

THAKUR COLLEGE OF SCIENCE & COMMERCE

Autonomous

CONCEPT OF DISPARITY

Gender Disparity

Introduction:

The concepts of disparity and disability are often used interchangeably. However, it is essential to understand the difference between the two. Though the origin of both the terms comes from inequality, the nature of inequality and stratification is different in both the concepts. The term disparity means to be different. Gender disparity for that matter is the differences between the genders which are often treated as unequal. Disability is the condition of being unable, impaired to maintain equality. Disparity is often man made but disability can be natural too. For e.g. Women are physically weak and cannot do adventurous activity (which is not true) is a statement coming from gender disparity created by social systems.

Gender disparity- as a form of inequality

Gender disparity as a form of inequality is a manifestation of socio-cultural discrimination against women in society. Physical difference between man and woman, which is biological in nature is regarded "Sex". However, there is not hierarchy attached to the phenomenon of "sex" i.e. biologically being a man or a woman does not attach superiority or inferiority to either of them. It is the socio-cultural norms and the structure of patriarchy that converts "sex" into "gender" and then associating it with power and authority to

one at the cost of the other. The term Patriarchy is derived from two words "patri" and "arch" which means father and rule respectively. It means „rule of the father“ or male domination. And it is this patriarchal structure of society in general and of family in particular that creates gender disparity or gender bias.

Gender disparity can be defined as "a situation of unequal and hierarchical relations and the socially constructed roles or stereotypes assigned to women as that of a housewife and mother are considered as „norms“ to be followed invariably across class, caste, race and culture. This bias often leads to denial of opportunities and injustice to women"

Female Foeticide

Sex ratio is calculated as the number of females per thousand of males. Sex ratio of any country is not just a demographic variable but an important indicator of country's gender development index. India is one of those female deficit countries in the world where sex ratio is calculated per thousand of males. In most of the developed nations sex ratio is always calculated as number of males per thousand of females as there is a natural tendency of female foetus to survive longer than their male counter parts.

The sex ratio, which was 972 per 1000 of men in 1901, has declined to 933 in 2001. It has marginally increased to 940 in the year 2011. There is also a concept of child sex ratio that is calculating the sex ratio is in the age group of 0-6 years which is also declining drastically in India. From 976 in 1961 to 927 in 2001 and as per the provisional census report for 2011 it has further declined to a devastating 914.

Causes of Female Foeticide

Sex Determination (SD) and Sex Selective Abortion (SSA) - With the introduction of new reproductive technologies in 1970s in India ultrasound sonography was a big hit amongst the doctors and families expecting a child. Apart from knowing the abnormalities in the foetus, this technology also revealed the sex of the child which helped the parents to determine the sex and abort an unwanted female foetus. This is considered to be the major reason for declining sex ratio.

Female infanticide and foeticide - Several Indian states historically were known for its practice of female infanticide. With the idea of girl child being a burden to the family, there was a rampant elimination of female infants thorough various practices like “doodhpiti” (drowning in milk) in Gujarat, suffocating the child, consumption of opium seeds etc. After the new reproductive technologies were available the heinous practice shifted from infanticide to foeticide.

Son preference and patriarchal value system- The patriarchal system reinforces certain norms form Indian religions and cultures. Son is preferred in an Indian household for social, economic and religious reasons. He is considered to be the bread winner and a support to parents in their old age.

It is also believed that son continues the family name and lineage (Vansh). According to Hindu tradition a son is required to ignite the funeral pyre of his parents for them to attain salvation. These myths and beliefs expect to have at least one son in the family and with a small child norm or one child norm in urban educated families, daughters are eliminated to maintain the family size and structure.

Dowry and burden of marriage cost- Dowry is the gifts in terms of cash or kind given by the bride’s parents to the groom’s family. The high demands of dowry convert girl into a liability for her parents and marrying her to a suitable groom becomes a burden. With increasing cost of marriages, which are forced to be borne by the bride’s family alone and ever increasing evil of dowry practice are the root cause for considering a girl child in the family as a commodity to be disposed through infanticide or foeticide to avoid the financial burden later.

