Revision Notes CHAPTER - 3

Democracy and Diversity

- 1. We saw how power can be distributed to accommodate linguistic and regional diversities.
- 2. People also identify them on the basis of their physical appearance, class, religion, gender, caste, tribes, etc.
- 3. In this chapter, we will study how democracy responds to socials difference, divisions, and inequalities.
- 4. We then turn to how democratic politics affects and is affected by these social diversities.

A Story from Mexico Olympics

- 1. The story depicts an important landmark in the history of the CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES.
- 2. The two men standing with clenched fists upraised and head bowed are the US athletes, Tommie Smith and John Carlos.
- 3. The International Olympics Association held Carlos and Smith guilty of violating the Olympic spirit by making a political statement.
- 4. Their medals were taken back.
- 5. Back home, they were subjected to a lot of criticism even Norman had also suffered a lot, he was not included in the next Olympics.
- 6. But their action gained attention for the Civil Rights Movements in the US.

Differences, similarities, divisions

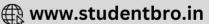
- 1. The athletes above were responding to social divisions and social inequalities.
- 2. Social diversity can take different forms in different societies.

Origins of social differences

1. These social differences are mostly based on an accident of birth.







- 2. We don't choose to belong to our community.
- 3. But all kinds of social differences are not based on our birth.
- 4. Some of the differences are based on our choices.
- 5. For example, some people are atheists. They don't believe in God or any religion.
- 6. Every social difference does not lead to social divisions.
- 7. In the instances above, Carlos and Smith were similar in one way and thus different from Norman who was white.
- 8. But they were also all similar in another way they were all athletes who stood against racial discrimination.
- 9. We all have more than one identity and can belong to more than one social group.
- 10. We have different identities in different contexts.

Overlapping and cross - cutting differences

- 1. Social division takes place when some social differences overlap with other differences.
- 2. In the US because the blacks tend to be the poor, homeless and discriminated against.
- 3. In our country, Dalits tend to be poor and landless.
- 4. They often face discrimination and injustice.
- 5. The group that shares a common interest on one issue are likely to be in different issues.
- 6. Overlapping social differences create possibilities of deep social divisions and tensions.
- 7. Cross cutting social differences are easier to accommodate.

Politics of social divisions

- 1. At first sight, it would appear that the combination of politics and social divisions is very dangerous and explosive.
- 2. Political parties can make social divisions into political divisions and lead to conflict, violence or even disintegration of a country.
- 3. This has happened in many countries.

Range of outcomes

- 1. Northern Ireland of the United Kingdom has been for many years the site of a violent and bitter ethnic political conflicts.
- 2. Such example leads some people to conclude that politics and social divisions must not be allowed to mix.





- 3. But if social divisions do exist in a country, they must never be expressed in politics.
- 4. At the same time every expression of social divisions in politics does not lead to such disasters.
- 5. In a democracy, it is only natural that political parties would talk about these divisions, make different promises to different communities.
- 6. Social divisions affect voting in most countries.
- 7. In many countries, there are parties that focus only on one community.

Three determinants

- 1. Three factors are crucial in deciding the outcome of politics of social divisions.
- a. First of all, outcome depends on how people perceive their identities.
- b. Second, it depends on how political leaders raise the demands of any community.
- c. Third, it depends on the how the government reacts to demands of different groups.
- 2. Thus the assertion of social diversities in a country need not be seen as a source of danger.
- 3. Expression of various kinds of social divisions in politics often results in their canceling one another out and thus reducing their intensity.
- 4. People who feel marginalised, deprived and discriminated have to fight against the injustices.
- 5. Sometimes social differences can take the form of unacceptable level of social inequality and injustice.
- 6. History shows that democracy is the best way to fight for recognition and also to accommodate diversity.



