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Primordialism comes in broadly two versions. The first version states that while it may be possible that Nationalism does not exist, but still, what is undeniable is that Nations exist. In extension this version implies that while it is possible that individuals sharing sameness are not united by a sense of togetherness, yet it suggests that they should be so united, for this sameness finds its full expression via the authority granted by 'self-determination'. The Second version of Primordialism states that both Nation and Nationalism exist already. The feeling of being a member (togetherness) of the Nation, may sometimes fade and blur, but it never completely diminishes or vanishes. Whenever favourable conditions and contexts become apparent, the feeling of togetherness and Nationalism becomes conscious. This latter version of Primordialism, presupposes and grants natural origins of nation and nationalism, such that Nation and nationalism are not regarded as being mere concepts that have been constructed or fabricated at some point in history; rather sameness in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, etc. is taken to be something which is a naturally given.

In contrast however, it may be also be pointed out when we are born in a structure where our elders and ancestors have already lived, which they have imbibed to the extent of feeling that this structure is an essential aspect of their existence and identity, then those identity determining contents are implicitly taught and transferred to the next generation. That is to say, to some extent at least, we learn and adopt our identities from what we see and what we are taught.

***PONDER BOX-I***

*Does this argument about learned identities which has been put forth to counter Primordialism appear satisfactory to you? Think of reasons why/why not?*

### **9.3.2 Ethno-symbolism**

John A. Armstrong, Anthony D. Smith and John Hutchinson are the main proponents of this theory. This theory states that Nationalism is a product of symbols (such as; flag, song, deity, etc.), myths, and tradition. While the idea of Nation may either be constructed or natural, but

it is to be understood as a synthesis of symbolization; shared myths, customs, habits, and rituals concerning ideals, values, patronage, sacrifice, etc. that have been transferred across generations. For the Ethno-symbolists, Nation is not a recently constructed phenomenon, rather it is something that originated in the distant past. The theory establishes that an Ethnic Consciousness had existed in our forefathers for long. Without considering this pre-existent ethnic consciousness, Nation and Nationalism cannot be understood fully. According to this view, therefore, a unique history, culture, and socio- geographical pattern, etc. are essential for the emergence of nationalism.

### 9.3.3 Modernisms

According to the Modernists Nation is to be understood as a socially and/or politically constructed community of people; and Nationalism comes into existence due to and in the course of modernization and its accompaniments, especially industrialization, urbanization, mass-modern education, etc. The modernists argue that it was these phenomena that paved the way of community feeling, cultural commonness and shareability of identity, where the sameness may either be of an “imagined community”, or an “invented tradition”, or that of an “imagined geo-political location”.

Benedict Anderson developed the idea of an “imagined community” for explicating the nature of Nationalism. He explained that while members of a nation can never practically know most of the other members, yet most of them feel as if they stand united with all the others and that they have something in common with them, something which is deeply rooted in who they all are. However, for Anderson, this feeling of a commonly shared essential character is merely ‘imagined’, and the media and print culture plays a significant role in its emergence, articulation, and precipitation.

The idea of “invented tradition” states that some of the seemingly traditional cultural practices/customs, are in fact a much recent phenomena, which might have been intentionally or consciously invented, yet comes to be seen as being traditional (*See, Eric Hobsbawm, Introduction of The Invention of Tradition, 1-14*). This is how Nationalism too needs to be viewed, i.e., even though Nationalism and its associated practices and institutions are a modern invention, still they are perceived as if they have existed always or have emerged in a remotely distant past.

The idea of an “imagined geography” was proposed by Edward Said. This idea may be taken to suggest that person may perceive themselves and some others as belonging to and being part of a particular spatial location, which was earmarked through imagery, (theoretical and/or literary) texts, social/political discourse, myths, etc. (*See, Orientalism, 38-51*).

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## **9.4 TYPES OF NATIONALISM**

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Theoretical discussions surrounding Nationalism have identified some of its important types which tend to depend upon and vary with the perspective that the concerned theoretical framework maintains with regard to the concept of Nation, the concept of State, the relation between Nation and State, the relation between Individual and Society, etc. The following discussion would begin by explaining Ethnic and Civic Nationalism. It is important to note here that certain other types of nationalism can be understood as either being an assimilation of both ethnic and civic nationalism, or different versions (variations) of any one of these. Interestingly, we need to also note that that some types of nationalism appear to challenge certain constitutive elements inherent in the ideas of Nation and Nationalism, such as Pan-nationalism which presents a challenge to the idea of geographical boundary or defined (or imagined) space.

### **9.4.1 Two Main Types; Ethnic and Civic**

#### **9.4.1.1 Ethnic Nationalism**

Ethnic nationalism presupposes the presence of ethnic commonality (or commonalities) amongst the people. The formation of a Nation, according to this view, is therefore to be identified in terms of certain ethnic commonality determining factor(s). This ethnic commonality may be grounded in a common language, a common religion, common religious practices, or a common (ethnic) ancestry or lineage, etc. Ethnic nationalism advocates that if a group of people share some kind of ethnic commonality, then this group has (and/or should have) a tendency towards realizing political distinct-ness and autonomy or “self-determination”. The full flourishing of this “self-determination” is further conditioned on the group forming its own state/political institution(s). More so, this theory emphasizes the ideas of nativity and a native land. This emphasis comes in broadly two versions, hard and soft. In the hard version, the nation-state believes in the idea of ethnic nationalism rigidly and asserts that nationality or citizenship is to be determined on the basis of one’s ethnicity (which may be identified through a single or multiple factors). This assertion implies that

those who do not belong to or identify through the ethnicity determining factor(s) being considered by the nation-state, will not be regarded as citizens of the nation state (or would rather be identified as second grade citizens) even if they are found to have been residing in the territory of that nation. Soft version of ethnic nationalism, on the other hand, defines nationality or citizenship in terms of blood-based lineage or descentance from a citizen of that nation-state.

#### 9.4.1.2 Civic Nationalism

Civic nationalism states that ethnicity and nativity cannot be the only building blocks of any nation-state. The defenders of this view argue that firstly, a common kinship is extremely difficult to locate in any nation-state due to the un-availability of a “pure” race; and secondly that no (modern) nation state can be established on the basis of a singular commonality. Civic nationalism, instead, advocates the need of some “universal values” for forming a nation. These include freedom, equality, liberty, fraternity etc. which are often identified as “Liberal Values”, and this is the reason why Civic Nationalism is also called Liberal Nationalism.