Lower nutritional and health status of women

Biologically, female foetus is stronger to sustain illness, or escape miscarriages, but later the cultural inequalities end up in women of the house eating less, left over and last, making her susceptible to low nutritional value and low health status. Early and unsafe pregnancy, lack of maternal and post-natal health care all result in high female mortality rates leading to low sex ratio declined to a devastating 940.

Causes of Violence against Women

India has always lived with a paradox with glorifying women as goddess (Devi) on one hand and giving a devil treatment on the other. From cradle to death (in fact much before she reaches a cradle) or from womb to tomb she is subject to discrimination and step motherly treatment. At every level of her life in all the institutions of family, marriage, religion, education, economy, law, media and politics, she faces the brutal exploitation from the pre-existing and omnipresent structure of patriarchy.

Meaning of violence Against Women

United Nations Declaration 1993, defined violence against women as “any act of gender base violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, psychological or sexual harm or

suffering to a woman, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life". This is an all-inclusive definition of VAW. The violence of her basic human rights often take place in various ways. It may take a form of sex determination and sex selective abortion, neglect of infant and girl child in the areas of nutrition health care, illiteracy and drop outs, under estimation of house hold work, inequality and harassment at the work place, dowry and related harassments including bride burning, sexual assault, rape, religious rituals, cultural practices, misrepresentation in media and many others.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau's facts

Every three minutes there is a crime against women

Molestation happens every 15 minutes

Sexual harassment every 53 minutes

Rape case every 29 minutes

4 out of 10 women in India face violence in their homes.

A woman is killed for dowry every hour.

Types of Violence Against women

Violence against women can be classified broadly into three categories....

A) Domestic violence: The violence which takes place within the household or by a known perpetrator is considered to be domestic violence. Wife beating, wife battering, dowry harassment, emotional torture by family members, sexual abuse, marital rape (sexual Intercourse which is non-consensual in nature), deprivation of basic rights necessities, discrimination in the family and denial of economic are all a part of domestic violence

B) Criminal violence: The act which are considered to be crime and punishable under Indian Penal Code termed as criminal violence. They are Rape, molestation, trafficking of women, sexual harassment at work place, bride burning, abduction and kidnapping, eve teasing, female foeticide or infanticide are all part of Criminal Violence

C) Social violence: The violence which women face due to societal norms and religious practices are part of social violence. It includes Sati, prohibition of widow remarriage, child marriage, devdasi, denial of entering or worshipping at religious places, atrocities against woman in the name of caste, community etc.

Measures of violence Against Women:

There are several government and non-government organizations working towards gender equality and fighting against all forms of violence against woman. Following are some of the landmark legal measures and acts pertaining to woman's rights. There are several articles in the Indian Constitution which promise equal rights and liberties to each and every woman in India. There are special provisions for woman in terms of positive discrimination or affirmative action in terms of reservation of woman in local self-government, educational institutions, job opportunities and public transport. There are a number of government bodies, NGOs and civil society organizations helping women to gain justice and equality in the society. They work in the areas of research, sensitization, awareness, law making or amendment in the existing law, campaigns for empowerment of woman. There is a special ministry for women and child

welfare at the centre and state to look into the

policies and programmes for woman in the nation. The National Commission for Woman (NCW) is the statutory body of Government of India at the central level that looks in to the matters pertaining to gender justice.

