CIVICS

Chapter 7: Understanding Marginalisation

Understanding Marginalisation

The Adivasis

The Adivasis of India – Some Common Facts

- The term 'Adivasis' literally means 'original inhabitants'. Since time immemorial, the Adivasis have been living in lands which are closely surrounded by forests.
- The Adivasis live in several states such as Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.
- Odisha is home to more than 60 tribal groups.
- Tribal societies largely do not have a hierarchal system.

Religion and Languages of the Adivasis

- The religion followed by the Adivasis or the tribal groups is very different from Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.
- The tribals worship the spirits of nature, village and ancestors.
- While the village spirit is worshipped in sacred groves (large tracts of forests which are protected by communities), ancestral spirits are worshipped at home.
- The Adivasi practices however are also influenced by surrounding religions such as Shaktism, Buddhism, Bhaktism, Vaishnavism and Christianity.
- The Adivasi religion also influences prominent religions around them. For example, the Jagannath cult in Odisha and the Shakti cult in Bengal have been influenced by tribal religions.
- Christianity has emerged as an important religion among the Adivasis as many tribals converted to Christianity in the modern period (nineteenth and twentieth centuries).
- The languages of the Adivasis have been extremely different from Sanskrit. They have also influenced certain largely spoken regional languages such as Bengali.
- Santhali language is a largely spoken tribal language.

What does it mean to be Socially Marginalised:

(i) To be marginalized is to be forced to occupy the sides or fringes and thus not be at the Centre of things.

(ii) Sometimes marginalized groups are viewed with hostility and fear.

(iii) There is a sense of difference & exclusion which leads to communities not having access to resources & opportunities & in their inability too assert their rights.

(iv) To make certain groups in society feel marginalized, there are economic, social, cultural and political factors. Thus, marginalization is seldom experienced in one sphere.

Who are Adivasis:

(i) The term 'Adivasis' refers to the 'original inhabitants'. They are communities who lived and often continue to live in close association with forests.

(ii) Around 8% of India's population is Adivasi. There are over 500 different Adivasi groups in India, they are not a homogeneous population.

(iii) Many of India's most important mining and industrial areas are situated in Adivasi areas.

(iv) Adivasis are particularly numerous in states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and in the north-eastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. Orrisa is home to more than 60 different tribal groups.

(v) Adivasis practice a range of tribal religions that are different from Islam, Hinduism and Christianity. Their religions themselves have influenced dominant religions of the empire around them.

(vi) They have most distinctive societies because there is often very little hierarchy among them. This makes them radically different from communities organised around principles of caste system.

(vii) Adivasis worship ancestors, own village and nature spirits. They have been influenced by different religions, like Shakta, Buddhist, Vaishnav, Bhakti and Christianity.

(viii) Adivasis have their own languages, which was as old as Sanskrit. Santhali has the largest number of speakers and has a significant body of publication.

Adivasis and Stereotyping:

Stereotypes are characteristics imposed upon groups of people because of their race, nationality and sexual orientation, among others.

(i) Adivasis are invariably portrayed in very stereotypical ways-in colourful costumes, headgear and through their dancing.

(ii) Adivasis are blamed for their lack of advancement as they are believed to be resistant to change

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or new ideas.

(iii) People believe that the Adivasis are exotic and belong to primitive and backward background.

Adivasis and Development:

(i) Forests play a crucial role in the development of all empires and settled civilization in India. As they provide with-

- Metal ores- iron & copper, gold & silver
- invaluable timber
- medicinal herbs
- animal products, like wax, lac & honey
- animals

(ii) Adivasis had deep knowledge of forest. Often empires heavily depended on Adivasis for the crucial access to forest resources.

(iii) In today's world, Adivasis are considered marginal and powerless communities.

(iv) In the pre-colonial world, they were traditionally ranged hunter-gatherers and nomads and they lived by shifting agriculture and cultivating at one place.

(v) For the past two hundred years, Adivasis have been forced through economic changes, forest policies and political force applied by State to migrate as workers in plantations, industries and as domestic workers.

(vi) Forest lands have been cleared for timber and to get land for agriculture and industry.

(vii) Huge tracts of lands have gone under the waters of hundreds of dams that have been built in independent India.

