

Sociology

(Indian Society) (Chapter - 6) (The Challenges of Cultural Diversity)

(Class - XII)

Question 1:

What is meant by cultural diversity? Why is India considered to be a very diverse country?

Answer 1:

- The term diversity implies differences instead of inequalities.
- Once we say that India may be a nation of great cultural diversity, we mean that there are many alternative varieties of social groups and communities living here.
- Different kinds of social groups and communities live here. There are communities with different cultural markers like language, religion, sect (Sub-division of religious group), ethnicity, race or caste.
- India may be a pluralistic society. There's unity in diversity but its excessive diversity is becoming a challenge.
- When diverse communities (linguistic communities, religious communities, sects then on) are, also, part of a bigger entity sort of a nation, then difficulties are also created by competition or conflict between them.
- Cultural diversity can present challenges which arise from the very fact that cultural identities are very powerful-they can arouse intense passions and are often able to mobilize large numbers of individuals.
- Sometimes, cultural differences are in the middle of economic and social inequalities and this further complicates things.
- Measures to deal with the inequalities or injustices suffered by one community can provoke opposition from other community's funds must be shared. The situation gets worse when scarce resources like water, jobs or government jobs, 1632 different languages and dialects, different religions, diversity in climate and topography are causing serious challenges to the country.

Question 2:

What is community identity and how is it formed?

Answer 2:

- Community identity relies on birth and belonging instead of on some sorts of acquired qualifications or accomplishments.
- These quite identities are called ascriptive i.e. they're determined by birth and individual's choice isn't involved.
- People feel a deep sense of security and satisfaction in belonging to communities.
- Ascriptive identities like community identities are difficult to shake off; whether or not we elect to disown them, others may still identify us by those very markers of belonging.
- Expanding and overlapping circles of community ties like family, kinship, ethnicity, language give intending to our world and offers us a way of identity.
- Ascriptive identities and community feelings are universal. Everyone includes a motherland, a maternal language, a family, a faith, and that we all are equally committed to our respective identities.
- Our community provides us with our mother-tongue and also the cultural values through which we comprehend the planet. It, also, anchors our self-identity.
- The method of socialisation involves continuous dialogue with our significant surroundings like parents, kin, family and community. Thus, community may be an important a part of our identity.
- Community conflicts are very hard to accommodate since either side thinks of the opposite side as a hated enemy and there's a bent to exaggerate the virtues of one's own side additionally because the vices of the opposite side.
- It's very hard for people on either side to see that they're constructing matching but reversed mirror images of every other.

- sometimes, each side are indeed equally wrong or right; at other times, history may judge one side to be the aggressor and therefore the other to be the victim but this could happen long after the warmth of the conflict has cooled down.
- Some notion of a mutually agreeable truth is tough to gain in situations of identity conflict.

Question 3:

Why is it difficult to define the nation? How are nation and state related in modern society?

Answer 3:

- A nation may be a peculiar type of community that's easy to explain but hard to define.
- We will describe many nations founded on the idea of common cultural, historical institutions sort of a shared religion, language, ethnicity, history or regional culture.
- But it's hard to return up with any defining features for nation.
- For each possible criterion there are exceptions and counter examples.
- For example-there are many nations that don't share a typical language, religion, and ethnicity so on. On the opposite hand, there are many languages, religions or ethnicities that are shared across nations. But this doesn't result in the transformation of one unified nation.
- Nation at the only level, could be a community of communities. Members of a nation share the will to be a component of the identical political collectivity. Nations are communities that have a state of their own.
- Now, there has been a one-to-one bond between nation and state. But this development is new.
- It wasn't true of the past that one state could represent one nation or every nation must have its own state.
- Also, people constituting a nation may very well be citizens or residents of various states. There are more Jamaicans living outside Jamaica than in Jamaica.
- Dual citizenship could, also, be a chance. These laws allow citizens of a selected state to also simultaneously be citizens of another state. Example, Jewish Americans Many be citizens of Israel also because the USA.
- Thus, nation may be a community that has been ready to acquire a state of its own. It's, also seen that states are finding it more and more necessary to assert that they represent a nation.
- A feature of the modern era is that the establishment of democracy and nationalism as dominant sources of political legitimacy. This suggests that nation is the most accepted or proper justification for a state, while people are the last word source of legitimacy of the state.

