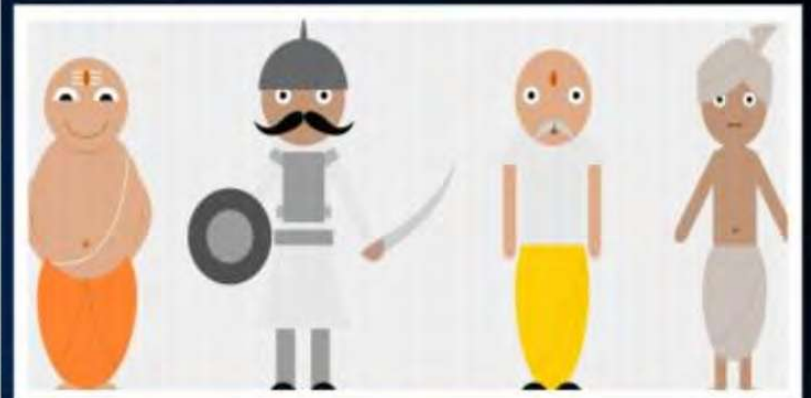


TOPICS to be covered

1 Gender, Religion and Caste

one shot





GENDER, RELIGION and CASTE



Introduction



- **Social differences** refer to situations where people are discriminated on the basis of social, economic and racial inequality.
- Three kinds of social differences - form of social divisions and inequalities.
- These are social differences based on gender, religion and caste - nature of this division in India and how it gets expressed in politics.





What All Are We Gonna Study In This Chapter?



- Gender and Politics.
- Religion, Communalism and Politics.
- Caste and Politics.



Gender and Politics



- The gender division tends to be understood as natural and unchangeable. → This is incorrect.
- Public / Private Division.

SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

Society's Belief



- Women do all work inside the home such as cooking, cleaning.
- Women's work is not valued and does not get recognition.

- Men do all the work outside the home.
- Men are ready to take up women's works, only when these jobs are paid.



- The result of this division of labour is that although women constitute half of the humanity, their role in public life is minimal in most societies.
- Gender issues were raised in politics.
- Women in different parts of the world agitated for equal rights, demanded enhancing the political and legal status of women.
- Women's movements are called FEMINIST movements.

Equality



Patriarchy:

This concept is used to refer to a system that values men more and gives them power over women.

Feminist:

A woman or a man who believes in equal rights and opportunities for women and men.



- ❖ Political expression of gender division and political mobilization helped to improve women's role in public life.
- ❖ In our country, women still lag much behind men despite some improvement since Independence. Ours is still a male-dominated, **PATRIARCHAL** society.



Discrimination Against Women



❖ Women face disadvantage, discrimination and oppression in various ways:

✓ **Literacy Rate:**

✓ Jobs:

- The literacy rate among women is less than men. ✓
- Small proportion of girl students go for higher studies.
- They drop out because parents prefer to spend their resources for their boys' education. ✓



- 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 an average man every day.

✓ **Remuneration Act :**

- The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 provides that equal wages should be paid to equal work.
- Women are paid less than men, even when both do exactly the same work. ✓

✓ **Female Abortion :**

- Some parents prefer to have sons and find ways to have the girl child aborted before she is born.
- Sex-selective abortion led to a decline in child sex ratio (number of girl children per thousand boys).

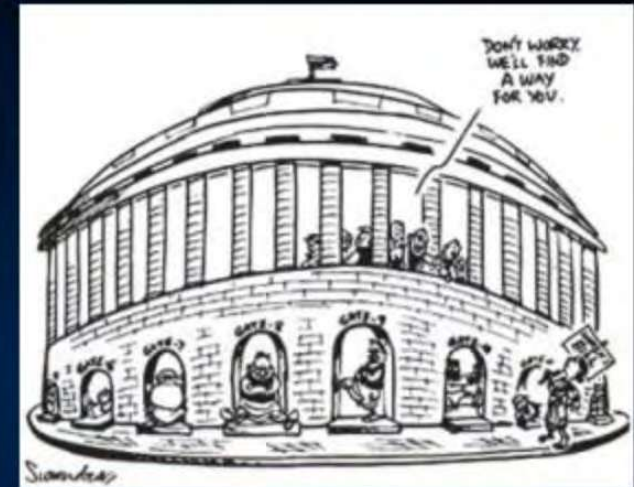
- Urban areas have become particularly unsafe for women.
- They are not safe even within their own home from beating, harassment and other forms of domestic violence.
- Women's political representation?



