Page 1 of 37 Pages in this Full pdf

MWG-010 Women and Political Process
Guess Paper-1

Q1. Explain the meaning of the 'political.

Ans. Most of you would be familiar with the term 'polis' that the Greeks employed. It is from here that we get the term political. Polis referred to the Greek city-state, actually implying a shared space and community. In the classical Greek understanding political referred to the shared context of community living and the decisions taken within the community. The polis was seen as that which encompassed all facets of life and everyone who lived within it. Of course you would also know that it was only Greek, adult, male property owning sections that constituted the polis. The Greeks saw no dichotomy in talking about the universality of polis on the one hand, and its exclusivity on the other hand.

The classical Greek understanding of the term political thus hinged upon the idea of community, and participation. It meant the activity of community living and communal decision-making. It evoked a community of people where all members belonged and took collective decisions regarding their future. Of course we should remind ourselves once again about the limited nature of the Greek notion of collective and universal membership of the polis and thus obviously the limited notion of the political. Clearly foreigners, women and slaves had no role to play in the polis and thus were excluded from the definition of the term political.

Significantly for us, classical Greek philosophy made no distinction between the private and the public. Indeed, it made no distinction between the polis and other facets of life. This meant that the political was all encompassing. Such a view was intrinsically linked with an organic view of community life. Every part and member of the polis was seen as inextricably linked with the other; hence decisions taken in the context of one part would be significant for the other. All aspects of life and living were thus part of the political. Thus, there was no place to seek shelter from the polis or the political, wherein political suggested a kind of life that would be committed to maintaining the balance and equilibrium of life within the polis through the decisions taken. Thus, the Greek notion of the political was committed to finding and determining the good life for the community, it did not separate the social from the political. This was so because there was no notion of a life that could be meaningful and purposeful outside of the membership of the community. The notion of an individual simply did not exist, an individual in abstraction and autonomous of the polis was inconceivable.

Let us turn to Aristotle in specific for greater clarity on this issue. Aristotle was of the opinion that the good life would be possible only through participation in the life of the polis, which he described as the final and perfect association. All associations according to Aristotle aim at some good; however, the highest good could be achieved only through membership of the polis. He explained the exclusion of women, slaves and children by referring to the 'essential' difference between greater (free, male) and lesser (unfree, female). These two classes of people however were linked according to Aristotle by a relationship of necessary super ordination. Aristotle considered this relationship to be natural and indeed essential for the preservation of both.

For Aristotle, the household constituted the non-public sphere within which the female was subsumed and was defined by. In Aristotle's understanding the household too being an association was aimed at good, but of a lesser nature as compared with the polis. Thus the life of the polis was considered to be naturally superior and those fit enough to be part of the political were obviously naturally superior as well. Women, children and slaves ofcourse provided the necessary background and condition for the life in the polis, he compared them to the flute makers and the men who participated in the political matters with the flute player!

Aristotle bifurcated the public (political) from private (apolitical) realms. The family for instance would be a lesser association, an apolitical association. The Greeks described those who did not participate in politics and were not part of the 'political' as idiots, and women were idiots in that sense. We can surely anticipate strong feminist objection to these ideas, which we shall take up in the next Unit. Those who participated in the public/political life were characterized by responsibility, rationality and were thus an integral part of the life of the public and of the polis. The non-political/private sphere was for those who were not fully rational and who could experience only limited goodness appropriate to their sphere. Within the Aristotelian philosophy, what ought to be because whatever ought to be has been actualized to — that is, is. Thus, Aristotle's theory could be used to justify and defend any kind of dominance or subordination.

This Aristotleian understanding has had a far-reaching and deep impact on the nature of conceptualization of the political in the western political philosophy tradition. In the post-medieval period though, we will notice a shift in the conceptualization of the term 'political'. While the Greek understanding of the term political referred to the power to take part in decision-making it also suggested an ethical meaning wedded as it was to the pursuit of the 'good'.

Q2. Write about the "Proactive Reform" Discourse.