Question 4:

Why are states often suspicious of cultural diversity?

Answer 4:

- States attempt to establish their political legitimacy through nation-building strategies.
- They sought to secure the loyalty and obedience of their citizens through policies of assimilation or integration.
- This is often because most states have generally been suspicious of cultural diversity and have tried to cut back or eliminate it. The states fear that the popularity of various culturally diverse identities like language, ethnicity, and religion will cause social fragmentation and stop the creation of a harmonious society.
- Also, except for the fear of fragmentation, accommodating these differences is politically challenging.
- Thus such a big amount of states has resorted to either suppressing these identities or ignoring them within the political domain.

Question 5:

What is regionalism? What factors is it usually based on?

Answer 5:

- Regionalism in India is rooted in India's diversity of languages, cultures, tribes and religions.
- It is encouraged by the geographical concentration of those identity markers particularly regions, and fueled by a way of regional deprivation.
- Indian federalism has been a method of accommodating these regional sentiments. From Presidencies to States
- After Independence, initially the Indian state continued with the British-Indian arrangement dividing India into large provinces, called Presidencies. Madras, Bombay and Calcutta were the three major presidencies.
- Soon after Independence and also the adoption of the constitution, of these units of the colonial era had to be reorganised into ethno-linguistic states within the Indian union in response to strong popular agitations.
- Language including regional and tribal identity and not religion has provided the foremost powerful instrument for the formation of ethno-national identity in India.
- But this doesn't mean that each one linguistic communities have gotten statehood. For example- Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand. In their formation, language didn't play any role. a mix of ethnicity supported tribal identity, language, regional deprivation and ecology provided the idea.

Question 6:

In your opinion, has the linguistic reorganisation of states helped or harmed India?

Answer 6:

- Language plus regional and tribal identity-and not religion-has provided the foremost powerful instrument for the formation of ethno-national identity in India. Language ensures better communication and leads to simpler administration.
 - Madras presidency was divided into Madras State, Kerala and Mysore State. The Report of the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) which was implemented on Halloween, 1956, has helped transform the political and institutional lifetime of the state.
 - It's proved to be perfectly consistent to be Kannadiga and Indian, Bengali and Indian, Tamil and Indian, Gujarati and Indian.
 - In 1953, Potti Sriramulu, died seven weeks after beginning a quick unto death. His death provoked violent protests and led to the creation of the state of Andhra Pradesh. It also led to the formation of the SRC, this in 1956 put the formal, final seal of approval on the principle of linguistic states. These states supported language sometimes quarrel with one another. While these disputes don't seem to be pretty, they might after all are far worse.
- Currently there are 29 states (federal units) and seven Union territories (centrally administered) within the Indian nation-state.

Question 7:

What is a 'minority'? Why do minorities need protection from the state?

Answer 7:

- Minority usually involves some sense of relative disadvantage.
- Privileged minorities like extremely wealthy people aren't usually noted as minorities; if they're, the term is qualified in a way, as within the phrase "privileged minority".
- When minority is employed with none qualification, it implies a comparatively small and also, disadvantaged group.

- The sociological sense of minority implies that the members of the minority form a collectivity i.e. they need a way of group solidarity, a sense of togetherness and belonging.
- This is often linked to disadvantage because the experience of being subjected to prejudice and discrimination usually heightens feelings of intra-group loyalty and interests.
- Groups is also a minority in statistical sense, like folks that are left-handed or people born on 29th February, don't seem to be minorities in sociological sense because they are doing not form a collectivity.
- Religious or cultural minority groups need special protection due to the demographic dominance of majority.
- These groups are politically vulnerable. They have to face the danger that the bulk community will capture political power and use the state machinery to suppress their religious or cultural institutions, ultimately forcing them to abandon their identity.