Portrayal of Women in Media:

Media is a plural form of medium. Media is a unit through which messages, information, data, thoughts and ideas are transmitted or communicated. Mass media is a form of media where transmission and communication take place across society to large number of people at the same time. Media can be classified as print media which includes

newspaper, magazines, journals, pamphlets, leaflets, printed advertisements etc. whereas audio-visual or electronic media includes television, films, radio, computers and internet etc. Since these tools of media communicates to masses at the same time and over a period of time, its content and ideas have a great influence on society's mind set. Media has been used to change the perception of society. Hence portrayal of women in media definitely influence and shape the ideas and perception towards women in that society. Media can create awareness and sensitize people regarding issues pertaining to women. An affirmative image portrayed in media creates a positive environment towards women and traditional stereo typed image can create a degrading status of women.

Awareness and sensitization- Media especially newspapers, journals and news channels help people to become aware of current scenario and status of women in the society. It can analyse problems of women and make its readers or viewers sensitive towards the same. For e.g. recent television show Satyamev Jayate to some extent has covered several issues pertaining to women. or reporting on cases of violence against women with a great sensitivity. Spreading the information regarding policies and programmes for women.

Highlighting achievers- Women's achievements can be highlighted in the fields of science, technology, education, economy, industry, entertainment, art, literature, music, social work or politics. For e.g. making story of Kiran Majumdar Shaw as an industrialist or on Lata Mangeshkar as an artist create a positive image of women in the minds of people.

Women as sex symbols- Women in media has been misused as a sex symbol for selling products in the advertisements or providing entertainment in the TV shows or films. Beauty pageants and western standards- Rampant beauty pageants where woman is seen as a model with an ideal face and figure often misjudge her as a dumb character or beauty without brains. Western standards of fairness and slim figure have become a craze amongst young Indian girls thanks to media.

Conclusion:

World over with the advent of globalization and liberalization the status of women is changing. The disparity between men and women is decreasing with woman being economically and socially advanced. However, she still faces many problems and discrimination of different kinds and which needs to be addressed with the help of legal measures and renewal of her role in media. There is a call for restructuring the patriarchal system and attitudes towards the women.

Introduction:

In the previous chapters we have understood Indian society to be pluralistic and diverse in nature. i.e. there exist several groups in India that hold different identities as Indian society is multi-regional, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-religious as well as multi-cultural. Hence differences are bound to occur among these groups from time to time giving rise to conflict and strife. It is this diverse nature of our country that is responsible for creating social and economic disparities among our people.

Definition and Characteristics of Caste and the caste System India is a secular nation where several religions co-exist and the Constitution asks of each citizen to be tolerant of other religions. However, despite the provisions of the Indian Constitution to protect the interests of people belonging to all religions, communalism has often endangered peace and harmony of our country in several instances in the past.

The most oppressive system, the caste system plays a very important role in Indian society. It is a unique system that initiated social stratification in Indian society. All the religions in India have their own caste differences. For .eg. Hinduism is divided into thousands of castes and sub-castes which find their origin in the Varna system of the ancient Rigveda. The Varna system classifies Hindus into four main castes: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. The most atrocious practice of the caste system was untouchability which though hardly found in urban areas, still exists in rural areas. The caste system as followed in India is rigid and does not allow inter-caste marriage. The upper caste looks down upon the lower castes and this differentiation results in hatred and violence. In India there is excessive politicization of the caste system. Organizations and political parties have formed to extract economic and social gains for themselves and the castes they support. Northern states have experienced caste related violence from time to time. Politicians in U.P., Maharashtra, Karnataka have played the caste card regularly to come to power. The reservation policy accepted by the V.P.Singh government has brought in its wake a lot of social unrest. There have been anti-reservation movements led by doctors and students in recent years that feel the policy has worked against their interests. The government, in order to uplift the backward castes, offers free education, reservation of jobs in the public sector, seats in the Parliament and also seats in the higher educational institutions teaching professional courses. However, over the years the system has been exploited by those who are powerful and rich rather than benefitting the truly marginalized sections of society.

Inequalities Caused by the Caste System

1. Casteism violates the fundamental right to equality as well as the democratic principles of our constitution.
2. It is actually a form of communalism that creates disharmony and leads to conflicts and violence.
- 3 It gives rise to increased corruption in politics. Selfish politicians with vested interests get voted into the parliament on false promises of promoting their loyalties to their castes.
- 4 Castes is responsible for promoting groupism and importance of certain castes over national interests.

