

Civics Class 10 Important Question Chapter 4 Gender, Religion and Caste

1. “There is urgent need to combat communalism”. Explain. [CBSE 2014]

Answer: Communal politics is based on the idea that religion is the principal basis of social community.

(i) The followers of a particular religion must belong to one community. Their fundamental interests are the same. Any difference that they may have is irrelevant or trivial for community life. It also follows that people who follow different religions cannot belong to the same social community.

(ii) A communal mind often leads to a quest for political dominance of one’s own religious community. For those belonging to majority community, this takes the form of majoritarian dominance. For those belonging to the minority community, it can take the form of a desire to form a separate political unit.

(iii) Sometimes communalism takes its most ugly form of communal violence, riots and massacre. For example, communal riots in UP Bihar, Gujarat, etc.

(iv) Communalism should not be seen as a threat to some people in India. It threatens the very idea of India. That is why communalism needs to be combated.

2. “In India women’s political representation is very low”. Justify.

Or

Explain the need for more representation for women as elected representatives. How can it be achieved?

Or

What is the status of women representation in India’s legislative bodies? [CBSE 2013]

Answer: (i) The percentage of elected women members in Lok Sabha has never reached even 10 percent of its total strength.

(ii) The share of women in the State Assemblies is less than 5 percent. In this respect, India is among the bottom group of nations in the world. India is behind the averages for several developing countries of Africa and Latin America.

(iii) In the government, Cabinets are largely all male even when a women becomes the Chief Minister or the Prime Minister.

(iv) There is urgent need to increase women representation in the legislature to empower women.

3. How has the principle of Universal Adult Franchise helped in combating casteism?

Answer: (i) Under the universal adult franchise all the citizens of India who are at least 18 years of age are a voter to elect the representatives to the Parliament and the State Legislatures. They possess this right without any discrimination of caste, creed, colour, sex, religion or belief.

(ii) Universal adult franchise and the principle of one-person-one-vote has compelled political leaders to gear up to the task of mobilising and securing political support.

(iii). It also brought new consciousness among the people of castes that were hitherto treated as inferior and low.

4. What were Gandhiji's views regarding religion and politics? Explain.

Answer: Gandhiji used to say that religion can never be separated from politics. What he meant by religion was not any particular religion like Hinduism or Islam but moral values that form the basis of all religions. He believed that politics must be guided by ethics drawn from religions.

5. 'Political mobilisation on religious lines is a frequent form of communalism.' Explain.

Answer: Political mobilisation on communal lines involves the use of sacred symbols, religious leaders, emotional appeal and plain fear in order to bring the followers of one religion together in the political arena. In electoral politics, this often involves special appeal to the interests or emotions of voters of one religion in preference to others.

6. Besides caste, which other factors do matter in electoral politics ?

Answer: (i) Voting on the basis of community : Political leaders pursue the voters to cast their vote on the basis of communal lines.

(ii) Political Mobilization on Religious lines : Political mobilization on religious lines is another frequent form of communalism. This involves the use of sacred symbols, religious leaders, emotional appeal and plain fear in order to bring the followers of one religion together in the political arena. In electoral politics this often involves special appeal to the interests or emotions of voters of one religion in preference to others.

(iii) Performance of the government : Along with caste and community people also check the performance of the political party or the agenda of the party.

7. Write the appropriate term:

(i) A person, who says that religion is the principal basis of community.

(ii) A person, who believes in equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

(iii) A person who does not discriminate other on the basis of religious beliefs.

Answer: (i) Communalist (ii) Feminist (iii) Secularist

Long Answer Type Questions (5 Marks)

1. Name the movements which agitate for women's rights. How have these movements helped in improving women's conditions?

Answer: Feminist Movements.

(i) Political expression of gender division and political mobilisation on this question helped to improve the women's role in public life.

(ii) Now, women are working in occupations such as scientists, doctors, engineers, lawyers, managers, and college and university teachers which were earlier not considered suitable for women.