Page 2 of 37 Pages in this Full pdf

Ans. The most dominant historiography of the 19th century reform movements related to women has been that it attempted to bring improvements in women's lives, bringing them opportunities of education and greater participation in public life, freeing them from the traditional ritual lifestyle of the pre-modern era. Thus, this discourse presents the reform movement as a constructive phenomenon that uplifted the condition of women in the 19th century.

Some of the main features of this discourse are the following.

- Ritual Sphere: This mainly involves a discussion of the efforts made in the 19th and early 20th centuries against the prohibitive practices related to women. The three most prominent issues discussed were as Sati system, the custom of child marriage and the restrictions on the widows, including the issue of widow-remarriage.
- Educational Sphere: The main focus of this area of the proactive reform discourse is that it discusses the efforts to introduce Indian women to the world outside their domestic spaces. Women were educated and familiarized in Western discourse, either at home or in school. A major stress of this education was on learning English language, especially when the women studied in schools.
- SocialSphere: This component of the proactive discourse majorly focuses on the efforts to abolish caste-related mistreatment of women and men. Although this component involves a study of the effects of castepractices on both men and women, it focuses on the specific circumstances faced by the women related to this issue.
- Public and Political Spheres: This component of the proactive discourse explores the efforts made by the women to engage in the public and political spheres.

While discussing the above issues, this historiography focuses on the efforts made by the British to pass laws related to these issues alongside efforts by the social reformers to sensitize the society towards these restrictive practices. The efforts to create an awakening in the society against social and gender issues often drew support by giving evidences from scriptures to show that these practices didn't have any religious sanction and the efforts made by the women to participate in this reform movement as a constructive process.

Q3. Describe women's political participation in nationalist movement.

Ans. The nationalist movements that unfolded across the world during the 19th and 20th centuries were pivotal moments in history, marking struggles for independence, sovereignty, and self-determination. While these movements were often dominated by male leaders, women played significant and transformative roles in shaping the course and outcomes of nationalist struggles. This essay explores the diverse ways in which women participated in nationalist movements, examining their contributions, challenges, and the lasting impact of their political engagement.

(1) **Early Foundations**: The roots of women's political participation in nationalist movements can be traced to the late 19th century. In various regions, women were exposed to new ideas of equality, freedom, and national identity. Educational reforms and the emergence of feminist thought provided a platform for women to question their societal roles and actively engage in political discourse.

(2) **Women's Participation in Political Organizations**: As nationalist movements gained momentum, women actively participated in political organizations and movements. They joined nationalist parties, supported independence movements, and organized themselves to advocate for political rights. In India, for example, women like Sarojini Naidu and Annie Besant were prominent figures in the Indian National Congress, contributing significantly to the cause of independence.

(3) **Civil Disobedience and Nonviolent Resistance**: Women were integral to the strategies of civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance adopted by many nationalist movements. In India, the Salt March led by Mahatma Gandhi saw the active involvement of women who marched alongside men, facing arrests and repression. The commitment to nonviolence became a powerful symbol of resistance, challenging oppressive colonial regimes.

(4) **Women's Role in Liberation Wars**: In some nationalist movements, women took up arms and actively participated in liberation wars. The Algerian War of Independence, for instance, witnessed the engagement of women in the armed struggle against French colonial rule. Women served as fighters, couriers, and organizers, contributing significantly to the military efforts.

(5) **Feminist Perspectives within Nationalist Movements**: Many women within nationalist movements also embraced feminist perspectives, advocating for gender equality alongside national independence. They challenged patriarchal norms within their societies and sought to address issues such as women's suffrage, education, and legal rights. The Mexican Revolution, for example, saw women like Hermila Galindo actively pushing for women's rights within the broader struggle for social and political change.

(6) **Women's Contributions to Nation-Building**: Beyond the immediate struggles for independence, women played vital roles in nation-building efforts. Post-independence, women contributed to the development of educational institutions, healthcare systems, and social welfare programs. The involvement of women in shaping the newly independent nations was a testament to their enduring commitment to the well-being of their societies.

Page 3 of 37 Pages in this Full pdf

(7) **Challenges Faced by Women in Nationalist Movements**: While women's contributions were significant, they faced numerous challenges within nationalist movements. The male-dominated leadership often marginalized women, relegating them to supportive roles rather than recognizing their full agency. Societal norms and traditional gender roles also constrained women's active participation, leading to resistance and discrimination even within the nationalist struggle.

