
UNIT 76 MINORITY, CITIZENSHIP AND MULTICULTURALISM

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76.1 OBJECTIVES

This Unit will attempt to explain the conceptual framework of key terms like minority, citizenship and multiculturalism and hope that after you have gone through it, you will be able to

1. Understand the key terms like minority, citizenship and multiculturalism
2. The Role of migration diaspora community formation
3. The need and the role of citizenship in their lives
4. The concept of dual nationality/citizenship
5. The relationship between multiculturalism and diaspora and
6. Multiculturalism, as a sustainable human co-habitation?

76.2 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding Units, we discussed some of the conceptual framework on diaspora formation and their residential and political rights along with the attempts of the host countries to assimilate and integrate them in the mainstream. As we learnt, individuals or group of people when they migrate from one place to another, they tend to form a community of their own and start living as a cohort in an enclave. They tend to segregate and differentiate themselves from the rest of the people or majority group, thus leading to both geographical and psychological distancing. This is often done for a communal feeling of security, safety and intra-community bonhomie.

When such a group lives longer in a given geographical area for a considerable period of them, they tend to form a diasporic group. These diasporic groups henceforth tend to differentiate themselves on the basis of race, culture, language, and profession and are akin to inbreeding pattern of some societies. Such a group also poses a challenge to the host country's governments as they are considered an 'outsider' and beyond the preview of political control of the host country. This is so because some of the co-habitants continue to hold the citizenship of their country of origin. When these groups of people live in the host country for a longer period of time they are naturalized and become the citizens of the host countries.

In the modern democracies there are deliberate attempt to either integrate or assimilate these diasporic minority groups with the native majority. It is based on the principle of multiculturalism which treats all humans as equal and does not discriminate them based on race, caste, religion, gender or nationality. Multiculturalism believes that people from diverse background and ethnicity can co-habit a place peacefully and work towards the development of a just and democratic society. So, in a way, one sees that all the three concepts - minority, citizenship and multiculturalism are correlated and have a bearing on each other.

76.3 DEFINING DIASPORA AS MINORITY

All diasporas, whether it's ethnic, religious, colonial or professionals are minority in origin. The process of migration and diaspora formation are demographic phenomenon and by virtue of its own definition enjoy a minority status. In fact, minority is understood to be a group of people, united under a common ethnicity, religion or language, which is "numerically inferior to the rest of the population" and constitute minority (Capotorti, 1991: 96). It has nonetheless been contested that minority-majority are binary categorization and was created by colonial narrative in most of the under-developed and developing countries. Sometimes, the very concept of minority is contested on the ground whether it is self-imposed or imposed by the outside forces.

As mentioned, the labeling of minority status to a group of people is the result of demographic movement. Had people lived at the same place from time immemorial, sharing the same language, culture and religion, there would neither be a minority nor a diaspora formation. According to one estimate, 10 to 20 per cent of the world's population, numbering between 600 million and 1.2 billion, live under minority status and are categorized based on ethnicity, religious beliefs and linguistic differentiation. These minority groups need special protection to survive and flourish in a majoritarian state. It was for this reason that the United Nations Declaration on Minorities under Article 3 on December 18, 1992 came out with special measures to safeguard the rights of such individuals and communities. It was expected that the States within their territories would defend the national, ethnic, cultural, and religious and linguistic rights of minority groups and would create conditions to promote and safeguard their identities.

76.4 FEATURES OF DIASPORA MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Conceptually speaking, the safety and security of minority groups in multicultural

society rest on the principles of protection of the existence, non-exclusion, non-discrimination and non assimilation. To allow the minority groups to retain their individuality, it is stipulated that they should not be forced, as part of policy, to assimilate with the rest of the majority group, thereby losing their individuality. Instead, they should be integrated with the majority group under a common law, thereby allowing them the freedom to exercise their cultural, linguistic and religious uniqueness. Integration allows the existence of a pluralistic society, thus allowing the minority groups to retain its individual identity. In India, Siddis or Habshis and Parsis are good examples of diaspora communities fully assimilated and integrated in Indian culture with full citizenship rights to them (Case Studies I, II)

