

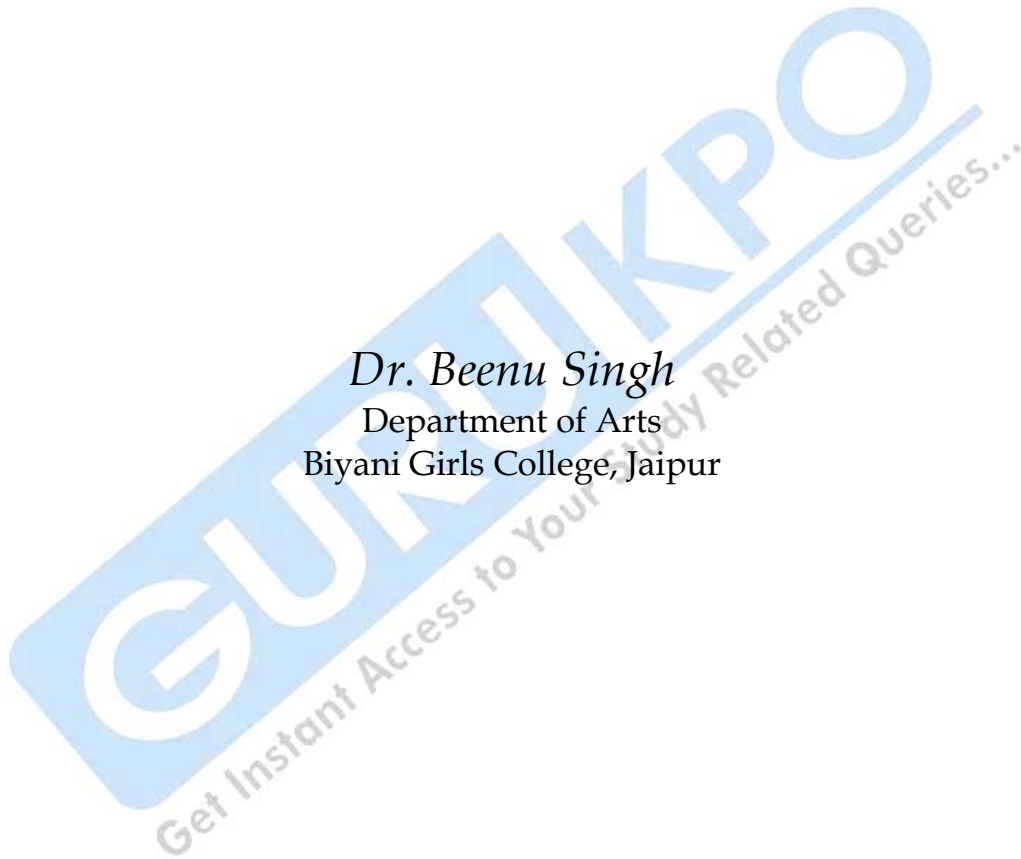
Biyani's Think Tank

Concept based notes

Sciology Book 1

Class - XII

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Preface

I am glad to present this book, especially designed to serve the needs of the students. The book has been written keeping in mind the general weakness in understanding the fundamental concepts of the topics. The book is self-explanatory and adopts the “Teach Yourself” style. It is based on question-answer pattern. The language of book is quite easy and understandable based on scientific approach.

Any further improvement in the contents of the book by making corrections, omission and inclusion is keen to be achieved based on suggestions from the readers for which the author shall be obliged.

I acknowledge special thanks to Mr. Rajeev Biyani, *Chairman* & Dr. Sanjay Biyani, *Director (Acad.)* Biyani Group of Colleges, who are the backbones and main concept provider and also have been constant source of motivation throughout this Endeavour. They played an active role in coordinating the various stages of this Endeavour and spearheaded the publishing work.

I look forward to receiving valuable suggestions from professors of various educational institutions, other faculty members and students for improvement of the quality of the book. The reader may feel free to send in their comments and suggestions to the under mentioned address.

Author

Chapter 1

The Demographic Structure of Indian Society

Q.1. What is the role of sociology?

Ans: Sociology can help you to map the links and connections between “personal troubles” and “social issues”.

Q.2. What do you mean by demography?

Ans: Demography is the systematic study of population. The term is of Greek origin and is composed of the two words, demos (people) and graphein (describe), implying the description of people.

Q.3. What is demographic study based on?

Ans: Demographic studies are based on processes of counting or enumeration – such as the census or the survey – which involve the systematic collection of data on the people residing within a specified territory.

Q.4. What is importance of demographic data?

Ans: Demographic data are important for the planning and implementation of state policies, specially those for economic development and general public welfare.

Q.5. Detail the Malthusian Theory of Population Growth?

