

MODULE 1: CONTEMPORARY INDIAN SOCIETY

Unit 1. Understanding and Addressing Diversity in Indian society

a) Difference between Diversity, Stratification and Marginalisation in Contemporary India.

India is one nation, but a plural society. Its plurality is in-built in its geographical, demographic, historical, political, economic and socio-cultural base. Its social diversity has been expressed in various forms such as languages, religions, tribes and castes.

Concept of Diversity

India has been considered as perhaps the largest and most plural society in the world. In India, people speak an array of languages and use a wide range of scripts. As a country, India has major religions - Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism - living side by side. India is the world's most complex and comprehensively pluralistic society, home to a vast variety of castes, tribes, communities, religions, languages, customs and living styles. It was estimated by the Anthropological Survey of India that there are nearly 4,599 separate communities in India with as many as 325 languages and dialects in 12 distinct language families and some 24 scripts.

An Assortment of people who bring of backgrounds, styles and beliefs as wealth to the groups and organizations, with which they interact with, is called Diversity. Diversity is any collective mixture characterized by complexities, similarities and related tensions and differences. It lays emphasis on valuing the differences between people.

Diversity embraces an understanding that every person is unique, at the same time also recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the extent of age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities, political beliefs, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, race, religious beliefs, or other ideologies.

"Diversity" means more than just acknowledging and/or tolerating difference. Diversity is a set of conscious practices that involve:

- Understanding and appreciating interdependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural environment.
- Practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own.
- Understanding that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing;
- Recognizing that personal, cultural and institutionalized discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others;

- Building alliances across differences so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination.

Diversity includes, therefore, knowing how to relate to those qualities and conditions that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong, yet are present in other individuals and groups. These include but are not limited to age, ethnicity, class, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race, sexual orientation, as well as religious status, gender expression, educational background, geographical location, income, marital status, parental status, and work experiences.

Concept of Stratification

Social stratification is a kind of social differentiation whereby a society groups people into socioeconomic strata, based upon their occupation and income, wealth and social status, or derived power (social and political). As such, stratification is the relative social position of persons within a social group, category, geographic region, or social unit.

The categorization of people by social strata occurs in all societies, ranging from the complex, state-based or polycentric societies to tribal and feudal societies, which are based upon socio-economic relations among classes of nobility and classes of peasants.

Historically, whether or not hunter-gatherer societies can be defined as socially stratified or if social stratification began with agriculture and common acts of social exchange, remains a debated matter in the social sciences.^[2] Determining the structures of social stratification arises from inequalities of status among persons, therefore, the degree of social inequality determines a person's social stratum. Generally, the greater the social complexity of a society, the more social strata exist, by way of social differentiation.^[3]

Stratification means arranging something, or something that has been arranged, into categories. Stratification is a system or formation of layers, classes, or categories. Stratification is used to describe a particular way of arranging seeds while planting, as well as the geological layers of rocks. But like so many science words, somehow, it's not content to stay in the scientific realm, and must also have a place in the social sphere, where its job is to categorize and arrange people into groups: upper, middle, and lower classes.

Definition of Stratification.

Stratification is the division of something, especially society, into different classes or layers. 'The process by which individuals and groups are ranked in more or less enduring hierarchy of status is known as stratification'

<http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/social-stratification-meaning-types-and-characteristics-sociology-2446-words/6199>

Four underlying principles

Four principles are posited to underlie social stratification.

- 1) social stratification is socially defined as a property of a society rather than individuals in that society.
- 2) social stratification is reproduced from generation to generation.
- 3) social stratification is universal (found in every society) but variable (differs across time and place).
- 4) social stratification involves not just quantitative inequality but qualitative beliefs and attitudes about social status.

In India, caste is one set of role cards and perhaps the most important one. One's caste is ascribed; that is, children inherit the status and functions of their parents. At birth Indians are dealt their caste card. This is alien to what many people in the United States believe about the "good society." Our parents, relatives, teachers, and friends tell us in a thousand ways that what we make of our lives depends on our efforts, and many of us think all societies should play by the same rules, or at least strive to do so. But it is important to remember that there is no society where individual effort is the sole criterion for status.

Concept of Marginalization.

The process by which a group of individuals is pushed to the margins of the society is called marginalisation. It may be defined as a social process in which people are systematically blocked from opportunities, resources, and rights.