#### **PONDER BOX-II**

*Keeping in mind the concepts of Ethnic and Civic Nationalism; reflect upon the nature and the idea of The Indian Nation-State (with reference to the arguments conceptualized and developed during the Freedom Struggle; Constitutional Debates; and the Indian Constitution).*

References to Civic/Liberal Nationalism can be found in the “Social Contract” Theory. The Social contract theory attempts at giving a plausible explanation of how the State emerges. It argues that the need and the urge for saving one’s own life, for ensuring well-being and welfare for oneself and others are what gave birth to the need of a contract among individuals and groups. This contract is what underpins and constitutes a sovereign state. Ernst Renan, one of the foremost scholars to describe civic nationalism, proposed that this contract is rooted in what may be identified as the “will to unite” or the “will to live together”. Renan’s ideas further suggest that without this “will” no group of people can form a nation (nation-state), despite having common ethnicity and nativity. Renan presents several examples to show not only that common ethnicity or nativity are insufficient for the formation of a nation-state, but also that there are nation states which are entirely founded upon (liberal) universal

values rather than on any common and shared ethnic character<sup>\*</sup>. Nation-states based on the idea of civic nationalism, determine citizenship on the basis of the law of the soil (where you are born) and/or on constitutional values of that nation-state.

In contrast, Ethnic nationalists would argue that the “will to live together” cannot arise without the feeling/presence of some common and shared ethnicity, and that in the absence of this feeling, the “will to live together” is merely an apparent imposition from which no nation-state can come into existence in its true sense.

### 9.4.2 Other Types of Nationalism

Anti-colonial nationalism is a product of anti-colonial movements that started in retaliation to colonization by The British Empire. The consciousness of wanting to be free from the British Rule, which came in the backdrop of the uniformity of being members of a colonized country, gave room to the claim of inciting and manifesting a national-spirit across all individuals of that colonized country. The claim was that the colonized Nation was already a Nation prior to colonization. And the need then was to reclaim and re-affirm a national sovereignty in-dependent of the British Rule. Mahatma Gandhi, in *Hind Swaraj*, argued that the presence of the four *piethas* (Spiritual places/seats) in the four directions of India is proof enough of its Nationhood prior to the British Rule. Nativist nationalism grants citizenship by virtue of being born within the territory of a nation. Racial nationalism, Religious nationalism, and Language nationalism are based on the commonality of race, religion, and language respectively. While Territorial nationalism is based on (actual or imaginary) geographical boundary, Pan-nationalism defies any territorial boundary and focuses only on the idea of common ethnicity. Economic nationalism advocates that economic activities within the territory of a nation should be controlled by state. Socialist nationalism advocates that nation should be based on socialist values.<sup>†</sup>

#### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with that provided at the end of the unit.

1. Describe civic nationalism.

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<sup>\*</sup> Dr. B.R. Ambedkar explicitly agrees with Renan’s ideas about nation and nationalism, and can be seen as an advocate of civic nationalism. (See, A Nation call for Home, in Dr. Ambedkar: Writing and Speeches, vol. 9).

<sup>†</sup> Apart from the types of Nationalism mentioned here, there are many other types that emerging based on movements concerning gender, race, ethnicity, etc.



numerous cultural expressions within the world/a society/an individual with equal (political) relevance. The disregard of multicultural values appears to be one of the leading causes of disputes between nations.

In contrast to the modern conception of Nation whereby a Nation cannot be seen without the state, Gandhi advocated the idea of “stateless nation” or “stateless society”. He believed that though in spiritual terms, we are and were a Nation, but from the political and economic point of view our focus should be on “local rule” or “*Grāma-swarājya*” rather than on attaining State-hood. Gandhi’s idea of village-self-rule suggests that for him, the State signified an artificial entity which hinders human flourishing. He believed that no human can survive in an artificial relation, since the creative force of humans demands “real” and “organic” relations where all dimensions of life interact with each-other; flourishing and adapting in accordance with the other dimensions.

Rabindranath Tagore, in his lectures on Nationalism, opines that nationalism treats each individual as an object, imposing certain identity defining characteristics onto them, and/or at the same time drawing exclusive focus on those attributes of their character which are conducive to the furtherance of its nationalist ideals. He suggests that while Society, which happens to be a voluntary self-expression of being a Social Being, is an end in itself; Nation is an abstract and artificially imposed ideal, in which individuals organize themselves to fulfil predetermined mechanical (un-organic) roles. For Tagore, nation and nationalism focus on “utility” and “survival of the fittest” and that is why it promotes only those aspects of one’s identity which fulfil its utilitarian aim, simultaneously treating the other aspects as hindrances. It lacks any sense of care or concern for others.

In contrast “co-operation” is an organic consequence of human life and creativity. Though Nation gives the assurance of security, but at the same time it demands the people to behave in a pre-fixed fashion exhibiting the sanctioned identity defining characteristics. Tagore sees this assurance of security as a threat to freedom. He writes, “the living ideals must not lose their touch with the growing and changing life. Their real freedom is not within the boundaries of security, but in the highroad of adventures, full of the risk of new experiences” (Tagore, *Nationalism*, 9).

### **Check Your Progress III**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with that provided at the end of the unit.

1. Highlight the main criticisms given by Tagore against the idea of Nationalism.

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## 9.6 LET US SUM UP

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The discussions in the preceding sections highlight that there is no one unanimous way of defining or describing ‘Nationalism’. Each theory tends to adopt a divergent perspective which varies in terms of presuppositions regarding the ideas of nation, nation-individual relation, identity, etc. The discussion becomes even more complex since Nationalism is not merely an abstract theoretical concept but a feeling and a phenomenon which is rooted in history and in real life experiences. By discussing the various types of nationalism (civic and ethnic, and their various sub-types), the unit has presented a synoptic view of some of the popular perspectives adopted with regard to this idea; subsequently giving an overview of the key criticisms of the idea of nationalism.

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## 9.7 KEY WORDS

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**Civic Nationalism** : Nationalism based on some accepted values/principles.

**Ethnic Nationalism** : Nationalism based on ethnic identity.

**Modern Nation/Nation-State** : Nation congruent with state.

**State** : A political framework/institution.

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### Web-links

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nationalism/>

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sovereignty/>

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## 9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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*(Learner should develop their answers with the help of the hints given below.)*

### Check Your Progress I

1.

