

Gender, Religion and Caste

Check Point 01

Q. 1. What do you mean by gender division?

Answer: This is a form of hierarchical social division which is not based on biology but on social expectations and stereotypes as we know that gender is unchangeable and natural. It is basically a division of work between men and women on the basis of their sex. Gender division doesn't mean that women do not work outside the house, they do work, but there is a division of work on the bases of gender.

Q. 2. In which group of countries, the participation of women in public life is very high?

Answer: Mostly we notice that the participation of women in public life is very less almost in all the countries. But, there are some countries which are exceptions, where we see the participation of women is very high and very active. These countries are Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, Norway, and Finland.

Q. 3. Which model of the state is adopted by Constitution- makers of India?

Answer: The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 provides that equal wages should be paid to equal work. According to this Act, all the workers should get equal wages, and there should be no discrimination on the bases of their gender. According to our constitution men and women, both are equal in status so they should be paid equally for their work.

Q. 4. What does the secular state provide?

Answer: As we know that India is a very big country with a variety of religions, so we need secularism in our country. The secular state provides equal status to all religion and gives freedom to all individuals and communities to practice any religion. In a secular state, everyone is free to choose the religion of their choice. No One can be forced to practice some particular religion.

Check Point 02

Q. 1. Name the system based on exclusion and discrimination.

Answer: Caste system is based on the exclusion and discrimination. Even today, we see discrimination on the basis of caste at many places. Mostly, the lower caste people are discriminated by the upper caste ones. This makes them feel discriminated, isolated and deprived.

Q. 2. Suggest any one advantage of casteism in politics.



Answer: As we know that everything has some pros and cons, so does casteism. It has some disadvantages and also some advantages. A very good example of the advantage of casteism in politics is “Preservation of Culture”. Casteism in politics helps to preserve our culture as very see every political party support some religion or culture. For example, BJP in our country is said to preserve the Hindu culture.

Q. 3. What do you mean by the term OBC?

Answer: OBC is referred to as “Other backward classes.” After independence, OBCs have been identified through specially appointed commissions. The Kalelkar Commission laid down four criteria to identify OBCs: low social position in caste hierarchy, lack of general educational advancement among the majority of the caste/ community, inadequate or lack of representation in government service, and industry.

Q. 4. What is Universal Adults Franchise?

Answer: Universal adult franchise means that the right to vote to all the citizens of age group 18 or above without any discrimination of caste, colour, class, religion or gender. In Universal Adults Franchise all citizens have the right to vote irrespective of gender.

Self Assessment

Q. 1. What do you mean by stereotype?

Answer: Stereotypes are characteristics imposed upon particular groups of people on the basis of their caste, religion, sex, and nationality. It is a set idea that people have about what someone or something is like, especially an idea that is wrong.

Q. 2. In which country, the participation of women in public life is very high?

Answer: As we know that the participation of women in public life is very less almost in all countries. But, there are some countries in which we see the very active participation of women in public life. These countries are Sweden, Norway, and Finland.

Q. 3. Which act provides that equal wages should be paid for equal work to both men and women?

Answer: The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 provides that equal wages should be paid to equal work. According to this Act, all the workers should get equal wages, and there should be no discrimination on the bases of their gender. According to our constitution men and women, both are equal in status so they should be paid equally for their work.

Q. 4. Mention any two bases of social division in India.

Answer: Two main bases are gender and religion. Women are mostly discriminated on the basis of gender in terms of payment of equal wages, respect in society, lower status in domestic matters, etc.



Religion is another factor of division. Many a times, the majority inflicts some dominance over the minority in various ways.

Q. 5. Explain the model of the secular state in India.

Answer: • Indian model of secularism does not support any one particular religion or community. It treats all citizens equally.

- It gives freedom to all the citizens to practice any religion of their choice.
- It is against the discrimination of people on the bases of religion.
- The state has a right to intervene in the matters of religion in order to maintain equality among communities.

Q. 6. 'In India women's political representation is very low'. Justify.

Answer: It is true that women's political representation is very less. Women are thought to be confined to the house. They are supposed to do all the household chores and take care of children. One of the main reasons being the patriarchal nature of our society. Even today, in many villages, girls are not allowed to study which results in lesser women in the educational sphere. Less exposure to the outside world confines the women to their homes.

Q. 7. Why is it necessary to have 'secularism' in India?

Answer: India is a very big country with a number of communities, religions, and caste. So, it becomes necessary to have secularism in India in order to maintain equality within all religious communities. Under Indian secularism, no one is to be discriminated and everyone has the right to practice any religion of their choice.

