

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 5-

In this world, the moment we step into a nursery school. We are taught that we are different. This difference is not based on caste, religion, or race. But it is the difference as an individual. We are taught that we are different by the fact that we have different abilities, talents, strengths, and weaknesses and are hence taught to not compare ourselves with anyone else in this world. This basic teaching we receive in our nursery school forms the base for the rest of our future. Hence, we are very well aware that we are different human beings and need not think or compare ourselves with other human beings.

But when we talk about an individual's taste. We talk about something that is not present with us since the time of our birth but is something that we will develop as individuals throughout our lives through various social experiences, life lessons, and other incidents that we experience throughout our lives in society.

Here in this paper, we will discuss in detail how the individual's taste and actions emerge in society. When we are born we know nothing. Our parents, siblings, or grandparents in joint families and other relatives take our care And it is through their day-to-day teachings that we learn how to live in a society. But as the famous thought goes If life were predictable, it would cease to be life, and be without flavor by Eleanor Roosevelt. We know that life is unpredictable and we need to be always a student to learn whether we are at our 20's or 80's.

To deeply understand how the actions of a person emerge in a society. Let us look into some statistics related to domestic violence in India. The website of the world health organization states that the current situation of COVID-19 where people are encouraged to live at homes will create more and more chances of domestic violence as seen in China where the cases of domestic violence increased three folds.

For example, it is feared that a woman who is living in an abusive relationship will become more vulnerable to domestic violence. And why so? Because the family members spend more time in close contact and families can be coping with additional stress and potential economic or job losses. Now here we need to see something. What I said above is stated in the report of WHO. Now we know that COVID-19 has taken up a lot of jobs and has made a lot and lot of families suffer across the world. But the thing to note here is how can that increase the risk of high domestic violence on women. As we know that the economic losses or job losses affect the whole family and not just the male member of the family. Then why are only women becoming more and more vulnerable to domestic violence? And we all know the answer to this question also. Yes, it is because of the actions that both the male and female members of the family have seen been practiced in the society or have experienced it before by themselves. Like the male who feels like beating his wife will end all of his problems may have come to his mind through the actions of his parents where he might have in his childhood seeing his mother been beaten by his father or aunt by the uncle. Or might have seen this happening in his locality. Or might be he was watching some movie and suddenly a woman is seen beaten by her husband. This could have got stored in his head. He might have thought that this is how you live in a society. Or how you live in your household. On the other hand, why is the wife suffering all this torture and not

complaining? Again we know the answer to that question also. Maybe in her childhood, she would also have seen her mother been beaten by her father. And when she would have tried to know why is her mother been beaten and why on the earth is she not complaining or stopping her husband. Her mother might have answered that this is how society works. She might have been taught in her childhood to quietly suffer all the atrocities being presented to her by her husband as this is male dominant society. And that too by her mother who is also a woman. Or there might be a case that in the same cinema hall where that boy was watching the movie also had a visitor who was this girl. She was also looking at this scene from some part of the cinema hall. But she learned something else. She learned that oh so this is how she is supposed to be treated by her future husband. And she has no right to oppose it. As she is a woman she is bound to suffer all this. This is her destiny as told to her by society. This is how our actions are been shaped by our social structure. Just to be sure that I am correct in my argument and not just baking things based on my thinkings or personal opinions.

Let's see another point mentioned in that report of WHO. The next point states that the woman may get less access to her family or friends due to reduced services because of COVID-19. The women might receive little or no support from their parents, friends in case they are subjected to domestic violence by their partners. Now what we need to understand through this point is that why on the earth do the women need someone to protect them and that too from her husband. Like she is one and her husband is one. So, why does she needs someone to fight for her when she is standing against one single man and not in front of many. That's again because of what she has learned through the society in which she lives. She has been taught since childhood that she is weak. She is taught that she will always need someone to help her in tough situations as she is not capable of pulling it off on her own. Hence, even though she is capable of fighting for herself. She won't as she has never done that without some support. Hence, from this example, we can surely say that it is our social structure that shapes the actions of a person as an individual.

Now let us talk about the taste of an individual. The term taste can be understood as the preferences of the individual like consumer preferences of the person as an individual.

