

7 ■■■ Understanding Marginalisation

Lesson at a Glance

- The term **marginalisation** refers to a situation in which an individual or a group of individuals is deprived of certain privileges or treated as different from others.
- Marginalisation is experienced in every sphere of life. **Economic, social, cultural** and **political** factors work together to make certain groups in society feel **marginalised**.
- The term **Adivasi** means the original inhabitants.
- Adivasis have always been in close connection with forests. They are also known as **Scheduled Tribes**.
- About 8% of India's population is Adivasi.
- There are over 500 different Adivasi groups in India.
- Adivasi dominated states are Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and the north-eastern states.
- Adivasis worship their **ancestors, village** and **nature spirits**. They have always been influenced by different surrounding religious such as Shakta, Buddhist, Vaishnav, Christianity etc.
- Adivasis have their own languages, Santhali is one of them.
- Adivasis are usually portrayed in colourful costumes and headgear. Their dances are also unique.
- It is the general belief of the people that Adivasis are **exotic, primitive** and **backward**. But it is not so in reality.
- **Forests** played a very significant role in the life of the Adivasis. Adivasis had deep knowledge of forests. History is witness that big empires heavily depended on Adivasis for the crucial access to forest resources.
- But today they are considered **marginalised communities**.
- The pre-colonial Adivasis were basically **hunter-gatherers** and **nomads**. They practised **shifting cultivation**. Some Adivasis also cultivated in one place.
- Slowly and steadily they began to migrate because of economic changes, forest policies, etc. Thus, they lost their access to forests.

- The forest land that once belonged to Adivasis, were cleared for different purposes such as agriculture and industry.
- According to official figures, more than 50% of persons displaced due to mines and mining projects are tribals.
- Another recent data shows that 79% of the persons displaced from the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Jharkhand tribals.
- With the loss of access to forests Adivasis lost their means of livelihood. As a result, they migrated to cities in search of work.
- In the cities, they lead a very miserable life. Their children are malnourished. They have no access to education.
- 45% of tribal groups in rural areas and 35% in urban areas live below the poverty line.
- The term **minority** refers to the communities that are **numerically small** in relation to the rest of the population.
- People belonging to **majority group** may suppress or overpower minority communities. This may lead to their marginalisation. Hence, it is necessary to protect their interest. Our Constitution provides safeguards to them.
- Muslim community is also socially marginalised.
- Muslims are 13.4% of India's population. They have over the years been deprived of the benefits of socio-economic development. They have little access to education. They are deprived of basic amenities like water, electricity. In public employment too they always lag behind to other communities.
- The government is very active to improve the condition of the Muslim community.
- It set-up a high-level committee in 2005 to examine the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim Community in India. The report discusses in detail the marginalisation of this community. It suggests that on a range of social, economic and educational indicators the situation of the Muslim community is comparable to total of other marginalised communities like Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- 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 that they are not like the 'rest of us'. This often becomes an excuse to treat them unfairly.
- This social marginalisation of Muslims has led to them migrating from places where they have lived.

- In our countries, there are several more marginalised communities like Dalits.
- It is quite essential to bring these communities in the mainstream so that they may avail access to rights, development and other opportunities.

■ IN-TEXT QUESTIONS SOLVED ■

1. Explain at least three different reasons why groups may be marginalised. [NCERT Textbook, page 83]

Ans. Groups may be marginalised due to the following reasons:

- They speak different languages
- They follow different customs
- They are poor

2. Why was Dadu forced to leave his village in Orissa? [NCERT Textbook, page 83]

Ans. Dadu was forced to leave his village in Orissa because the companywallahs took his land for mining iron ore there.

3. List five products that you use at home that come from the forest. [NCERT Textbook, page 85]

Ans. (i) Fruit
(ii) Timber
(iii) Gum
(iv) Lac
(v) Honey

4. By whom were the following demands being made on forest land?

- timber for construction of houses and railways
- forest land for mining
- forest land for agriculture by non-tribal people
- reserved by government as wildlife parks

In what ways would this affect tribal people?