(viii) Losing their lands and access to the forests means that tribals lose their main source of livelihood and Adivasis have migrated to cities in search of work.

(ix) They get caught in the cycle of poverty and deprivation. Almost 45% of tribal groups in rural areas and 35% in urban areas live below the poverty line.

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(x) As a result, Many tribal children are malnourished and aloso literacy rate is also very low among tribals.

(xi) When Adivasis are displaced from their lands, they lose much more than a source of income. They lose their traditions & customs.

Minorities and Marginalisation:

(i) The term minority is most commonly used to refer to communities that are numerically small in relation to the rest of the population.

(ii) It encompasses issues of power, access to resources and has social & cultural dimensions.

(iii) Safeguards are needed to protect minority communities against the possibility of being culturally dominated by the majority. They also protect them against any discrimination & disadvantage that they may face.

(iv) The Constitution provides these safeguards because it is committed to protecting India's cultural diversity and promoting equality as well as justice.

Muslims and Marginalisation:

(i) Muslims are 13.4% of India's population and are considered to be a marginalized community in India.

(ii) They have over the years been deprived of the benefits of socio-economic development, of basic amenities, literacy and public employment.

(iii) Recognizing that Muslims in India were lagging behind in terms of various development in indicators, the government set up a high-level committee in 2005.

(iv) The report of the community suggests that Muslim community is comparable to that of other marginalized communities like Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

(v) According to the Report of average years of schooling, for Muslim children between ages of 7-16 is much lower than that of other socio-religious communities.

(vi) 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 they are not like the 'rest of us'. This often becomes an excuse to treat them unfairly.

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(vii) This social marginalization of Muslims in some instances has led to their migration from places where they have lived, often leading to the ghettorisation of the community.
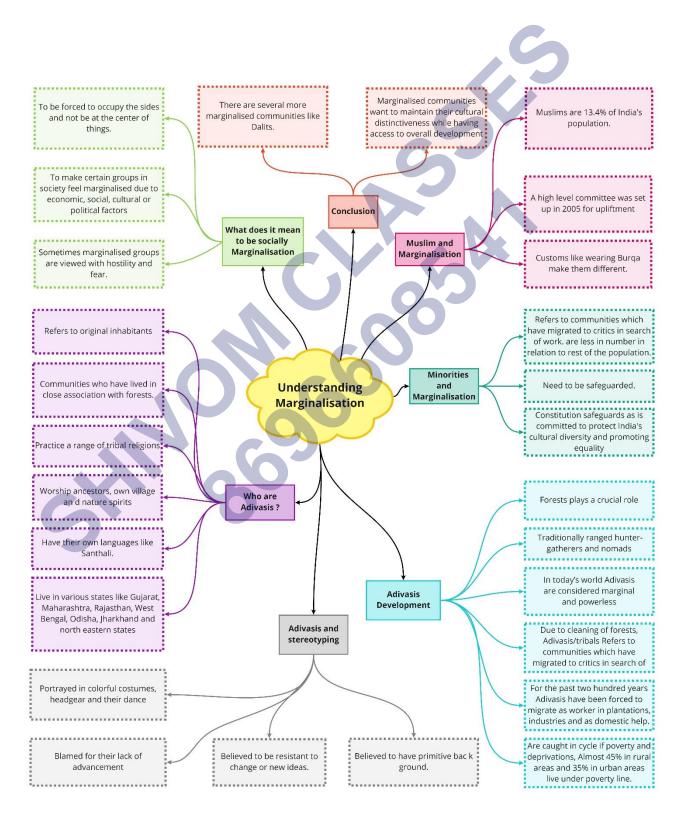
Ghettoization: A ghetto is an area or locality that is populated largely by members of a particular community. Therefore, a process that leads to such a situation. This may occur due to various social, cultural and economic reasons.

(viii) The experience of all these groups point to the fact that marginalistaion is a complex phenomenon requiring a variety of strategies, measures and safeguards to redress the situation.

(ix) Every citizen has a stake in protecting the rights defined in the Constitution and the lawas and policies framed to realise these rights.

(x) Without these, no one will ever be able able to protect the diversity that makes one's country unique.

Conclusion:

(i) There are different reasons for each of the communities being marginalised, each experiences marginalisation in different ways.

