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Gender Religion & Caste

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IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

- **Gender Division:** It is a form of hierarchical social division based on biology, social expectations and stereotypes.
- **Sexual Division of Labour:** A system in which all work inside the home is either done by women of the family, or organised by them through the domestic helpers.
- **Feminist:** A woman or a man who believes in equal rights and opportunities for men & women.
- **Patriarchy:** It is a concept which is used to refer to a system that values men more and gives them power over women. The society based on this ideology is known as the patriarchial society.
- **Child Sex Ratio:** It is referred to as the number of girl children per thousand boys in a given period, 6. **Family Laws:** Those laws that deal with family related matters such as marriages, divorce, adoption, inheritance, etc. In our country every community has its own family law.
- **Urbanisation:** The process of shifting of population from rural areas to urban areas for better facility and job opportunities.
- **Majoritarian Dominance:** The community belonging to a majority category takes the status of majoritarian dominance.
- **Occupational Mobility:** Process of shift from one occupation to another. Usually when a new generation takes up occupations other than those practised by their ancestors.
- **Caste Hierarchy:** It is a ladder like formation in which all the caste groups are placed from the highest to the lowest castes.
- **Secular state:** A state which has no official religion of its own is known as the secular state. It provides religious equality and equal status to all religions.



- **Secularism:** It is an ideology which deals with the equal status to all religions and prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion. It implies religious freedom, people enjoy the right to preach, practise or profess a religion of their choice.
- **Untouchability:** A state of affairs in which some backward and lower caste people are treated as outcaste people, treated as untouchables and are not allowed to mingle with so called upper caste.
- **Universal adult Franchise:** It refers to in which Right to vote is given to every adult citizen of the country. It is one of the political rights of the people.
- **Minorities:** The word signifies those groups of people or communities who are lesser in number in a given area.
- **Communal Representation:** A system of separate electorate for the adequate representation of the people belonging to different communities.
- **Social change:** It signifies the modification which takes place in the life style of people, i.e., mode of living, the social status and cultural changes.



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Multiple Choice Questions

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1. What is the percentage of Hindus in India, as per the 2001 Census?

- (a) 13.4
- (b) 80.5
- (c) 90.2
- (d) 91

2. Family laws deal with

- (a) marriage and divorce
- (b) adoption
- (c) inheritance
- (d) all of the above

3. In India, the representation of women in legislature has been

- (a) moderate
- (b) high
- (c) low
- (d) very low

4. The system where father is the head of the family is called

- (a) hierarchy
- (b) matriarchy
- (c) patriarchy
- (d) monarchy

5. Jotiba Phule was a/an

- (a) social reformer
- (b) political leader
- (c) educationist
- (d) environmentalist

6. Which among the following statements about India's Constitution is wrong? It

- (a) prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion.
- (b) gives official status to one religion.
- (c) provides to all individuals freedom to profess any religion.
- (d) ensures equality of citizens within religious communities.

7. When we speak of gender divisions, we usually refer to:

- (a) Biological difference between men and women



- (b) Unequal roles assigned by the society to men and women**
- (c) Unequal child sex ratio**
- (d) Absence of voting rights for women in democracies.**

8. The distinguishing feature of communalism is:

- (a) Followers of a particular religion must belong to one community.**
- (b) Communalism leads to the belief that people belonging to different religions can live as equal citizens within one nation.**
- (c) A communal mind does not lead to quest for political dominance of one's own religious community.**
- (d) A secular constitution is sufficient combat communalism.**

9. Which leaders worked for the elimination of caste system in India?

- (a) Jotiba Phule, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi and Periyar Ramaswami Naicker**
- (b) Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi**
- (c) Jotiba Phule, Periyar Ramaswami Naicker and Mahatma Gandhi**
- (d) Swami Vivekanand, Jotiba Phule and Raja Ram Mohan Roy**

10. "A woman or a man who believes in equal rights and opportunities for men and women."

Select the correct option for the definition.