- Decline of the Roman Empire and the unfolding of the French Revolution.

- King had to share his power with the religious centres (Church) and the economic centres (Landlord).
- With the coming in of industrialization, a new economic class had emerged.
- Religious revolutions started challenging the authority of the Church.
- Kings began earmarking geographical boundaries and identifying as population those who resided within the demarcated boundary.
- Modern State is believed to have emerged due to the rise of a new economic class (comprising of business and industrialist capitalists).

2.

- “Collective self-consciousness” can also be viewed as a relation grounded in commonality and shareability.
- Common sharedness refers to a social relation of each of a number of individuals.

### **Check Your Progress II**

1.

- Civic nationalism states that ethnicity and nativity cannot be the only building blocks of any nation-state.
- A common kinship is extremely difficult to locate in any nation-state due to the unavailability of a “pure” race.
- No (modern) nation state can be established on the basis of a singular commonality.
- Civic nationalism advocates the need of some “universal values” for forming a nation.

### **Check Your Progress III**

1.

- Nationalism treats each individual as an object.
- Society is a voluntary self-expression of being a Social Being, and it is an end in itself.
- Nation is an abstract and artificially imposed ideal.
- Nation and nationalism have a utilitarian aim.

- Co-operation is an organic consequence of human life and creativity.



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## UNIT 10

## SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION\*

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### Structure

10.0 Objectives

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Understanding Social Discrimination

10.3 Diversity and Discrimination

10.4 Social Justice: A Solution

10.5 Let Us Sum Up

10.6 Key Words

10.7 Further Readings and References

10.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 10.0 OBJECTIVES

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The main objectives of this unit are –

- To provide a clear meaning of social discrimination
  - Understanding various causes that discriminate individuals by discussing caste, class, region, religion, gender, sexual preferences, mental illness, and many others. The unit provides case studies to have a better grip on the concept and engages with contemporary debates to see the relevance of discerning social discrimination. It also talks about social justice as a solution to such discrimination.
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### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

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In this unit, the reader will learn about the various forms of social discrimination based on different social identities. It provides a comprehensive understanding of different meanings attached to discrimination and the plausible grounds to discern it. In any society, people aspire to connect themselves with one identity or the other, say, caste, class, region, religion, nationality, and so on. It is the supremacy supposedly attached to one's identity that pushes one to distance one-self from, and discriminate against others.

The unit will acquaint the reader with the plausible reasons to avoid the feeling of supremacy, and in turn, the possible ways through which we can understand the meanings of

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discrimination, and also the ways through which we can refrain from discriminating. The phrase “social justice” is used to capture and imply solutions to the issue of social discrimination. The questions that we need to keep in our minds before reading further are the following – a) is it plausible to discriminate against others based on the prejudices of their social identities? b) Do the presumptions against social identities define a person? c) If not, how can we understand the meaninglessness of such prejudices and how are we to tackle them? d) Is there any way we can imagine any society that is free from any social discrimination?

This unit deals with these questions from a broader perspective by simultaneously engaging with some contemporary debates and examples to provide a clear picture of social discrimination which breeds through the common tendency of people to act on their prejudices, thus, sustaining discrimination in society. In short, the unit will assist the learner to grasp various meanings attached to social discrimination, possible reasons, and plausible solutions to stop such discrimination.

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## **10.2 Understanding Social Discrimination**

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Let us start with a case study. Imagine a person, a woman who comes from a historically and socially discriminated caste. She goes to appear for an assistant professor interview. She has graduated from a prestigious university, earned multiple degrees, published several articles in reputed journals, and delivered numerous lectures at various universities. However, despite having a tremendous record, and a remarkable interview performance she does not get selected as she belongs to a community which has been ranked low in the social hierarchy. Her rejection is solely dependent upon her being from a certain caste. This example is reflective of some of the most deep-rooted biases and prejudices that are still prevalent in our societies against people belonging to particular castes, ethnicities, color, gender, race, etc. The selection committee, in the given example, seems to believe in such prejudices thereby rejecting the candidature of woman concerned. The woman has been discriminated against based on her caste. This is one example of social discrimination.

The entry on “Social Discrimination” in *The Encyclopedia of World Problems*, defines discrimination in terms of “individuals or groups unfairly treated in a way that is worse than how other people are treated, based on a particular characteristic.” Here individuals or groups are discriminated against on the basis of their caste, class, creed, gender, race, region,

religion, sexual preferences, mental illness, and many other social identities. It would be worthwhile to ask here as to Why do we need to treat everyone equally? The social history of human evolution has taught us about the struggle that many of our ancestors have fought and won. It is a fact now that humans are born free with dignity and rights. If each person has dignity and equal rights given by the constitution, it is legally and morally wrong to treat a person or a group of persons differently and inhumanly. Any form of discrimination based on their social identities is, as Prof. Dinesh Bhugra notes, ‘damaging, derogatory, and demeaning’. This suggests that such a person or group which is discriminated against or groups are treated as a second citizen. as Simone De Beauvoir defines women exactly the same in her book, *The Second Sex*. Similarly, social discrimination too makes those groups feel like foreigners in their own land as Ambedkar explicates in his autobiography, *Waiting for Visa*.

Why do we think we are equal? Thomas Hugh in his book, *The Slave Trade*, explained slavery in America and European countries where people of colour were treated inhumanly, demeaned, and even killed if they were not of any use to the whites. Racism is based on the idea that one race deserves privileges in health, money, and education over other races. It tends to create a perception that one race (or caste, class, gender, region, religion, and others) is superior to others. To counter racism, UNESCO published a report in 1967 arguing that “all human beings belong to the same species and descend from the same stock.” This finding can not only apply to various races, but also to caste, class, gender, region, religion, and other social identities. Therefore, we all are equal and must not be subjected to any kind of discrimination.

The above-mentioned instances illuminate that such prejudices have been institutionalized in the society such that people from different groups act accordingly. Bhugra argues that social discrimination appears to be lodged in the system and, therefore, can be pervasive and intrusive, and stops people from reaching their full potential and, more importantly, labeling them changes their identities. It is defined as sustained inequality between individuals based on their illness, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or any other measures of diversity.