5 Casteism has intensified the majority-minority caste divide. The upper caste especially in villages still enjoys certain entitlements and privileges whereas the lower caste is still discriminated against.

6 The social status and education of the backward castes is still an issue due to the narrow-minded approach of the upper castes.

7 Many members of the backward castes migrate to cities to escape the shackles of the inhumane caste system in villages but end up suffering for lack of opportunities. 8 There are several instances of ill treatment meted out to lower castes: marginal farmers being denied loans by upper caste loan officials, molestation and gang-rape of women, exploitation of children and social boycotting.

Measures to control casteism:

While the caste system has become an integral part of the Indian society originating in ancient mythology, in keeping with the modern era a scientific approach should be taken in understanding the relevance of this system today.

1 Casteism just like communalism is an obstacle in achieving national good and hence awareness must be raised among people. One should promote the notions of secularism and nationalism as principle higher than casteism.

2 Both print and electronic media should conduct programmes and arrange for discussions among scholars widely emphasizing the divisive influence of casteism on society. Scholars from different castes should enable better Understanding among the masses about the concept of reservation as a positive discrimination for creating equality in opportunities for the downtrodden that have been oppressed for centuries.

3 Policymakers must work towards a more equitable distribution of wealth to overcome economic disparities among castes.

4 Intercaste-marriages and increased social interactions among people of different caste should be encouraged and accepted.

5 The youth can take the responsibility to raise social awareness about how a well assimilated society is a better off society.

6 Casteist forces adhered to political parties or any other groups fuelling tension should be identified and banned immediately. The scars left on the hitherto 'untouchables' or backward castes can only be healed with humane and compassionate treatment being meted out.

7 Access to a well-rounded education and equal entitlement to all the fundamental rights so also cultural development are the only way to give social justice to members of the lower castes.

The caste system needs to be gradually phased out for the creation of a more equal and just society but serves far too many vested interests in our country to be removed completely.

Intergroup Conflicts Caused due to Caste Division

A group plays a very important role in the development of an individual's personality. A group is formed when two or more people come together as they may possess some common characteristics, for Ex. they may speak the same language or belong to the same community. While most groups come together out of a common purpose or goal, some groups get formed coincidentally. Given that man is a social being who cannot do without Interaction and communication with his fellow human beings, it is only natural that a person belongs to several groups at any given time. Thus, formations of groups make man realize not only his

full potential but also achieve what is best for everyone and this leads to development of society.

While some groups work towards improvement and positive change for all, others engage in destructive activities. When there are many groups, they may have conflicting interests. It is when these groups attain extreme positions and are willing to sacrifice common and national good for fulfilling their own selfish interests that it culminates into social chaos. Such imbalances lead to violence and aggression for eg. Communal tension, linguistic riots, regional strife and even terrorist activities. To mention a few causative factors for intergroup conflicts, there are the stereotypes where a person is slotted as belonging to a certain category about which there are fixed perceptions and mistaken ideas. For eg. an urban dweller may look at a person coming from rural areas as lacking in education. A religious person may be sceptical about ideas and practices of people belonging to other religions. Also one often distinguishes between 'in-groups' ('my friends', 'my family', 'my country') and the 'out-groups' ('his friends', 'their family'). It is when these feelings are motivated and encouraged aggressively that it affects the harmony of society. Furthermore, groups, as a whole, may suffer from superiority or inferiority complex and be made intensively aware of inequalities through discrimination. For ex. certain positions in a business organization may be held by male candidates only. There may also be differences in political and philosophical leanings of an individual. Some or all of these become reasons for inter-group conflicts.

Communalism in India:

Meaning

India is a secular nation where several religions co-exist and the Constitution asks of each citizen to be tolerant of other religions. However despite the provisions of the Indian Constitution to protect the interests of people belonging to all religions, communalism has often endangered peace and harmony of our country in several instances in the past.

