

## CBSE Notes Class 8 Social Science Civics Chapter 7

### Understanding Marginalisation

To be marginalised is to be forced to occupy the sides or fringes and not to be at the centre of things. In the social environment too, groups of people or communities are being excluded. **Reasons for marginalisation**-different languages, follow different customs, belong to different religious groups from the majority community, they are poor, considered to be of 'low' social status and viewed as being less human than others.

Marginalised groups are viewed with hostility and fear. This sense of difference and exclusion leads the communities to not have access to resources and opportunities and unable to assert their rights, thus leading them to experience a sense of disadvantage and powerlessness vis-a-vis more powerful and dominant sections of society who own land, are wealthy, better educated and politically powerful. Thus, marginalisation is seldom experienced in one sphere. Economic, social, cultural and political factors work together to make certain groups in society feel marginalised.

#### Who Are Adivasis?

Tribals are also referred to as Adivasis. Adivasis—literally means 'original inhabitants', communities who lived and continue to live, in close association with forests. About 8% of India's population is Adivasi and most of the country's mining and industrial centres are located in Adivasi areas like Jamshedpur, Rourkela, Bokaro and Bhilai, among others. Not a homogeneous population, there are over 500 various Adivasi groups in India. They are numerous in states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and in the north-eastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. 60 different tribal groups in Odisha. They are distinctive because there is often very little hierarchy among them and this makes them radically different from communities organised around principles of jati-varna (caste) or those that were ruled by kings.

Adivasis practise a range of tribal religions- different from Islam, Hinduism and Christianity- worship of ancestors, village and nature spirits, the last associated with and residing in various sites in the landscape – 'mountain-spirits', 'river-spirits', 'animal-spirits', etc. The village spirits-worshipped at specific sacred groves within the village boundary, the ancestral ones- worshipped at home. Adivasis-influenced by different surrounding religions like Shakta, Buddhist, Vaishnav, Bhakti and Christianity. Adivasi religions-influenced dominant religions of the empires around them, for example, the Jagannath cult of Odisha and Shakti and Tantric traditions in Bengal and Assam. During the 19th century, substantial numbers of Adivasis converted to Christianity, which has emerged as a very important religion in modern Adivasi history. Adivasis have their own languages (most of them radically different from and possibly as old as Sanskrit), which have often deeply influenced the formation of 'mainstream'

Indian languages, like Bengali. Santhali has the largest number of speakers and has a significant body of publications including magazines on the internet or in e-zines.

## Adivasis and Stereotyping

Adivasis are portrayed in very stereotypical ways – in colourful costumes, headgear and through their dancing. Besides this, we seem to know very little about the realities of their lives. This wrongly leads to people believing they are exotic, primitive and backward.

## Adivasis and Development

1. Forests covered a major part of our country until the 19th century
2. 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. They were not ruled by large states and empires. Instead, often empires heavily depended on Adivasis for the crucial access to forest resources.
3. In the pre-colonial world, they were traditionally ranged hunter-gatherers and nomads and lived by shifting agriculture and also 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 lives as workers in plantations, at construction sites, in industries and as domestic workers. For the first time in history, they do not control or have much direct access to the forest territories.
4. From the 1830s onwards, Adivasis from Jharkhand and adjoining areas moved in very large numbers to various plantations in India and the world - Mauritius, the Caribbean and even Australia. India's tea industry became possible with their labour in Assam. Today, there are 70 lakh Adivasis in Assam alone. For example, in the 19th century alone 5 lakh Adivasis had perished in these migrations.

Forestlands-cleared for timber and to get land for agriculture and industry. Adivasis-lived in areas that are rich in minerals and other natural resources, which were taken over for mining and other large industrial projects. Powerful forces collude to take over tribal land forcefully and procedures are not followed.

According to official figures, over 50% of persons displaced due to mines and mining projects are tribals. Another recent survey report by organisations working among Adivasis shows that 79% of the persons displaced from the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Jharkhand are tribals. Huge tracts of their lands have also gone under the waters of hundreds of dams that have been built in independent India.

In the Northeast, their lands remain highly militarised. India has 104 national parks covering 40,501 sq km and 543 wildlife sanctuaries covering 1,18,918 sq km. These are areas where tribals originally lived but were evicted from. When they continue to stay in these forests, they are termed, encroachers. Losing their lands and access to the forest means that tribals lose their main sources 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.

Poverty and deprivation, situations Adivasis are caught in. 45% of tribal groups in rural areas and 35% in urban areas live below the poverty line leading to deprivation in other areas- malnourished tribal children- low Literacy rates-When Adivasis are displaced from their lands, they lose much more than a source of income-lose their traditions and customs – a way of living and being. As you have read, there exists an interconnectedness between the economic and social dimensions of tribal life. Destruction in one sphere naturally impacts the other. Often this process of dispossession and displacement can be painful and violent.

## Minorities and Marginalisation

The Constitution provides safeguards to religious and linguistic minorities as part of our Fundamental Rights. Why have these minority groups been provided with these safeguards? The minority refers to communities that are numerically small in relation to the rest of the population. This concept goes well beyond numbers encompassing issues of power, access to resources with social and cultural dimensions.

Culture of majority influencing the way in which society and government express themselves- size is a disadvantage and result in the marginalisation of the relatively smaller communities- hence, safeguards protect minority communities against being culturally dominated by the majority-also protect them against any discrimination and disadvantage-Communities that are small in number relative to the rest of society may feel insecure about their lives, assets and well-being, which may get accentuated if the relations between the minority and majority communities are fraught-The Constitution provides these safeguards because it is committed to protecting India's cultural diversity and promoting equality as well as justice-the judiciary plays a crucial role in upholding the law and enforcing Fundamental Rights- every citizen of India can approach the courts if they believe that their Fundamental Rights have been violated.

## Muslims and Marginalisation

14.2% of Indian Population (2011 Census)-Muslims are considered as a marginalised community as they have been deprived of the benefits of the socio-economic development over the years. Muslims were lagging behind in terms of various development indicators- so the government set up a high-level committee in 2005- chaired by Justice Rajindar Sachar-The committee examined the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community in India- The report discusses in detail the marginalisation of this community-suggests that on a range of social, economic and educational indicators the situation of the Muslim community is comparable to that of other marginalised communities like Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Economic and social marginalisation experienced by Muslims has other dimensions-Like other minorities, distinct Muslim customs and practices apart from what is seen as the mainstream. Some may wear a burqa, sport a long beard, wear a fez, leading for ways to identify all Muslims- they tend to be identified differently and some people think they are not like the 'rest of us'-thus causing them to be treated unfairly and discriminated against -This social marginalisation of Muslims has led to them migrating from places where they have lived, often leading to the ghettoisation of the community- Sometimes, this prejudice leads to hatred and violence.

Marginalisation, a complex phenomenon requires a variety of strategies, measures and safeguards to redress this situation. All of us have a stake in protecting the rights defined in the Constitution and the Laws and Policies framed to realise these rights. Without these, we will never be able to protect the diversity that makes our country unique nor realise the State's commitment to promoting equality for all.