Wilkinson and Pickett, in their book *The Spirit Level*, distinguish between “people as us” and “people as them”. Social identities do not only include a group of people but at the same time exclude other groups. The included group will be known as “us”, and excluded group will be “them”, and “us” will have prejudices against “them” and discriminate against “them” based

on those prejudices. These prejudices may play out in the form of religious identities and associated biases. Each religion forms a group based on its religious belief. The people belonging to that religion will perceive those with similar and identical beliefs as “us” and consequently individuals belonging to other religions may be identified as “them”. Whenever the “us” hold a bias against the “them”, there is a high likelihood that the “them” would feel discriminated against, isolated and threatened.

All this suggests that discrimination and prejudice go together. However, what is prejudice and how does it work? D. Giosetti, in her book, *On Prejudice: A Global Perspective*, illuminates that “prejudice towards individuals is about self-hate and is related to identification and projection and is a learned behavior.” She further argues that to understand how we form prejudice we can discern it by observing children. Children do not have any biasness towards any group of people, and they learn to hate “them” by observing adults. We form certain opinions against other groups without having substantial grounds and this is passed to the next generations without being questioned. The sustained transfer of certain opinions against other groups creates an unquestioned belief that is commonly understood as prejudice. These prejudices carry a significant amount of hate and are majorly responsible for social discrimination.

Discrimination does not happen only on one level. The social identities and prejudices against them work on various levels. The different groups of people with various identities create a multi-tiered society. For instance, a woman faces discrimination based on gender. However, a woman can have another identity as well such as she can belong to a caste, an economic strata, a tribe, and/or a particular race. These identities attached to an individual can bring a new form of discrimination as each social identity is associated with another kind of prejudice. The double jeopardy hypothesis tells us that the frequency of discrimination is higher if a person belongs to multiple target groups.

Some thinkers believe that the notion of shame is embedded within discrimination. T. J. Scheff in an article, “Shame and Conformity: The Defence-emotion System”, argues that “shame is to do with feeling foolish, stupid, ridiculous, inadequate, defective, etc.” The discriminated group simply cannot act outside the designated task because of the sense of shame. Therefore, they undermine their value of actions and feel alienated. For instance, any discrimination against people who have alternative sexual preferences face shame all the time

and they cannot display their affection openly. The systematic discrimination against LGBTQIA+ pushes them into isolation.

This whole nexus of identity and its supremacy over others makes consensus much easier because only a small group is included which is generally homogenous. However, society is not a small homogeneous group. This implies that a large part is excluded from society. Individuals, social groups, and tribes are pushed to the cultural, economic, and educational periphery, and certainly outside the decision-making space. The exclusionary process that is based on discrimination erodes society from its foundation as the majority is outside the growth of society.

The exclusionary process in a society deprives the majority of necessary resources. Not only do they suffer from stigma and prejudices, but they lack educational competency, economic resources, and cultural heritage. This pushes them to low social status in society which deepens if the systematic discrimination continues. Dinesh Bhugra argues that many social and scientific researches have pointed out that low social status does not only affect imagination and reasoning, but it also leads to people feeling underconfident, and this results in poor self-image and poor self-esteem. If socially discriminated individuals and groups have a poor self-image and poor self-esteem, they suffer in finding employment, forming a good educational background, voting choices, imagining their rights and responsibilities, funding, and other potential aspects. In short, their life and future degrade to the maximum. Imagine, if the majority of society suffers in achieving their excellence, the society, in general, can never make progress in its true sense. Therefore, thinkers such Plato, Rawls, Amrtya Sen, and many others argue for a just and equal society free of discrimination.

There is a growing sense that with the development of modern society and technology, we will have a less unequal society. Wim Naudé and Paula Nagler in their article, “Is Technological Innovation Making Society More Unequal”, evaluate the hypothesis that argues progress in technology will bring resources close to the discriminated group, and thus, elevate their social status. However, Wilkinson and Pickett question “Why is it that at the pinnacle of human material success and technical achievement, we find ourselves anxiety-ridden, prone to depression, worried about how others see us, unsure of our friendship, driven to consume with little or no community life.” Technology has alienated humans more than ever. Instead of people having social contracts and responsibilities, they have found their own

nest in isolation. People have become less aware of the nexus behind such discrimination. This has only increased prejudices and discrimination even at a faster pace.

However, discrimination does not merely have negative connotations. One can imagine the positive ways of discrimination as well. In India, the constitution talks about reservation which positively discriminates against the targeted group and provides resources and opportunities to elevate the discriminated for centuries. For instance, if a scheduled tribe has been marginalized for centuries, the Indian Constitution reserves 7.5% in all the fields to include them in the mainstream. This results in an inclusive society that believes the growth of individuals is the growth of a society.

To sum up, social discrimination in this context refers to the *arbitrary* denial of rights, privileges, and opportunities to members of discriminated or targeted groups. The emphasis on “arbitrary” demonstrates that certain groups in society are being treated unequally because of their caste, creed, class, race, ethnicity, region, religion, and so on rather than of their merit. Prejudices against social identities frequently result in discrimination against the subordinate caste, class, racial and ethnic groups in each society.

### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. What is social discrimination? Explain.

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## 10.3 DIVERSITY AND DISCRIMINATION

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When discrimination takes place based on class, race, gender (or any group of people), we need to be focusing on the social identity of an individual which one eventually adopts being in a 'group'. It seems we tend to form these groups, be it narrowed down to groups of teenagers in the same grade or groups of clans/tribes in a broader one. Social identity is the sense of a self, such that persons recognize themselves with such groups. It illuminates the relevance of social groups in forming our social identity, giving people a sense of belonging in the social sphere.

In the 1970s, two renowned social psychologists, Henri Tajfel and John Turner, formulated a social identity theory that shed light on the cognitive and motivational processes that help people retain a good sense of self by favorably contrasting their social group with other groups. Tajfel asserted that people's affiliations with certain groups such as their social class, family, cricket team, and so on were a significant source of pride and self-esteem for them.

We tend to split the world between 'them' and 'us' by way of socially categorizing or putting people into social groups. This stereotyping, Tajfel further advocates, is the result of a common cognitive process; the tendency to group things and give relevant meaning to the groups. It implies that while segregating into groups, we overemphasize two things, 1) the differences between groups and 2) the similarities in the same group. In the social identity theory, these differences are known as in-group (us) and out-group (them).

According to social identity theory, people are categorized into in-groups and out-groups using three different mental processes which are 1) social categorization, 2) social identification, and 3) social comparison.