[NCERT Textbook, page 85]

Ans. The demands mentioned above were made by the British government in India.

This would affect the establishment of the tribal people. They would be displaced to some other places where they would not get work easily.

5. In your opinion, why is it important that Adivasis should have a say in how their forests and forest lands are used? [NCERT Textbook, page 87]

Ans. Adivasis have been directly affected by the decisions of the government agencies.

6. Why do we need safeguards for minorities?

[NCERT Textbook, Page 88]

Ans. We need safeguards for minorities in order to protect them from being dominated by the majority.

7. Read the following content carefully.

I live in a Muslim-dominated area. Some days back during Ramzan there was some disturbance that started taking a communal outlook. My brother and I had gone for an Iftar party in the neighbourhood and were dressed in traditional clothes, that is sherwani and salwar kameez respectively. On returning home, my brother and I were asked to change our clothes to jeans and T-shirt.

Now when everything is fine I wonder what was the reason that we were asked to change our clothes and why I didn't find it odd. Were our clothes giving away our identity and is that identity linked to all kinds of fears and discrimination?

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This is an essay written by a child around your age. What do you think she is trying to convey?

[NCERT Textbook, Page 90]

Ans. People in society are very keen to hide their identity in order to avoid any tension. Some typical dresses signify some particular communities. Such dresses become their identity. At the time of communal tension, people try to avoid such dresses so that they cannot be targeted by the opposing group.

■ TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED ■

Let's Recall

9. 1. Write in your own words two or more sentences of what you understand by the word 'marginalisation'.

Ans. The word 'marginalisation' refers to a situation in which an individual or a group of individuals is deprived of

certain privileges or treated as different from others. Marginalisation can be experienced in every sphere. Several factors are there which make certain groups in society feel marginalised. These factors are economic, social, cultural and political.

Q. 2. List two reasons why Adivasis are becoming increasingly marginalised.

Ans. (i) Adivasis love to lead their life in their own way, without any interference from the other.
(ii) They usually resist changes or new ideas.

Q. 3. Write one reason why you think the Constitution's safeguards to protect minority communities are very important.

Ans. The Constitution's safeguards to protect because they are numerically small in relation to the rest of the population and therefore they may be dominated by the majority communities.

Q. 4. Re-read the section on Minorities and Marginalisation. What do you understand by the term minority?

Ans. The term minority refers to communities which are numerically small in relation to the rest of the population.

Q. 5. You are participating in a debate where you have to provide reasons to support the following statement. 'Muslims are a marginalised community'. Using the data provided in this chapter, list two reasons that you would give.

Ans. Two reasons are :

(i) Muslims are deprived of basic amenities such as water, electricity, etc.

(ii) They have little access to education.

Q. 6. Imagine that you are watching the Republic Day Parade on TV with a friend and she remarks, 'Look at these tribals. They look so exotic. And they seem to be dancing all the time.' List three things that you would tell her about the lives of Adivasis in India.

Ans. Three things about the lives of Adivasis in India :

(i) They love to wear colourful dresses.

(ii) They are very close to forests.

(iii) They have their own languages, Santhali is one of them.

Q. 7. In the storyboard you read about how Helan hopes to make a movie on the Adivasi story. Can you help her by developing a short story on Adivasi?

Ans. Adivasis live in close association with forests. They earn their livelihood through forests. They love to live in their traditional style, unaware of the developments of the present world. They usually resist changes or new ideas. Their life is very simple and they want very limited things. Since they are very close to nature, they enjoy a very healthy life. Dancing is an important part of their life. They love to dance collectively on festive occasions.

But new developments disturbed their life. They got displaced as a result of which they lost their access to forests. This created the problem of livelihood among them. They ultimately migrated to cities where they got engaged in local industries or at building or construction sites to earn low wages. In cities, they are bound to live a very hard life.

Q. 8. Would you agree with the statement that economic and social marginalisation are interlinked? Why?

Ans. Yes. I do agree with the statement because economic condition of a man affects his social status. His social recognition is assessed by his economic base.