Women's Political Representation



- Problems of women didn't get adequate attention.
- One way to ensure this is to have more women as elected representatives.
- In India, the proportion of women in legislature has been very low.
- In the government, cabinets are largely all-male even when a woman becomes the Chief Minister or the Prime Minister.



This cartoon offers an understanding of why the Women's Reservation Bill has not been passed in the Parliament

WOMAN UP FOR GENDER EQUALITY



- ❖ One-third of seats in local government bodies – in panchayats and municipalities – are now reserved for women.
- ❖ Twenty-seven years after the women's reservation Bill was first introduced in Parliament, the Lok Sabha on September 20 passed a Bill with near unanimity to amend the Constitution and provide one-third reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.



Religion, Communalism and Politics



- ❖ Social division based on religious differences is fairly widespread in the world today.
- ❖ Unlike gender differences, the religious differences are often expressed in the field of politics.
- ❖ Government should take special steps to protect the followings:

Gandhiji used to say that religion can never be separated from politics.

Victims of communal riots in our country are people from religious minorities.

Women ¹⁹has argued that FAMILY LAWS of all religions discriminate against women.

- ❖ Political power should sometimes be able to regulate the practice of religion so as to prevent discrimination and oppression.



Communalism

N M C



- Communalism is a situation when a particular community tries to promote its own interest at the cost of other communities.
- Communal politics is based on the idea that religion is the principal basis of social community.

The followers of a particular religion must belong to one community.



Their fundamental interests are the same.



People who follow different religions cannot belong to the same community

Different religion communities are superficial and immaterial.



Their interests are bound to be different and involve a conflict.



They cannot live as equal citizens within one nation.

- State power is used to establish domination of one religious group over the rest, when communalism is expressed in politics.
- Communalism can take various forms in politics:

NEGATIVE

1.

- Most common expression of communalism involve religious prejudices, stereotypes and superiority of one's religion over other religions.

2.

- Communal mind leads to political dominance through religion.
- It takes the form of majoritarian dominance.
- Minority community forms a separate political unit.