Marginalization is the process of pushing a particular group or groups of people to the edge of society by not allowing them an active voice, identity, or place in it. Through both direct and indirect processes, marginalized groups may be relegated to a secondary position or made to feel as if they are less important than those who hold more power or privilege in society. Individuals and groups can be marginalized on the basis of multiple aspects of their

identity, including but not limited to: race, gender or gender identity, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, sexuality, age, and/or religion. Some individuals identify with multiple marginalized groups, and may experience further marginalization as a result of their intersecting identities.

Definition of Marginalization

Definition 1 : - The process whereby something or someone is pushed to the edge of a group and accorded lesser importance. This is predominantly a social phenomenon by which a minority or sub-group is excluded, and their needs or desires ignored.

Definition 2: - The process of according less importance to something or someone moved away from the inner workings of the group. A social phenomenon of excluding a minority, subgroup, or undesirables by ignoring their needs, desires, and expectations

Definition 3: - The definition of marginalization is the process of making a group or class of people less important or relegated to a secondary position.

Marginalization is a multidimensional, multiclausal, historical phenomenon. There are no general laws to understand and comprehend the complex nature of marginalization. The analytical tools that can be used in most cases include class in relation to specific social, cultural, economic and political conditions as well as ideological systems. The nature of marginalization varies in different settings. **For example**, the marginalization of women in Arab is not the same as in India. Though they broadly share some feature. The religious, ideological system patriarchy, political economy of a country and the overall social system has its impact on the marginalization of specific group or an individual.

b) Concept and characteristics of diversity: linguistic, regional and religious

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c) Challenges and Role of Education: Linguistic diversity, Regional and Religious Diversity

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Concept and Nature:

India is a nation of vast linguistic diversity

The Constitution of India now recognizes 23 languages, spoken in different parts the country. These consist of English plus 22 Indian languages: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Meitei, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.

While Hindi is the official language of the central government in India, with English as a provisional official language, individual state legislatures can adopt any regional language as the official language of that state.

The Constitution of India recognizes 23 official languages, spoken in different parts of the country, of which two official and classical languages: Sanskrit and Tamil.

Definition 1: Linguistic Diversity is a way to talk about varied types of traits including language family, grammar, and vocabulary.

Definition 2: Linguism is a division among members of a society on the basis of language , sub- language.

When India got its independence, it was decided that English should continue as official language along with Hindi for a period of 15 years. But English has continued to remain till today an associated official language mainly because of the revolt by the South Indian states against the compulsory learning of Hindi as official and national language.

The issue of linguism raises a very crucial question in the area of education is What should be the language burden on school going child?

CAUSES OF LINGUISM

There are many causes at the root of linguism in our country, the major one's are the following.

1. Psychological causes

People of a particular region are attached to the regional language which is their mother tongue. Hence they do not easily accept to learn another Indian language

2. Historical causes

India had been invaded by numerous foreign countries. e.g. French people invaded us

country and established their supremacy in Pondicherry, Portuguese in Goa. Mughals came and brought Persian language. British spread English language all over India. As a result, Indian languages became subordinated to these languages. This gave birth to linguism as people from different regions promoted their own regional language in their states.

3. Geographical causes

Every language has its own literature. This literature is influenced everywhere by local geographical conditions such as plains, mountains, local vegetation and local culture. It reflects the life of the people who speak the language. Hence an individual does not willingly accept it if the language of another region is forced on him.

4. Economic causes

There are some economic causes that also inspire linguism. Some languages are financially assisted by the government for their progress but people speaking other languages object to this.

5. Political causes

Linguism is also inspired by the political interest and aspiration of different politicians and political groups. During elections in order to win votes many communal political parties raise the language issue to instigate their people and win their votes.

6. Social causes

Linguism is encouraged by some social factors. The language that is adopted by the society is respected. On the contrary the languages that caters to contradictory presumptions are objected, this leads to linguism. e.g. Insistence on continuance of English as Associate official language along with Hindi by South Indian states like Tamil Nadu

Adverse Consequences of Linguism

- Linguistic divide within the country
- Influence on medium of instruction in different parts of India
- Negative political exploitation on the basis of language
- Threat to National Integration
- Inadequate representation of Linguistic Minorities

ROLE OF EDUCATION

Education plays an important role in the elimination of linguism.

1. Education for national integration
2. Inculcation of democratic principle for language options in education
3. Creating interest for language study
4. Co-curricular activities:
 - (a) Competitions, games, dramas promoting respect for Indian Languages
 - (b) Appreciation of contributions of great poets and authors to the development of Indian languages.
5. The 3 language formula is given by Kothari Commission which is modified and revised form of earlier policy, equalizes the language burden and also develops the Indian identity in every in every citizen through the learning of a common language and it has been adopted by all the states
 - a. Mother tongue/ Regional language
 - b. Official Indian language or associate official Indian languages
 - c. Modern Indian language or western language not included in (a) or (b).

