Chapter 3 - Equality

Question 1:

Some people argue that inequality is natural while others maintain that it is equality which is natural and the inequalities which we notice around us are created by society. Which view do you support? Give reasons.

Answer:

Any answer supported with argument or explanation would solve the purpose. It is strongly recommended that you prepare the solution on your own. However, a sample solution has been provided for your reference:

- Equality is natural and the inequalities which we notice around us are created by society.

- People are naturally equal because of the common humanity.

- Inequality exists because of unequal opportunities and exploitation of one group from other groups in the society.

- Natural inequalities are those that emerge between people as a result of their different capabilities and talents.

- Social circumstances, situations and conditions help the individual to grow and develop her/his talents and capabilities.

- Different status and roles are essential for smooth running of the society but these status and roles are decided by the society that shows inequality.

- Society categorises the people on the basis of race, gender, caste, class etc that create inequality.

- Thus, society labels certain race, gender, caste, class to be treated inferior or superior by creating stereotypes.

Question 2:

There is a view that absolute economic equality is neither possible nor desirable. It is argued that the most a society can do is to try and reduce the gaps between the richest and poorest members of society. Do you agree?

Answer:

Any answer supported with argument or explanation would solve the purpose. It is strongly recommended that you prepare the solution on your own. However, a sample solution has been provided for your reference:

- It is correct that absolute economic equality is not possible even though it is desirable. The most a society can do is to try and reduce the gaps between the richest and poorest members of society to bring economic equality.

- Society has different status, roles and ranks for its members so that it can function smoothly.

- People achieve different ranks according to their capabilities and the rewards are equivalent to the work and responsibilities that are attached to their rank.

- Therefore, absolute economic equality cannot be possible as inequality in income will remain in the society.

- The gap between the richest and poorest members of the society can be reduced by providing equality in opportunity to everyone, regardless of their background.

Question 3:

Match the following concepts with appropriate instances:

(a) Affirmative action (i) Every adult citizen has a right to vote

(b) Equality of opportunity (ii) Banks offer higher rate of interest to senior citizen

(c) Equal Rights (iii) Every child should get free education

Answer:

(a) Affirmative action (ii) Banks offer higher rate of interest to senior citizen

(b) Equality of opportunity (iii) Every child should get free education

(c) Equal Rights. (i) Every adult citizen has a right to vote

Question 4:

A government report on farmers' problems says that small and marginal farmers cannot get good prices from the market. It recommends that the government should intervene to ensure a better price but only for small and marginal farmers. Is this recommendation consistent with the principle of equality?

Answer:

The recommendation of the government is consistent with the principle of equality as the intervention is necessary to secure the interests of small and marginal farmers.

Small and marginal farmers do not have access to adequate resources to sustain themselves during the off-season. Therefore, they need better compensation for their produce.

Question 5:

Which of the following violate the principles of equality and why?

(a) Every child in class will read the text of the play by turn.

(b) The Government of Canada encouraged white Europeans to migrate to Canada from the end of the Second World War till 1960.

(c) There is a separate railway reservation counter for the senior citizens.

(d) Access to some forest areas is reserved for certain tribal communities.

Answer:

(a) It is not a violation of principles of equality as reading by turn is necessary to maintain discipline and coherence in class.

(b) It is a violation of principles of equality as white Europeans were given preference and privilege over coloured people on the basis of their colour differences.

(c) It is not a violation of principles of equality because this right is given to the senior citizens on the basis of their special needs and requirements.

(d) It is not a violation of principles of equality because it protects the livelihood rights and culture of the tribal people.

Question 6:

Here are some arguments in favour of the right to vote for women.

Which of these are consistent with the idea of equality? Give reasons.

(a) Women are our mothers. We shall not disrespect our mothers by denying them the right to vote.

(b) Decisions of the government affect women as well as men, therefore they also should have a say in choosing the rulers.

(c) Not granting women the right to vote will cause disharmony in the family.

(d) Women constitute half of humanity. You cannot subjugate them for long by denying them the right to vote.

Answer:

(a) It is not consistent with the idea of equality as this is not based on the principles of equality but this argument emanates from our emotions.

(b) It is consistent with the idea of equality as this argument is based on the impact of decision making process on women and hence, their right to choose the decision makers.

(c) It is not consistent with the idea of equality as it is concerned more with the disintegration of family rather than giving women equal opportunity to choose their representatives.

(d) It is consistent with the idea of equality as this argument is based on rational thinking. Women are considered as equal to men in the composition of society and are therefore given equal importance and opportunity to cast their vote.