Ans

- The most famous theories of demography is the one associated with the English political economist Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834).
- Malthus's theory of population growth – outlined in his Essay on Population (1798) – was a rather pessimistic one.
- He argued that human populations tend to grow at a much faster rate than the rate at which the means of human subsistence (specially food, but also clothing and other agriculture-based products) can grow. Therefore humanity is condemned to live in poverty forever because the growth of agricultural production will always be overtaken by population growth.
- While population rises in geometric progression (i.e., like 2, 4, 8, 16, 32 etc.), agricultural production can only grow in arithmetic progression (i.e., like 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 etc.). Because population growth always outstrips growth in production of subsistence resources, the only way to increase prosperity is by controlling the growth of population.
- Unfortunately, humanity has only a limited ability to voluntarily reduce the growth of its population (through ‘preventive checks’ such as postponing marriage or practicing sexual abstinence or celibacy).

- Malthus believed therefore that ‘positive checks’ to population growth – in the form of famines and diseases – were inevitable because they were nature’s way of dealing with the imbalance between food supply and increasing population.

Q.6. Give the critical analysis of Malthusian theory?

- Malthus was criticised by liberal and Marxist scholars for asserting that poverty was caused by population growth.
- The critics argued that problems like poverty and starvation were caused by the unequal distribution of economic resources rather than by population growth.
- An unjust social system allowed a wealthy and privileged minority to live in luxury while the vast majority of the people were forced to live in poverty.

Q.7. Detail the Theory of Demographic Transition?

- There are three basic phases of population growth.
- The first stage is that of low population growth in a society that is under developed and technologically backward.
- Growth rates are low because both the death rate and the birth rate are very high, so that the difference between the two (or the net growth rate) is low.
- The third (and last) stage is also one of low growth in a developed society where both death rate and birth rate have been reduced.

Q.8. Why population explosion does happen?

- This ‘population explosion’ happens because death rates are brought down relatively quickly through advanced methods of disease control, public health, and better nutrition.
- However, it takes longer for society to adjust to change and alter its reproductive behaviour (which was evolved during the period of poverty and high death rates) to suit the new situation of relative prosperity and longer life spans.

Q.9. What is birth rate?

Ans. The birth rate is the number of live births per 1000 population.

Q.10. What is death rate?

Ans. The *death rate* is expressed as the number of deaths in a given area during a given time per 1000 population

Q11. What is rate of natural increase?

Ans. The *rate of natural increase* or the growth rate of population refers to the difference between the birth rate and the death rate.

When this difference is zero then we say that the population has 'stabilized', or has reached the 'replacement level', which is the rate of growth required for new generations to replace the older ones that are dying out.

Sometimes, societies can experience a negative growth rate – that is, their fertility levels are below the replacement rate. Eg Japan, Russia, Italy and Eastern Europe.

Q.12. What is fertility rate?

Ans. The *fertility rate* refers to the number of live births per 1000 women in the child-bearing age group, usually taken to be 15 to 49 years.

Q.13. What is infant mortality rate?

Ans. The *infant mortality rate* is the number of deaths of babies before the age of one year per 1000 live births.

Q.14. What is maternal mortality rate?

Ans. The *maternal mortality rate* is the number of women who die in childbirth per 1000 live births.

Q.15. What does high infant mortality and maternal mortality rate indicates?

Ans High rates of infant and maternal mortality are an unambiguous indicator of backwardness and poverty.

Q.16. What is life expectancy?

Ans Life expectancy refers to the estimated number of years that an average person is expected to survive.

Q.17. What is sex ratio?

Ans. The *sex ratio* refers to the number of females per 1000 males in a given area at a specified time period

Q.18. Why there is slightly more females than males?

Ans Girl babies appear to have an advantage over boy babies in terms of resistance to disease in infancy.

Women have tended to outlive men in most societies, so that there are more older women than men.

Q.19. What is dependency ratio?

Ans The *dependency ratio* is a measure comparing the portion of a population which is composed of dependents.

Q.20. What is the reason for decline of death rate after 1921?

Ans The principal reasons for the decline in the death rate after 1921 were increased levels of control over famines and **epidemic** diseases.

Improvements in medical cures for these diseases, programmes for mass vaccination, and efforts to improve sanitation helped to control epidemics.

Q.21. What is the main cause of decline of sex ratio in India?

Ans. Health factor that affects women differently from men is childbearing.

Social scientists believe that the cause has to be sought in the differential treatment of girl babies.

Sex specific abortions that prevent girl babies from being born; and female infanticide.

Q.22. Explain the basic argument of the theory of demographic transition. Why is the transition period associated with a 'population explosion'?

Ans: The theory suggests that population growth is linked to overall levels of economic development and that every society follows a typical pattern of development-related population growth.

