



CHAPTER 1 WORKING OF DEMOCRACY

NOTES

- ❖ Democracy is regarded as the best form of government in modern times.
- ❖ The 20th Century was known as a century of democracy.
- ❖ Nature of Indian democracy is different from other democracy.
- ❖ The supporters of the British imperialism argued that India could not be considered as a nation because of being a vast sub-continent with multiplicity.
- ❖ Jawaharlal Nehru said: “Unity in diversity”.

Challenges posed by communalism

- ❖ Different communities lived in harmony in Pre-Independent India despite occasional confrontation between Hindus and Muslims.
- ❖ The animosity between the Hindus and the Muslims was largely the creation of the British rulers :
 - i) The British rulers adopted Divide and Rule Policy in India.
 - ii) They also sowed the seeds of Social Division and Political Competition among Indians.
 - iii) They provided special electorates for the Muslims in India.
- ❖ **Communalism** is a person's attachment with the good of his community.
- ❖ It is associated with a narrow, selfish, divisive and aggressive attitude.
- ❖ India has the worst types of communalism such as Sikhism, Dravidianism, Caste Conflicts and Tribalism etc.
- ❖ Communalism may result when :
 - i) The beliefs of one religion are presented as superior.
 - ii) The demands of a religious group are formed in opposition to another.
 - iii) State power is used to dominate others.
- ❖ The method of using religion in politics is communal politics.



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Features of Indian Secularism (Constitutional devices to combat Communalism)

- ❖ No official religion for the Indian state.
- ❖ Freedom to profess, practise and propagate any religions or not to follow any religions.
- ❖ The Indian Constitution prohibits discrimination on the ground of religion.
- ❖ The Constitution allows the state to intervene in the matters of religion in order to ensure equality among religious communities.

Caste and Politics

- ❖ The term 'caste' is derived from the Portuguese word '*casta*' meaning breed, race and kind.
- ❖ '*Varna*' and '*Jati*' i.e. complexion and lineage.
- ❖ Four Castes : *Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas* and *Sudras*
- ❖ Caste Influence begins in electoral politics.
- ❖ Electoral maxim in Haryana : "*Jat ki beti jat ko, jat ki vote jat ko*"
- ❖ Caste system was based on exclusion of and discrimination against the outcast groups.
- ❖ The Constitution of India prohibits caste based discrimination to reverse caste injustice.
- ❖ Caste System has not disappeared :
 - i) Even now most people marry within their own caste.
 - ii) Untouchability still continues.
 - iii) Large presence of upper caste among the urban middle classes.

Caste in Politics

- ❖ Caste influence is visible not only in the electoral politics but also in the formation of ministry.
- ❖ Political Parties and Candidates in election make appeals to caste sentiment to get support.
- ❖ The impression that elections are all about caste is not true because
 - i) No parliamentary constituency has a clear majority of one single caste.
 - ii) Every candidate needs to win the confidence of more than one caste and community to win elections.
 - iii) No party wins the votes of all the voters of a caste or community.
- ❖ **"It is not politics that gets caste ridden, it is caste that gets politicised"**
 - i) Each caste group tries to become bigger by incorporating its neighbouring castes or sub-caste which was excluded earlier from it.
 - ii) Various caste groups are required to enter into a coalition with other castes or communities for dialogue and negotiation.
 - iii) New kinds of caste groups have come up in the political arena like 'backward' and 'forward' caste groups.



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- ❖ The primary function of caste politics is to transfer authority from higher to the lower and middle castes.
- ❖ Caste is playing a progressive role:
 - i) Casteism becomes a means of levelling the old order of inequality.
 - ii) It uplifts the downtrodden section.
- ❖ Sanskritisation means the lower castes imitate or emulate the ways of the higher one.

Gender Perspective in Politics

- ❖ Gender division is a form of hierarchical social division. This is rather based on social expectation and fixed in form.
- ❖ The role of women in public life was minimal and only men participated in public affairs, voted and contested.
- ❖ Women agitation demanded
 - i) Women Empowerment and
 - ii) Improvement in Education and Career Opportunities.
- ❖ Feminist Movement aims at equality in personal and family life.
- ❖ Participation of women in public life is very high in Scandinavian countries like Sweden, Norway and Finland.
- ❖ Women face disadvantages, discrimination and oppression in many ways :
 - i) Women are not paid equal wages.
 - ii) Parents prefer sons and get girl child aborted.
 - iii) Reports of harassment and exploitation.

Women's Political Participation

The proportion of women in Indian legislature is very low :

- i) Women members never reached 10% in Lok Sabha
 - ii) They are less than 5% in State Assemblies
- ❖ It should be made legally binding to give a fair proportion of women in elected bodies.
- ❖ The government of India has reserved one third of seats for women in local bodies like Panchayats and Municipalities.
- ❖ But, Women Empowerment Bill has been pending before the Parliament.
- ❖ Two women could hold the highest posts viz, Smt. Indira Gandhi and Smt. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil.
- ❖ There are two women Lok Sabha Speakers.



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Role of Meira Paibis in the working of Democracy in Manipur

- ❖ **Meira Paibis**, a unique pressure group of women only was established in Manipur in 1980.
- ❖ It means women torch bearers.
- ❖ **Meira Paibis's** role in Manipur
 - i) To restore law and order, peace in the conflict zone of Manipur. They are against the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 and state atrocities in Manipur.
 - ii) To help the authority in the implementation of dry state policy in order to prohibit sale of liquor.
 - iii) They fight against social evil activities like adultery, forcible divorce, abduction and kidnapping etc.
 - iv) They can participate and influence in the political decision making as an agency of democracy at the grass root level.
 - v) They played an active role against kidnapping of children in mid 2008 and in ILP (Inner Line Permit) movement in 2015

Manipur State Commission for Women

- ❖ Needs of a commission for women in Manipur :
 - i) Women have been looked down upon by the male dominated society.
 - ii) Cases of domestic violence, physical assault, harassment, forcible kidnapping and divorce.
- ❖ MSCW was established on 12th December, 2006 is like Human Rights Commission for women.
- ❖ The Commission has requested the Ministry of Department of North Eastern Region for financial assistance.
- ❖ Its slogan “**Awake Women**” or “**Nupisha Mikap Thoklo**”



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