

Understanding Marginalization

1. MARGINALISED SECTIONS.

- A marginal group is one that does not belong or which dwells at the margin of two cultures and two societies and possesses a marginal mentality with its unresolved identity crises.”
- It is first seen as a distinctive social group, with their own characteristic's features, victimised by the dominant members of the host society.
- They are subjected to unequal treatment by way of acts of discrimination.
- In India, large numbers of people have experienced marginalisation because of the caste system.

2. ADIVASIS.

- The term literally means 'original inhabitants' - are communities who lived, and often continued to live, in close association with forests.
- Around 8 per cent of India's population is Adivasi and many of India's most important mining and Industrial centres are in Adivasi areas - Jamshedpur, Rourkela, Bokaro and Bhilai among others.
- Adivasis are not homogeneous population: there are over 500 different Adivasi groups in India.
- Adivasis are particularly numerous in states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and in the north-eastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura.
- Adivasi societies are also most distinctive because there is often very little hierarchy among them. Thus, makes them radically different from communities organised around principles of *jati-varna* or those that were ruled by Kings.
- Adivasis have their own language, which have often deeply influenced the formation of 'mainstream' Indian languages, like Bengali.

3. ADIVASIS AND STEREOTYPING.

- In India, we usually 'showcase' Adivasi communities in particular way. Thus, during school functions or other official events or on books and movies, Adivasis are invariably portrayed in very stereotypical ways - in colourful costumes, headgear and through their dancing.
- This often wrongly leads people believing that they are exotic, primitive and backward. Often Adivasis are blamed for their lack of

advancement as they are believed to be resistant to change or new ideas.

4. ADIVASIS AND DEVELOPMENT.

- Forests covered the major part of our country till the nineteenth century and the Adivasis had a deep knowledge of, access to, as well as control over most of these vast tracts at least till the middle of the nineteenth century.
- This meant that they were not ruled by large States and Empires. Instead, often empires heavily depended on Adivasis for the crucial access to forest resources.
- This is radically contrary to our image of Adivasis today as somewhat marginal and powerless communities. In the pre-colonial world, they were traditionally ranged Hunter-gatherers and nomads and lived by shifting agriculture and cultivating in one place.
- For the past 200 years Adivasis have been increasingly forced - through economic changes, forest policies and political force applied by the State and private industry - to migrate to live as workers in plantations, at construction sites, in industries and as domestic workers.
- Adivasis have also lived in areas that are rich in minerals and other large industrial projects.
- Losing their lands and access to the forest means that tribals lose their main source of livelihood and food. Having gradually lost access to their traditional homelands, many Adivasis have migrated to cities in search of work where they are employed for very low wages in local industries or at building or construction sites.

5. MINORITIES AND MARGINALISATION.

- Constitution provides safeguard to religious and linguistic minorities as part of our Fundamental Rights.
- The term minority is most commonly used to refer to communities that are numerically small in relation to the rest of the population.
- The Indian Constitution recognised that the culture of the majority influences the way in which society and government might express themselves. In such cases, size can be a disadvantage and lead to the marginalisation of the relatively smaller communities.
- Safeguards are needed to protect minority communities against the possibility of being culturally dominated by the majority. They also protect them against any discrimination and disadvantage that they may face.
- The Constitution provides these safeguards because it is committed to protecting India's cultural diversity and promoting equality as well as justice.

6. MUSLIMS AND MARGINALISATION.

- According to 2001 census, Muslims are 13.4 per cent of India's population and are a marginalised community in India today because in comparison to other communities, they have over the years been deprived of the benefits of socio-economic development
 - Recognising that Muslims in India were lagging in terms of various development indicators, the government set up a high-level Committee to examine the social, economic and Educational status of the Muslim community.
7. The Muslim community is also socially marginalised.
 8. Muslims are 13.4 % of India's population. They have over the years been deprived of the benefits of socio-economic development. They have little access to education. They are deprived of basic amenities like water, electricity. In public employment too they always lag behind to other communities.
 9. The government is very active to improve the condition of the Muslim community.
 10. It set-up a high-level committee in 2005 to examine the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim Community in India. The report discusses in detail the marginalisation of this community. It suggests that on a range of social, economic and educational indicators the situation of the Muslim community is comparable to total of other marginalised communities like Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
 11. Muslim customs and practices such as wearing burqa and fez make them different from others. Because of this, they tend to be identified differently and some people think that they are not like the 'rest of us'. This often becomes an excuse to treat them unfairly.
 12. This social marginalisation of Muslims has led to them migrating from places where they have lived.
 13. In our country, there are several marginalised communities like Dalits.
 14. It is quite essential to bring these communities in the mainstream so that they may avail access to rights, development and other opportunities.
 15. **Marginalisation:** The term refers to the situation in which an individual or a group of individuals is deprived of certain privileges or treated as different from others.

16. **Adivasi:** It literally means 'original inhabitants'.
17. **Hierarchy:** A graded system or arrangement of persons or things. These who find themselves avail the least power.
18. **Mainstream:** People or communities that are considered to be at the centre of a society.
19. **Displaced:** People who are forced to move from their homes for some reasons such as construction of dams, etc.
20. **Militarised:** An area where the presence of the armed forces is considerable.
21. **Malnourished:** One who does not get adequate food.
22. **Ghettoization:** Ghettoisation is a process in which an area or locality is populated largely by members of a particular community.

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