- There are three basic phases of population growth. The first stage is that of low population growth in a society that is underdeveloped and technologically backward.
- Growth rates are low because both the death rate and the birth rate are very high, so that the difference between the two (or the net growth rate) is low.
- The third (and last) stage is also one of low growth in a developed society where both death rate and birth rate have been reduced considerably and the difference between them is again small.
- Between these two stages is a transitional stage of movement from a backward to an advanced stage, and this stage is characterised by very high rates of growth of population.

This 'population explosion' happens because death rates are brought down relatively quickly through advanced methods of disease control, public health, and better nutrition. However, it takes longer for society to adjust to change and alter

its reproductive behaviour (which was evolved during the period of poverty and high death rates) to suit the new situation of relative prosperity and longer life spans. This kind of transition was effected in Western Europe during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. More or less similar patterns are followed in the less developed countries that are struggling to reduce the birth rate in keeping with the falling mortality rate.

Q.23..Why did Malthus believe that catastrophic events like famines and epidemics that cause mass deaths were inevitable?

Ans. Malthus believed that ‘**positive checks**’ to population growth – in the form of famines and diseases – were inevitable because they were nature’s way of dealing with the imbalance between food supply and increasing population..

Q.24. Which states in India have reached or are very near the ‘replacement levels’ of population growth?

Ans: Kerala

Q.25. Which ones still have very high rates of population growth? In your opinion, what could be some of the reasons for these regional differences?

Ans: Uttar Pradesh.

Q.26. What is meant by the ‘age structure’ of the population? Why is it relevant for economic development and growth?

Ans: The age structure of the population refers to the proportion of persons in different age groups relative to the total population. The age structure changes in response to changes in levels of development and the average life expectancy. Initially, poor medical facilities, prevalence of disease and other factors make for a relatively short life span. Moreover, high infant and maternal mortality rates also have an impact on the age structure. With development, quality of life improves and with it the life expectancy also improves. This changes the age structure: relatively smaller proportions of the **population are found in the younger age groups and larger proportions in the older age groups**

Q.27. What is meant by the ‘sex ratio’? What are some of the implications of a declining sex ratio? Do you feel that parents still prefer to have sons rather than daughters? What, in your opinion, could be some of the reasons for this preference?

Ans: The *sex ratio* refers to the number of females per 1000 males in a given area at a specified time period.

Chapter 2

Social Institution continuity and change

Q.1. What do you mean by caste in Indian context?

Ans:

- The English word 'caste' is actually a borrowing from the Portuguese *casta*, meaning pure breed.
- The word refers to a broad institutional arrangement that in Indian languages (beginning with the ancient Sanskrit) is referred to by two distinct terms, *varna* and *jati*. *Varna*, literally 'colour', is the name given to a four-fold division of society into *brahmana*, *kshatriya*, *vaishya* and *shudra*, though this excludes a significant section of the population composed of the 'outcastes', foreigners, slaves, conquered peoples and others, sometimes referred to as the *panchamas* or fifth category.

Q.2. What is jati?

Ans:

- *Jati* is a generic term referring to species or kinds of anything, ranging from inanimate objects to plants, animals and human beings.
- *Jati* is the word most commonly used to refer to the institution of caste in Indian languages, though it is interesting to note that, increasingly, Indian language speakers are beginning to use the English word 'caste'.

Q.3. What is main difference between varna and jati?

Ans:

- The most common interpretation is to treat *varna* as a broad all-India aggregative classification, while *jati* is taken to be a regional or local sub-classification involving a much more complex system consisting of hundreds or even thousands of castes and sub-castes.
- The four *varna* classification is common to all of India, the *jati* hierarchy has more local classifications that vary from region to region.

Q.4. What are the common features of caste system in India?

Ans:

The features of caste are the following:

- 1 Caste is determined by birth – a child is "born in to" the caste of its parents. Caste is never a matter of choice. One can never change one's caste, leave it, or choose not to join it, although there are instances where a person may be expelled from their caste.
- 2 Membership in a caste involves strict rules about marriage. Caste groups are "endogamous", i.e. marriage is restricted to members of the group.

3 Caste membership also involves rules about food and food-sharing. What kinds of food may or may not be eaten is prescribed and who one may share food with is also specified.

4 Caste involves a system consisting of many castes arranged in a hierarchy of rank and status. In theory, every person has a caste, and every caste has a specified place in the hierarchy of all castes. While the hierarchical position of many castes, particularly in the middle ranks, may vary from region to region, there is always a hierarchy.

5 Castes also involve sub-divisions within themselves, i.e., castes almost always have sub-castes and sometimes sub-castes may also have sub-sub-castes. This is referred to as a segmental organisation.

6 Castes were traditionally linked to occupations. A person born into a caste could only practice the occupation associated with that caste, so that occupations were hereditary, i.e. passed on from generation to generations.

Q.5. Throw some light on social activists who fought for social justice for low-caste people?