Communalism actually stems from religious fundamentalism that makes one believe that one's own religion is the only true faith. Communalism itself is the ideology of a social, political or a religious group that their religion and practices are superior to that of other groups. Religion is a personal and sensitive issue for most people. Therefore, any hint of antagonism or a sign of disrespect towards one's religion immediately triggers hatred and violence. Communalism is divisive in that it stresses the significance of one religion over the others. While effectively the preaching and values of all religions do not differ, it is the conflict of interests and desire for dominance that provokes hostility.

It has also been observed on various occasions that religious leaders arouse fanatic behaviour among followers through fundamentalist speeches and political leaders do the same to ensure themselves of a vote bank for attaining power. Historically communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims have occurred regularly. The seeds of this conflict lie in the Partition and formation of Pakistan. A case in point is the Ram Mandir – Babri- Masjid issue that was responsible for violent communal clashes across the nation and resulted in loss of innocent lives and property. Religious fundamentalism and fanaticism have left such wounds on the psyche of the people that it has led to building of stereotypes. Muslims are viewed suspiciously and often experience difficulties in assimilation. The New York Twin -Tower terror event has brought in

it's wake other issues like racial profiling at airports which is creating a greater sense of alienation in the Islamic community.

Communal conflicts between Hindus and Sikhs, Hindus and Christians or even Muslims and Christians have been observed but sparingly. In recent times communal strife has also spread to rural areas of the country implying prejudices can exist anywhere.

Causes:

The roots of communalism are found in the 'Divide and Rule' Policy of the British rule in India. The British in order to establish their supremacy in it's colonies and expand it's power used divisive tactics of turning Hindu and Muslim rulers against each other. They also encouraged the setting up of communal organisations having extremist religious tendencies.

1. Vested political interests:

Certain politicians or political parties in order to further their own gains give indirect support or patronage to communal groups or activities. Some of them may have non-secular tendencies themselves and make political decisions partially encouraging communalism.

2. Flexibility in religion's civil code:

There is a lack of a uniform civil code. To assure itself of votes and return to power the government affords special provisions to certain religious communities to follow their own code while other smaller communities are not allowed the freedom to follow their own personal laws and may feel discriminated against.

3. Rise of communal organisations:

Communal organizations established on the pretext of propagating and promoting religion socially through cultural activities have instead worsened the problem of communal politics. SIMI, RSS, Bajrang Dal .etc. have been found to instigate communal violence.

4. Religious fundamentalism:

Some religious leaders followed ardently by herds of devotees use their influence through inflammatory speeches to misguide the masses. Especially the ignorant masses get caught up in religious fervor and are willing to act violently.

5. Conversions:

Religious conversions are a sensitive issue in India. It is often undertaken by religious organizations on the promise of food, shelter .etc. to the poor and viewed suspiciously by everyone.

6. Politicization of local problems:

Local issues or problems involving different communities, which can be resolved by the local authorities, are sometimes magnified and given political dimensions to arouse communalistic passions and often lead to riots. Ex. Malegaon and Bhiwandi.

7. Law and Order:

The administration may fail to take care of minor communal disputes that could flare up into a major clash. There may be several anti-social elements who in the name of religion may engage in nefarious activities such as drug-peddling, smuggling, trafficking, robberies, murder and so on. Their activities need to be curbed and they need to be brought to book to maintain social balance.

8. External threats:

There exist many foreign forces which train extremists and supply them with modern weapons to undertake terrorist activities to fuel communal unrest in the nation.

Consequences:

The consequences of communalism would be grave and could destroy the social fabric of society; Communalism leads to hatred and aggression against others. It creates prejudices and builds stereotypes about certain communities. It encourages hostility and provokes violent behavior causing clashes and riots. It does not extract the maximum potential out of each individual of each community from society. Riots lead to disruption of economic and social activities and affects the smooth functioning of businesses. It tarnishes the image of the country affecting the country's international trade, investments and other interests. It hinders the objective of social harmony, national unity and security. It alienates and isolates members of certain communities making the atmosphere suspicious and difficult.