CONCLUSION

Finally, it should be remembered that in order to solve the problems of linguism it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive viewpoint. Each language should be encouraged by the government in every region. If the prejudice concerning the other language is removed from the mind and comprehensive and sympathetic viewpoint is adopted it becomes possible for a number of languages to prosper.

Regional Diversity

Nature: India Political territorial division consists of 29 states and 7 Union territories (Updated data July 2015)

This division is accompanied by significant regional diversity which is distinct and visible as one moves from state to state.

Diversity exists in language, food, dress and customs. Every state has its own distinctive cultural identity within the common Indian culture.

The North Indian states are markedly different from the South Indian states in all these areas.

Regionalism:

Meaning: -

The word —Regional means any element belongs to a particular region, and the feeling related to the people belonging to the particular region is known as —Regionalism

The term regionalism has two connotations:

In the positive sense, it is a political attribute associated with people 's love for their region, culture, language, etc. with a view to maintain their independent identity.

In the negative sense, it implies excessive attachment to one 's region in preference to the country, or the state. While positive regionalism is a welcome thing in so far maintaining as it encourages the people to develop a sense of brotherhood and commonness on the basis of common language, religion or historical background. The negative sense regionalism is a great threat to the unity and integrity of the country.

Definition: -

Regionalism is the sense of affection and attachment for people belonging to one 's own region rather than for those who belongs to some other region. —Devotion to the interest of one 's own region.

In the Indian context generally the term regionalism has been used in the negative sense. As a result of this people of one region in India have started looking at the people from some other part of the country in the same light in which they are prone to regard foreigners. They want that only people of their own area should run the government in their region while they do not want to make any place for people who have migrated from some other regions, irrespective of the period for which they have been living there.

In this way, some people have demanded the formation of separate state. For e.g. the formation of Uttaranchal & Jharkhand, state which the government has recently fulfilled. Even then, functions of government have been divided between the central government and the respective state government. All these state are free to act in all domestic matter.

CAUSES OF REGIONALISM.

1. Geographical Causes: -

There is a vast difference between food habits, language, culture, customs, dress, life style of people belonging to different states. This diversity is reflected in the state wise division and within the states. **For e.g.** If one has to travel from northern to states

like Delhi and Punjab to southern states like Kerala and Tamilnadu they are bound to experience huge discrepancies in the language culture, dress and food

2. **Historical Causes:** -

The we-feeling was shattered due to some historical causes. Many states in India had serious conflicts in the past with each other. These conflicts had created bitterness among them, therefore they cannot meet with each other with open heart and open mind.

3. **Political Causes:**

In different regions some people have demanded for the formation of regional government and this trend of thinking has been inspired by regional interest and the aim of gaining power

4. **Psychological causes:** -

It is wish of the most of the people that the progress and the achievement of their region should be the maximum. The idea in itself is neither bad nor deniable, but when they disregard the nation 's interest and those of the region for the attainment of this objective then

these feelings can be classified under regionalism.

5. **Social causes**

In a country like India, marriages are preferred with the person of the same regional background. Due to this, people belonging to one region avoid marriages in other regions.

6. **Economic causes:** -

Due to Economic problems such as lack of resources, unemployment etc, of a particular region people from those regions often migrates to comparatively stable economic

region. If this migration continues and increases, then it may result in sudden rise in the burden of that area. The people start hating them and try to turn them out from that region.

ROLE OF EDUCATION IN ERADICATING REGIONALISM: -

1. Encouragement of travel and communication
2. Propagating National History
3. Prevention of influence of Regional political parties in education
4. Purposive teaching of History

In literature, not only English, Hindi and the regional language must be included but other languages must also be made familiar.

Conclusion:

Education cannot solve the problem but it can create a background in the minds of the children to think beyond regional boundaries and to make approach wide and positive.

Regionalism cannot be considered as a big problem unless it hampers the nation 's unity. It is

such a problem that cannot be solved all of sudden. The problem should be handled tactfully and education is the most effective solution to create social harmony.

Religious Diversity: Nature

Indian Society reveals another aspect of Diversity: Different religions are followed by the Indian people for centuries. The Major ones are

Hindus

Muslims

Christians

Sikhs

Jains

Buddhists

Others (Zoroastrians, Jews etc.)

