



## CHAPTER - 3

# GENDER, RELIGION, AND CASTE

### GENDER AND POLITICS

\* Problem of considering gender division as an natural and unchangeable

\* Sex v/s Gender

\* Public / Private division → Sexual division of labour → Reduction of the role in Public life.

↓  
Society's Belief → ?

- women's work is not valued.
- Men do perform works done by women, if paid ex. cook

↓  
• Gender issues were raised in Politics → Demanding equality

↓  
Feminist Movement

\* Political Expression of gender → upliftment of women.

→ Participation of women in public life is very high in Scandinavian countries [Sweden, Norway, Finland]

### Discrimination against Women

\* Patriarchal Society → Women face disadvantage, discrimination and oppression.

\* Literacy rate: 54% among women, compared to 76 among men.  
Drop out Rate

\* Jobs → women's Participation in high paid jobs ↓ [Average working hour] ↑

\* Remuneration / Salary: Equal Remuneration, 1976 → But women are paid less than men.

\* Female foeticide → Parents Prefer to have son → Girl child aborted [Sex selective abortion]



\* Harassment, Exploitation, Domestic violence.

## Women Political Representation

\* Problems — Solution = More women as elected representatives.

→ Legal Provision to have a fair Proportion of women in elected bodies.

→ Panchayati Raj in India → 1/3 seats are reserved.

→ Demand for similar reservation in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies for women.

↓  
A Bill with this Proposal has been Pending in Parliament (But now has been Passed in 2023)

→ Proportion of women legislature.

- 12% in Lok Sabha (2014)
- 5% in State assemblies
- world average 23.5%

## Religion, Communalism and Politics

\* Religion → Differences — social division [It may be within some religion also]

→ Unlike gender differences, the religious differences are often expressed in politics.

\* Gandhiji → Religion can never be separated from politics. [Ethics and Moral values]

\* Victims of communal riots → Religious minorities → special steps to protect them.





\* Family laws → Discrimination against women - Demand for change.

## Communalism

\* Idea of Communalism

→ Religion - Basis of Nation → Followers of same religion ⊗ Different religion

↓  
Expressed in Politics

\* State power is used to establish domination of one religion group over the rest.

↓  
one community  
↓  
• Their fundamental  
Interest are same

↓  
Different community  
• commonalities are  
superficial and  
immaterial  
• Interest - Different  
and conflicting.

\* This belief is fundamentally flawed.

\* Various forms which communalism takes in Politics

\* The most common expression of communalism,

Religious Prejudice, stereotypes superiority of one religion over other.

\* Communal mind → Political Domination through religion → Majoritarian dominance.

• Minority → Separate political unit.

\* Political Mobilisation on religious line → use of sacred symbols, religious leaders. Special appeal to the interests or emotions.

\* Communalism → Communal violence, Riots and Massacre

• India and Pakistan Partition.

• Post - Independence period - large scale communal violence.

∴ They cannot live together, either one of them has to dominate the rest or they have to form different nation.



## Secular State

- \* Communalism → Major challenge - solution - secularism  
[Reflected in several constitutional provisions]
- (i) No official religion → No special status to any religion.
- (ii) Freedom to profess, practice and propagate any religion, or not to follow any.
- (iii) The constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion.
- (iv) The constitution allows the state to intervene in matters of religious communities
- \* Secularism → Foundations of our country vs \* communalism - threat to the country.

∴ Communalism is need to be combated. How?  
→ Secularism ⊕ Moral and Ideological change.

## Caste and Politics

[Gender → largely positive] [\* Religion - largely negative] [\* caste - Positive and Negative]

### \* Caste inequalities

→ special to India - Passing down occupation - Caste system is extreme form of this.

↓  
Hereditary Occupational division

\* Caste system → Exclusion and discrimination against the outcaste groups

→ Social Reformers ⊕ Socio-economic division ⊕ constitutional protection

- Jyotiba Phule      • urbanisation, ↑ literacy and education
- Gandhi ji        • occupational mobility.
- B.R. Ambedkar





- \* Traces of caste system → Caste and its relation with economic status.

## Caste in Politics

- \* Communalism - Religion is the basis. \* Casteism - Caste is the basis
- Caste can take various form in politics.
- Mustering support of a specific caste by giving special attention to the caste composition of that constituency. [Representative ticket distribution]
- Appeals to the caste sentiments to muster support.
- one-person-one-vote → Compelled political leaders to muster political support of castes which were treated as inferior and low
- \* This is far from true →
  - ↳ No Parliamentary constituency in the country has a clear
  - ↳ No party win the votes of all the voters of a caste or community. [vote bank]
  - ↳ Different Parties may put the candidates from the same caste.
  - ↳ Ruling Parties, HP's and HLA's too loose election.

## Politics in Caste

- \* Politics too influences the caste system and caste identities.
- ~~In Politics~~ It is not politics that gets caste ridden, it is the caste gets politicised.
- ) Each caste group tries to become bigger by incorporating within it neighbouring castes or sub-castes.
- ) Coalition among various caste groups thus enter into a dialogue



and negotiation

- \* New kinds of caste groups have come up.
- \* Backward and forward caste groups.

### Relation between Caste and Politics

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disadvantaged communities gets political attention.</li><li>• Dalits and OBC castes get access to decision making</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Divides the society.</li><li>→ It can divert attention from other pressing issues like poverty development and corruption</li></ul> |
|---|---|

Positive

Negatives.