Ans:

- 1 Jyotirao Govindrao Phule denounced the injustice of the caste system and scorned its rules of purity and pollution. In 1873 he founded the Satya shodhak Samaj (Truth Seekers Society), which was devoted to securing human rights and social justice for low-caste people.
- 2 Savitri Bai Phule was the first head mistress of the country's first school for girls in Pune. She devoted her life to educating Shudras and Ati-Shudras. She started a night school for agriculturists and labourers. She died while serving plague patients.
- 3 Periyar (E.V. Ramasami Naicker) is known as a rationalist and the leader of the lower caste movement in South India. He aroused people to realise that all men are equal, and that it is the birth right of every individual to enjoy liberty and equality.
- 4 Mysore Narasimhachar Srinivas was one of India's foremost sociologists and social anthropologists. He was known for his works on the caste system and terms such as 'sanskritisation' and 'dominant caste'. His book *The Remembered Village* is one of the best known village studies in Social Anthropology.

Q6. What is hierarchical division of caste based on?

Ans:

- The hierarchical ordering of castes is based on the distinction between 'purity' and 'pollution'.
- This is a division between something believed to be closer to the sacred and

something believed to be distant from or opposed to the sacred, therefore considered ritually polluting.

- Castes that are considered ritually pure have high status, while those considered less pure or impure have low status.
- Historians believe that those who were defeated in wars were often assigned low caste status.

Q.7. Why caste system asserts no mobility?

Ans:

- Castes are not only unequal to each other in ritual terms, they are also supposed to be complementary and non-competing groups.
- Each caste has its own place in the system which cannot be taken by any other caste.
- Since caste is also linked with occupation, the system functions as the social division of labour, except that, in principle, it allows no mobility.

Q.8. When was the first caste census done in India?

Ans: 1860

Q.9. How did the terms 'Schedule caste' and 'Schedule tribes' come into existence?

Ans:

Large scale irrigation schemes like the ones in the Punjab were accompanied by efforts to settle populations there, and these also had a caste dimension. The administration also took an interest in the welfare of downtrodden castes, referred to as the 'depressed classes' at that time. It was as part of these efforts that the Government of India Act of 1935 was passed which gave legal recognition to the lists or 'schedules' of castes and tribes marked out for special treatment by the state. This is how the terms 'Scheduled Tribes' and the 'Scheduled Castes' came into being. Castes at the bottom of the hierarchy that suffered severe discrimination, including all the so-called 'untouchable' castes, were included among the Scheduled Castes.

Q.10. What was the main focus of Anti-untouchability programme?

Ans:

The dominant view in the nationalist movement was to treat caste as a social evil and as a colonial ploy to divide Indians. But the nationalist leaders, like, Mahatma Gandhi, were able to simultaneously work for the upliftment of the lowest castes.

Q. 11. What were the changes brought to caste system after independence?

Ans:

- Recruitment to industrial jobs, whether in the textile mills of Mumbai (then Bombay), the jute mills of Kolkata (then Calcutta), or else where, continued to be organised along caste and kinship-based lines. The middle men who recruited labour for factories tended to recruit them from their own caste and region so that particular departments or shop floors were often dominated by specific castes. Prejudice against the untouchables remained quite strong and was not absent from the city, though not as extreme as it could be in the village.
- Endogamy, or the practice of marrying within the caste, remained largely unaffected by modernisation and change. Even today, most marriages take place within caste boundaries, although there are more intercaste marriages. While some boundaries may have become more flexible or porous, the borders between groups of castes of similar socio-economic status are still heavily patrolled. For example, inter-caste marriages within the upper castes (eg., brahmin, bania, rajput) may be more likely now than before; but marriages between an uppercaste and backward or scheduled caste person remain rare even today.

Q.12. What is sanskritization?

Ans:

- Sanskritisation' refers to a process where by members of a (usually middle or lower) caste attempt to raise their own social status by adopting the ritual, domestic and social practices of a caste (or castes) of higher status.
- Although this phenomenon is an old one and predates Independence and perhaps even the colonial period, it has intensified in recent times.
- The patterns for emulation chosen most often were the brahmin or kshatriya castes; practices included adopting vegetarianism, wearing of sacred thread, performance of specific prayers and religious ceremonies, and soon.
- Sanskritisation usually accompanies or follows a rise in the economic status of the caste attempting it, though it may also occur independently. Subsequent research has led to many modifications and revisions being suggested for this concept.

Q.13. What is dominant caste?

Ans:

- 'Dominant caste' is a term used to refer to those castes which had a large population and were granted land rights by the partial land reforms effected after Independence.
- The land reforms took away rights from the erst while claimants, the upper castes

who were 'absentee landlords' in the sense that they played no part in the agricultural economy other than claiming their rent.