Case Study I: Siddis or Habshis - A community fully acculturated and assimilated

Siddis/Sidis/Sidi Badshahs or Habshis are ethnic, tribal people of Afro-Indian origin settled and assimilated in Indian culture. They live in coastal Karnataka, Gujarat, and in some parts of Andhra Pradesh. A large number of them are Muslims; while there have been recent convert to Christianity as well. Their antiquity dates back to centuries and bear the testimony of the rich maritime trade India once had with African countries. Genetically, they are aligned to the DNA of Bantu tribe of Africa and were brought as slaves, soldiers, labourers and merchants. They have inherited ancestry from Africans, Indians, and the Portuguese, who brought them in large number as slaves to India. They are also called Habshis, a term which is of Abyssian (Ethiopia) origin. The total population of Siddi's in India is estimated to be around 8, 50,000.

A large number of Siddis reside in coastal Gujarat, especially in Junagadh, Jamnagar, Rajkot, Surendranagar, Bhavnagar and Amreli. They are economically and socially marginalised community. As a result of hundred years of living in the region, they have been assimilated and become part of Gujarati cultural landscape. In order to empower and make them mainstreamed, both state and union governments have included them in the Scheduled Tribes list. At some other places, where they have been excluded, their community leaders have been demanding for inclusion in the Scheduled Tribes list.

In a transnational and multicultural society in which people are constantly moving, the States have been facing severe challenges to recognize the rights of minorities, especially in some of the liberal democracies. There have been demand to accommodate the differences of culturally different and marginalized communities. As part of democratic representation, they are extended 'reservation' for the preservation of their identity. This becomes possible only after a community is recognized minority by the States. Understandably, this has spiraled into the 'politics of recognition' in some of the countries. Such political and social recognition to minority are often hotly contested by the native majoritarian communities who feel that their rights and resources have either been liquidated or shared. This has been noticed in some of the European countries where natives have been seen protesting against their social welfare assets being shared.

In fact, the native right-wing ideology has been one of the reasons for a shift

in the global geopolitics in recent years. Such perception is not unfounded as during the time of inter-ethnic rivalries, the minority diaspora groups are seen actively participating to serve its own interest or of their home country. This was witnessed in the insurrectionist movements in Nagorno-Karabakh, Israel, Palestine, Kosovo, Ethiopia and Kashmir. Such a minority group is known to have stirred and sustained unrest in some of these places. But there is also a positive side of the diaspora activism as they help in the resolution and restoration of peace in conflict zones. This was seen among the Eritrean and Sri Lanka diaspora. The orientation of such a group however depends whether they are ethnic-parochial or cosmopolitan in its approach. Their racial and cultural conceptualization tends to shape their social and political behaviour. It has also been observed that some of the minority diaspora, over a period of time, transformed themselves and undergo metamorphosis in identity reaffirmation. This was noticed among the Turkish migrants who, over a period, became Kurdish diaspora, thus leading to change in their identity.

Another feature of minority diaspora is the existence and perpetuation of the myth of 'model minority', which has been noticed among Indian immigrants in the US. It is assumed that they are homogenous mass of people who are highly educated, IT savvy and proficient in English language with higher per capita income than the rest of the American population. Contrary to this, there is another group of Indian diaspora within the US, whose migration pattern and settlement has been responsible in their marginalization within the same ethnic group. This has led to creation of a minority within the minorities who are less educated and have lower occupational status (Sharma 2010, Scop and Altman 2006).

76.5 ROLE OF MIGRATION IN MINORITY DIASPORA FORMATION

As mentioned earlier, migration is the predominant factor in the formation of diaspora and their identity affirmation as minorities. The phenomenon of such a demographic formation is slow and protracted, sometimes extending to decades and centuries. Sometimes, because of their numerical strength, over the course of time, they undergo change in their status as was evident in the migration of indentured labourers from India. In almost all countries, except Mauritius and some other countries, people of Indian origin live under minority status. For example they are 2.3% of total population in the UK, 4.5% in Canada, 1% in the US. In some countries their number is relatively high. As in the Netherlands 14%, South Africa 17%, Surinam 40%, Guyana 38%, Mauritius 70%, Reunion (France) 24% and Fiji 35%.