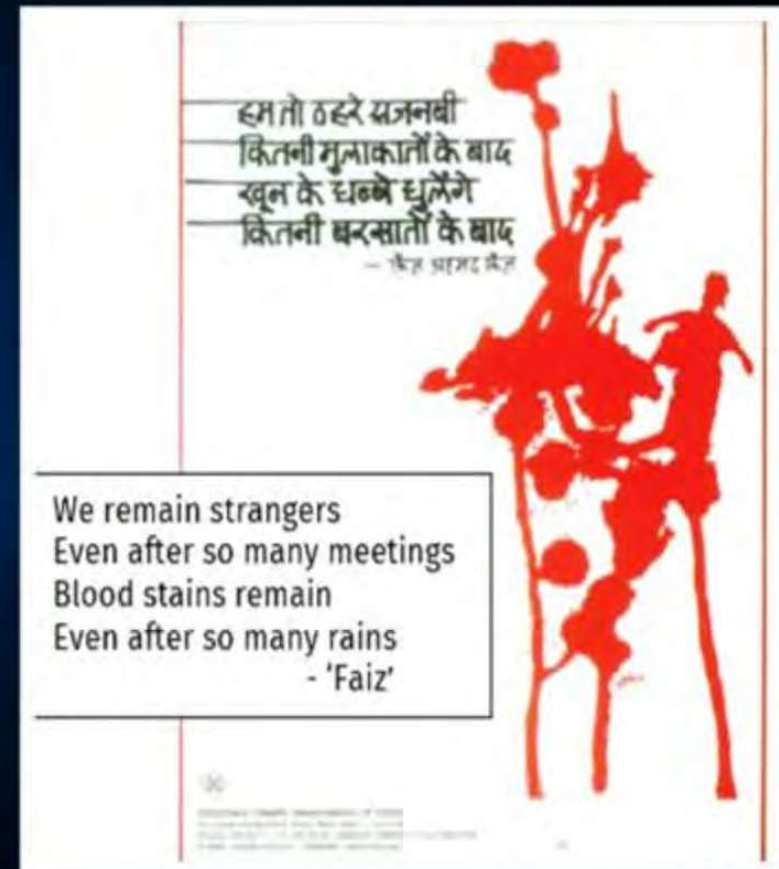


3.

- Political mobilization on religious lines involves use of sacred symbols, religious leaders, emotional appeal to the interests of voters of one religion in preference to others, to bring the followers of one religion together.

4.

- Sometimes communalism takes its most ugly form of communal violence, riots and massacre.
- India and Pakistan suffered some of the worst communal riots at the time of the Partition.





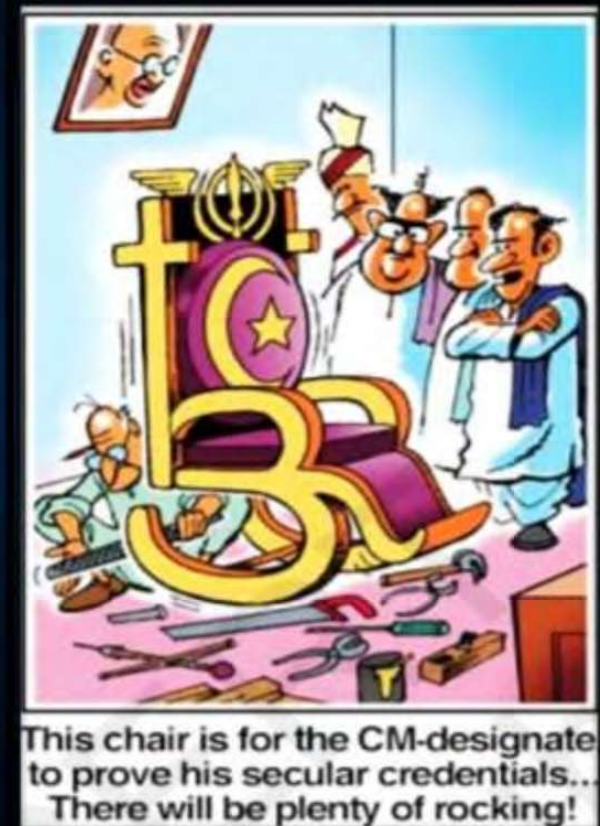
Secular State



- 'Secularism' refers to the separation of the power of religion from the power of the State.
- There is no official religion for the Indian state. Our Constitution does not give a special status to any religion.
- The Constitution provides to all individuals and communities freedom to profess, practice and propagate any religion, or not to follow any.



- ❖ The Constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion.
- ❖ Constitution allows the state to intervene in the matters of religion in order to ensure equality.
- ❖ A secular Constitution like ours is necessary but not sufficient to combat communalism.





Caste and Politics



- Expression of social divisions in the arena of politics:

Gender



Largely positive

Religion



Largely negative

Caste



Positive & Negative

- Unlike gender and religion, caste division is special to India.
- In most societies, occupations are passed on from one generation to another. Caste system is an extreme form of this.
- In this system, hereditary occupational division was sanctioned by rituals.



- ❖ Caste system was based on exclusion of and discrimination against the 'outcaste' groups.
- ❖ With economic development, large scale urbanization, growth of literacy and education, occupational mobility and old notions of caste hierarchy are breaking down.
- ❖ The Constitution of India prohibited any caste-based discrimination and laid the foundations of policies to reverse the injustices of the caste system.