(8) **Global Perspectives on Women's Political Participation**: Women's political participation in nationalist movements was not limited to specific regions but extended globally. In Africa, women like Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti played pivotal roles in anti-colonial struggles. The suffragette movements in Western countries also had strong connections with nationalist movements, as women fought for political rights both at home and in the colonies.

(9) **Legacy and Long-Term Impact**: The contributions of women to nationalist movements had a lasting impact on the political landscape. Post-independence, women continued to advocate for their rights, pushing for legal reforms, educational opportunities, and greater representation in political institutions. The struggles of women during nationalist movements laid the foundation for subsequent feminist movements and contributed to the global discourse on women's rights.

(10) **Challenges and Unfinished Agendas**: While progress has been made, challenges persist in ensuring gender equality and addressing the unfinished agendas of women's political participation. Women continue to face barriers in accessing political leadership roles, and issues such as gender-based violence, unequal representation, and discrimination persist in many parts of the world.

Conclusion: Women's political participation in nationalist movements was a multifaceted and transformative phenomenon. Their roles ranged from political leaders to foot soldiers, from advocates of nonviolent resistance to active participants in armed struggles. Despite facing challenges and often being sidelined within male-dominated leadership structures, women's contributions were instrumental in shaping the outcomes of nationalist movements.

The legacy of women's political participation extends beyond the attainment of independence. It laid the groundwork for ongoing struggles for gender equality, women's rights, and social justice. Recognizing and understanding the diverse ways in which women engaged in nationalist movements is crucial for acknowledging their agency, resilience, and enduring impact on the political and social landscapes of the post-colonial world.

Q4. Explain the term political representation.

Ans. Political representation, in a representative democracy, refers to elected officials nominally speaking for their constituents in the government. Elected representatives participate in governing the affairs of their constituency, and engage themselves in making decisions on behalf of the constituents (Patnaik, 2005).The role of representation is multi-faceted. Often, it isdescribed as the range of expectations that people possess regarding government and hence is related to public officials and leaders.

As political leaders they are proactively participating in local level economic, social and political processes; in social planning and policy development and acting upon them. They are defining and articulating the needs and priorities of their constituency for better service delivery by acting, organizing and making demands upon local bodies to respond to the concerns and priorities for improved services. They are taking collective action around both wider community and gender needs; change and/or influence policies and practices of government and governance (Farrell and Pant, 2009). This form of political participation i.e. expressing opinions and ideally exerting influence on government action either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies is closely linked with responsiveness and accountability of elected representatives to their voters.

The role of representation is closely associated with participation. In an electoral system, people cast votes to elect their representative. Representation, therefore, implies being elected to the political institutions. Broadly speaking, there are two ways in which the elected representatives participate in the elected bodies. Firstly, elected representatives work for the development of their constituency. They participate in the meetings and discussions to plan various activities for the overall development of their constituency. Secondly, they interact with their constituents to gauge their interests and needs and work towards meeting them. This view of participation is closely linked with the issues of responsiveness and accountability of elected representatives to their voters (Patnaik, 2005).

Women and their issues are by and large considered apolitical. Such bias causes and affects women's political under-representation. The concern over under representation of women in public life has led to the affirmative policies. The demand for reservation of women rests in the assumption that women as marginalized section share a common perception of injustice, deprivation and oppression vis-à-vis power structures. Affirmative action aims to build a mass leadership who will actively participate in strategic decision-making processes.

Social and political relations in a society constrain women's participation and access to formal political rights and representation in power structures. The common pattern of women's political exclusion stem from:

Page 4 of 37 Pages in this Full pdf

- Social and political discourses
- Political structures and institutions
- The socio-cultural and functional constraints that put limits on women's individual and collective agency (Bari, 2005).

The social and political discourses on gender roles place women within the private arena of home as mothers and wives, while men are places in the public sphere. The domestic domain is perceived as the legitimate space for women while public space is associated with men. Women have to negotiate their entry into and claim on public space according to the discursive and material opportunities available in a given culture and society.