While observing some other global diasporas, it has been seen that they dominate in numerical strength in a particular geographical region by forming ethnic enclaves. Historically, Jews migrated over a period of 2500 years to various countries because they were exiled not only from the place of their origin, but also from countries where they went to settle down. Now, there are more Jews living outside Israel, their mythical and reimagined homeland. While Israel is home to 30% of the Jews global population, the US has 51%, France, Canada and Russia (3% each), the UK has 2% and Argentina, Germany, Hungary, Ukraine and Australia have 1% each.

As mentioned in the earlier chapters, Jews diaspora is an arch-type example of living in minority. It was also the reason that they were discriminated against and were victimized during the course of history. It is because of their minority status that they felt the need of a separate homeland and also as a means to safeguard their freedom. Because of racial and political discrimination, they were barred from political participation in various countries. Despite living for decades and in some countries for centuries, they were granted citizenship rights much later. The US granted them citizenship in 1789, France in 1791, and other European countries in the late 18th century. Russia granted them citizenship rights as late as 1917.

Like the Jews diaspora, the Black diaspora too have been victim of deprivation and slavery because of their minority status. According to one estimate, the numbers of people of African descent in Europe are 3.51 million, North America (39.16 million), Latin America (112.65 million), and the Caribbean (13.56 million). Although their numerical strength is sizeable, they have continued to be discriminated and were deprived of political rights in most of the country.

76.6 DEFINING CITIZENSHIP

While discrimination and deprivation of political rights has been a common feature of most diaspora in the initial years of its formation, the birth of liberal democracies has seen a progressive recognition of their rights. But before we delve into its finer points, let's discuss the conceptual framework on which the idea of citizenship based and how it historically evolved over the period. In its most rudimentary form, citizenry is quite akin to tribal communal living where affinity and loyalty forms the crux of the association. A member of a tribal community is expected to perform certain services for the betterment of the community and be loyal to its ethos. They are expected to respect and perform certain rituals, symbols, follow norms and customs and swear to live by it. In its modern form, these symbols of affinity can be seen in the artifacts of national anthem, national flag, and other nationalistic icons.

During the Graceo-Roman civilization, the tribal affinity, as a form of citizenry, was extended to much larger geographical and demographic areas. It was soon followed by written norms, a precursor to the present-day Constitution. These norms included rights, privileges and duties of citizens towards the territorial sovereignty. It was responsible in forming the basic principles of polity, especially during war and conquest and aggression. These norms took the shape of conventions, practices and laws which were codified. But it was the French Revolution which strengthened the territorial nation-state. It was based on two kinds of citizenry - the Insider and the Outsider. While the Insider was the member of the territorial community, the Outsider was a foreigner or a stranger who was not to be trusted. The binary seems to exist even now, in the form of natives and immigrants and diaspora, with the latter being looked upon less-favourably on some of the countries.

It should be noted that the modern concept of citizenship and diaspora are quite in contrast to each other. While citizenship is a territorialized and immobile concept, migration and diaspora are mobile and de-territorialized phenomena. Migration thwarts homogenization and exclusion of social, cultural, political and economic categorization. While citizenship binds people, mobility frees

them from the boundedness and makes them responsible towards multiple belonging. It also stands in quite contrast to the nation-state rhetoric of ‘purity’ ‘ethnicity’ and loyalty to nationalism. It is the territorialized citizenship that has been responsible in differential categorization of ‘we’ and ‘otherness’.

Citizenship is territorial belongingness whereby a person is a part of sovereign state and carries with him/her certain duties and obligation towards the State. A citizen is a statutory status whereby he/she draws rights from the Constitution of the state and identifies himself/herself as the part of the State. Citizenship of some States can be acquired while in most cases, it is inherited by virtue of belonging or an ancestral lineage. The State, especially liberal democracies, on its part, is expected to provide security and some inalienable rights to its citizen which include freedom of religion, livelihood and expression. It is also considered contributory rights because citizens have to contribute to the welfare of the state. But citizenship is also known to alienate and assimilate as much as it ostracizes and equalizes a group of people, whether they are migrants or the diaspora. It is as much inclusive as exclusive in its disposition. The Rohingyas Muslims refugees and Tibetan refugees in India offer good example of an exclusive and inclusive processes respectively and the changes in the citizenship laws (Case Studies III, IV and V).

