

Read the two samples of group discussion given below and discuss their strengths and weaknesses by comparing them.

Sample 1(Reservation of Seats for Women in Parliament)

A: (silence)

B: I think reservation for women in parliament is a welcome measure as it enables women to participate in the governance of the country. After all when they can run homes so effectively, don't you think.....

C: Rubbish! Women do not need reservation. They are occupying big posts in all the sectors, so why can't they compete along with men? Opportunities are available to everyone. One should know how to utilize them.

F: Some women are good political leaders and very popular too. Look at Sonia Gandhi or Sushma Swaraj or even mamta Banerjee.

E: Allow me to say something.....

D: It is precisely to give them a level playing field that reservation is initially necessary. It will help them to catch on with men.

G: You are wrong. Women are incapable of doing well in the political field where shrewdness and statecraft is practiced. They can never catch up.

H: when women have proven records in several fields such as aviation, industry and even politics, why do they need reservation?

A: You mention statecraft. Women should also learn and they can be backed by political parties who will put them up as candidates. If a certain number of seats are reserved for women they can contest and win from those constituencies...Otherwise...

B: I agree, otherwise it is difficult for them. When we can give reservation to deprived classes of society for empowerment and in educational organizations, why not in Parliament? Haven't women been the oppressed class for decades? Should we not empower women, too? A society that accords respect to its women will get ahead faster.

F: No. What you say is not right. I wish to say again that reservation for women is a conservative step. It

H: Yes, I fully agree. It is a crutch on which women will forever depend, without trying to.....

D: I support you. Women have to protect themselves as weaklings and will continue to seek reservation for everything.

E: Yes but.....

B: Women form 50% of our population but have been suppressed for years. Hence we must give them at least 33% reservation in Parliament to enable them to have a say in governance. So it cannot be a conservative step.

The discussion ends here. (Adapted from 'Strengthen Your Steps')

Sample 2 (Opposition to Privatization will Affect India's Financial Future)

A: In order to decide whether privatization will affect India's financial future, we must first analyse the features of privatization.

G: Yes, you're right. Privatization leads to freedom from government control and companies and industries/organizations are free to run their establishments as they choose.

B: Then it must be good. Freedom is something everyone values. Even a small child will try and pull away his hand from his parents.

C: Yes, but freedom comes with a lot of responsibilities. Doesn't it.

E: Are you saying its' bad?

G: Allow me to finish what I am saying. Freedom is good if it is not misused. Privatization without control either by government or semi-government organizations will lead to chaos, monopoly and disregard for the common man's needs. Look what happened to health insurance to US. Do we want such a situation in India?

F: My view is that privatization will inevitably lead to a capitalist society and that we will widen the gap between the poor and the rich which is happening in India today. Our objective has been to build a classless society.

A: I completely disagree with you sir. Privatization of industry will create a healthy atmosphere of competition and in the absence of controls Indian industry can compete with others in the world and even bring in foreign exchange, which is essential for the growth of the economy.

C: You all must be aware of nationalized banks work. Under the protection of the government umbrella, they become lethargic and have a negligent attitude....

F: No but I strongly feel that privatization will lead to monopoly and push out Indian industries from our own country. Take the example of Coke or Mac-Donald's. Don't we have desi foods and drinks to capture public interest?

H: May be we do, but we need funds, don't we? Privatization will allow foreign funds to flow in and will make available a wide variety of goods for Indians. Didn't the telecom industry and the Automobile industry prosper from the economic reforms after 1991?

D: We are a democracy and should be wary of measures that we will not benefit the common man. So I strongly feel that there should be some checks and balances. Otherwise we will end up in a sorry mess like the IPL cricket. While I agree that there should be benefits to privatization at the same time I feel there should also be certain regulatory measures.

A: I think the gist of our discussion is that a developing economy like ours should open its doors to foreign industry, privatize Indian industry, but keep in place some regulatory measures which will act as checks and balances.

A mixed economy then is the answer.

Adapted from 'Strengthen Your Steps'