- (a) Feminist**
- (b) Patriarchy**
- (c) Caste hierarchy**
- (d) Social change**

11. What step taken to provide representation to women in Panchayats and Municipalities?

- (a) Reservation for election to half of the seats for women**
- (b) Appointment of 1/3 women members**
- (c) Reservation for election to 1/3 of the seats for women**
- (d) None of the above**

12. In which of these categories of work do you think less time is spent by men?

- (a) Household and related work**
- (b) Sleep, self-care, reading etc.**
- (c) Income-generating work**
- (d) Talking and gossiping**

13. Indian society is of which type?



- (a) A matriarchal society
- (b) A patriarchal society
- (c) A fraternal society
- (d) None of these

14. What is the result of political expression of gender division?

- (a) Has helped to improve women's role in public life
- (b) Has provided a superior status to women
- (c) The position remains the same, as it was
- (d) None of the above

15. What is mean by the term 'Feminist'?

- (a) Having the qualities considered typical of women.
- (b) A person who believes in equal rights and opportunities for women and men.
- (c) The belief that men and women are equal.
- (d) Men who look like women.

16. Which of these matters deal with the 'Family Laws'?

- (a) Marriage and divorce
- (b) Adoption
- (c) Inheritance
- (d) All of these

17. Which of these is true about the most ugly form of communalism?

- (a) Communal violence
- (b) Riots
- (c) Massacre
- (d) All the above

18. What is leading to the breakdown of caste hierarchy?

- (a) Large-scale urbanisation
- (b) Growth of literacy and education
- (c) Occupational mobility
- (d) All of the above

19. The percentage of elected women members in the Lok Sabha has never reached what per cent of its total strength?

- (a) 25%



- (b) 15%
- (c) 10%
- (d) 5%

20. In some places in India, by how much the child sex ratio has fallen to as low as?

- (a) 927
- (b) 840
- (c) 820
- (d) 800

ANSWERS

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. b | 11. c |
| 2. d | 12. a |
| 3. d | 13. b |
| 4. c | 14. a |
| 5. a | 15. b |
| 6. b | 16. d |
| 7. b | 17. d |
| 8. a | 18. d |
| 9. a | 19. c |
| 10. a | 20. d |





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MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS



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1. Mention any two constitutional provisions that make India a Secular State.

Answer: Two constitutional provisions that make India a Secular State are:

- There is no official religion for the Indian State. Unlike the status of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Islam in Pakistan and Christianity in England, our Constitution does not give a special status to any religion.
- At the same time, the Constitution allows the State to intervene in the matters of religion in order to ensure equality within religious communities; for example, it bans untouchability.

2. Suppose a politician seeks your vote on the religious ground. Why is his act considered against the norms of democracy? Explain.

Answer: If a politician seeks votes on religious grounds, he is acting against the norms of democracy because—

- This act of his is against the Constitution. He is exploiting social differences which may create social discord and lead to social division.
- Religion becomes a problem when it is expressed in politics and when one religion and its followers are pitted against another.
- When beliefs of one religion are presented as superior to those of other religions and the demands of one religious group are formed in opposition to another and the state power is used to establish the domination of one religious group over the rest, it leads to communal politics.

3. Explain the status of women's representation in India's legislative bodies.

Answer: The one way to ensure that women related problems get adequate attention is to have more women as elected representatives. To achieve this, it is legally binding to have a fair proportion of women in the elected bodies.

Panchayati Raj in India has reserved one-third seats in Local Government bodies for women.

In India, the proportion of women in legislature has been very low. The percentage of elected women members in Lok Sabha is not even 10 per cent and in State Assemblies less than 5 per cent. India is behind several developing countries of Africa and Latin America. Women organisations have been demanding reservations of at least one-third seats in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies for women.

And only recently, in March 2010, the women's reservation bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha ensuring 33% reservation to women in Parliament and State Legislative bodies.

4. How does religion influence the political set up in our country? Explain.



Answer: Gandhiji said, "Religion can never be separated from politics". By religion he did not mean any particular religion like Hinduism or Islam, but moral values and ethics drawn from religion to guide politics. Religion in politics is not as dangerous as it may seem to us. Ethical values of each religion can play a major role in politics. According to human rights groups, most of the victims of communal riots in our country are from religious minorities.