Case Study III: Rohingyas - A Stateless People

Rohingyas Muslims are a minority community in Myanmar who have been living there since centuries. Of the 54 million people in Myanmar about 1.3 million are Rohingya Muslims. After a military crackdown following the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army’s attack on Myanmar’s military posts, over a million Rohingya Muslims fled to Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. They were also made stateless as a result of a 1982 citizenship law in Myanmar which deprived them of their citizenship rights. As they were no longer citizens of Myanmar, they were not issued passport that could help them to migrate to another country legally.

Rohingyas in Myanmar have been described by the United Nations as “the most persecuted minority in the world.” According to an estimate, there are some 40,000 Rohingyas in different parts of India as refugees and some 300 to 500 are in jails because of their illegal status. In India, they were convicted under the Foreigner’s Act and detained at Assam’s Silchar detention center since 2012 for illegal entry into the country.

The new law enacted by India in 2019 called Citizenship Amendment Act does not grant citizenship to Muslim asylum-seekers. As a result, the Government of India is making an attempt to deport them to Myanmar. The CAA is also applicable in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir which holds a sizable Rohingya population. As India is not a signatory to the Refugee Convention, 1951 and 1967 Refugee Protocol, it does not recognise the Refugee Cards issued by the UNHCR.

Case Study IV: Tibetan Refugees – India as Second Homeland

Most Tibetan refugees arrived in India after the failed revolt against the Chinese rule in March 1959. The event led to the flight of the Dalai Lama and around 8000 Tibetans who sought refuge in India and other neighbouring South Asian countries. Out of the total Tibetan diasporic community of 128,944 worldwide, around 94,203 are based in India. According to Central Tibetan Authority (CTA) survey, there are some 127,935 Tibetans registered in the diaspora. Out of which 94,203 are in India; 13,514 in Nepal; 1,298 in Bhutan and 18,920 in other countries. In India, they were housed in 53 settlements across various parts of the country. The Tibetan diasporic communities all over the world regard India as their 'second homeland'.

Tibetans who arrived in India were given Identity Certificates which grant them all rights as Indian citizens except the right to vote and right to government employment. They are incidentally recognised as 'foreigners' and not as refugees. As a result, they cannot own any property, neither can they apply for government jobs. After 2014, only qualified professionals from among the Tibetan refugees were permitted to take jobs in private and non-government sectors.

Indian Citizenship Act (Amendment) of 1986 allowed for the grant of Indian citizenship to anyone born in India between January 26, 1950, and July 1, 1987. The amendment made a large section of the second and third generation Tibetan refugees eligible for Indian citizenship. However, the government of India listed the following four conditions for Tibetans seeking Indian citizenship: 1) they are required to get their Registration Certificate (RC) and Identity Certificate cancelled; 2) they should not be staying in designated Tibetan refugee settlements; 3) they should submit an undertaking that they no longer enjoy the benefits offered by the Tibetan government-in-exile; and, 4) they should submit a declaration that they no longer enjoy any privileges, including subsidies.

Although the clauses of obtaining Indian citizenship rights are hotly contested, but unlike many other refugee-hosting countries, India did not adopt the policy of integrating Tibetans into mainstream Indian society. Rather, it facilitated the preservation and promotion of their distinctive culture, tradition and identity by setting up separate Tibetan settlements in various parts of the country. India established separate schools for the Tibetan children and allowed the functioning of the Tibetan government-in-exile to manage their affairs.

Some of the countries allowing dual citizenship are those who, as part of policy, began to engage its diaspora. There were various reasons for this. In some cases remittances were the main reasons as it played a critical role in the host country's economy. In countries like Mexico, political diaspora is an integral part as it not only sends remittances but also finances political parties. It is for this reason, it is said, that no Mexico political party can afford to ignore its diaspora. In fact, many of these parties try to win over its expatriates and offer them lucrative deals in terms of investment and other rights.

The concept of citizenship has been undergoing major change, especially in the 21st century which is characterized with mass mobility and transmigration of capital, goods and services and off-shore manufacturing and technology. As a result, citizenship is no longer a monolithic or homogenous legal status and varies from country to country. The expansion of citizenship to include denizens, quasi-citizenship and dual citizenship are some of the examples which have found new proponents in many multicultural democratic societies. The relationship between the citizenship and the diaspora has, in the past, resulted into 'breached diaspora' as was witnessed after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. There were people who were left outside the borders of their titular states. As a consequence of this there was a deliberate attempt by Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan to reconnect with its people as a measure of nationalistic sentiments.

