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LESSON-3.GENDER,RELIGION AND CASTE

Prepared on : _____

Started notes in class on : _____

Question-1Mention different aspects of life in which women are discriminated or disadvantaged in India.

Solution:

Family laws of all religions discriminate against women.

There are reports of various kinds of harassment, exploitation and violence against women. Urban areas have become particularly unsafe for women.

In India, the proportion of women in legislature has been very low. For example, the percentage of elected women members in Lok Sabha has never reached even 10 per cent of its total strength. Their share in the state assemblies is less than 5 per cent. In this respect, India is among the bottom group of nations in the world.

Question-2State different forms of communal politics with one example each.

Solution:

Different forms of communal politics are as given below:

Everyday beliefs: Religious prejudices, stereotypes of religious communities, and belief in the superiority of one's religion over other religions are so common that we often fail to notice them even when we believe in it. For example even today the members of lower classes are not allowed to enter the temples in many regions.

Majoritarian dominance: A majority community tries to dominate other communities in politics. This may compel the minority community to form a separate political unit. For example, in Sri Lanka, majoritarianism has been followed which has resulted in conflict in the country.

Political mobilization on religious lines: Religious appeals are made to voters to attract their votes. Sometimes sacred symbols and religious leaders are used to bring the followers of one religion together in the political arena. Religious leaders are asked to propagate in favour of a political party. Emotional appeals are made on the basis of religion.

Communal violence: Sometimes communalism takes the ugliest form of communal violence, riots, and massacre. India and Pakistan suffered some of the worst communal riots at the time of the partition. Even after independence, riots on communal lines have taken place in India.

Question-3 State how caste inequalities are still continuing in India.

Solution:

Caste inequalities are still continuing in India in the following ways:

Most people still marry within their own caste or tribe. The upper caste people or sometimes other caste people too do not allow inter-caste marriages.

Untouchability has been prohibited by the Constitution but in practice, it still exists in different parts of the country, particularly in rural areas.

In the field of education too the position is far from satisfactory. The caste groups that had access to education under the old system have done very well in acquiring modern I education as well. But those groups who did not have access to education or were prohibited from acquiring it have naturally lagged behind.

Caste is still an important source of economic inequality because it regulates access to resources of various kinds while the upper classes are best off, the Dalits and Adivasis are worst off, and the backward classes are in between.

Although every caste has some poor members, the proportion of living in extreme poverty is much higher for the lowest castes.

Lower caste people like rural landless labourers, are generally poor and are exploited even today. Caste still continues to be closely linked to economic status. The percentage of the population living below the poverty line between 1999-2000 was 45.8 (STs), 35.9% (SCs), and 27% (OBCs) in rural areas.

Question-4 State two reasons to say that caste alone cannot determine election results in India.

Solution:

When parties choose candidates in elections, they keep in mind the caste composition of the electorate and nominate candidates from different castes so as to muster necessary support to win elections. When governments are formed, political parties usually take care that representatives of different castes and tribes find a place in it.

Universal adult franchise and the principle of one-person-one-vote compelled political leaders to gear up to the task of mobilising and securing political support. It also brought new consciousness among the people of castes that were hitherto treated as inferior and low.

Question-5 What is the status of women's representation in India's legislative bodies?

Solution:

The status of women's representation in India's legislative bodies is very less as mentioned below :

In Lok Sabha, the percentage of elected women members has never reached even 10 percent of its total strength.

Their share in the state assemblies is less than 5 percent. India is among the bottom group of nations in the world in this respect. Women in national parliaments in different regions are as given below :

Nordic Countries – 40%

America – 20.2%

Europe – 19.6%

Asia – 16.3%

India – 8.3%

Arab States – 8.2% 1

Thus, India is ahead of Arab states only.

Cabinets are also male-dominated even when a woman becomes a Chief Minister or the Prime Minister.

Thus the proportion of women in legislative bodies has been very low. Women's organizations and activists have been demanding reservation of at least one-third of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies for women. A bill with this proposal has been pending before the parliament for more than a decade but due to lack of consensus among the political parties, it has not been passed.

Question-6 Mention any two constitutional provisions that make India a secular state.

Solution:

There is no official religion for the Indian state. Unlike the status of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, that of Islam in Pakistan and that of Christianity in England, 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.

7. When we speak of gender divisions, we usually refer to:

- a. **Biological differences between men and women**
- b. **Unequal roles assigned by society to men and women**
- c. **Unequal child sex ratio**
- d. **Absence of voting rights for women in democracies**

Answer.

(b) Unequal roles assigned by society to men and women

8. In India, seats are reserved for women in

- a. **Lok Sabha**
- b. **State legislative assemblies**
- c. **Cabinets**
- d. **Panchayati Raj bodies**

Answer.

(d) Panchayati Raj bodies

9. Consider the following statements on the meaning of communal politics. Communal politics is based on the belief that:

- A. **One religion is superior to that of others.**
 - B. **People belonging to different religions can live together happily as equal citizens.**
 - C. **Followers of a particular religion constitute one community.**
 - D. **State power cannot be used to establish the domination of one religious group over others. Which of the statements is/are correct?**
- a. **A, B, C, and D**
 - b. **A, B, and D**
 - c. **A and C**
 - d. **B and D**

Answer.

(c) A and C

10. Which among the following statements about India's Constitution is wrong? It

- a. **prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion.**
- b. **gives official status to one religion.**
- c. **provides to all individuals freedom to profess any religion.**
- d. **ensures equality of citizens within religious communities.**

Answer.

(b) gives official status to one religion.

11. Social divisions based on _____ are peculiar to India.

Answer.

Social divisions based on **caste** are peculiar to India.

12. Match List-I with List-II and select the correct answer using the codes given below the Lists:

	List I	List II
1.	A person who believes in equal rights and opportunities for women and men	A. Communalist
2.	A person who says that religion is the principal basis of community	B. Feminist
3.	A person who thinks that caste is the principal basis of community	C. Secularist
4.	A person who does not discriminate others on the basis of religious beliefs	D. Castiest

	1	2	3	4
(a)	B	C	A	D
(b)	B	A	D	C
(c)	D	C	A	B
(d)	C	A	B	D

Answer.

(b)	B	A	D	C
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