Q. 8. Do the 'caste' and 'Vote bank' factors completely control the election in India?

Answer: No, though it is true that Caste and Vote bank factors control the election to some extent in India. Candidate of the party influence people and appeal on the basis of caste sentiments to get their support. They get support especially from the people who have an orthodox mindset. These people form the 'Vote Bank' of that party.

But at the same time, there has been tremendous improvement in the way elections are held today. Increase in literacy rate and education levels in society has made many citizens aware of right choices.

Q. 9. What is the most sought out demand of women at home?

Answer: The most sought out demand of women at home is to take care of children and to do all the household chores. They are supposed to take care of the family members and work without any expectations. They are supposed to live inside the house and are left unnoticed by everyone. Their importance in decision making of the household matters is also very less.



Q. 10. How did newly developed political consciousness help to improve the status of women in India?

Answer: Now a days, our government is working to improve the status of the women in our country. There are many steps in this direction. One of them is "The Equal Remuneration Act", 1976 which provides equal wages to all. Now women get wages equal as men for same work. The gender issue is also being taken seriously by the government. Schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao aim towards increasing female literacy and decreasing female infanticide.

Q. 11. What is the most sought out demand of women's organization and activists from the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies regarding women empowerment?

Answer: The most sought out demand of women organisations is reservation in the Parliament. Though reservation of 33 per cent is provided in local governments, it is yet to be a requirement of Lok Sabha and state Assemblies. Many organisations have pitched for the passage of the "long pending" Women's Reservation Bill.

Q. 12. Why do you think parents in India prefer a son over girl child?

Answer: in many parts of India parents prefer sons and find ways to have the girl child aborted before she is born because of their patriarchal thinking. They think that a boy child will live with them and will take care of them when they get old. Also, they think that at the time of marriage of their son they will receive expensive gifts. Apart from that, there is an orthodox mentality that if they invest in a boy's education they will get **the benefits later on as the girl will eventually get married.**

Q. 13 "Gender division is not based on biology but on social expectations and stereotypes". Support the statements.

Answer: Biologically there is no discrimination between the girl and boy child. Gender discrimination is present in our society because of the patriarchal thinking. Women are thought to do household chores and take care of children and men are supposed to work outside of the house and earn money. There is also discrimination of labor on the bases of sex. Women are paid less for their work as compared to men. These ideas have been a part of the society since ages which has aggravated the condition of women.

Q. 14 'The rigid caste system is disappearing in India.' Explain the major factors responsible for this. Suggest any two ways through which this can be further speeded up.

Answer: Caste system is disappearing in India because times have changed. Nowadays, educated people do not mind caste and religion of the other peoples. Many changes like Urbanisation, literacy and education growth, positions of landlords in villages are weakening and breakdown of old notions of caste hierarchy have



contributed in vanishing the caste divisions. This can be speeded up by employing the following:

1. Spread of education, which plays an important role in shaping our minds.
2. Spreading awareness and sensitizing the institutions.

Q. 15. Suggest any three steps to improve the women's participation in politics.

Answer: Steps to improve the women's participation in politics:

- Educating them so as to make them aware of their rights and duties
- Reservation of at least one-third of seats in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies for women.
- Political parties should also give due representation to women members.

Q. 16. Mention any positive role of caste in politics.

Answer: Some of the positive roles of caste in politics are as below:

1. It gives the opportunity to many backward and discriminated communities; the space to demand their share of power.
2. Caste system helped many Dalits or people belonging to the lower-class section of the society or OBC gain better access to decision making. Also, they can gain due recognition in various fields.

Q. 17. What ways does politics influence caste system?

Answer: Political parties and candidates in election influence people and make use of caste sentiments to win the support of the people. Some political parties favor some caste and become their representatives. These people form their 'vote banks'. In greed of gaining more votes, some political parties instead of eliminating the caste differences, support the ideas of orthodox people, thus promoting the caste system.

Q. 18. Explain the political demand of the Feminist Movement in India.

Answer: 1. The demand of the Feminist Movement in India is that women should get their share in politics and administration.

2. There should be a fair proportion of women's in the elected bodies. They demand that there should be reservation of at least one-third of seats in Lok Sabha and State Assembly.

3. The status of women in society should improve. They should not be thought of only as homemakers and should have due share in decision-making activities.