(ii) Marginalistaion is often linked to experiencing disadvantage, prejudice and powerlessness.

(iii) In India, there are several more marginalised communities like Dalits.

(iv) Marginalisation results in having a low social status and not having equal access to education and other resources.

(v) Marginalized communities want to maintain their cultural distinctiveness while having access to rights, development and other opportunities.

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Understanding Marginalisation

Conclusion

- There are several more marginalised communities like Dalits.
- Marginalised communities want to maintain their cultural distinctiveness while having access to overall development

What does it mean to be socially Marginalisation

- To be forced to occupy the sides and not be at the center of things.
- To make certain groups in society feel marginalised due to economic, social, cultural or political factors
- Sometimes marginalised groups are viewed with hostility and fear.

Muslim and Marginalisation

- Muslims are 13.4% of India's population.
- A high level committee was set up in 2005 for upliftment
- Customs like wearing Burqa make them different.

Minorities and Marginalisation

- Refers to communities which have migrated to critics in search of work. are less in number in relation to rest of the population.
- Need to be safeguarded.
- Constitution safeguards as is committed to protect India's cultural diversity and promoting equality

Who are Adivasis ?

- Refers to original inhabitants
- Communities who have lived in close association with forests.
- Practice a range of tribal religions.
- Worship ancestors, own village and nature spirits
- Have their own languages like Santhali.
- Live in various states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand and north eastern states

Adivasis Development

- Forests plays a crucial role
- Traditionally ranged hunter-gatherers and nomads
- In today's world Adivasis are considered marginal and powerless
- Due to cleaning of forests, Adivasis/tribals Refers to communities which have migrated to critics in search of
- For the past two hundred years Adivasis have been forced to migrate as worker in plantations, industries and as domestic help.
- Are caught in cycle if poverty and deprivations, Almost 45% in rural areas and 35% in urban areas live under poverty line.

Adivasis and stereotyping

- Portrayed in colorful costumes, headgear and their dance
- Blamed for their lack of advancement
- Believed to be resistant to change or new ideas.
- Believed to have primitive back ground.

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Important Questions

Multiple Choice Questions-

Question 1. According to the Sachar Committee report what was the percentage of Muslim children studying in Madrassa?

(a) 4 percent

(b) 6%

(c) 30%

(d) 66%

Question 2. A person who does not get adequate nutrition or food is:

(a) Militarised

(b) Displaced

(c) Ghetto

(d) Malnourished

Question 3. Which religious group has the highest literacy rate during 2001?

(a) Hindu

(b) Muslims

(c) Buddhists

(d) Jains

Question 4. According to which census it was Stated that Muslims are only 13.4% in India's population?

(a) According to 1991 census

(b) 2001 census

(c) 1981 census

(d) None of the above

Question 5. How many wildlife sanctuaries are there in India?

(a) 372

(b) 382

(c) 394

(d) 397

Question 6. How many percent of Muslim children in the 6 – 14 year of age group have never

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been enrolled in schools & dropped out?

(a) 70%

(b) 30%

(c) 25%

(d) 56%

Question 7. _____ are the important part of the women's movement in India?

(a) Religious Women

(b) Common people

(c) Muslim women

(d) None of these

Question 8. _____ are needed to protect minor Communities.

(a) Safeguards

(b) Legal

(c) Laws

(d) None of these

Question 9. Which one of the following metal is found in forest?

(a) Sugar

(b) Sweet

(c) Iron

(d) Tea

Question 10. Give another name of Adivasis

(a) Respective truth

(b) Tribals

(c) Educated person

(d) None of these

Question 11. Which one of the following is main cause of Marginalisation?

(a) Different dress

(b) Different films

(c) Different Languages

(d) All of these

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Question 12. Militarised means

(a) Presence of Minor Group

(b) Presence of Major group

(c) Presence of Adivasis

(d) presence of armed force

Question 13. Hierarchy means

(a) A graded system or arrangement of person or thing

(b) Minor group

(c) Major group

(d) None of these

Question 14. Marginalisation result in having

(a) Low social status

(b) Not equal education

(c) Both (a) & (b)

(d) None of these

Question 15. Many Muslim women wear?