Brahma and the origins of caste



- ❖ Yet untouchability has not ended completely, despite constitutional prohibition.
- ❖ Caste continues to be closely linked to economic status.





Caste in Politics

BJP 2x Long AAP 1x



- Casteism is rooted in the belief that caste is the sole basis of social community.
- Caste can take various forms in politics:

❑ While choosing candidates for election, political parties consider the caste composition of the voters to win support.

❑ When governments are formed, political parties take care that representatives of different castes find place in the government.



❑ Political parties make appeals to caste sentiment to win votes. Some political parties are known to favour some castes and are seen as their representatives.

❑ Universal adult franchise and the principle of one-person-one-vote compelled political leaders to bring caste sentiments into politics to muster support.

▪ It seems like election are all about caste and nothing else.
But this is far from true.

- No parliamentary constituency in the country has a clear majority of one single caste.
- No party wins the votes of all the voters of a caste or community.
- Many political parties may put up candidates from the same caste.
- The ruling party and the sitting MP or MLA too lose elections in our country.
- The voters have strong attachment to political parties which is stronger than their attachment to their caste or community.



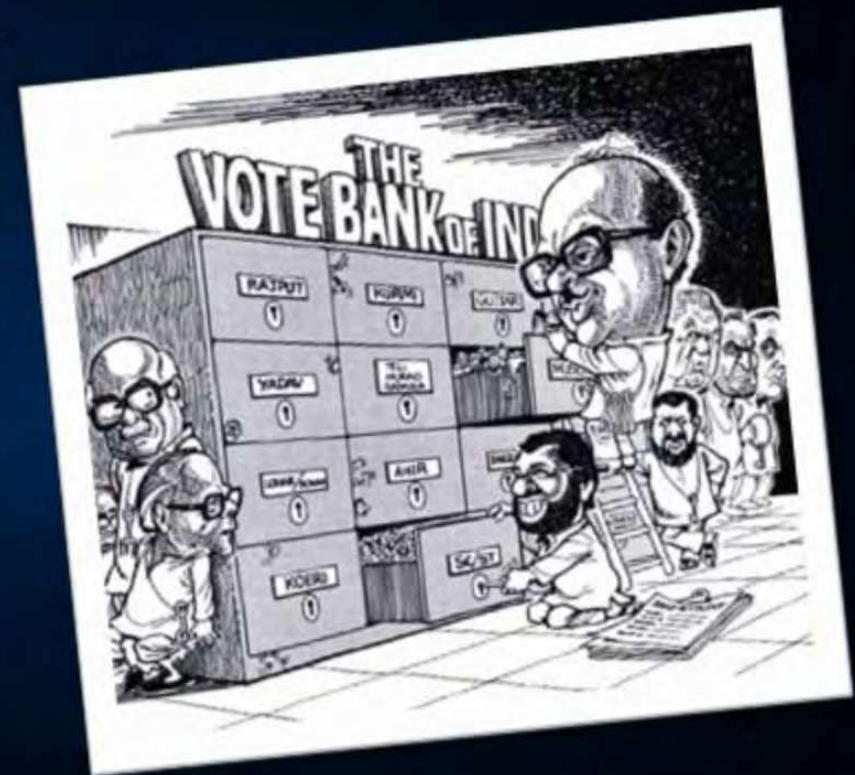
Politics in Caste



- Politics too influences the caste system and caste identities by bringing them into the political arena.
- It is not politics that gets caste ridden, it is the caste that gets politicized.
- This takes several forms:
- Each caste group tries to become bigger by incorporating within it neighboring castes or sub-castes.



- Various caste groups are required to enter into a coalition with other castes or communities and thus enter into a dialogue and negotiation.
- New kinds of caste groups have come up in the political arena like 'backward' and 'forward' caste groups.



- Caste plays different kinds of roles in politics.

Positive Side

- Disadvantaged communities get political attention.
- Dalits and OBC castes gain better access to decision making.

Negative Side

- Politics based on caste identity alone is not very healthy in a democracy
- It can divert attention from other pressing issues like poverty, development and corruption