Kazakhstan, as a measure of policy, made an attempt to exhort its diaspora to return to the country to balance the demographic disadvantage. But once such a balance was achieved with the returns of Kazakhs, the country turned lukewarm towards its diaspora. Offering citizenship to its diaspora, it seems to work as carrot and stick for the home country. It also explicitly showed that just as diaspora use home country for the vested interested, likewise the home country use them for its own advantages. A similar case of breached diaspora was witnessed with the dismemberment of British colonial India as Indian indentured labours in Malaya, Burma, Sri Lanka and Fiji were left stateless. The problem had become more acute for Tamil Indians in Sri Lanka who had gone there as labourers. With the passage of Citizenship law by Sri Lanka, some 900,000 Indian Tamils were disenfranchised. It was only as late as 2003 when Sri Lanka passed the Grant of Citizenship to Persons of Indian Origin Act that some 300,000 Indians stateless Tamil Indian were able to receive the citizenship of Sri Lanka.

Check your progress 1

- Note:
- a) Write your answer in about 50 words.
 - b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1. What are the challenges faced by the States in recognizing the rights of minorities

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2. Write a short note on Jews diaspora as a minority community.

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76.7 NATURE, FORM AND TYPES OF CITIZENSHIP

The relation between nation-state and the natives and the diaspora can be broadly classified into six categories based on the rights bestowed on them by the State. They are: Jus Sanguinis, Jus Soli, Jus Matrimonii, Naturalisation, Excluded categories and transnational citizenship. Jus Sanguinis means right of blood whereby individuals are given citizenship rights based on the relation of blood, parentage and heritage. It is a cultural, racial and territorial concept of exclusion of outsiders and immigrants. China, India, South Korea are some of the examples who give citizenship based on the history of belonging. The term Jus Soli, on the other hand, means right of the soil, whereby an individual obtain citizenship rights based on being born within a particular territory. Here, the ancestry and the citizenry of parents are not taken into consideration while granting citizenship rights. The US, Canada, Germany and Israel are some of the countries offering such kind of citizenship to people born in their territory.

Jus Matrimonii is another form of citizenship by virtue of matrimonial alliance. While some countries follow their own citizenry laws, they also grant citizenship to individual who marry people who are already its citizens. Naturalisation is yet another form of citizenship whereby an individual becomes citizen in the natural course of time based on either long-time residency or matrimonial rights. This form of citizenry is of most recent origin and resulted from transnational movement of people crossing borders for work, business and for other reasons. Most countries provide naturalised citizenship based on either residency or jus matrimonii. As mentioned earlier, while citizenship is a form of inclusion, it is also a mean to exclude a group of people who are deliberately deprived of political rights. This had been the case with the indentured labourers, slaves, women and indigenous people. In fact, all Gulf countries exercise this form of citizenry to exclude working immigrants, despite the fact that they have been working there since decades.

76.8 EXTENSION OF CITIZENSHIP: DUAL NATIONALITY/DUAL CITIZENSHIP/ TRANSNATIONAL CITIZENSHIP

Like the Tamil Indian diaspora in Sri Lanka, people of Indian origin were, over the period of time, naturalized in other countries including Fiji, Mauritius, Malaysia and some other countries. However, as human and workforce mobility became a common feature in the 21st century and in some countries much earlier, there also emerged a need to respect their political rights both in the home and host country. It found expression in the form of dual nationality and dual citizenship, which became a novel innovation in political governance. There are however a distinctive difference between the two terms. As a matter of policy, dual nationality extends certain rights and privileges to diaspora which may include unlimited visit to the home country, the right to own property and carry out business, but it debars the overseas citizens from political rights to contest or vote in elections and hold government offices, as in the case of India. Dual citizenship, on the other hand, extend these rights to include voting rights as well, thus making the diaspora an integral part of the political process.

There are some 64 countries including Ireland, the US, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and others which offer dual citizenship. Some countries like the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Cambodia, South Korea offer citizenship based on descent. There is another category where the US dual citizenship is not allowed. Some of these countries include Cuba, Japan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Surinam, Tanzania among others. India offers only dual nationality through its Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) scheme which was enacted in law in 2003. It fell short of providing dual citizenship which allows voting rights to its overseas citizens.