Government can take special steps to protect them. Family laws of all religions discriminate against women. The government can change laws to make them more equitable. These instances show a relationship between religion and politics. People should be able to express in politics their needs, interests and demands as members of a religious community. Thus, it is the responsibility of those whose political power is able to regulate the practice of religion, to prevent discrimination and oppression. These political acts are not wrong as long as they treat every religion equally.

5. "Gender division is not based on Biology but on social expectations and stereotypes'. Support the statement.

Or

Mention different aspects of life in which women are discriminated against or disadvantaged in India.

Answer: 'Gender division is not based on Biology but on social expectations and stereotypes':

- Boys and girls are brought up to believe that the main responsibility of women is house work and bringing up children. There is sexual division of labour in most families where women stay at home and men work outside to play the role of breadwinners.
- Literacy rate among women is only 54% in comparison to 76% among men. In studies, girls mostly perform better than boys, but they drop out simply because parents prefer to spend their resources on their sons' education. A smaller proportion of girls go for higher studies.
- On an average, a woman works more than an average man everyday. Since much of her work is not paid for, therefore often not valued. The Equal Wages Act provides for equal wages for equal work, but in almost all areas of work from sports to cinema, from factories to fields, women are comparatively paid less because of the male chauvinistic bent of mind of society.
- Child sex-ratio (number of girl children per thousand boys) is very low. In India, the national average is 927. In some places it is even lower because parents prefer to have sons so they get girl child aborted.



- In urban areas too, women are not respected and are unsafe even in their homes being subjected to beating, harassment and other forms of domestic violence.
- The role of women in politics in most societies is minimal.

6. State how caste inequalities are still continuing in India.

Answer: Caste has not disappeared from contemporary India and caste division is special to India. Some of the older aspects of caste persist even today.

- Even now most people marry within their own caste.
- Untouchability has not ended completely despite constitutional prohibition.
- Effects of centuries of advantages and disadvantages can be felt today. The caste groups that had access to education under old system have done well, whereas those groups that did not have access to education have lagged behind.
- There is a large presence of 'upper caste' among the urban middle classes in our country.

Caste continues to be linked to economic status as is evident from National Sample Survey:

- The average economic status of caste groups still follows the old hierarchy the 'upper' castes are best off, the Dalits and Adivasis are worst off and the backward classes are in between.
- Although every caste has some poor members, the proportion of those living in extreme poverty is higher for lowest castes and much lower for the upper castes.
- Similarly, every caste has some members who are rich. The upper castes are heavily over-represented among the rich while the lower castes are under-represented.
- The SC, ST and OBC together account for about two-thirds of India's population

7. What factors have brought about a change in the Indian Caste system in modern times? Explain.

Answer: The castes and caste system in modern India have undergone great changes due to the efforts of social reformers and the socio-economic changes in India. With economic development, large scale urbanisation, growth of literacy and education, occupational mobility and weakening of the position of landlords in the villages, the old notions of caste hierarchy are breaking down. Politics too influences the caste system and caste identities by bringing them into the political arena. The Constitution of India prohibits any caste-based discrimination and has laid foundations of policies to reverse injustices of the caste system.



8. Explain the various forms that caste can take in politics.

Answer: Various forms of caste in politics:

- When governments are formed, political parties usually take care that representatives of different castes and tribes find a place in it.
- When parties choose candidates, they keep in mind the composition of the electorate and accordingly choose candidates from different castes so as to muster necessary support to win elections.
- Political parties make appeals to caste sentiments to gain support. Some political parties are known to favour some castes.
- Universal adult franchise and the principle of one-person-one-vote compelled political leaders to mobilise political support. It also brought new consciousness among people belonging to those castes which were treated as inferiors.

9. What was the Feminist Movement? Explain the political demands of the Feminist Movement in India.

Answer: Feminist Movements are radical women's movements aiming at attaining equality for women in personal and family life and public affairs. These movements have organised and agitated to raise channels for enhancing the political and legal status of women and improving their educational and career opportunities.