Measures to control Communalism:

Following are some significant steps that can be taken to control communalism;

1. Role of Law and order Administration:

The police have an important role to play in intercepting and diffusing communal riots and flare-ups before it assumes huge proportions. They should act responsibly to combat violence and work with the cooperation of peace committees and members of conflicting communities to resolve tension.

2. Role of Education:

The curricula should be devoid of any communal content and partial views about particular religions. It should in fact teach secular principles, appreciation and respect for all religions. Schools and higher educational institutions should use various teaching aids promoting national values and communal harmony. Teachers should be trained to motivate students to conduct community programmes with involvement from their parents, neighbours and others to promote secularism, nationalism, cooperation and tolerance.

3. Role of Religious Leaders:

Religious leaders have an important role to play as their preaching is followed by the masses. People look up to their leaders and hence these leaders should teach the importance of communal harmony through their discourses.

4. Role of Media:

The media should act responsibly and avoid delivering news in a manner that will further encourage violence. Instead the media should identify and expose communal elements. It should create a forum for discussion where information about the ill effects of communal activities is disseminated.

5. Role of NGOs:

NGOs should go for large-scale publicity campaigns in media promoting communal harmony and national unity. They should draw public focus on more pressing national problems and educate people about the ill consequences of riots and destruction based on religious intolerance.

6. Ban on communal political parties:

The political parties having any direct or indirect connections with communal forces should be derecognized by the government. They should not be allowed to play with the religious sentiments of the public and exploit them for their political gains. This will help reinforce harmony among various communities.

7. Public Awareness:

Public awareness needs to be raised about the harmful impact of communalism. Our constitution, which labels India as a secular nation makes provisions to protect the interests of all religions and goes beyond the code of any religion. Hence one must learn to put national interests above one's religious views.

8. Security:

All communities must be treated equally. The people belonging to smaller communities should not feel isolated. Instead confidence should be instilled in them so that they feel safe and secure to uninhibitedly partake in the growth of the nation.

Casteism in India:

Meaning :-

The most oppressive system, the caste system plays a very important role in Indian society. It is a unique system that has initiated social stratification in Indian society. All the religions in India have their own caste differences. For .ex. Hinduism is divided into thousands of castes and sub-castes which find their origin in the Varna system of the ancient Rigveda. The Varna system classifies Hindus into four main castes : Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras.

The most atrocious practice of the caste system was untouchability which though hardly found in urban areas, still exists in rural areas. The caste system as followed in India is rigid and does not allow inter-caste marriage. The upper caste looks down upon the lower castes and this differentiation results in hatred and violence.

In India there is excessive politicization of the caste system. Organizations and political parties have formed to extract economic and social gains for themselves and the castes they support. Northern states have experienced caste related violence from time to time. Politicians in U.P., Maharashtra, Karnataka have played the caste card regularly to come to power. The reservation policy accepted by the V.P.Singh government has brought in its wake a lot of social unrest. There have been anti-reservation movements led by doctors and students in recent years that feel the policy has worked against their interests. The government, in order to uplift the backward castes, offers free education, reservation of jobs in the public sector, seats in the Parliament and also seats in the higher educational institutions teaching professional courses. However over the years the system has been exploited by those who are powerful and rich rather than benefitting the truly marginalized sections of society.