Historically, India categorizes its overseas citizens in three broad categories. One, persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), who were part of Old Indian diaspora in Fiji, Mauritius, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago, South Africa and Caribbean Island. The other category of non-resident Indians (NRIs) is of more recent origin and was formed post-independence. A large number of NRIs were in the Gulf countries post-oil boom phase and other developed economies like the US, the US, Australia, Canada and some European countries. An NRI is a person who continues to be a citizen of India and hold Indian passport. He/she continues to enjoy political rights to vote in Indian elections. To exercise the franchise, the person has to be in India to exercise his/her voting rights. The other category of OCI as mentioned earlier is of the most recent origin. As part of the scheme, all other citizenship including PIO was merged with the OCI and now forms the predominant form of India's diaspora citizenry.

The concept of citizenship has been undergoing major changes in recent times because of economic liberalisation, globalisation and new means of information and communication technology. To accommodate multiple identities with political rights at more than one place of residence, the discourse has now moved on to provide non-territorial and extra-territorial citizenship to people who owe allegiance to multiple sites. As a result, both home and host countries have begun to provide citizenship rights to people who are living beyond the territories of its sovereignty. The new form of transnational citizenship, on the other hand, is based on the premise, as Bauböck said, that the 'rights and obligations of citizenship change when an individual leaves the territory of citizenship, but they do not disappear altogether'.

As we have seen earlier, the diaspora continue to identify with the country of origin, both socially and politically. The sentiment of belonging and transnationalism has found wide acceptance in the tenets of global supranational organisations like the European Union which under the Maastricht Treaty made a provision to extend EU citizenship to its members. Under the new law, a person could be citizen of the EU as well as to the country of belonging. The new configuration between the states, citizens and supranational bodies has resulted into reconstruction of new order in citizenship. Not only this, it has decoupled the territorial boundaries of the State and Nation. As a consequence, while State continues to identify itself with the territorial borders, the nation on the other hand has expanded itself to include extra-territorial individuals, living beyond its border in the transnational locations.

76.9 MULTICULTURALISM

While the phenomenon of migration, citizenship and transnationalism has

been contesting grounds in overseas community formation, their coalescence led to the emergence of multiculturalism. To understand multiculturalism it is important to understand culture and its accompanying features. Although there is no definitive definition of culture, scholars have agreed to some of its broad features which include a common language, a shared history, a shared set of religious beliefs and ethos and moral values, in addition to a shared geographical belonging. These features constitute one set of culture while multiculturalism means simultaneity or co-existence of several cultures. There is an element of distinctiveness in each culture but they are not exclusive to each other. There is no water-tight compartment which separate one from the other as boundaries between cultures blur with some common feature encompassing all cultures.

Multiculturalism, a form of plural society is one which is a "...medley of people...for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the market-place, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit" (Furnivall 1948: 304)

Multicultural societies are much more than what was earlier thought as plural society, multi-racial, multi-ethnic or polytechnic societies. Within the ambit of multiculturalism, race remains a suspect term while culture is a celebrated term. The positive image of culture rests on the ground that it affirms identity belongingness of individuals as well as communities. In contrast to multicultural societies, monoculture society believes in the dominance of one ethnic or religious group over the other. In a much milder form it takes recourse to 'coercive assimilation' to bring homogeneity to the group. And there are various instruments like schools, law, citizenship and civic mechanism or soft coercive forces which states exercise to bring homogeneity to multiculturalism.

76.10 INTEGRATION AND ASSIMILATION OF MINORITY DIASPORA IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

In fact, it's the diversity of the societal group which forms the tapestry of multiculturalism. Any attempt to either integrate or assimilate the minority group with that of majority group is anathema to its individual character. To understand the phenomenon of assimilation and integration, scholars have often compared the two with a melting-pot and a salad-bowl. In the melting pot, various cultures are liquidated and mixed with the existing elements to form an altogether a new alloy. The new alloy or the social group thus formed loses their original character and culture. In the melting pot, the existing elements equally get influenced or altered by the new elements. Integration or a salad-bowl phenomenon, on the other hand, is like various fruits and vegetables, each retaining its usual taste and flavour, while co-existing with each other. Some recent scholars have however opposed both the model of assimilation and integration on the ground that they are forced and artificial attempts of homogenize diverse societies in a well defined mould.