- They frequently did not live in the village either, but were based in towns and cities. These land rights now came to be vested in the next layer of claimants, those who were involved in the management of agriculture but were not themselves the cultivators.
- These intermediate castes in turn depended on the labour of the lower castes including specially the 'untouchable' castes for tilling and tending the land.
- However, once they got land rights, they acquired considerable economic power. Their large numbers also gave them political power in the era of electoral democracy based on universal adult franchise. Thus, these intermediate castes became the 'dominant' castes in the country side and played a decisive role in regional politics and the agrarian economy.
- Examples of such dominant castes include the Yadavs of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the Vokkaligas of Karnataka, the Reddys and Khammas of Andhra Pradesh, the Marathas of Maharashtra, the Jats of Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh and the Patidars of Gujarat.

Ncert solved questions:

Q.1. What is the role of the ideas of separation and hierarchy in the caste system?

Ans: Theoretically, the caste system can be understood as the combination of two sets of principles, one based on difference and separation and the other on wholism and hierarchy. Each caste is supposed to be different from – and is therefore strictly separated from – every other caste. Many of the scriptural rules of caste are thus designed to prevent the mixing of castes – rules ranging from marriage, food sharing and social interaction to occupation. On the other hand, these different and separated castes do not have an individual existence – they can only exist in relation to a larger whole, the totality of society consisting of all castes. Further, this societal whole or system is a hierarchical rather than egalitarian system. Each individual caste occupies not just a distinct place, but also an ordered rank – a particular position in a ladder-like arrangement going from highest to lowest.

The hierarchical ordering of castes is based on the distinction between 'purity' and 'pollution'. This is a division between something believed to be closer to the sacred (thus connoting ritual purity), and something believed to be distant from or opposed to the sacred, therefore considered ritually polluting. Castes that are considered ritually pure have high status, while those considered less pure or impure have low status. As in all societies, material power (i.e., economic or military power) is closely associated with social status, so that those in power tend to be of high status, and vice versa. Historians believe that those who were defeated in wars were often assigned low caste status.

Q.2. What are some of the rules that the caste system imposes?

Ans: Refer question 4.

Q.3. What changes did colonialism bring about in the caste system?

Ans: Scholars have agreed that all major social institutions and specially the institution of caste underwent major changes during the colonial period. Not all of the changes brought about were intended or deliberate. Initially, the British administrators began by trying to understand the complexities of caste in an effort to learn how to govern the country efficiently. Some of these efforts took the shape of very methodical and intensive surveys and reports on the 'customs and manners' of various tribes and castes all over the country. Many British administrative officials were also amateur ethnologists and took great interest in pursuing such surveys and studies.

Q.4. In what sense has caste become relatively 'invisible' for the urban upper castes?

Ans: One of the most significant yet paradoxical changes in the caste system in the contemporary period is that it has tended to become 'invisible' for the upper caste, urban middle and upper classes.

- For these groups, who have benefited the most from the developmental policies of the post-colonial era, caste has appeared to decline in significance precisely because it has done its job so well.
- Their caste status had been crucial in ensuring that these groups had the necessary economic and educational resources to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by rapid development.
- In particular, the upper caste elite were able to benefit from subsidized public education, specially professional education in science, technology, medicine and management.
- At the same time, they were also able to take advantage of the expansion of state sector jobs in the early decades after Independence. In this initial period, their lead over the rest of society (in terms of education) ensured that they did not face any serious competition.
- As their privileged status got consolidated in the second and third generations, these groups began to believe that their advancement had little to do with caste. Certainly for the third generations from these groups their economic and educational capital alone is quite sufficient to ensure that they will continue to get the best in terms of life chances. For this group, it now seems that caste plays no part in their public lives, being limited to the personal sphere of religious practice or marriage and kinship. However, a further complication is introduced by the fact that this is a differentiated group. Although the privileged as a group are overwhelmingly upper caste, not all upper caste people are privileged, some being poor.

Chapter 3

The Market as social institution

Q.1. What do you mean by market?

Ans:

The word 'market' may refer to particular markets that we may know of, such as the market next to the railway station, the fruit market, or the wholesale market. In yet another sense, 'market' refers to an area or category of trade or business, such as the market for cars or the market for readymade clothes.

Q.2. What is name of the book of Adam Smith?

Ans: The Wealth of Nation

Q.3. How did colonial period brought about changes in tribal market?

Ans: Tribal areas were 'opened up' by building roads and 'pacifying' the local people (many of whom resisted colonial rule through their so-called 'tribal rebellions'), so that the rich forest and mineral resources of these areas could be exploited. This led to the influx of traders, money lenders, and other non-tribal people from the plains into these areas. The local tribal economy was transformed as forest produce was sold to outsiders, and money and new kinds of goods entered the system. Tribals were also recruited as labourers to work on plantations and mines that were established under colonialism. A 'market' for tribal labour developed during the colonial period. Due to all these changes, local tribal economies became linked into wider markets, usually with very negative consequences for local people. For example, the entry of traders and moneylenders from outside the local area led to the impoverishment of adivas, many of whom lost their land to outsiders.