Exceptions:

- (a) Religious minorities like Parsis or Sikhs could also be relatively made economically but they will still be disadvantaged within the cultural sense thanks to their small numbers compared to overwhelming majority Hindus.
- (b) Another set of complications arise by the actual fact of India state's simultaneous commitment to secularism likewise because the protection of minorities.
- (c) The protection of minorities requires that they lean special consideration in a very context where the traditional working of the form of government places them at a drawback vice-versa the bulk.
- (d) This results in the accusation of favoritism. But supporters would state that without this protection, secularism can be converted into an excuse for imposing majority community's values and norms on minorities.

Question 8:

What is Communalism?

Answer 8:

- Communalism refers to aggressive chauvinism supported religious identity. Chauvinism is itself an attitude that sees one's own group because the only legitimate or worthy group, with other groups being seen as inferior, illegitimate and opposed.
- Communalism is an aggressive political ideology linked to religion.
- This is often a peculiarly Indian or South Asian meaning which is different from the Standard English.
- Within the English, communal means something associated with a community or collectivity as different from a private. A people meaning is neutral, whereas the South Asian meaning is strongly charged.
- Communalism is about politics not about religion. Although, communalists are intensely attached religion, there's no necessary relationship between personal belief and communalism. A communalist may or might not be a devout person, and devout persons may or might not be communalists.
- Communalists cultivate an aggressive political identity and are prepared to condemn or attack everyone who doesn't share their identity.
- One in all the foremost important features of communalism is that religious identity overrides everything else, it, also, constructs large and diverse groups as singular and homogenous.
- Samples of communal riots in our country- Anti Sikh riots of 1984; the Gujarat riots.
- But, India also incorporates a long tradition of non-secular pluralism, starting from peaceful co-existence to actual mixing or syncretism. This syncretic heritage is reflected within the devotional songs and poetry of the Bhakti and Sufi movements.

Question 9:

What are the different senses in which 'secularism' has been understood in India?

Answer 9:

- The Indian meanings of secular and secularism imply that state doesn't favour any religion. This suggests equal respect for all religions instead of separation or distancing.
- Within the western context, secularism implies separation of church and state. This suggests the progressive retreat of faith from public life, because it was converted from a compulsory obligation to a voluntary personal practice.
- Secularisation was associated with the arrival of modernity and therefore the rise of science and rationality as alternatives to non-secular ways of understanding the planet.
- One difficult issue that arises from this can be the stress between the western sense of state maintaining distance from religion and also the Indian sense of the state giving equal relevance all religions.

Question 10:

What is the relevance of civil society organisations today?

Answer 10:

- Civil society is that the name given to the sector which lies beyond the private domain of the family, but outside the domain of both state and market.
- Civil society may be a non-state and non-market a part of the general public domain within which individuals get together voluntarily to form institutions and organisations.
- It's a sphere of active citizenship: individuals take up social issues, try and influence the state or make demands on that, pursue their collective interests or seek support for a range of causes.
- It consists of voluntary institutions formed by group of citizens. It includes political parties; media institutions, trade unions, NGOs, religious organisations and other forms of collective entities.
- The most criteria for inclusion in civil society are that the organisation mustn't be state controlled, and it shouldn't be purely profit making entity.
- Examples-Doordarshan isn't a civil society entity though private television channels are. The Indian people had an encounter with authoritarian rule during 'Emergency' enforced between June 1975 and 1977. Forced sterilisation programmes; censorship on media and government officials; civil liberties revoked.

Civil Society Today

- Today the activists of civil society organizations have a good range of issues including advocacy and lobbying activity with national and international agencies further as active participation in various movements.
- The problems taken jip range from tribal struggles for land rights; devolution of urban governance; campaigns against rape and violence against women, primary education reform, etc.
- Media, also, has begun to play a crucial role within the civil society initiatives.
- Example- the Right to Information. Beginning with an agitation in rural Rajasthan for the discharge of knowledge on government funds spent on village development, this effort grew into a nation-wide campaign. Despite opposition from the bureaucracy. Government was forced to retort to the campaign and pass a brand new law formally acknowledging citizens' right to information.