Political demands of the feminist movement in India:

- The one way to ensure that women related problems get adequate attention in India is to have more women as elected representatives. To achieve this, it is legally binding to have a fair proportion of women in the elected bodies. Panchayati Raj in India has reserved one-third seats in Local Government bodies for women.
- In India, the proportion of women in legislature has been very low. The percentage of elected women members in Lok Sabha is not even 10 per cent and in State Assemblies less than 5 per cent. India is behind several developing countries of Africa and Latin America. Women organizations have been demanding reservations of at least one-third seats in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies for women.

And only recently, in March 2010, the women's reservation bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha ensuring 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and State Legislative bodies.

10. What have been the consequences of the political expression of gender division in free India?



Answer: Political expression of gender division and political mobilisation has helped improve women's role in public life all over the world including India. However, despite some improvements since Independence, ours is still a male-dominated society and women lag behind in all fields.

- Literacy rate among women is only 54 per cent as compared with 76 per cent among men.
- Proportion of women among highly paid and valuable jobs is still very small.
- Equal Wages Act provides that equal wages should be paid for equal work. However, in all areas from sports and cinema, factories to fields, women are paid less than men for the same amount of work.
- In many parts of India, parents prefer to have sons and find ways to abort the girl child before she is born.

11. Explain the factors that have led to the weakening of the caste system in India.

Answer: Reasons which have contributed to changes in caste system:

- Efforts of political leaders and social reformers like Gandhiji, B.R. Ambedkar who advocated and worked to establish a society in which caste inequalities are absent.

Socio-economic changes such as:

- urbanisation
- growth of literacy and education
- occupational mobility
- weakening of landlord's position in the village
- breaking down of caste hierarchy have greatly contributed.

The Constitution of India prohibited any caste-based discrimination and laid the foundations of policies to reverse the injustices of the caste system.

Provision of fundamental rights has played a major role because these rights are provided to all citizens without any discrimination.

12. How far is it correct to say that it is not politics that gets caste ridden but it is the caste that gets politicised? Explain.

Answer: Politics too influences the caste system and caste identities by bringing them into the political arena. This takes several forms:

- Each caste group tries to become bigger by incorporating within itself neighbouring castes or sub-castes.
- Various caste groups enter into a coalition with other castes for negotiations.



- New caste groups like 'backward' and 'forward' have come up in the political arena.
- Expressions of caste differences in politics give many disadvantaged communities the chance to demand their share of power and thus gain access to decision-making.
- Many political and non-political organisations have been demanding and agitating for an end to discrimination against particular castes for more dignity and more access to land, resources and opportunities.

13. What was the Feminist Movement? Explain the political demands of the Feminist Movement in India.

Answer: Feminist Movements are radical women's movements aiming at attaining equality for women in personal and family life and public affairs. These movements have organised and agitated to raise channels for enhancing the political and legal status of women and improving their educational and career opportunities.

Political demands of the feminist movement in India:

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- And only recently, in March 2010, the women's reservation bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha ensuring 33 per cent reservation to women in Parliament and State Legislative bodies.

14. "The Government of India gives holidays for the festivals of most of the religions." Why is it so? Give your viewpoint.

Answer: The Government of India gives all religious holidays because India is a secular state.

Certain provisions were adopted in the Constitution to make India a secular state:



- There is no official religion for the Indian State. Unlike the status of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and Islam in Pakistan, our Constitution does not give a special status to any religion.
- The Constitution provides to all individuals and communities freedom to profess, practice and propagate any religion or not to follow any.
- The Constitution prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion.
- Constitution allows the State to intervene in the matters of religion in order to ensure equality within religious communities, for example, it bans untouchability



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Case-Based Questions

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QUESTION 1

Communal politics is based on the idea that religion is the principal basis of social community. Communalism involves thinking along the following lines. The followers of a particular religion must belong to one community. Their fundamental interests are the same. Any difference that they may have is irrelevant or trivial for community life. It also follows that people who follow different religions cannot belong to the Family laws: Those laws that deal with family related matters such as marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance, etc. In our country, different family laws apply to followers of different religions. same social community. If the followers of different religion have some commonalities these are superficial and immaterial. Their interests are bound to be different and involve a conflict. In its extreme form communalism leads to the belief that people belonging to different religions cannot live as equal citizens within one nation. Either, one of them has to dominate the rest or they have to form different nations.

