

# 8 **Confronting Marginalisation**

## Lesson at a Glance

- Adivasis, Dalits, Muslims and women come under **marginal groups**. These groups experience **inequality** and **discrimination** at every level in society. As this hurt them, they want to come out of this. They often challenge existing inequalities.
- They argue that simply by being citizens of a democratic country, they process equal rights that must be respected. Many of them look up to the Constitution to address their concerns.
- The Constitution provides **Fundamental Rights** which are available to all Indians equally, including the marginalised groups.
- But as the marginalised groups fail to enjoy equal rights, they insist the government to enforce laws.
- The government, as a result, **frame new laws** in keeping with the spirit the Fundamental Rights.
- **Untouchability** has been abolished. This means that no one can henceforth prevent Dalits from educating themselves, entering temples, using public facilities etc.
- Our Constitution States that no citizen of India shall be discriminated against on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. This has been used by Dalits to seek equality where it has been denied to them.
- There are specific laws and policies for the marginalised groups in our country.
- The government sets up a committee or undertakes a survey and then makes an effort to promote such policies in order to give opportunities to specific groups.
- The government tries to promote **social justice** by providing for free or subsidised hostels for students of Dalit and Adivasi communities.
- The Government's **reservation policy** is a very significant effort to end inequity in the system.

- The laws which reserve seats in education and government employment for Dalits and Adivasis are based on an important argument that in a society like ours, where for centuries sections of the population have been denied opportunities to learn and to work in order to develop new skills or vocations, a democratic government must assist these sections.
- Governments across the country have their own list of SCs or Dalits, STs and backward and most backward castes. The central government too has its list.
- Students applying to educational institutions and those applying for posts in government are expected to furnish proof of their caste or tribe status in the form of caste and tribe certificates.
- If a particular Dalit caste or a certain tribe is on the government list, then a candidate from that caste or tribe can avail of the benefit of reservation.
- Besides policies there are also specific laws to protect the rights of marginalised communities.
- The **Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act** came into being in 1989 to protect Dalits and Adivasis from the domination of the powerful communities.

## IN-TEXT QUESTIONS SOLVED

**Q. 1.** State one reason why you think reservations play an important role in providing social justice to Dalits and Adivasis? [NCERT Textbook, page 97]

**Ans.** Reservations create special opportunities for Dalits and Adivasis to come up in the mainstream of the society.

**2.** Complete the following table:

List of schemes	What is this scheme about?	How do you think it will help promote social justice?
Scholarships for students		
Special police stations		
Special schemes for girls in government schools		

[NCERT Textbook, page 97]

**Ans.**

List of schemes	What is this scheme about?	How do you think it will help promote social justice?
Scholarships for students	This scheme is about the financial assistance to the weaker sections of the society especially for SCs and STs.	It will promote education among them and will bring them equal to others
Special police stations	Police stations exclusively for SCs and STs.	It will dispose off their cases faster
Special schemes for girls in government schools	Scholarships to girls and free education to them	It will promote their consciousness to education.

3. In your opinion does the force put on Rathnam to perform the ritual violates his Fundamental Rights?

[NCERT Textbook, page 99]

**Ans.** Yes, it certainly violates his Fundamental Rights.

4. Why do you think that Dalit families were afraid of angering the powerful castes?

[NCERT Textbook, page 99]

**Ans.** Dalit families were scared that they would be perished if they dared to anger the powerful castes.

5. List two different provisions in the 1989 Act.

[NCERT Textbook, page 100]

**Ans.** Two different provisions in the 1989 Act were:

(i) To occupy land that was taken from Dalits and Adivasis

(ii) No further forced displacement.

6. What do you understand by manual scavenging?

[NCERT Textbook, page 101]

**Ans.** Manual scavenging refers to the practice of removing human and animal waste or excreta using brooms, tin plates and baskets from dry latrines and carrying it on the head to the disposal grounds at some distance.

7. Re-read the list of Fundamental Rights provided on page 14 of the textbook and list two rights that the practice of manual scavenging violates?

[NCERT Textbook, page 101]

**Ans.** Two rights that the practice of manual scavenging violates are:

(i) Right to Equality

(ii) Right against exploitation.

8. Why did the Safai Karamchari Andolan File a PIL in 2003? What did they complain about in their petition?

[NCERT Textbook, page 101]

**Ans.** The Safai Karamchari Andolan filed a PIL in 2003 in order to get the manual scavenging banned. In their petition they complained that manual scavenging still existed and it continued in government undertakings like the railways. They sought enforcement of their Fundamental Rights.

9. What did the Supreme Court do on hearing their case in 2005?

[NCERT Textbook, page 101]

**Ans.** On hearing their case in 2005, the Supreme Court directed every department/ministry of the union government and state governments to verify the facts within six months. If manual scavenging was found to exist, then the government department has to actively take up a time-bound programme for their liberation and rehabilitation.

## TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

9. 1. List two Fundamental Rights in the Constitution that Dalits can draw upon to insist that they be treated with dignity and as equals. Re-read the Fundamental Rights listed on page 14 of the textbook to help you answer this question.

**Ans.** Two Fundamental Rights are:

(i) Right to Equality

(ii) Right against Exploitation

9. 2. Re-read the story on Rathnam as well as the provisions of the 1989 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Now list one reason why you think he used this law to file a complaint.

**Ans.** This law provides protection to Dalits and Adivasis. Therefore, Rathnam sought the support of this law.

**Q. 3.** *Why do Adivasi activists, including C.K. Janu, believe that Adivasis can also use this 1989 Act to fight against dispossession? Is there anything specific in the provisions of the Act that allows her to believe this?*

**Ans.** The Act guarantees Adivasis not to be dispossessed from their traditional homelands. The land belonging to Adivasis cannot be sold to or bought by non-tribal people. In cases where this has happened, the Constitution guarantees the right of tribal people to repossess their land.

**Q. 4.** *The poem and the song in this Unit allow you to see the range of ways in which individuals and communities express their opinions, their anger and their sorrow. In class, do the following two exercises:*

(a) *Bring to class a poem that discusses a social issue. Share this with your classmates. Work in small groups with two or more poems to discuss their meaning as well as what the poet is trying to communicate.*

(b) *Identify a marginalised community in your locality. Write a poem, or song, or draw a poster etc. to express your feelings as a member of this community.*

**Ans.** (a) Classroom activity.

(b) Students are suggested to do this task themselves.