Q.4. How the layout of the market symbolizes the hierarchical inter-group social relations in Bastar Distt?

Ans:

Different social groups are located according to their position in the caste and social hierarchy as well as in the market system. The wealthy and high-ranking Rajput jeweller and the middle-ranking local Hindu traders sit in the central 'zones', and the tribal sellers of vegetables and local wares in the outer circles. The quality of social relations is expressed in the kinds of goods that are bought and sold, and the way in which transactions are carried out. For instance, interactions between tribals and non-tribal traders are very different than those between Hindus of the same community: they express hierarchy and social distance rather than social equality.

Q.5. What economic transformation were brought to India by colonism?

Ans:

- **Change in land agrarian economy.**
- **'jajmani system' incorporated into wider networks of exchange through which agricultural products and other goods circulated.**
- **Pre-colonial India had well-organised manufacturing centers as well as indigenous merchant groups, trading networks, and banking systems that enabled trade to take place within India, and between India and the rest of the world.**

Q. 6. Why was *Hundi* introduced?

Ans:

Because trade took place primarily within the caste and kinship networks of these communities, a merchant in one part of the country could issue a *hundi* that would be honoured by a merchant in another place.

Q.7. How there is close connection between the caste system and the economy?

Ans:

' Vaisyas' constitute one of the four *varnas* – an indication of the importance of the merchant and of trade or business in Indian society since ancient times. However, like the other *varnas*, 'Vaisya' is often a status that is *claimed* or aspired to rather than a fixed identity or social status. Although there are 'Vaisya' communities (such as *banias* in North India), whose traditional occupation has been trade or commerce for a long time, there are some caste groups that have entered into trade. Such groups tend to acquire or claim 'Vaisya' status in the process of upward mobility.

Q.8. How colonialism brought emergence of new market in India?

Ans:

- Demise of the Handloom industry due to the flooding of the market with cheap manufactured textiles from England.
- In the colonial era India began to be more fully linked to the world capitalist economy.
- After colonisation, India became a source of raw materials and agricultural products and a consumer of manufactured goods, both largely for the benefit of industrialising England.
- New groups (especially the Europeans) entered into trade and business, sometimes in alliance with existing merchant communities.
- New communities emerged to take advantage of the economic opportunities provided by colonialism, and continued to hold economic power even after Independence. Eg Marwaris

Q.9. How did new communities emerged due to colonialism?

Ans:

- New communities emerged to take advantage of the economic opportunities provided by colonialism, and continued to hold economic power even after Independence.
- Represented by leading industrial families such as the Birlas, the community also includes shopkeepers and small traders in the bazaars of towns throughout the country.
- The Marwaris became a successful business community only during the colonial period, when they took advantage of new opportunities in colonial cities such as Calcutta and settled throughout the country to carry out trade and money lending.
- Like the Nakarattars, the success of the Marwaris rested on their extensive social networks, which created the relations of trust necessary to operate their banking system.
- Many Marwari families accumulated enough wealth to become moneylenders, and by acting as bankers also helped the commercial expansion of the British in India.
- Some Marwari families transformed themselves into modern industrialists, and even today Marwaris control more of India's industry than any other community.

Q.10. How capitalism is linked to social system?

Ans:

- Marx understood capitalism as a system of **commodity** production, or production for the market, through the use of wage labour.
- Marx wrote that all economic systems are also social systems. Each **mode of production** consists of particular relations of production, which in turn give rise to a specific class structure.
- He emphasised that the economy does not consist of *things* (goods circulating in the market), but is made up of *relations* between *people* who are connected to one another through the process of production.
- Under the capitalist mode of production, labour itself becomes a commodity, because workers must sell their **labour power** in the market to earn a wage.
- This gives rise to two basic classes – capitalists, who own them earns of production (such as the factories), and workers, who sell their labour to the capitalists.
- The capitalist class is able to profit from this system by paying the workers less than the value of what they actually produce, and so extracting **surplus value** from their labour. Marx's theory of capitalist economy and society provided the inspiration for numerous theories and debates about the nature of capitalism throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Chapter 4

Patterns of social inequality and exclusion

Q.1. What are three forms of social resources?

Ans: The social resources can be divided into three forms of capital –

- Economic capital in the form of material assets and income.
- Cultural capital such as educational qualifications and status
- Social capital in the form of networks of contacts and social associations
- These three forms of capital overlap and one can be converted into the other.
- For example, a person from a well-off family (economic capital) can afford expensive higher education, and so can acquire cultural or educational capital. Someone with influential relatives and friends (social capital) may – through access to good advice, recommendations or information – manage to get a well-paid job.