### **1) Social Categorization**

We usually categorize objects to know and identify them. In a quite similar way, we categorize people and ourselves to identify with a certain group as part of our social identity, for example, students, Asians, Women, factory workers, and so on. People start to define certain characteristics or norms for such groups and eventually appropriate their behavior accordingly. This is how we determine the common characteristics after observing the groups and start using this “common characteristic” as a norm for the group. Therefore, we form a prejudice or biasedness towards that group or community. The individual or group identity, thus, gets reduced to prejudice.

### **2) Social Identification**

In this process, we start to identify with or adopt the group's identity (or what we call prejudice) we have categorized ourselves into. Each individual builds or imagines her personality from the fixed characteristics that a group identity demonstrates. It appears that “common characteristics” not only help individuals to imagine their identity but also provide a gateway for others to discern the individuals. However, how far one can discern others is a significant question. For example, a woman in society is generally understood in terms of her

relationship with a man such as a daughter, sister, mother, and housewife, however, should we consider women in just these roles?

### **3) Social Comparison**

It appears that human beings put their self-esteem at the center. The categorization and identification have already created a sense of “us” and “them”. It becomes only possible if we compare “us” against “them”. The self-esteem of “us” keeps pushing us not only to find differences in “them”, but also put them under negative purview.

This is crucial to comprehend bias because, once two groups decide they are rivals, they are compelled to compete so that the participants can continue to feel good about themselves. Hence, competition and enmity between groups are caused by conflicting identities as well as issues of competing for sustained resources like employment, social status, education, health, land, and many others. The systematic habit to differentiate and keep one’s traits as superior pushes us to favor our group (in-group) and discriminate against the other (out-group).

To discern society categorically, it seems significant to categorize, identify, and compare people into social groups and form their social identity. However, the problem becomes visible when you start defining one social identity as superior and others as inferior.

The process of fixing meaning to a particular group is commonly called stereotyping. Consider this stereotype people of colour are uncultured, and only the whites can bring them to being cultured. If we suffer from such a stereotype and we don’t question it, we probably will be more inclined to discriminate against a particular group of individuals for no justifiable reason at all. The first thought we come across stands against such social identity that belongs to the stereotype which majorly is the cause of discrimination.

We tend to accept the social identity of “in-group” as the norm of society that takes away our ability to be inclusive of “out-group” interests and differences. It implies that any exclusive society can never provide equal status, freedom, and opportunities to all its members, and, thus, must be rejected. The significant question at hand is – if social discrimination is evil in a society, how should we tackle it? Antonio Rosmini, for instance, advocates social justice for having a just and equal society.

### **Check Your Progress II**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. According to social identity theory, what are three mental processes according to which people are categorized into in-groups and out-groups?

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## **10.4 SOCIAL JUSTICE: A SOLUTION**

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The processes of categorization and comparison draw a line or a divide between “in-groups” and “out-groups” like privileged and underprivileged, haves and have-nots. The plausible solution for reducing or bridging these gaps and avoiding forming such divides and lines between groups of people is advocating for social justice and refraining to give in to prevalent stereotypes. This would first involve questioning the grounds on which we form such stereotypes. On what grounds, do people discriminate against other human beings? Secondly, devising ways to form a society that is based on equality, justice, and fraternity, respecting various practices and thoughts, allowing every member to flourish by providing equal opportunities, and ensuring a fair allocation of resources and support for their human rights. By having all these, we can aim at social justice.

The question however is, what do we mean by social justice? Dinesh Bhugra in his article, “Social Discrimination and Social Justice” describes social justice as “all institutions should be freely and equally accessible and available to all individuals irrespective of their characteristics. They must be strengthened in the context of social justice to ensure delivery of social justice.” Social justice is aimed at promoting a society that is just and equitable, valuing diversity, providing equal opportunities to all its members, irrespective of their disability, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, or religion, and ensuring fair allocation of resources and support for their human rights. Further, Bhugra argues that “Social justice and social discrimination go hand and hand. Social discrimination can be measured in several spheres, personal to political ones.” For instance, there is widespread discrimination and not giving proper accommodation of people with mental disabilities and not giving their fundamental rights. Social justice will aim in such a situation to figure out the causes and

provide better policies and theories to give mentally disabled people a dignified life with their fundamental rights intact.

In India, Dr. Ambedkar introduced positive discrimination which is commonly known as a reservation to uplift the low castes as they suffered immensely for centuries because of the systematic oppression inherent in the caste system. Ambedkar presented two major papers, “Castes in India” and “Annihilation of Caste” and argued that caste has no scientific basis. If any religion promotes the superiority of one caste over another and treats certain castes and communities as a second-class citizen, we should do away with that religion as well. Ambedkar’s assertions illuminate that to stop social discrimination, we need to remove its first cause, which Ambedkar finds is the religion rooted in caste-based discrimination.

Similarly, there are ample examples where women did not have free access to education. In such spaces, people stereotyped women as individuals whose sole job is to take care of households. Therefore, the female gender has no need for education. The stereotyping of gender in accessing education was the main cause of women being deprived of education. Savitribai Phule and Jyotiba Phule started questioning these practices and started bringing women to education. In *Gulamgiri*, Jyotiba Phule delineates the systematic oppression against women in Indian society and how education can uplift women to have their fundamental rights.

Similarly, if we talk about people who faced suffering based on their sexual orientation, we would notice that even today, despite being given the rights by the supreme judiciary, society still dehumanizes and discriminates against them. It is common to hear the news of violence against the Queer community.

If we reflect on all such cases, we would find that there is one common point among them. All the discriminated people were not considered equals, thus, were not given fundamental rights. If we understand our country, to eradicate inequality and discrimination, the Indian constitution provides each of us fundamental rights, and the legal institutions are made responsible for keeping a check on them.

Social justice would thus mean that these institutions should be freely and equally accessible to all individuals. The role of laws and legal institutions become so significant. Suppose a woman faces domestic violence at her place, and the legal institutions are corrupted. She might not even file the FIR in the first place. Her fundamental rights have been breached and

there is no legal institution there to track such injustices. Therefore, a firm, free, and unbiased legal system is necessary to keep checking whether fundamental rights are given to all the members.

In this context, the role of the government is also really significant. The government needs to keep an eye on laws and legal institutions to assure social justice for all the sections. Until the government has the intentions to stop discrimination, it becomes quite impossible to have good policies that promote all people of all sections.