Though secular democracy has created space for women's participation and representation in politics; the dichotomy of public-private spheres has excluded them from public political spheres and even when they enter politics; they are entering as mothers and wives. Male domination of politics, political parties and culture of formal political structures hinders women's political participation and representation. The women's perspective is often ignored and not reflected upon in the politics. The gender biases of male leadership in political parties often put limitations on women being elected at the position of power within political party structures.

The gender status quo is maintained through low resource allocation to women's human development by the state, society and the family. This is reflected in the social indicators, which reflect varying degrees of gender disparities in education, health, employment, ownership of productive resources and politics in all countries. Lack of access to rights and ownership of productive resources, limits the scope of their political work. Additionally gender is mediated through class, caste and ethnicity that structure access to resources and opportunities. Due to socio-cultural dependence, women often lack social capital of men. This leads to the absence of constituency base for them and means of political participation such as political skills, economic resources, education, training and access to information (Bari, 2005).

Q5. Discuss identity politics, communalism and women's political mobilizations.

Ans. The movement in the late 1970s constructed itself as secular but did not make any effort to define its identity as such. It was assumed that affiliations with the women's movement were based on gender and positions of difference were articulately largely on grounds of class rather than caste or religious community. Class was constructed as a modern identity unlike caste or religious community, which were seen as pre-modern identities to be transcended.

By the mid-1980s, there was an awareness of the fractionalization of the women's movement, and various groups spent considerable energy and effort in defining their identities as separate from others. However, this sectarianism did not prepare the women's movement for the deep schisms that would be created by the events to follow, in particular the Shah Bano case and the Roop Kanwar sati case, which opened up a Pandora's Box of divisiveness highlighting cultural, religious and communitarian identities. Let us revisit in the context of political rights of women in institutions.

The women's wings such as Hindu right wing organizations over the years became more visible and active. The organizations such as the Shiv Sena's Mahila Agadi, the VHP's Durga Vahini, the BJP's Mahila Morcha and the RSS's Rashtrasevka Samiti located their stand firmly within the non-threatening ideology of patriarchal family structures. They emphasized that Hindu women must become militant in support of their religion as well as against the possibility of physical violence but not at the cost of losing their primary identities as wives and mothers. Women were actively mobilized in riots, for instance, in Bhagalpur in 1989, in Ahmedabad in 1990, in Surat in 1992(Phadke, 2003).

Identity politics, communalism, and women's political mobilizations are intertwined phenomena that shape the socio-political landscape in complex ways. This discussion explores the dynamics of identity politics and communalism, particularly in the context of women's political mobilizations. Examining how identities based on gender, religion, and other factors intersect and influence political engagement provides insights into the challenges and opportunities for inclusive and equitable political participation.

(1) **Identity Politics**: A Framework of Mobilization: Identity politics refers to the mobilization of political support and action around specific aspects of identity, such as race, gender, ethnicity, or religion. While identity-based movements aim to address historical inequalities and discrimination, they can also lead to polarization and the exclusion of certain groups. In the context of women's political mobilizations, identity politics becomes a crucial framework for understanding and addressing gender-based disparities.
   - **Intersectionality in Identity**: The concept of intersectionality emphasizes the interconnectedness of multiple identities. Women's experiences are shaped by a combination of factors, including gender, race, class, and religion. Recognizing the intersectionality of identities is essential for understanding the diverse challenges faced by women in different social contexts.
   - **Empowerment through Identity**: Identity politics can empower marginalized groups by providing a platform to articulate their concerns and demand justice. For women, embracing a collective identity can be a catalyst for challenging systemic inequalities, advocating for policy changes, and fostering a sense of solidarity.

Page 5 of 37 Pages in this Full pdf

(2) **Communalism:** Challenges in Political Mobilization: Communalism refers to the mobilization of political support along religious lines, often leading to the polarization of communities. In many societies, communal politics have been a source of tension and conflict. Examining how communalism intersects with women's political mobilizations provides insights into the complexities of navigating identity-based challenges.
- Gendered Implications of Communalism: Communal politics can have gendered implications, affecting women differently based on their religious affiliations. In some instances, women may face restrictions or expectations imposed by communal ideologies, limiting their autonomy and political agency.
- Challenges to Inclusivity: Communalism can pose challenges to inclusive political mobilization. Women may find themselves torn between communal identities and the broader feminist agenda. Bridging the gap between communal affiliations and gender equality becomes a delicate balancing act, necessitating nuanced strategies for political engagement.

