

HS8.101 Making of Contemporary World

Quiz 4

Q1:

What are the characteristic features of modern politics? Give two examples (not from the slides) of how debates in modern politics reflect these characteristics. In other words, give examples of how we use these features to determine what is 'normal' and 'abnormal' in modern politics.

Q2:

What do we mean when we say 'rights' is a 'momentum' concept? Explain with examples.

Ans 1:

Aristotle said that man by nature is a political animal, and the political system of any region at a particular instance of time reflects the society, culture & governance system of that time and place. Politics and political ideologies have changed a lot with time. Modern politics focuses on self-governance and the representation of citizens of the country in a parliament. India's modern-day politics identifies India as a sovereign democratic republic that promises justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity to every citizen of India.

In the modern-day world, everyone is considered equal and discriminating against any person based on caste, creed, gender, or any ground is condemnable and can be challenged in court. Modern-day politics also reflect the same idea. Compared to the 19th or 18th century, women were considered equal to men and practised equal voting rights to choose the government for them. Similarly, the enslaved people also had no participation in choosing their rulers, but now everyone can choose their decision-making bodies, and every vote has equal value. Earlier, women were not part of choosing the ruler. Still, discrimination against a woman is considered highly sexist and abnormal today, and women's participation is highly expected and is a common notion. If someone's policies are against a particular gender/creed, they are subjected to a significant backlash.

Also, earlier, the generations of the working class were expected to be the working class. If we consider the French political system before 1789, it was challenging for someone from the general population category to move into the powerful and conservative Church category. But now, one can contest elections, and if they manage to win the elections, they become the ruling elites and are part of the decision-making legislature. Earlier someone couldn't move from the working class from the working-class to the legislature. Still, it is pretty standard today if someone is told he cannot contest elections, which is considered abnormal. Earlier, women and enslaved people's participation in indirect decision-making was abnormal. But, it is normal now, and the same goes for an ordinary citizen's direct involvement in the legislature.

Ans 2:

Norms or moral principles that specify specific standards of human behaviour are referred to as human rights. They are generally understood as inalienable, fundamental rights "to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is human". However, these rights need to be changed over time. Otherwise, the laws and the fundamental rights won't reflect the society it governs. And hence 'rights' is a 'Momentum' concept.

As the values of society change and people's needs change, so too must the law. Rights need amendment according to the condition of the hour. For instance, voting rights were first given to men possessing land in America. Still, the right to vote is universal for everyone above a certain age, regardless of any discriminating factor. Privacy was not considered a right before, but now it's every individual's legal right. Supreme Court of India also identified the right to privacy as a right as it upholds one's dignity.

Historically, communities have expected the law to regulate behaviour, but lately, these expectations have lengthened their arms. The law needs changes to meet the demands made by the coming of the newest technology. For example, recording someone without their permission violates the right to privacy. Also, some amendments are beneficial but might not be the same for others. For example, the right to private property and the redistribution of land after the abolition of the Zamindari Act. We can have many instances from history. The amendment of individual acts has affected humankind greatly and made their lives more comfortable and open.

The foremost example that came before us regarding this is LGBTQ rights in India. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer rights in India have evolved in recent years. Same-sex sexual activity was decriminalized in 2018. Article 15 of the Constitution was interpreted to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. In India, transgender people are now eligible to change their legal gender post-sex reassignment surgery under legislation passed in 2019. And now, the Indian government identifies transgender people as the third gender. This shows that something that is a crime or not decent at a particular period may not be considered flawed at another time.