Thus, social justice is an important concept that is often discussed in various contexts, including politics, economics, and philosophy. It refers to the idea of promoting fairness and equality in society by ensuring that individuals and groups are given equal opportunities and treatment, regardless of their race, gender, class, or other social categories as discussed by John Rawls in his book, *Theory of Justice*. While the concept of social justice has been debated for centuries, it has become more prominent in recent years due to the rise of social movements, such as Black Lives Matter and #MeToo, which have highlighted the need for change in various areas of social life.

Social justice can take many different forms and can involve efforts to address a wide range of issues, including poverty, discrimination, unequal access to education and healthcare, and environmental degradation. It can involve promoting policies and practices that promote equal opportunity and social mobility, such as progressive taxation and affordable housing. It can also involve promoting diversity and inclusion and ensuring that all individuals and groups have a voice in decisions that affect their lives.

At its core, social justice is about ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to lead a fulfilling and meaningful life, free from discrimination and oppression. It is about creating a society where everyone is valued and respected, and where everyone has the chance to reach their full potential. While achieving social justice can be challenging, it is an important and necessary goal that requires the cooperation and effort of individuals, organizations, and governments at all levels.

Social justice is often linked to the concept of human rights, which recognizes that all individuals are entitled to certain basic rights and freedoms, such as the right to life, liberty, and equality before the law. Social justice involves promoting these rights and ensuring that

they are protected and respected for all individuals and groups, regardless of their background or circumstances.

One key aspect of social justice is the recognition that many of the inequalities and injustices that exist in society are systemic in nature, meaning that they are embedded in the structures and institutions of society. Addressing these systemic issues requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account the various factors that contribute to inequality and injustice, such as economic, political, and cultural factors.

Another important aspect of social justice is the recognition that individuals and groups have different needs and experiences and that policies and practices must be tailored to meet these needs and address these experiences. For example, policies and programs designed to address poverty may need to take into account the unique challenges faced by different groups, such as single parents, people with disabilities, or Indigenous communities.

Ultimately, achieving social justice requires a commitment to ongoing dialogue, education, and action. It involves recognizing and addressing how inequality and injustice exist in society and working together to create a more fair and equal society for all. By promoting social justice, we can help to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to lead a fulfilling and meaningful life and that no one is left behind.

### **Check Your Progress III**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. What is Ambedkar’s concept of positive discrimination?

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## **10.5 LET US SUM UP**

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Social discrimination occurs when an individual or a group of people are deprived of their rights because of their social identity. We have delineated that social identity comes with certain prejudices and target individuals suffer precisely because of these prejudices. In this

sense, the privileged group keeps control of society and excludes others; depriving them of what they truly deserve.

To discern what they truly deserve, we need to understand the basis of a human being. It has been established that human beings are born free, equal, and with dignity. It is their fundamental right to be considered equal and deserves equal opportunities in all fields. Providing a just and accessible environment to people of all sections is also necessary for society as it generates self-esteem and confidence among people. What else would be better for society if all its members exude confidence!

Social justice would thus mean that the institutions should be freely and equally accessible to all individuals. Social justice is about ensuring that everyone can lead a fulfilling and meaningful life, free from discrimination and oppression. It is about creating a society where everyone is valued and respected, and where everyone has the chance to reach their full potential. All social identities are socially constructed, and, therefore, need to be analyzed from an unbiased lens. In conclusion, all persons are free and equal, and this must be the fundamental rule of any society.

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## 10.6 KEY WORDS

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**Discrimination:** Unfair treatment to an individual or a group

**Prejudice:** Preconceived biased opinion towards or against any social identity

**Social Discrimination:** Unfair treatment to an individual or a group based on their social identity.

**Social Identity:** Any identity that has its base on society, i.e. caste, class, religion, region, color, sexual orientation, gender, and so on.

**Social Justice:** It aims to provide a free and equal society where everyone can flourish.

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## **10.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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(*Note: Elaborate your answers with the help of the hints given below for answers.*)

### **Check your progress I**

1. Social discrimination refers to the *arbitrary* denial of rights, privileges, and opportunities to members of discriminated or targeted groups. The emphasis on “arbitrary” demonstrates

that certain groups in society are being treated unequally because of their caste, creed, class, race, ethnicity, region, religion, and so on rather than of their merit.

### **Check your progress II**

1. Three different mental processes are 1) social categorization, 2) social identification, and 3) social comparison.

### **Check Your Progress III**

1. Dr. Ambedkar introduced positive discrimination which is commonly known as a reservation to uplift the low castes as they suffered immensely for centuries because of the systematic oppression inherent in the caste system.



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## UNIT 11

## SWARAJ\*

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### Structure

11.0 Objectives

11.1 Introduction

11.2 Macrocosm and the Microcosm in Relation through Swaraj

11.3 Political Swaraj

11.4 Economic Swaraj

11.5 Social Swaraj

11.6 Let us Sum Up

11.7 Key Words

11.8 References and Further Reading

11.9 Answers to Check your Progress

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### 11.0 OBJECTIVES

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This unit will introduce the students to:

- The concept of Swaraj, particularly the manner in which it was used by M.K Gandhi.
  - The unit will also establish the various dimensions of the usage of the term – political, economic, social, moral.
  - The philosophical analysis of the term will be done with respect to modern political theory, and comparisons will be made wherever required.
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### 11.1 INTRODUCTION

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The term Swaraj/Svaraj draws on Sanskrit roots (swa/sva-self, and raj-rule), and etymologically means self-rule. The meaning of the term in popular usage has often been identified with independence from foreign rule, and the key reason for it is that the term gained wide currency during India's struggle for independence from British rule. However, the term has far deeper and more comprehensive roots than the words independence or freedom connote in the English language, and we shall discuss this in some detail in this unit.

Indian nationalists like Dayanand Saraswati, Dadabhai Naoroji, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak were some of the first political leaders to use this term, in their fight against British colonialism. Like Dayanand Saraswati, Tilak argued that this term has Vedic roots, and is part of India's ancient past. His famous words "Swaraj is my birth right, and I will have it." – marked the first phase of the nationalist discourse in India. Each of these figures had their

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\* Dr. Shridha Shah, Former Faculty, Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi.

contribution in formulating the usage of this term in India's quest for freedom from British rule, however, the way M.K. Gandhi articulated and deployed this term, has been unparalleled, not only in political praxis, but also political theory.

