



GENDER RELIGION AND CASTE





THEMES

- We have come to know from the previous chapter –democracy and diversity that all societies have social differences but when these differences are used for political intentions and when these differences are used for political gains, these natural differences between us become the social divisions.
 - Not all social divisions affect [politics in a negative way. And in this particular chapter we are focussed to see that three differences between us are politically motivated namely gender, religion and caste. We shall see how these differences get expressed in politics.
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GENDER AND POLITICS

- You must have heard about the concept sexual division of labour or gendered division of labour— meaning division of work between men and women according to the gender. It has been the customs of societies to divide the work between men and women according to the expectations and aspirations and stereotypes of the societies. Society from the beginning has said that women are only allowed to do household tasks like cooking, cleaning, washing, raising of children etc. And men are destined to do works that take them outside the four walls of their home, that is men do works like cleaning, washing etc when they are paid for their work. But women do not get paid for their work they do in the domestic front. In villages women fetch water, look after their children and in urban areas they sometimes work in offices or work as domestic helpers that is as maids.
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GENDER AND POLITICS(Continuation)

- Although women constitute half of the population yet their voices are not frequently heard, especially in politics because it was believed previously that politics is the domain of men and women do not fit in the arenas meant for men, or it can be rightly said that men deliberately wanted women to remain confined within the four walls of their houses. Thus we can say that there was some kind of deliberate politics or power play involved in segregating women from the issues that men held to be their own preoccupations.
 - When women realized that the division between them and men is only based on biology and does not exist in real, and when their issues were raised in public and politics, they started fighting for their rights so that they are held on equal footing with men. There were agitations in different countries for the extension of voting rights to women. Women fought and raised their voice and demanded that their political status should be upgraded and demanded that they should get career opportunities for their growth. These movements on the part of the women when they raised the voices against the injustices is known as feminist movements
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GENDER AND POLITICS(Continuation)

- In India, women still lag behind men in many respects because literacy rate of women is much below than men, lesser number of girls for higher studies and there are innumerable girls who are either school or college drop-outs. The Equal Remuneration Act has been passed in our country in 1976 which says that women should not be discriminated against men in respect to the wages but still differences exist in all fields of work. Again many parents prefer boy child to girl child and that is why we often see so many cases of female foeticide ,or the girl child is killed in the womb before she is born. The cases of women harassment, exploitation are on the rise.
 - Now it is realized that unless women have participation in politics and power, their voices would be unheard and would be neglected. But still women members has touched 12% in Lok Sabha and representation of women in state assemblies is less than 5%. In Panchayati Raj one third of seat is reserved for women in local government bodies and in municipalities which ensures their democratic participation
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