Consequences:

Casteism violates the fundamental right to equality as well as the democratic principles of our constitution. It is actually a form of communalism that creates disharmony and leads to conflicts and violence. It gives rise to increased corruption in politics. Selfish politicians with vested interests get voted into the parliament on false promises of promoting their loyalties to their castes. Casteism is responsible for promoting groupism and importance of certain castes over national interests. Casteism has intensified the majority-minority caste divide. The upper caste especially in villages still enjoys certain entitlements and privileges whereas the lower caste is still discriminated against. The social status and education of the backward castes is still an issue due to the narrow-minded approach of the upper castes. Many members of the backward castes migrate to cities to escape the shackles of the inhumane caste system in villages but end up suffering for lack of opportunities. There are several instances of ill treatment meted out to lower castes: marginal farmers being denied loans by upper caste loan officials, molestation and gang-rape of women, exploitation of children and social boycotting.

Measures to control casteism:

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Casteism just like communalism is an obstacle in achieving national good and hence awareness must be raised among people about its peril. One should promote the notions of secularism and nationalism as principle higher than casteism. Both print and electronic media should conduct programmes and arrange for discussions among scholars widely emphasizing the divisive influence of casteism on society. Scholars from different castes should enable better understanding among the masses about the concept of reservation as a positive discrimination for creating equality in opportunities for the downtrodden that have been oppressed for centuries. Policymakers must work towards a more equitable distribution of wealth to overcome economic disparities among castes. Intercaste-marriages and increased social interactions among people of different caste should be encouraged and accepted. The youth can take the responsibility to raise social awareness about how a well-assimilated society is a better off

society. Casteist forces adhered to political parties or any other groups fuelling tension should be identified and banned immediately. The scars left on the hitherto 'untouchables' or backward castes can only be healed with humane and compassionate treatment being meted out. Access to a well-rounded education and equal entitlement to all the fundamental rights so also cultural development are the only way to give social justice to members of the lower castes. The caste system needs to be gradually phased out for the creation of a more equal and just society but serves far too many vested interests in our country to be removed completely.

Linguism in India:

As we have already seen earlier, India is a multi-lingual country. It is a nation of 28 states and 7 union territories where as many as 1652 languages are spoken and of these 18 languages are recognized as official languages in the 8th schedule of the Constitution. The states in India were created based on linguistic barriers and hence an integral part of the state's identity.

The First Official Language Commission was appointed by the Government of India under the chairmanship of Mr. B.G.Kher on 7th June 1955. On its recommendation English, the principal official language, was to be replaced by Hindi, the subsidiary official language after 1965. However when the Commission's report was published in 1958, it created disappointment and unrest among the southern states of the country. They were opposed to Hindi being imposed on them as the official language and preferred the use of English. To contain possible outbreak of riots, the then Prime minister Pandit. J. Nehru, pacified the angered states in the Lok Sabha saying Hindi would not be imposed on the non-Hindi speaking states and that English would continue to be an associate language for an indefinite period.

Later when the Official Language Bill was passed in the Parliament in 1963 and Hindi adopted as the principal official language of the union in 1965, anti-Hindi riots erupted in South India and W. Bengal against the Hindi speaking. The agitation became strong with Tamil Nadu asking for statehood and several of these states threatening withdrawal of political support to the Congress in the Parliament. Finally to control the situation from going out of hand, the Central Government agreed to reform the Act and made a statutory guarantee to the non-Hindi speaking states that English would not be replaced by Hindi for any official purposes. However as a reaction to this move, anti-English riots broke out in Delhi and other parts of North India and turned violent against the English speaking. It spurred retaliation in the south. Besides the Hindi vs English riots, other states have also experienced linguistic conflicts. for.ex. U.P., Maharashtra had disputes with Goa and Belgaum. Goa wished to assume two official languages. viz. Konkani and Marathi, whereas the Belgaum Municipal Corporation clashed with the Karnataka government when it wanted to adopt Marathi and not Kannada as its official state language.