Four issues in religious diversity in India

1. How can the uniqueness of each religion be maximized?
2. How can we propagate similarity of religions based on our common humanity?
3. How can we advocate complementary and supportive sentiments among religions, including inclusivity, unity, variety and interdependence?
4. How can we promote the convergence of religions on the basis of shared interests, values and practice, particularly through prayers and social service?

[*http://religionanddiversity.ca/media/uploads/workshop_report_living_with_religious_diversity_2013.pdf](http://religionanddiversity.ca/media/uploads/workshop_report_living_with_religious_diversity_2013.pdf)

Religious Diversity: Challenges

Communalism

Communalism is a social problem and it is said that communalism word emerged in the 19th century and intensified in 20th century.

Definition:1 - The word communalism comes from the word community which in simple term means individual's attachment or identification with the community which she\ he belongs. In this sense the word communalism is a positive term.

Definition :2 - In its modern usage, term —communalism refers to the tendency of socio-religious groups to promote political, social and economic interests of one group even at the expense of another group. In doing so, the religious group may consider other religious communities as opponents and enemies. It implies an extreme sense of pride in an identification with one own community or religion. It arouses out of religious fundamentalism; the belief that one's religion is the only supreme faith. So, appeals to the danger to one's religion or mere mention of disrespect shown to places of worship are aroused and this leads to communal disputes.

For eg: Babri Masjid incident, 1982 Meerut riot, Godhra incident, revolt of 1857, riots in Jamshedpur 1979. This problem was provoked during British rule & they used this for divide and rule in India.

Thus communal dispute occurs among two communities like Hindus & Muslims, Hindu's & Sikhs, Sikhs and Buddhist and various other communities.

Causes of Communalism

Communalism is a multidimensional, complex, social phenomenon. There are social political, economic, cultural and religious factors which account for the genesis of communalism and communal violence.

1. **Historical Causes:** British imperialism used it as a divide and rule policy.
2. **Political Causes:** Vested Political interests after independence used various means to obtain power through communal forces. **For eg.** Partition of India, Dispute over Kashmir, Khalistan Movement.
3. **Economic Causes:** At the time of independence resources were limited and expectations were very high. Soon there emerged a competition for limited resources. In this competition the vested interests found an easy way to mobilize people on caste, communal and regional basis to demand better share.
4. **Selfish Vested Interests:** Political parties and government, having failed to fulfil the

expectations of people, use religion & tradition as diverting tactics. Some parties tell the religious minorities that they are being discriminated against by majority dominated governments.

5. **Unemployed Youth**: The frustrated, educated unemployed or under employed youth, full of energies are particularly targeted to keep them busy in divisive politics. Youth in India today has fallen prey to communal leadership.

Role of Education

1. The government should not yield to communal pressures and their negative influence on educational aims and policies. A Secular policy must pervade nationwide in all educational institutions.

2. Educational system must be reconstructed to emphasize nature of our culture and inculcate secularism and scientific temper among young students

3. Curriculum and textbooks should be free from religious bias.

4. Co-curricular Activities should promote Secularism

(i) General Assembly: Secular Atmosphere- prayers of all religious.

(ii) Celebration of Festivals of all religions with equal fervour.

(iii) Emphasis on Essential contribution of different Religions.

(iv) Tribute to various Religious headers on important days.

(v) Emphasis on the importance of Democracy/Equality and Brotherhood

Conclusion

India is Unique because of its Diversity

Understand, Accept and Appreciate India's Diversity

Celebrate unity in diversity.

Education should promote National Integration through Curricular and Co- Curricular Activities

References: (Online Resources)

http://religionanddiversity.ca/media/uploads/workshop_report_living_with_religious_diversity_2013.pdf

<http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/language/essay-on-linguistic-diversity-in-india/4030/>

<http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/india-2/essay-on-the-different-forms-of-diversity-inindia/4001/>

(Please Note: Refer to the list of references provided in the syllabus for Course 2, in addition to the above)

Question Bank Unit 1

Course 2: Contemporary India and Education

Unit 1

Essay Questions

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1. Linguism is a barrier to social progress in India '. Explain the statement with regard to the causes and consequences of Linguism

2. 'India 's Diversity is Unique and must be celebrated 'Justify the statement in the light of the nature of Diversity in Indian society.

3. What are the causes of Communalism in India? How can Education promote

communal harmony?

4. Describe the regional diversity in Indian society. How can Education eradicate regionalism?

5. Discuss the role of Education in promoting 'Unity in Diversity'

Short Notes:

1. Causes of Regionalism in India
2. Role of Education in eliminating Linguism in Indian society
3. Adverse consequences of Communalism
4. Causes of Regionalism in India