Historically, multiculturalism found fresh ground in the US and the UK because of ideological shift both in the polity and society. It was the civil rights

movement and Black Power campaign in the US in the mid 1960s which forced American societies to realize the liberal ideology and extending equal rights and recognition to the Black citizens. In the UK, on the other hand, the massive influx of immigrants from the New Commonwealth countries was the turning point in integrating diverse group of people who were ethnically and culturally different from each other. It added a new dimension to its demography. The expulsion of Asians from East Africa and boat people from Vietnam added a new dimension to the discussion on multiculturalism. Their immigration to the US, the UK, Australia and Hong Kong made the receiving countries realize the unique features of these cultures and an attempt was made to accommodate them.

There were two broad strategies - whether to allow them to live together or to segregate them in different groups and mainstream them with the rest of the population. The challenge with the former option was that it would lead to their ghettoization, while the latter would lead to psychological trauma inflicted on them because of separation from the rest of the community members. An insight into the challenge was added taking recourse from feminism and Black Power movement which was based on W.E.B. Du Bois' (1868-1963) perception of double consciousness. It was important to understand the prevailing perception — of how they were perceived by their own community members and by the outside Western White agents. This led to what has been popularly called Male Gaze and the White Gaze with regard to feminism and Black minority groups respectively.

The ethnic minorities in the meantime began demanding that the perception about their culture should be based on what they thought about their culture rather than what others thought about it. It was self-appraisal of the value and meaning of culture by the indigenous people instead of the receiving countries, state government or outside agents. This has been responsible in spurting cultural relativism among the policy makers. It means that no culture is superior or inferior to other and as a rule it opposes dominance of one over the other. The same bi-polar binary of right and wrong, good or bad, ethical or non-ethical were extended to religion at the lower level and nation at the macro level.

Initially, when nations and states began postulating multiculturalism, the prevailing political establishments, perceived a serious threat to its sovereignty. As people of various race, ethnicity, religion and ideological affiliation began inhabiting a common metropolitan space, the site of their settlement soon became the site of contesting space, both in the theme and the narrative. With the dissolution of Communism and the ensuing globalisation, some manpower-deficit nation realised that they needed fresh blood to run their economy and growth engine. There was no way they could achieve this without opening the gate of immigration to the skill workforce. With more and more immigrants making their way into developed nations, multiculturalism offered a unique blend of pragmatism and contrasting contradiction into a wholesome landscape.

76.11 MULTICULTURALISM IN A TRANSNATIONAL SPACE

The new global order of multiculturalism, decoupled the territorialized nation-state with citizenship issues and let the people of diverse citizenship, identities,

and culture inhabit a common space. It did not however mean that these people would lose their individual identities but instead, it revitalized new connections with other identities. The multi-centrality of identities began to flourish as a result of news social, political, linguistic and cultural situatedness. In most such cases, the initiator of multiple cultural living was of economic origin as people began to form transnational communities, transcending geographical and cultural space with ease. The explosion of hybridity became more intense and extensive in the postcolonial phase to urban metropolitan centres in countries like the US, the UK, Canada and Australia. The new inhabitants of these urban spaces maintained bi-statal affiliation to the county of origin and settlement.

At these centers of urban multiculturalism, the states agreed to accept and promote plural differences and create equal access to resources to all groups including the minorities. It positively accepted the religious, cultural, and racial differences of the inhabitants. The minority rights were not shunned but given proper space in the governance. Multiculturalism also began to refute racism and ethno-centric domination of the majoritarian demography. It began celebrating the differences which results from race, culture, religion, gender and sexuality.

There are nonetheless, critique who oppose multiculturalism on the ground that it prevents development of pan-ethnic consciousness as it essentialises an identity and fails to recognize the fluidity of mobility and identity. It also differentiates between the individual preferences at the cost of scripted group identity. In multiculturalism, individuals on the other hand are expected to live and act a scripted identity of the group, rather than express their individual creativity. This often builds a false and a narrow fixed identity based on ethnicity and religious affiliation within the cohort and fails to develop a broader pan-ethnic solidarity.