(iii) In some parts of the world, for example, (») By reserving some seats in the Lok Sabha in the Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, Norway and Finland, the participation of women in public life is very high.

2. Mention any four steps which can be undertaken to improve the women's representation in politics.

Or

Suggest any three steps to improve the women's participation in politics.

Answer: (i) To make it legally binding to have a fair proportion of women in the elected bodies

(ii) By reserving some seats in the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies for women.

(iii) Political parties should also give due representation to women members.

(iv) By raising the literacy rate.

3. What is casteism? How is casteism in India different as compared to other societies?

Or

Describe any five features of the caste system prevailing in India.

Answer: (i) Organisation of people into social groups for the purpose of marriage, work and diet is known as the caste system.

(ii) The social structure of India is based upon the caste system. All societies have some kind of social inequality and some form of division of labour, but the Indian caste system is an extreme form of division of labour based on birth.

(iii) Although in most societies, occupations are passed on from one generation to another, but in India, it is different from other societies as in this system hereditary occupational division was sanctioned by rituals.

- (iv) The Indian caste system was very rigid. Members of the same caste group were supposed to form a social community that practised the same or similar occupation, married within the caste group, and did not eat with members from other caste groups.
- (v) Indian caste system continues to be closely linked to economic status.

4. Mention any positive role of caste in politics.

Or

Describe the positive and negative aspects of relationship between caste and politics.

- Answer:** (i) In some situations, expression of caste differences in politics gives many disadvantaged communities the space to demand their share of power.
- (ii) In this sense, caste politics has helped people from the Dalits and the OBC castes to gain better access to decision making.

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- (iii) Although in most societies, occupations are passed on from one generation to another, but in India, it is different from other societies as in this system hereditary occupational division was sanctioned by rituals.
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Describe the positive and negative aspects of relationship between caste and politics.

- Answer:** (i) In some situations, expression of caste differences in politics gives many disadvantaged communities the space to demand their share of power.
- (ii) In this sense, caste politics has helped people from the Dalits and the OBC castes to gain better access to decision making.

(iii) Several political and non-political organisations have been demanding and agitating for the end of discrimination against particular castes, for more dignity and more access to land, resources and opportunities.

Negative :

(i) It disrupts social harmony.

(ii) It can divert attention from other pressing issues like poverty, corruption, etc.

7. Why is the idea of communal politics fundamentally flawed?

Answer: Most of these beliefs are fundamentally not true. People of one religion do not have the same interests and aspirations in most of the contexts. Every individual has his/her own choices, roles, positions and identities. There are many voices inside every community. All these voices have a right to be heard. Therefore, any attempt to bring all followers of one religion together in contexts other than religion is bound to suppress many voices within that community.

8. What are Feminist Movements? What were their major demands ?

Or

What was the Feminist Movement ? Explain the political demands of the Feminist Movement in India.

Answer: These are the movements which are organised by various women organisations to create equality for women in personal and family life.

(i) These feminist movements demand equal rights for women in all spheres of life.

(ii) There were agitations in different countries for the extension of voting rights to women.

(iii) The agitations demanded enhancing the political and legal status of women.

(iv) The movements also demanded in improving the educational and career opportunities for the women.

9. Explain the relationship between religion and politics.

Or

How are religious differences expressed in politics ?

Answer: (i) Views of Gandhiji : Gandhiji used to say that religion can never be separated from politics. What he meant by religion was not any particular religion like Hinduism or Islam, but the moral values that are there in all religions. According to him, politics must be guided by ethics drawn from all religions.

(ii) Views of Human rights groups : Human rights groups in our country have argued that most of the victims of communal riots in our country are people from religious minorities. They have demanded that the government should take special steps to protect religious minorities.

(iii) Women's Movements : Women's movements have argued that family laws of all religions discriminate against women. So they have demanded that the government should change these laws to make them more equitable.