Read the passage and answer the following questions

Q1. Communal politics is based on what idea?

- (1) Communal politics is based on the idea that religion is the principal basis of social community.
- (2) Communal politics is based on the idea that religion is not the principal basis of social community.



(3) Communal politics is based on the idea that killing is the principal basis of social community.

(4) Communal politics is based on the idea that animal is the principal basis of social community.

ANSWER: (1) Communal politics is based on the idea that religion is the principal basis of social community.

Q2. Can people who belong to different religions belong to same family laws?

(1) No, they cannot

(2) Yes, they can

(3) Maybe, they can

(4) Either yes or no

ANSWER: (1) No, they cannot

Q3. What does the extreme form of communalism leads to?

(1) Extreme form communalism leads to the belief that people belonging to different religions cannot live as equal citizens within one nation. to same religions cannot live as equal citizens within one nation.

(2) Extreme form communalism leads to the belief that people belonging to different religions can live as equal citizens within one nation.

(3) Extreme form communalism leads to the belief that people belonging Citizens within



(4) Extreme form communalism leads to the belief that people belonging to same religions can live as equal citizens within one nation.

ANSWER: (1) Extreme form communalism leads to the belief that people belonging to different religions cannot live as equal citizens within one nation.

Q4. What is the belief about people who follow different religions?

(1) It believes that people who follow different religions can belong to the Family laws.

(2) It believes that people who follow different religions cannot belong to the Family laws.

(3) It believes that people who follow different religions can convert laws.

(4) It believes that people who follow different religions can make different government.

ANSWER: (2) It believes that people who follow different religions cannot belong to the Family laws.

QUESTION 2

The literacy rate among women:

The literacy rate among women is only 54 per cent as compared with 76 per cent among men. Similarly, a smaller proportion of girl students go for higher studies. When we look at school results, girls perform equally or better than boys yet they drop out because parents prefer to



spend their resources on their boys' education rather than spending equally on their sons and daughters.

Read the following questions and answers the following questions

Q1. In India why do girls drop out from their studies?

- (1) Inspite of doing well in their studies, Indian girls drop out from their studies because parents prefer to spend their resources only on their sons.
- (2) Inspite of doing well in their studies, Indian girls drop out from their studies because parents ask them to do jobs.
- (3) Inspite of doing well in their studies, Indian girls drop out from their studies because parents kill them.
- (4) Inspite of doing well in their studies, Indian girls drop out from their studies because parents start their home tuitions.

ANSWER: (1) Inspite of doing well in their studies, Indian girls drop out from their studies because parents prefer to spend their resources only on their sons.

Q2. How much is the literacy rate of women in India?

- (1) The literacy rate of women in India is 24%.
- (2) The literacy rate of women in India is 64%.
- (3) The literacy rate of women in India is 54%.
- (4) The literacy rate of women in India is 94%.

ANSWER: (3) The literacy rate of women in India is 54%.

Q3. How much is the literacy rate of men in India?



- (1) The literacy rate of men in India is 24%.
- (2) The literacy rate of men in India is 76%.
- (3) The literacy rate of men in India is 44%.
- (4) The literacy rate of men in India is 14%.

ANSWER: (2) The literacy rate of men in India is 76%.

Q4. Who influence most to the women to drop out from school early?

