
Chapter 3

Democracy and Diversity

❖ Racial Discrimination

- It refers to the ideology that discriminates people on the basis of their skin colour. The 'whites' consider themselves superior than the 'blacks'.
- Mexico Olympics: In the Olympics held at Mexico City (1968), US athletes Tommy Smith and John Carlos received their medals wearing black socks and no shoes that signified Black poverty. This was the first incident opposing racial discrimination and proved to be an important landmark in the history of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.

❖ Overlapping and Cross-cutting Differences

- Social divisions are produced when one kind of social difference becomes more important than the other and people start feeling that they belong to different communities.
- Overlapping social differences create possibilities of deep social divisions and tensions. People feel strongly connected to one group and alienated towards the other.
- Cross-cutting social differences are easier to accommodate as each person is a part of more than one social group and does not strongly identify with the members of only one group.

❖ Politics of Social Divisions

- Competition among various political parties on the basis of some existing social division can transform these social divisions into political divisions and would further lead to conflicts, violence or even disintegration of the nation.

❖ Range of Outcomes

- In Northern Ireland, hundreds of civilians, militants and security forces were killed in the fight between Unionists (represented the Protestants) and Nationalists (represented the Catholics) and between the security forces of the UK and the Nationalists.
- Political competition along religious and ethnic lines resulted in the disintegration of Yugoslavia into six independent countries.
- Social divisions affect voting in most of the countries. People from one community tend to prefer some party more than the others.
- However, social division does not lead to disintegration of the country if it is respected and dealt with properly.

❖ Three Determinants

- Three factors decide the outcome of politics of social divisions.
 - It depends on how people perceive their identities. If people see that their identities are multiple and are complementary with the national identity, then it becomes easy to accommodate.
 - Demands that are within the constitutional framework and are not at the cost of another community become easier to accommodate.
 - It depends on how justly the government reacts to the demands of the different groups.

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- Political expression of social division in a country allows various marginal social groups to express their grievances and get the government to attend to these. Hence, social diversity is normal and healthy for a democracy.