Q.2. What are three key principles of social stratification?

Ans:

1. **Social stratification is a characteristic of society, not simply a function of individual differences.** Social stratification is a society-wide system that unequally distributes social resources among categories of people. In the most technologically primitive societies – hunting and gathering societies, for instance – little was produced so only rudimentary social stratification could exist. In more technologically advanced societies where people produce a surplus over and above their basic needs, however, social resources are unequally distributed to various social categories regardless of people's innate individual abilities.

2. **Social stratification persists over generations. It is closely linked to the family and to the inheritance of social resources from one generation to the next.** A person's social position is ascribed. That is, children assume the social positions of their parents. Within the caste system, birth dictates occupational opportunities. A Dalit is likely to be confined to traditional occupations such as agricultural labour, scavenging, or leather work, with little chance of being able to get high-paying white-collar or professional work. The ascribed aspect of social inequality is reinforced by the practice of endogamy. That is, marriage is usually restricted to members of the same caste, ruling out the potential for blurring caste lines through inter-marriage.

3. **Social stratification is supported by patterns of belief, or ideology.** No system of social stratification is likely to persist over generations unless it is widely viewed as being either fair or inevitable. The caste system, for example, is justified in terms of the opposition of purity and pollution, with the Brahmins designated as the most superior and Dalits as the most inferior by virtue of their birth and

occupation. Not everyone, though, thinks of a system of inequality as legitimate. Typically, people with the greatest social privileges express the strongest support for systems of stratification such as caste and race. Those who have experienced the exploitation and humiliation of being at the bottom of the hierarchy are most likely to challenge it.

Q.3. What is prejudice?

Ans:

Prejudices refer to pre-conceived opinions or attitudes held by members of one group towards another. The word literally means 'pre-judgement', that is, an opinion formed in advance of any familiarity with the subject, before considering any available evidence. A prejudiced person's preconceived views are often based on hearsay rather than on direct evidence, and are resistant to change even in the face of new information. Prejudice may be either positive or negative.

Q.4. How prejudice is grounded in stereotypes ?

Ans: Prejudices are often grounded in stereotypes, fixed and inflexible characterizations of a group of people. Stereotypes are often applied to ethnic and racial groups and to women. In a country such as India, which was colonized for a long time, many of these stereotypes are partly colonial creations. Some communities were characterised as 'martial races', some others as effeminate or cowardly. In both English and Indian fictional writings we often encounter an entire group of people classified as 'lazy' or 'cunning'.

Q.5. What is discrimination?

Ans: Discrimination refers to actual behaviour towards another group or individual.

Discrimination can be seen in practices that disqualify members of one group from opportunities open to others, as when a person is refused a job because of their gender or religion. Discrimination can be very hard to prove because it may not be open or explicitly stated. Discriminatory behaviour or practices may be presented as motivated by other, more justifiable, reasons rather than prejudice. For example, the person who is refused a job because of their caste maybe told that they were less qualified than others, and that the selection was done purely on merit.

Q.6. What is social exclusion?

Ans: Social exclusion refers to ways in which individuals may become cut off from full involvement in the wider society. It focuses attention on a broad range of factors that prevent individuals or groups from having opportunities open to the majority of the population. In order to live a full and active life, individuals must not only be able to feed, clothe and house themselves, but should also have access to essential goods and services such as education, health, transportation, insurance, social security, banking and even access to the police or judiciary. Social exclusion is not accidental but systematic – it is the result of structural features of society.

Q.7. What is untouchability?

Ans. 'Untouchability' is an extreme and particularly vicious aspect of the caste system that prescribes stringent social sanctions against members of castes located at the bottom of the purity-pollution scale. Strictly speaking, the 'untouchable' castes are outside the caste hierarchy – they are considered to be so 'impure' that their mere touch severely pollutes members of all other castes, bringing terrible punishment for the former and forcing the latter to perform elaborate purification rituals. In fact, notions of 'distance pollution' existed in many regions of India (particularly in the south) such that even the mere presence or the shadow of an 'untouchable' person is considered polluting. Despite the limited literal meaning of the word, the institution of 'untouchability' refers not just to the avoidance or prohibition of physical contact but to a much broader set of social sanctions.

Q.8. What are the features of disability?

Ans: Some common features central to the public perception of 'disability' all over the world

- Disability is understood as a biological given.
- Whenever a disabled person is confronted with problems, it is taken for granted that the problems originate from her/his impairment. The disabled person is seen as a victim.
- Disability is supposed to be linked with the disabled individual's self perception.
- The very idea of disability suggests that they are in need of help.

Q.9. What are laws passed to end, prohibit and punish caste discrimination, specially untouchability?

Ans: Caste Disabilities Removal Act of 1850

- Constitution Amendment(Ninety Third Amendment) Act of 2005.
- Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989.