Another critique of multicultural practices is that it tries to control and manage cultural and racial differences obscuring the issue of power and dominance of one community over the other. It tries to homogenize the horizontal uniqueness of each community. It has been noticed that while multiculturalism tries to safeguard the civil and religious rights of the non-Western communities, it attempts to avoid questioning the false hierarchical western religious model. For example, the perception of Christianity being superior to other tribal religions is hardly put on discussion. In a way, it could be said that while multiculturalism allows expression and protection of minority rights, it conceals the contradiction and prejudices of a pan-ethnic majority under the carpet. The policies of multiculturalism, initiated by some of the First World countries are in a way are also an attempt to accommodate cultural differences in order to serve its broader economic and diplomatic need.

Sometimes, host countries have been seen making deliberate attempt to incorporate multiculturalism through suggested gestures and to add authenticity to its discourse. This was evident in 2009 with the then US president Barak Obama celebrating Diwali at the White House. This not only added credibility to the State's policy of multiculturalism but also made American Hindus feel at home in the receiving country. It helped in promoting religious identity of a particular group of diaspora and thus giving credence to the politics of recognition.

76.12 LET US SUM UP

Multiculturalism was recently seen coming under severe attack during the time of crisis, especially during the terrorists' attack. The racial targeting of South Asians post-9/11 in the US based on phenotype features suggests how religious identities become an easy markers of differentiation. The threat to multiculturalism is not only from the public at large but also from states who promote essentialised identities. Racial attacks and discrimination, while harming the minorities, also harms the host countries. It mobilizes the victimized ethnic groups based on identity thus making host countries a contested site in the long run.

Check your progress 2

- Note:
- a) Write your answer in about 50 words.
 - b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1. What is the difference between dual nationality and dual citizenship?

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2. How a minority group is mainstreamed? Write a short note on the model.

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SUGGESTED READING

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ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check your progress 1

1. In a multicultural society in which people are constantly moving, the States have been facing severe challenges to recognize the rights of minorities, especially in some of the liberal democracies. There have been demand to accommodate the differences of culturally different and marginalized communities. As part of democratic representation, they are extended 'reservation' for the preservation of their identity. This becomes possible only after a community is recognized minority by the States. Understandably, this has spiraled into the 'politics of recognition' in some of the countries. Such political and social recognition to minority are often hotly contested by the native majoritarian communities who feel that their rights and resources have either been liquidated or shared. This has been noticed in some of the European countries where natives have been seen protesting against their social welfare assets being shared.
2. While observing some other global diasporas, it has been seen that they dominate in numerical strength in a particular geographical region by forming ethnic enclaves. Historically, Jews migrated over a period of 2500 years to various countries because they were exiled not only from the place of their origin, but also from countries where they went to settle down. Now, there are more Jews living outside Israel, their mythical and reimagined homeland. While Israel is home to 30% of the Jews global population, the US has 51%, France, Canada and Russia (3% each), the UK has 2% and Argentina, Germany, Hungary, Ukraine and Australia have 1% each.

Check your progress 2

1. As human and workforce mobility became a common feature in the 21st century and in some countries much earlier, there also emerged a need to respect their political rights both in the home and host country. It found expression in the form of dual nationality and dual citizenship, which became a novel innovation in political governance. There are however a distinctive difference between the two terms. As a matter of policy, dual nationality extends certain rights and privileges to diaspora which may

include unlimited visit to the home country, the right to own property and carry out business, but it debar the overseas citizens from political rights to contest or vote in elections and hold government offices, as in the case of India. Dual citizenship, on the other hand, extend these rights to include voting rights as well, thus making the diaspora an integral part of the political process.

2. To understand the phenomenon of assimilation and integration, scholars have often compared the two with a melting-pot and a salad-bowl. In the melting pot, various cultures are liquidated and mixed with the existing elements to form an altogether a new alloy. The new alloy or the social group thus formed loses their original character and culture. In the melting pot, the existing elements equally get influenced or altered by the new elements. Integration or a salad-bowl phenomenon, on the other hand, is like various fruits and vegetables, each retaining its usual taste and flavour, while co-existing with each other. Some recent scholars have however opposed both the model of assimilation and integration on the ground that they are forced and artificial attempts of homogenize diverse societies in a well defined mould.



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