing the demand for reservations.
 - 10) It can provide a medium to preserve and promote traditional knowledge and skills.
- The govt. of India has created a special venture fund with a corpus of 606 cr. of which 450 cr. has already been sanctioned to 120 companies with at least 51% of shareholding by SC entrepreneurship.
- **Arguments against:**
 - 1) Capitalism as a system inherently promotes inequality.

- 2) There is no guarantee that it will change the existing mindset.
- 3) Endowments are necessary but entitlement is the need of the hour. Hence it will benefit only those who are skilled(class within caste).
- 4) Dalit capitalists may confront systemic challenges. e.g. delay in project approval, challenges in managing the enterprise, denying access to credit and lack of developed social capital might reduce their access to business networks.
- 5) It may lead to the politicization of caste due to increased nexus between politicians and entrepreneurs.
- 6) It may create a feeling of relative deprivation among the forward caste which can lead to conflicts.

VIOLENCE AGAINST DALITS (11:30 AM)

- According to NCRB, increase in violence by 1.2% in 2021.
- In 2021, 70818 cases are pending which constitutes 96% of cases and the conviction rate is 36%.
- Reasons for the increase in Violence against Dalits:
 - 1) According to Christopher Jefferlot, increased mobility in the secular hierarchy has challenged the hegemony of the upper caste which led to relative deprivation and can be seen through violent manifestation.
 - 2) According to Gail Omvedt, violence against Dalits is a counter-reaction to the process of Sanskritization.
 - 3) Lack of 3 A's with respect to the justice system- awareness, accessibility, and affordability.
 - 4) Lack of caste-sensitive attitude among law enforcement agencies.
 - 5) Fear of retaliation.
 - 6) Dependence on the perpetrators with respect to income sustainability.
 - 7) There exists a lack of reporting as many victims consider it as a matter of fate.
 - 8) Glorification of fringe elements also reduces deterrence concerning crime against others.
 - 9) Lack of efforts to correct malpractices in society also leads to the continuation of derogatory practices.
- However, the apex court has observed that sometimes existing laws are misused. i.e. instead of being used as a shield, it is used as a weapon to settle the personal scores and it is referred to as 'new legal terrorism'. However, misuse doesn't justify the dilution of laws but creates grounds for better regulation of laws.
- Question: Despite the increase in legal provisions violence against Dalits is on the rise. Discuss.

TOPIC FOR THE NEXT CLASS: WOMEN ISSUES