Methods to resolve linguistic conflicts:

As of today the Union of India has adopted a Bi-lingual policy, where English and Hindi are both adopted by the government for official purposes and for use in Parliament. The Official Language Amendment Act 1968 has made provisions to control linguistic riots in the future. The Act allows optional use of Hindi or the State Official Language in addition to English. States, which have not adopted Hindi as their official language, can continue with the use of English for communication between the Union and the State. Between States where either State may not accept Hindi, any communication has to be accompanied with its translation in English. States may adopt their regional language as their official language and use it as a

medium of instruction in higher education. Candidates appearing for competitive examinations of the U.P.S.C. are given the freedom to write in their own regional language. Efforts are taken to promote use of Hindi among non-Hindi speaking people.

Regionalism in India:

Meaning :-

There are various aspects that unite the people living in a particular region. A region is characterized by a common language, culture, demographic composition, geographical features, social, historical and political backgrounds. Hence a person tends to be very loyal to a distinct region more than to the country. Regionalism implies excessive loyalty to one's region or state that tends to pose a danger to national unity. There are differences between the natural resources, endowments and even the levels of development of various regions. These inequalities are actually intensified by politicians who for their vested interests have directed resources for development of certain states and not others. Within states certain regions are favoured while others are neglected. These regional imbalances fuelled by political motivations are responsible for regional conflicts in India. Regional conflicts have assumed extreme forms from time to time whether it be the demand for autonomy, river disputes or boundary disputes; Separatist agitations – The Kashmir debate has been raging for several decades now. The people of Kashmir always live in a state of fear as internal fundamentalist threats and cross border terrorism seems to have become a daily reality for them. Telangana's demands in Andhra Pradesh, anti- Hindi stance as well as demand for statehood by Tamil Nadu have done irreparable damage to the national identity. Jharkhand , Chhattisgarh and Uttaranchal were states created because of the inter-state disparities. Inter-state river water disputes – the Cauvery and Krishna river water issue between Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have led to bloodshed in the recent past. Punjab and Haryana have clashed over the issue of Ravi- Beas waters. Border disputes - For ex. Belgaum which lies on the border of Karnataka and Maharashtra has a large Marathi speaking population and was caught in a linguistic conflict with Karnataka.

Causes:

The causes of regional disputes basically lie in the interstate disparities and are briefly explained as follows: There are interstate disparities in the per capita incomes of various states. Certain states like Maharashtra , Punjab, Gujarat enjoy higher levels of Per Capita Income while the BIMARU states i.e. Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa have low levels of PCI. The gap in purchasing power creates discontent. There are disparities in degree of urbanization of states. A higher level of urbanization implies higher industrial development and therefore greater economic, social and political progress. Disparities in Agricultural production brought about by erratic rainfall in some and heavy monsoons as well as sufficient irrigation facilities in other regions imply a huge gap in their annual produce and hence farmers in Punjab are richer to those in Rajasthan. The industrial growth across states differs widely leading to better employment opportunities and greater economic progress of certain states over others. The cities and townships in developed states have far more and sophisticated infrastructural facilities compared to states lagging in development. The states with a rich historical background may

look down upon other states which tends to stir regional conflicts. Furthermore there are prejudices and stereotypes that increase the interstate divide.

Measures to curb regionalism:

Efforts should be made by the Central and State governments to promote national unity and solidarity. States should be willing to cooperate with each other to resolve their disputes in the larger interest of the nation. Cultural, Sports and literary exchanges between states should be encouraged to foster regional cooperation. Fiscal and other incentives must be given to industrialists and businesses for setting up their plants and operations in backward areas to further their development. Ex. Subsidies and tax exemptions. Special Area Development programmes should be undertaken in tribal, hilly and desert regions for their growth. There should be well coordinated planning between the Centre and states for fair allocation of funds for regional development. There should be just and equitable distribution of natural resources.

Summary

Thus with this unit we have read and understood diversity as a difference, disparity as an inequality and distinguished between the two concepts. We have gained a sound understanding of intergroup conflicts of four kinds namely communalism, casteism, linguism and regionalism, what factors give rise to such conflicts in society with reference to India and analyzed their ill consequences so also the measures to resolve these conflicts for the betterment of society.