10. How can religion influence politics? Explain.

Answer: (i) Gandhiji believed that politics must be guided by ethics drawn from all religions.

(ii) Ideas, ideals and values drawn from different religions can and perhaps should play a role in politics.

(iii) People should be able to express in politics, their needs, interests and demands as a member of a religious community.

(iv) Those who hold political power should sometimes be able to regulate the practice of religion so as to prevent discrimination and oppression.

(v) These political acts are not wrong as long as they treat every religion equal.

11. What is communal politics ? Explain.

Or

When does the communal problem become acute ?

Answer: Religion is used in politics in exclusive and partisan terms. This manner of using religion in politics is communal politics.

The communal problem becomes acute when :

- Religion is seen as the basis of the nation.
- When one religion and its followers are discriminated against another.
- When people start believing that beliefs of one religion are superior to those of other religions.
- When the demands of one religious group are formed in opposition to another.
- When the state power is used to establish the domination of one religious group over the rest.

12. What is communalism? What are the major beliefs of communal people?

Answer: Communalism is a situation when a particular community tries to promote its own interest at the cost of other communities.

Communal politics is based on the idea that religion is the principal basis of social community.

Communalism involves thinking along the following lines:

- The followers of a particular religion must belong to one community.
- Their fundamental interests should be the same. Any difference that they may have is irrelevant or trivial for community life.
- Communalism also follows that people who follow different religions cannot belong to the

same social community. If the followers of different religions have some commonalities, these are superficial and immaterial. Their interests are bound to be different and involve a conflict.

- Sometimes, communalism leads to the belief that people belonging to different religions cannot live as equal citizens within one nation. Either one of them has to dominate the rest, or they have to form different nations.

13. State any four provisions of the Indian Constitution which makes it a secular state.

Answer: (i) No official religion : There is no official religion of the Indian state. Unlike the status of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Islam in Pakistan and Hinduism in Nepal, our Constitution does not give a special status to any religion.

(ii) Fundamental Rights : Under the Right To Freedom of Religion, our Constitution provides to all citizens freedom to profess, practice and propagate any religion, or not to follow any. Under the Cultural and Educational Right, our Constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion.

(iii) Equality : The Constitution allows the state to intervene in the matters of religion in order to ensure equality within religious communities. To ensure equality, untouchability has been banned.

(iv) Intervention of the state within religious communities : The Constitution allows the state to intervene in the matters of religion in order to ensure equality within the different religious communities.

14. 'Politics too influences the caste system.' Explain.

Or

In what ways does politics influence caste system?

Or

How caste is politicised? Explain any three points.

Answer: Politics too influences the caste system and caste identities by bringing them into the political arena. Thus, it is not politics that gets caste-ridden, it is the caste that gets politicised. Politics in caste normally takes the following forms :

(i) Wide base : Each caste tries to widen its base to gain majority. Each caste group tries to become bigger by incorporating within it, the neighbouring castes or sub-castes which were earlier excluded from it.

(ii) Coalition : Various caste groups are required to enter into a coalition with other castes or communities, and thus enter into a dialogue and negotiation. This strengthens the basic

structure of democracy.

(iii) New groups : New kinds of caste groups have come up in the political arena like 'backward' and 'forward' caste groups.

15. Explain the different aspects of life in which women are discriminated or disadvantaged in India.

Or

How women in India still face discrimination and oppression in various ways ? Explain.

Or

In our country, women still lag much behind than men despite some improvements since independence. Justify this statement by giving four reasons.

Answer: (i) Literacy rate : The literacy rate among women is only 65.46 (2011 census) per cent as compared to 82.14 (2011 census) per cent among men. Similarly, a smaller proportion of girl students go for higher studies because parents prefer to spend their resources for their boys education than spending equally on their daughters.