Gandhi's use of the term swaraj, not only took account of India's political quest for independence, but also focussed on breaking through the economic and social bondages that characterised India, at that time. Further, swaraj in Gandhi's view not only characterised aspects of the state at the macro level, but also the role of the individual at the micro level. Scholars have argued that Gandhi's use of the term swaraj supplanted the theory of sovereignty as part of modern western political theory, which seeks to place supreme power with the state. In Gandhi's articulation of swaraj, sovereignty ultimately rested with the civil society.

*"I hope to demonstrate that real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority."* (Gandhi, Young India, 29-1-25)

Gandhi presents a radical understanding of the term swaraj. Following him, thinkers and political leaders like K.C. Bhattacharya, Vinoba Bhave, J.P Narayan, etcetera have continued the tradition of reflecting on this term, which not only has relevance for the politics of the Indian subcontinent and the colonised world, but also in terms of global political theory.

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## **11.2 MACROCOSM AND THE MICROCOSM IN RELATION THROUGH SWARAJ**

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As mentioned earlier, the term Swaraj etymologically, refers to self-rule. The question that immediately arises is what does this 'self' refer to? Is it the state or its people that are being referred to here? Or is it the individual self? The answer to the question encompasses all these alternatives and adds more. At the most perfunctory level, swaraj is the democratic rule of a state by its own people, which is how the term was primarily used by the earlier nationalists. Their call for Home-Rule expressed their wish for freedom from foreign rule. Figures like Tilak, distinguished between Swaraj and Suraj (good governance), which means that for them just good governance was not important, it was also a question of who was governing them.

Tilak spoke of swarājya in four ways: as the ruler and ruled belonging to the same country, race, religion; as a well governed rule of law; as a government promoting the well-being of the populace; and a government elected by and accountable to the people. Tilak's concept of swaraj largely focussed on political autonomy, although he did not discount the moral aspects

of self-control. His understanding of swaraj was highly influenced by his reading of the *Bhagvad Gitā*. However, as we have already had a glimpse, Gandhi's idea of swaraj had a radically new connotation.

The concept of swaraj, for Gandhi, works with the most basic unit of the self, however, this notion of self is not the Cartesian self, which is solipsistic, and functions only as an atomised individual. Scholars like Ramchandra Gandhi have argued that the Gandhian notion of the self draws from an advaitin understanding of reality i.e., non-duality between self and the other/s. This conception of the self believes in a dialectical relation between the individual, and the larger world and cosmos. Thus, at the most basic level swaraj refers to individual autonomy and self-control, but this would be meaningless without considering the larger interrelatedness of the microcosm and the macrocosm. Unlike the modern liberal understanding of individual rights and autonomy, which is often in conflict with that of the community or society, the individual autonomy that is being spoken of here, would be meaningful and worthwhile only when it harmonises with the good of all, and not that of the majority. The individual self is also to be guarded against any homogenisation or universalising oneness, either through the march of history or reason. The dialectical relation of the individual with their family, community, and nation is essential in establishing a plurality of voices and establishing swaraj.

### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. What is the meaning of Swaraj?

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2. What, according to Tilak, are the various ways in which the idea of Swaraj can be understood?

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## 11.3 POLITICAL SWARAJ

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As we have seen swaraj is not just a call for freedom from foreign rule or Home-rule, and was not limited in its assertion to getting rid of the British from India\*. The Indian nationalists envisioned swaraj in its political dimension as self-governance, which essentially works with non-hierarchical, direct democracies, and decentralisation of power as its praxis. Such systems of governance are generally meant to minimise violence and allow a plural structure to subsist in any society. The ideal of swaraj is actually, a stateless society – each person being completely self-regulated, and yet unhindered by external control and force. This can be understood through the notion of anarchy.

Anarchy has at one level been a pejorative term, which generally indicates lack of order; however, when anarchy is considered in its philosophical essence, what it means is a lack of an externally given order. The state as conceptualised in modern western political thought – keeper of the law and order – is bypassed in this framework, as each person is regarded as a law maker unto themselves, and do not require external control by the state. Political anarchy has been discussed across the world though not with much success, and more often than not dissolved into violence and disorder wherever attempted. In this regard, the unique feature of the discussion of swaraj in the Indian context, especially by M.K. Gandhi, was the insistence on *ahimsa* (non-violence) and *satya* (truth) as fundamental principles, and the deployment of the constructive programme to ensure *Poorna Swaraj* and to establish *Ramrajya*. Gandhi's ability to use terms that were already part of the Indian vocabulary and discourse, and to convey profound political principles to the masses was remarkable. The term *Ramrajya* was not meant to indicate a religion, but it was meant to indicate a state where the voice of the poorest would be taken seriously, and the rule was not by force but by truth.

The idea envisioned through political swaraj had a two-pronged approach. The first was in the form of resistance to the centralised authority of the state, and the second was in the form of political participation and a constructive approach to the political. In this context, village panchayats were seen as the most feasible form for political swaraj to exist, as they ensured decentralisation of power, and direct participation by the people in democratic and constructive processes. Gandhi's Constructive Programme (1945) is an important document to consider in this context. It lists issues of key concern with regards to the Indian society of the time and lays out a discussion of how they may be achieved. The insistence at each juncture is not a solution by political force, but a coming together of the civil society in realisation of their interdependence and mutual benefit, which is the key aspect of achieving

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\* Gandhi particularly saw the problem of foreign rule in terms of the rule of the modern western civilization and not the British as people. See, *Hind Swaraj*.

swaraj. The items listed in the constructive programme are not all inclusive or exhaustive and allow for amendment. In any case, the key issue was that for a polity to be built on the principle of ahimsa, a training in the constructive programme was essential, which would enable the establishment of Poorna Swaraj.

Another key aspect for the establishment of political swaraj was that of praxis, and *Satyagraha* was Gandhi's response to it. Satyagraha, generally referred to as truth-force, was developed as a special form of non-violent political action. It either took the form of civil disobedience or non-cooperation. Mainstream political theories advocate the use of force for maintaining law and order, and to defend against external aggression. Training of the civil society, in the constructive programme and satyagraha, was Gandhi's response to bring the principles of ahimsa in political practice. To be a satyagrahi required consistent practice and it was not a one of participation in protests. The theory of swaraj, in its practice of satyagraha coupled with the constructive programme, envisioned a society based on complete ahimsa that gave every individual freedom, while at the same time ensured that this freedom is borne out of their realisation of the truth of their interdependence on one another.