(a) Burka

(b) Skirt

(c) Payjama

(d) Cargo

Very Short:

1. Where is Niyamgiri Hill located?

2. How many national parks are there in India?

3. How much area are the 54 national parks and 372 wildlife sanctuaries covering?

4. Why did many Adivasis have migrated to cities?

5. Where were the Adivasis employed in the cities?

6. Whom does the Constitution provide safeguards as part of our Fundamental Rights?

7. What does the term 'Militarised' mean?

8. Whom would you call 'Malnourished'?

9. What % of India's population is Adivasi.

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10. For what purposes the forest land that once belonged to Adivasi got cleared.

Short Questions:

1. Define the term Ghettoisation. Who are Ghettos?
2. What does 2001 census tells about Muslims?
3. What will happen if the culture of majority influences the way in which society and government might express themselves.
4. What will be the result if the Adivasis lose their rights over forest lands?
5. What is all happening in Niyamgiri hills of Orissa?

Long Questions:

1. What does Sachar Committee report tell about the Muslims and how is economic and social marginalization experienced by Muslims has other dimensions as well?

Answer Key:

MCQ:

1. (a) 4 percent
2. (d) Malnourished
3. (d) Jains
4. (b) 2001 census
5. (a) 372
6. (c) 25%
7. (c) Muslim women
8. (b) Legal
9. (c) Iron
10. (c) Tribals
11. (c) Different Languages
12. (d) presence of armed force
13. (a) A graded system or arrangement of person or thing
14. (c) Both (a) & (b)
15. (a) Burka

Very Short Answer:

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1. The Niyamgiri Hill is located in Kalahandi district of Orissa.

2. There are 54 national parks in India.

3. They are covering around 1,09,652 S km.

4. Many Adivasis have migrated to cities in search of work

5. They were employed for very low wages in local industries or at building or construction sites.

6. The Constitution provides safeguard to religious and linguistic minorities as part of our Fundamental Right

7. Militarised means an area where the presence of the armed forces is considerable.

8. A person who does not get adequate nutrition or food is malnourished.

9. About 8%.

10. The purposes such as agriculture and industry the forest land got cleared.

Short Answer:

Ans: 1. A Ghetto is an area or locality that is populated largely by members, of a particular community. Ghettoisation refers to the process that leads to such a situation. This may occur due to various social, cultural and economic reasons.

Ans: 2. According to 2001 census, Muslims are 13.4% of India's population and are considered to be a marginalised community in India today because in comparison to other communities they have over the years been deprived of the benefits of social and economic development. This census also shows that literacy of Muslims is the lowest i.e., 59% among all religious groups.

Ans: 3. In such cases size can be a disadvantage and lead to the marginalisation of the relatively smaller communities. Thus, 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 disadvantages that they may face.

Ans: 4. Adivasis use around 10,000 plant species-approximately 8,000 species are used for medicinal purposes; 325 are used as pesticides; 425 as gums, resins and dyes; 550 as fibres; 3500 are edible. This entire knowledge system gets wiped out when Adivasis lose their rights over forest lands

Ans: 5. Niyamgiri hill of Orissa is located in Kalahandi district. This area is in inhabitated by Dongarria Konds, an Adivasi community. A major aluminum company is planning to set up a mine and a refinery here which will displace this Adivasis community. They have strongly resisted this proposed development and have been joined by environmentalists as well. A case against the company is also pending in the Supreme Court.

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Long Answer:

Ans: 1. Recognizing that Muslims in India were lagging behind in terms of various development indicators, the government set up a high-level committee in 2005. The Committee was chaired by Justice Rajindar Sachar, The committee examined the social, economical and educational status of the Muslim community in India. The report discusses in detail the marginalization of this community.

It suggests that on a range of social, economic and educational indicators the situation of the Muslim community is comparable to that of other marginalized communities like Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. For example, according to the Report the average years of schooling for Muslim children between the age of 7-16 is much lower than that of other socio-religious communities.

Economic and social marginalization experienced by Muslims has other dimensions as well. Like other minorities, Muslim customs and practices are sometimes quite distinct from what is seen as the mainstream. Some not all – Muslims may wear a burqa, keeping a long beard wear a fez and these become ways to identify the Muslims.

Because of this, they tend to be identified differently and some people think that they are not like the 'rest of us'. Often this becomes an excused to treat them unfairly, and discriminate against them.

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