(ii) Unpaid work : The proportion of women among the highly paid and valued jobs is still very small. Though on an average, the Indian woman works one hour more than an average man everyday, but most of them are not paid equally and therefore, their work is often not valued.

(iii) Sex ratio : In many parts of India, parents prefer to have sons, and find ways to have the girl child aborted before she is born. This has led to a decline in the child sex ratio (the number of girl children per thousand boys) in the country is merely 940.

(iv) Domestic violence : There are reports of various kinds of harassment, exploitation and violence against women. Both urban as well as rural areas have become unsafe , for women. They are not safe even within their own homes from beating and other forms of domestic violence.

16. Explain the various forms that communalism can take in politics.

Or

What is communalism? Explain the various forms that communalism take in politics.

Or

Explain the main features of Communalism. What form does it take in politics?

Or

What is communalism? How is communalism a hinderance in the functioning of our democracy? Explain.

Answer: Communalism can take several forms in politics – in everyday beliefs, formation of parties based on communities, campaigning or asking for votes, formation of government, etc.

(i) Communalism in daily beliefs : The most common expression of communalism is in everyday life. These routinely involve religious prejudices, stereotypes of religious communities and the beliefs in the superiority of one religion over the other religions. This is so common that we often fail to notice it, even when we believe in it.

(ii) Formation of political parties on the basis of communities : All the communities of the world have a quest for political dominance of one's own religious community. For those belonging to the majority community, this takes the form of majoritarian dominance. For those belonging to the minority community, it can take the form of a desire to form a separate political unit.

(iii) Political mobilisation on communal lines : It is another frequent form of communalism. Parties based on a particular community make use of sacred symbols, religious leaders, emotional appeal and create fear in order to bring the followers of one religion together in the political arena. In electoral politics, this often involves a special appeal to the interests or emotions of voters of one religion in preference to others.

(iv) Communal riots: Sometimes, communalism takes the most ugly form of communal violence, riots and massacre. India has suffered some of the worst communal riots at the time of partition. The post independence period has also seen large- scale communal violence.

17. “The focus on caste in politics can sometimes give an impression that elections are all about caste and nothing else. That is far from true.” Explain by giving examples.

Answer: (i) Constituencies are a mixture of people belonging to different castes : No parliamentary constituency in the country has a clear majority of one single caste. So, every candidate and party needs to win the confidence of more than one caste and community to win elections.

(ii) Different choices even within caste : No party wins the votes of all the voters of a caste or community because even within the community, people have different choices. When people say that a caste is a 'vote bank' of one party, it usually means that about two-thirds of the voters of that community.

(iii) Hunt for a dominating caste : Most of the political parties may put up candidates from the majority caste. But even this cannot guarantee their victory because some voters have more than one candidate from their castes, while many voters have no candidate from their

castes.

History of elections : According to history of Indian elections, the ruling party and the sitting Member of the Parliament (MP) or Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) frequently lose elections in our country. This proves that though casteism and communalism play a major role in politics, but elections are not about caste and communalism.

18. What forms can caste take in politics?

Or

Explain any four forms of casteism in Indian Politics.

Or

Explain the role of caste in Indian politics.

Or

Explain any three forms of caste politics in India.

Answer: (i) While choosing candidates : 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 get necessary support to win elections.

(ii) While forming a government : When the governments are formed, political parties usually take care that representatives of different castes and tribes find a place in it.

(iii) While campaigning : Political parties and candidates in elections make appeals to people to give them their votes on the basis of caste. Some political parties are known to favour some castes, and are seen as their representatives. .

(iv) Universal adult franchise and the principle of one-person-one-vote, has compelled the political leaders to raise the caste-based issues during elections. They do so to mobilise and secure political support. It also brought new consciousness among the people of castes that were hitherto treated as inferior and low.

HOTS Questions and Answers

1. How do social divisions affect politics? Explain with examples.

Answer: Gender, religion and caste are the most important factors responsible for social divisions.