(3) **Women's Political Mobilizations**: Women's political mobilizations encompass a wide range of movements and initiatives aimed at addressing gender-based disparities. From suffragette movements to contemporary feminist activism, women have consistently mobilized to assert their rights, challenge discriminatory norms, and advocate for systemic change.
- Global Feminist Movements: The global feminist movement has played a crucial role in mobilizing women across borders. Issues such as reproductive rights, gender-based violence, and economic inequality form common threads that unite women in their pursuit of equality. Global solidarity amplifies the impact of women's political mobilizations.
- Local and Regional Initiatives: Women's political mobilizations also take shape in local and regional contexts, addressing specific challenges faced by women within those communities. Grassroots movements, community-based organizations, and advocacy groups contribute to shaping policies and challenging discriminatory practices.

(4) **Dynamics of Intersectionality in Women's Mobilizations**: The dynamics of intersectionality come into sharp focus within women's political mobilizations. Recognizing the diverse identities and experiences of women is essential for fostering inclusive movements that address the intersecting forms of discrimination they face.
- Challenges of Exclusivity: While women's political mobilizations aim to address gender-based disparities, there is a risk of excluding women from marginalized communities if the movements are not inclusive. Acknowledging the intersecting factors of race, class, religion, and sexual orientation is crucial for avoiding the pitfalls of exclusivity.
- Inclusive Policy Demands: Intersectionality influences the policy demands put forth by women's movements. Recognizing the diverse needs of women allows for more comprehensive policy proposals that address the complexities of their experiences. Inclusive agendas contribute to the creation of policies that benefit all women, regardless of their intersecting identities.

(5) **Challenges and Opportunities**: The intersection of identity politics, communalism, and women's political mobilizations presents both challenges and opportunities for fostering inclusive political spaces.
- Challenge of Divisions: Identity politics and communalism can sometimes lead to divisions within women's movements. Differences based on religion, ethnicity, or other identities may create fractures, hindering the collective strength of women advocating for gender equality.
- Opportunity for Solidarity: On the other hand, navigating the complexities of identity politics can create opportunities for solidarity. Recognizing and celebrating diverse identities within women's movements can strengthen their collective voice and contribute to a more inclusive and effective advocacy for women's rights.
- Policy Impact: The intersection of identity and communal politics influences the impact of policy changes on women. Policies that address the specific needs of women from diverse backgrounds are more likely to be effective in dismantling systemic inequalities and fostering gender equality.

(6) **Future Directions**: The future of women's political mobilizations in the context of identity politics and communalism lies in fostering intersectional and inclusive approaches.
- Education and Awareness: Promoting education and awareness about the intersectionality of identities is crucial. Efforts to increase understanding and empathy across different communities can contribute to building bridges and fostering cooperation within women's movements.
- Intersectional Leadership: Encouraging intersectional leadership within women's movements ensures that diverse voices are represented in decision-making processes. Leadership that reflects the intersecting identities of women contributes to more inclusive strategies and policies.
- Collaboration Across Movements: Collaborating across various movements, including feminist, anti-communal, and human rights movements, can amplify the impact of women's political mobilizations.

IGNOU MOTHER PUBLICATION - ASSIGNMENTS & GUESS PAPERS & PYQ SOLVED PDF

INDIA'S NUMBER 1 STUDY MATERIAL PROVIDER

यह केवल एक सैंपल पीडीएफ है।

यह केवल Sample PDF है। पूरी Solved Assignment या Guess Paper PDF खरीदने के लिए हमारी वेबसाइट पर जाएँ

या

WhatsApp पर मैसेज करें।

WHATSAPP ONLY: +91 9485943709

WHATSAPP ONLY:: +91 9992290905

1. Solved Assignment Visit -:: https://motherpublication.in/

2. Pyq Solved Guess paper Visit:-: https://mothernotes.in/

Mother Publication • IGNOU Study Resources