- (1) Parents influence most to the women to drop out from school early
- (2) Environment influence most to the women to drop out from school early
- (3) School influence most to the women to drop out from school early
- (4) Men influence most to the women to drop out from school early

ANSWER: (1) Parents influence most to the women to drop out from school early





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Picture Based Question

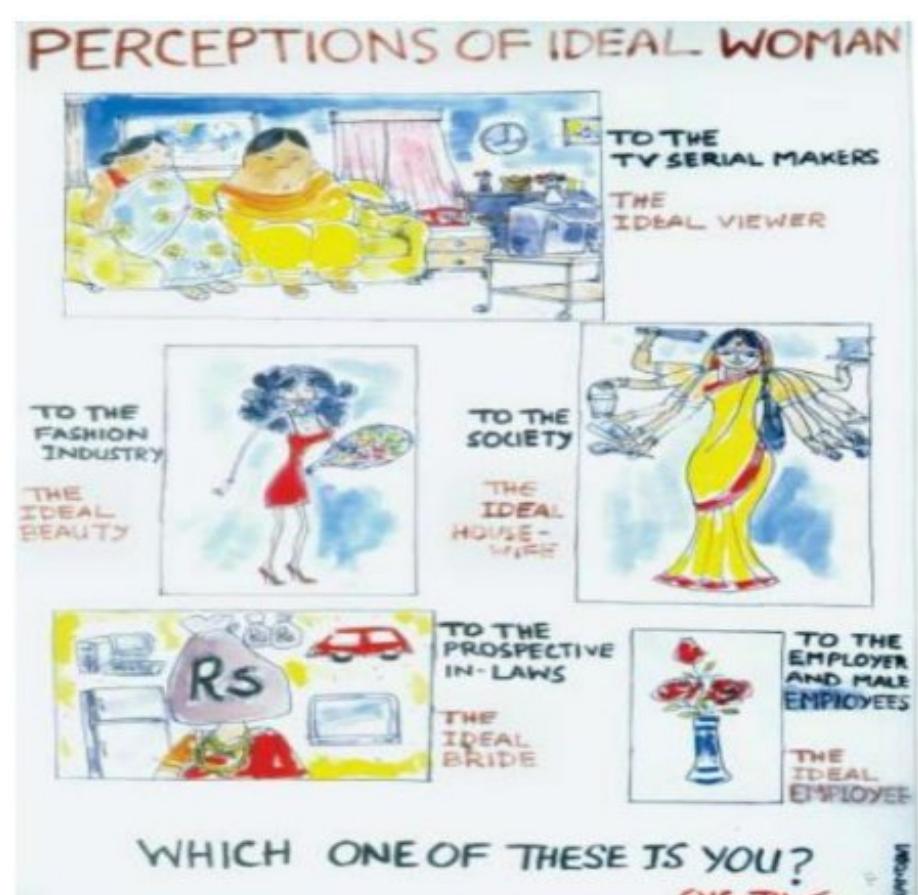
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QUESTION 1



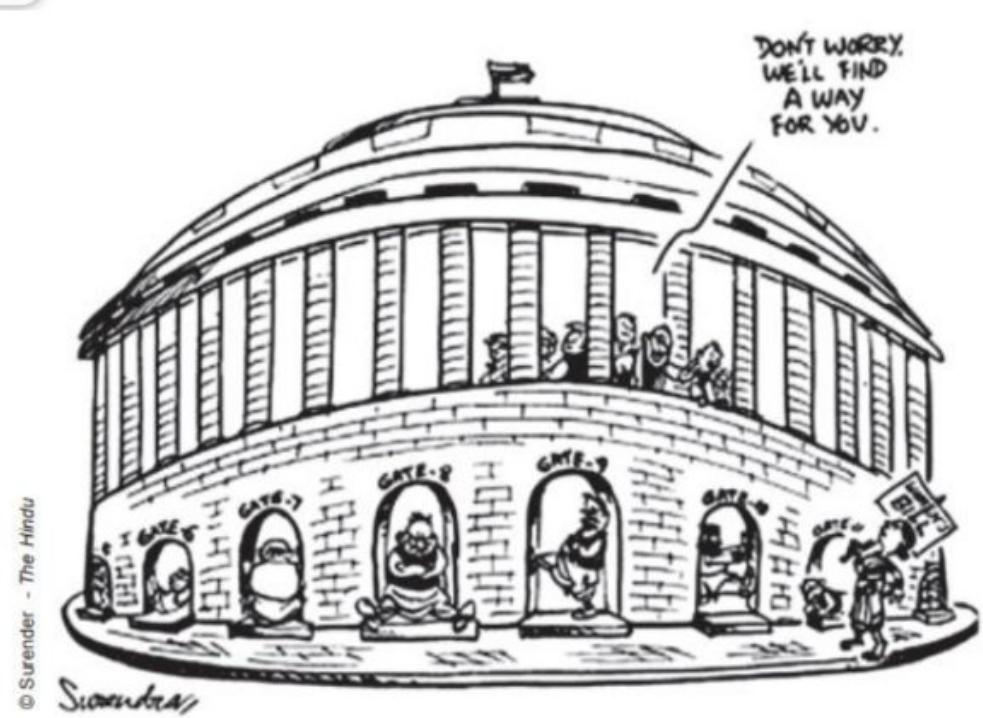
1) What does the above cartoon represent?