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## 11.4 ECONOMIC SWARAJ

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Swaraj cannot be meaningful, or for that matter even be practical, if people do not have control over their means of sustenance and livelihood. In this respect economic autonomy is paramount as far as the realisation of swaraj is concerned. It is noteworthy that Dadabhai Naoroji's critique of the British rule in India targeted their economic drain of India's wealth and resources, in his work – *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* (1902). The masses in India were being exploited by the British rule, and the nation was being drained of its resources for the benefit of the British empire.

With Gandhi the issue of economic autonomy is carried further to the modes of production, and a critique of industrialism. Gandhi's critique of the modern western civilisation focussed in large part on the industrial and technological mode of production that came in with the British rule. Gandhi's insistence on the use of *khadi* and the *charkha* were a response to the mechanisation of the manufacture process that not only disenfranchised local manufacturers but also forced consumption of foreign made goods. However, the most significant aspect of the critique was the alienation that it brought about in society. Several scholars looking into Gandhi's critique of the modern political economy have compared it to that of Karl Marx's critique of capitalism.

Gandhi's insistence on *swadeshi*, and the boycott of foreign made goods, was not a parochial move. It was meant to provide substance to the call of swaraj, one which would remain an abstract ideal without swadeshi. The insistence on spinning the charkha by each person was meant to ensure that each person engage in daily bread labour, and to uphold its dignity for each. It was also to meant to decentralise the manufacture process and promote the use of locally produced things. This is a significant aspect of realising economic swaraj, and to highlight economic interdependence between neighbouring communities. Some of these issues are only being realised now, in relation to the changing ecological balance and climate change, where insistence on local and sustainable consumption is being promoted. The overarching picture was to develop self-reliant and sustainable village communities and move people away from the clutches of alienating city life. This was not a romanticised picture of village life. Gandhi was fully aware of the squalor and poverty of Indian villages, which is precisely why he considered the practice of the constructive programme equivalent, if not more significant, to the quest for political independence of India.

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## 11.5 SOCIAL SWARAJ

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Each society or community has its own set of issues that it needs to tackle. Cultural, ethnic, religious, caste-based diversities, etcetera characterise any society, and have different responses from each society and community. While we may be able to explain the basis of the origins of these differences, a society based on swaraj is essentially a non-hierarchical society. No amount of political will, or economic equity, can root out social discriminations from a society, when the civil society plays no hand. In the case of India, the removal of untouchability and Hindu Muslim unity were recognised as essential to establishing true swaraj.

Gandhi's significant contribution to social swaraj was his ability to establish social experiments in order to address social issues, without the intervention of the state and its policies, though one may admit that he was not successful in his attempts. Nonetheless, his engagement with these issues highlights the importance of a non-hierarchical civil society, where people despite their differences can identify with a common sense of humanity and truth, through non-violent means.

The issue of Hindu Muslim unity invoked the view that all religions led to the same ultimate truth, and therefore, the view that Hindus and Muslims had completely different customs, origins, etcetera did not hold much sway. If the ultimate truth was the same for all, then the other differences could be mitigated to enable a plural society. Likewise, the malaise of

untouchability represented an unforgivable sin in Hindu society, and Gandhi considered that without exorcising it, Hindu society could never be reformed. His insistence was to enable this reform without to come from within, without state intervention, and particularly that of the British state. In both regards, he failed; nonetheless, it is significant to place his attempts in the context of the way in which we have discussed swaraj, so far.

### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. What are the various dimensions of Swaraj?

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## 11.6 LET US SUM UP

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Modern western political thought holds the individual, and their selfish interest and survival, as a fundamental assumption of their political theory. Swaraj as we have discussed it so far challenges this basic assumption. The self in swaraj is inherently constituted of the other and cannot thrive by itself. For any community or society to find true freedom living together, it must have a comprehensive conception of the individual in its relationship with others. Swaraj as a concept is not just about a democratic government, but one in which the civil society does not depend on the state for regulating every detail. In fact, the true concept of swaraj allows the establishment of institutions that enable individuals and societies to resist external control, and yet live by the law of non-violence and truth, and their common humanity.

The concept of swaraj is not limited to political thought. It is very significantly tied up with intellectual autonomy. Gandhi's critique of the modern western civilisation is fundamentally, a critique of a way of life and thought that was being spread across the world through colonialism. Philosophers like K.C. Bhattacharya tried to articulate what it would mean to have swaraj in terms of ideas that we pursue, and by way of which we recognise who we really are. The legacy of colonialism is not just about economic and political enslavement, but it is ultimately an enslaving of the mind. It is this enslavement, which was regarded as most pernicious, and therefore swaraj in ideas, which then reflects in our material reality, is what is ultimately the legacy of the pursuit of swaraj.

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## 11.7 KEY WORDS

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**Ahimsa** : the law of non-violence; it is meant to express not just the negative connotation of no violence, but a positive sense of compassion at all levels, for all beings, mentally and physically.

**Poorna Swaraj** : demand for complete sovereignty.

**Swadeshi** : a movement which focussed on self-reliance. It was meant to be the substantive aspect of the practice of swaraj.

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## 11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress I

1. The term Swaraj draws on Sanskrit roots (swa-self, and raj-rule), and etymologically means self-rule. At the most perfunctory level, swaraj is the democratic rule of a state by its own people, which is how the term was primarily used by the earlier nationalists. However, in later development, particularly with that of Gandhi it came to refer to individual autonomy

and self-control, and this autonomy would be meaningless without considering the larger interrelatedness of the microcosm and the macrocosm.

2. According to Tilak, the various ways, in which the idea of Swaraj can be understood, are, a) as the ruler and ruled belonging to the same country, race, religion; b) as a well governed rule of law; c) as a government promoting the well-being of the populace; and d) a government elected by and accountable to the people.

### **Check Your Progress II**

1. Swaraj is a comprehensive term that covers the moral and spiritual aspects, along with the political, economic, and social dimensions. For any community or society to find true freedom living together, it must have a comprehensive conception of the individual in its relationship with others. Swaraj as a concept is not just about a democratic government, but one in which the civil society does not depend on the state for regulating every detail. It encompasses political autonomy, economic autonomy as well as social autonomy, for each individual in a society, and must be established on the principles of satya and ahimsa.