Q.10. What were the measures taken for upliftment of OBC?

Ans: The OBCs are a much more diverse group than the Dalits or adivasis. The first government of independent India under Jawaharlal Nehru appointed a commission to look into measures for the welfare of the OBCs. The First Backward Classes Commission headed by Kaka Kalelkar submitted its report in 1953. But the political climate at the time led to the report being side lined. From the mid-fifties, the OBC issue became a regional affair pursued at the state rather than the central level.

Q.11. Who are adivasis?

Ans: The jana or tribes were believed to be 'people of the forest' whose distinctive habitat in the hill and forest are as shaped their economic, social and political attributes. However, ecological isolation was nowhere absolute. Tribal groups have had long and close association with Hindu society and culture, making the boundaries between 'tribe' and 'caste' quite porous.

Q.12 How the policies of Indian Government proved to be bane for adivasis?

Ans:

- The government monopoly over forests continued.
- The policy of capital-intensive industrialisation adopted by the Indian government required mineral resources and power-generation capacities which were concentrated in Adivasi areas.
- Adivasi lands were rapidly acquired for new mining and dam projects. In the process, millions of adivasis were displaced without any appropriate compensation or rehabilitation.
- Eg. Sardar Sarovar dam on the river Narmada in western India and the Polavaram dam on the river Godavari in Andhra Pradesh will displace hundreds of thousands of adivasis, driving them to greater destitution.
- These processes continue to prevail and have become even more powerful since the 1990s when economic liberalisation policies were officially adopted by the Indian government. It is now easier for corporate firms to acquire large areas of land by displacing adivasis.

Chapter 5

The challenges of cultural diversity

Q.1. What is diversity?

Ans: The term 'diversity' emphasises differences rather than inequalities. When we say that India is a nation of great cultural diversity, we mean that there are many different types of social groups and communities living here. These are communities defined by cultural markers such as language, religion, sect, race or caste. When these diverse communities are also part of a larger entity like a nation, then difficulties may be created by competition or conflict between them.

Q.2. What is ascribed status?

Ans: The ascriptive status are determined by the accidents of birth and do not involve any choice on the part of the individuals concerned. It is an odd fact of social life that people feel a deep sense of security and satisfaction in belonging to communities in which their membership is entirely accidental.

Q.3. What are the features of ascribed status?

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A second feature of ascriptive identities and community feeling is that they are universal. Everyone has a motherland, a mother tongue, a family, a faith... This may not necessarily be strictly true of every individual, but it is true in a general sense.

Q.4. What is state?

Ans: In Max Weber's well-known definition, a state is a "body that successfully claims a monopoly of legitimate force in a particular territory". The word "State" has a capital S when it is used to denote the federal units within the Indian nation-state.

Q.5. What is nation?

Ans: A nation is a peculiar sort of community that is easy to describe but hard to define.

Q.6. What is nation-state?

Ans: Nations are communities that have a state of their own. That is why the two are joined with a hyphen to form the term nation-state. In recent times there has been a one-to-one bond between nation and state.

Q.7. What is regionalism?

Ans: Regionalism in India is rooted in India's diversity of languages, cultures, tribes, and religions. It is also encouraged by the geographical concentration of the identity markers in particular regions, and fuelled by a sense of regional deprivation. Indian federalism has been a means of accommodating these regional sentiments.

Q.8. What is communalism?

Ans: The word 'communalism' refers to aggressive chauvinism based on religious identity. Chauvinism itself is an attitude that sees one's own group as the only legitimate or worthy group, with other groups being seen – by definition – as inferior, illegitimate and opposed. Thus, to simplify further, communalism is an aggressive political ideology linked to religion. This is a peculiarly Indian, or perhaps South Asian, meaning that is different from the sense of the ordinary English word. In the English language, "communal" means something related to a community or collectivity as different from an individual. The English meaning is neutral, whereas the South Asian meaning is strongly charged. The charge may be seen as positive – if one is sympathetic to communalism – or negative, if one is opposed to it.

Q.9. What is secularism?

Ans: In the western context the main sense of these terms has to do with the separation of church and state. The separation of religious and political authority marked a major turning point in the social history of the west. This separation was related to the process of "secularisation", or the progressive retreat of religion from public life, as it was converted from a mandatory obligation to a voluntary personal practice.

Q.10. What are the different senses in which 'secularism' has been understood in India?

Ans: The Indian meanings of secular and secularism include the western sense but also involve others. The most common use of secular in everyday language is as the opposite of communal. So, a secular person or state is one that does not favour any particular religion over others. Secularism in this sense is the opposite of religious chauvinism and it need not necessarily imply hostility to religion as such. In terms of the state-religion relationship, this sense of Kabir secularism implies equal respect for all religions, rather than separation or distancing. For example, the secular Indian state declares public holidays to mark the festivals of all religions.

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