Ans. The given cartoon represents how a woman is perceived by various sections of the society. For a TV show maker, a woman is seen a housewife who sits idle and just watches TV whole day. For the fashion industry, an ideal woman is the one who is beautiful and slim figure. For society, a housewife is supposed to be a multi-tasker, who should work all day without complaining. For a potential groom and in laws, the ideal bride is the one who can bring lots of dowry.

2) How is a woman perceived by the male employees and the employer?

Ans. For an employer and the fellow male colleagues of a female employee, a woman can only be seen as a show piece, a flower vase that is just there to beautify the office and nothing else. She should not ask for equal salary, equal rights. She is just there for the decoration. This is the most harmful perception of women.

QUESTION 2



This cartoon offers an understanding of why the Women's Reservation Bill has not been passed in the Parliament. Do you agree with this reading?

1) Identify the building shown in the above cartoon.

Ans. The Indian Parliament House is shown here.

2) What is shown in the above cartoon?

Ans. The cartoon shows male politicians blocking the gates of the Parliament for women. The Women's Reservation Bill is pending since 2008 and it has not been passed. It is a lapsed bill. It asks for reserving 33% seats for women in the Parliament.



3) What is the status of Women's Reservation Bill?

Ans. It is a lapsed bill. It has not been passed yet. Though women have got reservation in the local government by the 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts, 1992.

QUESTION 3



This chair is for the CM-designate,
to prove his secular credentials...
There will be plenty of rocking!

1) What does the cartoon represent?

Ans. The cartoon shows how a special chair has been made for the new Chief Minister to prove his secular credentials. The chair has all religious symbols. But the irony is, a chair having all the symbols won't make a politician secular. They have to be secular from within and needs to prove during their tenure that they are impartial towards any particular religion.

2) Which concept is shown here?

Ans. Secularism. It means that all the religions are equal and that the government and religion are separate entities.

3) Give example of the events in India when there was a threat to secularism.

Ans. In 2002, after the Godhra Riots in Gujarat, the then CM- Narendra Modi was alleged of his involvement in provoking actions against the Muslim community. Later, he was also advised by them

QUESTION 4



Do you think that political leaders are right to treat people belonging to a caste as 'vote banks'?



1) What is shown in the cartoon?

Ans. It is shown that how some political parties influence a particular caste based group, a community and focus on them so that they become their loyal voters.

2) Identify any 2 leaders.

Ans. L.K Advani, Atal Bihar Vajpayee, V.P Singh

3) What is Vote Bank politics?

Ans. Vote bank politics is the practice of creating and maintaining vote banks through divisive policies. As it encourages voters to vote on the basis of narrow communal considerations, often against their better judgement, it is considered harmful to the principles of representative democracy.

4) Do you think that political leaders are right to treat people belonging to a caste as 'vote banks'?

Ans. I think that political leaders are not right in treating people belonging to a caste as vote banks. The reason is that making a vote bank based on caste will divide the velocity into different groups by dirty game of politicians and political parties during elections to win the election. It can create tension among different castes as a result there may be blood sheds on the occasion of polling.