(i) Gender and politics : The share of women in the Parliament is less than 10%. Women's organisations and activists have been demanding reservation of some seats for women in the legislature.

(ii) Religion and politics : People or political parties use religious symbols, religious leaders, to appeal to the people or the followers of one religion to come under the same umbrella. Political parties also keep it in mind while choosing a candidate for a constituency.

(iii) Caste and politics : 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 tribes find a place in it.

2. (i) Which caste or community has a very high percentage of population living below the poverty line ?

(ii) Define below the poverty line.

(iii) Mention any two factors due to which castes and caste system in modern India have undergone great changes.

Answer: (i) SCs and STs,

(ii) Below the poverty line means those, who spent ? 327 or less per person per month, in the rural areas and ? 454 or less per person per month in the urban areas.

(iii) (a) Economic development (b) Urbanisation and the growth of literacy.

3. “Caste has not still disappeared from contemporary India”. Give any three examples to justify the statement.

Answer: (i) Even now most people marry within their own caste or tribe.

(ii) Untouchability has not ended completely despite constitutional prohibition.

(iii) Caste continues to be closely linked to economic status.

4. How does the Constitution of India ensure secularism?

Or

Mention constitutional provisions that make India a secular state.

Or

What is a secular state? How does the Constitution of India ensure that India remains a secular state?

Answer: A state that has no official religion and grants equal status to all religions is called Secular State.

(i) The Constitution provides to all individuals and communities freedom to profess, practice and propagate any religion, or not to follow any.

(ii) The Constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion.

(iii) At the same time, the Constitution allows the state to intervene in the matters of religion in order to ensure equality within religious communities. For example, it bans untouchability.

5. Explain with examples, the increasing role of women in public life. What lessons you have learnt from this?

Answer: (i) Women do all work inside the home such as cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, tailoring, looking after children, etc. This indicates that women plays very important role in family life.

(ii) In villages, women fetch water, collect fuel and work in the fields. This indicates that there is need to spread education among women in rural areas.

(iii) In urban areas, poor women work as domestic helper in middle class homes, while middle class women work in offices. This indicates that there is need to increase more economic avenues for women.

(iv) Now women are working as scientists, doctors, engineers, lawyers, managers and college and university teachers which were earlier not considered suitable for women. This states that women play very important role in economic and social development.

6. Discuss the sexual division of labour. Do you think sexual division of labour is a right phenomenon?

Or

Explain the sexual division of labour.

Or

What do you mean by sexual division of Labour?

Answer: (i) The sexual division of labour is not a new phenomenon. It has been under practice since time immemorial.

(ii) The result of this division of labour is that women have been confined to a private domain of family, while the public domain has been monopolised by the men.

(iii) Although women constitute half of the population of the world, their role in public life especially politics is minimum in most of the societies.

(iv) Though the role of women in world politics is increasing but still, it is a male-dominated society. No, sexual division of labour is not right because this limits the economic opportunities for women.

7. The rigid caste system is disappearing in India. Explain the major factors responsible for this. Suggest any two ways through which this can further be reduced.

Or

Why caste barriers are breaking down in India? Give three reasons to explain.

Answer: (I) Social Reformers : Social reformers like Jotiba Phule, Gandhiji, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, etc., advocated and worked to establish a society in which caste inequalities are absent.

(ii) Economic Factors : With, economic development, large-scale urbanisation, growth of literacy and education, occupational mobility and the weakening of the position of landlords in the villages, the old notions of caste hierarchy are breaking down. Now, most of the time in

urban areas, it does not matter much who is walking along next to us on a street or eating at the next table in a restaurant.

(iii) Constitution : The Constitution of India prohibits discrimination of any type. It provides equal opportunities to all.

(iv) Fundamental Rights : Provision of Fundamental rights has played a major role because these rights are provided to all the citizens without any discrimination. The caste system can further be reduced by the spread of education, and by promoting intercaste marriages.