

Revision Notes
CHAPTER - 3
Democracy and Diversity

1. We saw how power can be distributed to accommodate linguistic and regional diversities.
2. People also identify them on the basis of their physical appearance, class, religion, gender, caste, tribes, etc.
3. In this chapter, we will study how democracy responds to social difference, divisions, and inequalities.
4. We then turn to how democratic politics affects and is affected by these social diversities.

A Story from Mexico Olympics

1. The story depicts an important landmark in the history of the CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES.
2. The two men standing with clenched fists upraised and head bowed are the US athletes, Tommie Smith and John Carlos.
3. The International Olympics Association held Carlos and Smith guilty of violating the Olympic spirit by making a political statement.
4. Their medals were taken back.
5. Back home, they were subjected to a lot of criticism even Norman had also suffered a lot, he was not included in the next Olympics.
6. But their action gained attention for the Civil Rights Movements in the US.

Differences, similarities, divisions

1. The athletes above were responding to social divisions and social inequalities.
2. Social diversity can take different forms in different societies.

Origins of social differences

1. These social differences are mostly based on an accident of birth.

2. We don't choose to belong to our community.
3. But all kinds of social differences are not based on our birth.
4. Some of the differences are based on our choices.
5. For example, some people are atheists. They don't believe in God or any religion.
6. Every social difference does not lead to social divisions.
7. In the instances above, Carlos and Smith were similar in one way and thus different from Norman who was white.
8. But they were also all similar in another way – they were all athletes who stood against racial discrimination.
9. We all have more than one identity and can belong to more than one social group.
10. We have different identities in different contexts.

Overlapping and cross – cutting differences

1. Social division takes place when some social differences overlap with other differences.
2. In the US because the blacks tend to be the poor, homeless and discriminated against.
3. In our country, Dalits tend to be poor and landless.
4. They often face discrimination and injustice.
5. The group that shares a common interest on one issue are likely to be in different issues.
6. Overlapping social differences create possibilities of deep social divisions and tensions.
7. Cross – cutting social differences are easier to accommodate.

Politics of social divisions

1. At first sight, it would appear that the combination of politics and social divisions is very dangerous and explosive.
2. Political parties can make social divisions into political divisions and lead to conflict, violence or even disintegration of a country.
3. This has happened in many countries.

Range of outcomes

1. Northern Ireland of the United Kingdom has been for many years the site of a violent and bitter ethnic – political conflicts.
2. Such example leads some people to conclude that politics and social divisions must not be allowed to mix.

3. But if social divisions do exist in a country, they must never be expressed in politics.
4. At the same time every expression of social divisions in politics does not lead to such disasters.
5. In a democracy, it is only natural that political parties would talk about these divisions, make different promises to different communities.
6. Social divisions affect voting in most countries.
7. In many countries, there are parties that focus only on one community.

Three determinants

1. Three factors are crucial in deciding the outcome of politics of social divisions.
 - a. First of all, outcome depends on how people perceive their identities.
 - b. Second, it depends on how political leaders raise the demands of any community.
 - c. Third, it depends on the how the government reacts to demands of different groups.
2. Thus the assertion of social diversities in a country need not be seen as a source of danger.
3. Expression of various kinds of social divisions in politics often results in their canceling one another out and thus reducing their intensity.
4. People who feel marginalised, deprived and discriminated have to fight against the injustices.
5. Sometimes social differences can take the form of unacceptable level of social inequality and injustice.
6. History shows that democracy is the best way to fight for recognition and also to accommodate diversity.