The analysis made by Bourdieu rejects the idea of the taste of an individual as a result of the intellect capability of the person. He argues that the taste of a person is a way to show his or her class in society. That is according to him the items we purchase like dresses, cosmetics, newspapers all are symbolic to represent our social status. He even says that we tend to like art, music, and literature not according to our choices but according to the choices that we think can help us in gaining more and more respect in society. And if we see these arguments in the modern context of today's world. We will find that all these arguments still exist. For example, if we look into a middle-class setup we see that if a person purchases an English newspaper while his neighbors purchase a Hindi newspaper. His neighbors will see him as a person of high intellect or status. As we have learned in our Indian society that English is a respected language. We are also taught that English is what will earn you respect. And when we look into the mindset of middle-class people we get to know that they even care for the cost of paper. Like they know that a Hindi newspaper is of 2 or 3 bugs and English is of 5 or 6. So, they also start believing that the person is rich and knowledgeable just by looking at the type of newspaper he has bought.

They will not try to see if that person can really read it or is just buying it to show off. Because if the people are seeing the newspaper as a thing of respect then there are huge chances that the person could have bought that newspaper just to show his class and earn respect in his society and reality he does not know a single letter of English.

If we look into a high-class setup. We will find that here the people do care about the newspaper his or her neighbor purchases. But not by seeing that if it is English or Hindi. But they care about the number of newspapers the person has bought. Like if a person buys an English paper, Hindi paper, Bengali paper and the other one just buys an English paper. The person will feel respectable as he purchases multiple papers daily and his neighbor will feel low as he is unable to invest in multiple newspapers. Hence, we see that how even a newspaper that we purchase is not because of our liking but because of the society where we want some respect, recognition, and status to live in.

Most of the people in our college IITD live in Delhi including professors and students. We as Delhiites know that we need to travel a lot in Delhi metros as they are comfortable, easy access, and convenient for long distances. Now consider a situation where the college is reopened after the COVID break. Now, we are required to travel in the metro to reach college from our home. We need to wear something. What it will be? will it be a kurta dhoti or jeans and shirt? Since there is no special eve on that day the obvious answer will be jeans and a shirt. But why is that answer so obvious. Like for example, I like dhoti kurta but still, I would prefer to wear jeans and a shirt. Why is that the case? That's because we know that if we wear dhoti kurta to the college. A lot of people around us in the metro or the college will look at us and make fun of us. There can be a case that no one cares but still, we will feel that everyone cares. And that they will laugh at us for wearing dhoti-kurta. Here we see that yes the taste or we say that our preference is not ours because we want so but because that is what the society wants. We want to look according to how society will accept us. We don't want to make society accept us the way we are because during the class second we were taught one essay starting from the line that a human is a social animal. And from that day we start choosing things according to the society and not according to our liking and thinking. Bourdieu then further talks about how the taste of a person lies in a multidimensional field where the person's position is determined by the amount and composition of the type of capital that person poses. By amount, he is talking about the economic resources that are being present with the person, and by composition, he talks about the cultural knowledge, skills, experiences, abilities of the person. He also talks about the vocabulary and modes of speech as a factor to shape his consumer interests. He also talks about the institutions which also play an important role in shaping the tastes of the person as an individual. Like we all know that a child's mind is like free and fresh air where a lot of thoughts occur regularly. We as grown-ups are required to help the child with all of his or her curiosities without keeping in mind the race of the child, the color of the child's skin, the religion of the child. As we are taught that for god all of his children are equal. But is this the case? No, because when a child takes admission to a school his parents are told to give fees. The fees they are capable of paying decides the type of school he will study in. Here he sees how money decides what he will learn and not his personal choice. Then if the child dreams to be a cricketer in the future. His parents don't support his idea and compel him to study and not focus on

sports. Although they are the parents and always believe to provide and think the best for their child. But here knowingly or unknowingly not only they have crushed the dreams of the child but also from here the child learned that his thoughts which were supposed to be free-spirited are not fully free as there are some restrictions like parental access, societal access. That also plays an important role in the choices they make. When that child goes to a wedding ceremony of his relative. He sees a lot of lighting, food, music is there. Then he sees some people discussing the clothes of the grooms and some ladies discussing the jewelry of the bride. He learns from there that the people who when taken together are termed as a society are not very interested in the eve but are interested in the money that is being spent by the organizers of the wedding ceremony. He learns that it is not the bride or the groom that decide how they should look on one of the most auspicious days of their lives. But it is the society because of which the bride and groom are wearing clothes of lacs of rupees so that they respect and status is not diminished in the society. He sees how the choices of a person on some of the most important days of the life of the person are also taken by the societal influence and not by the individual himself.

Today, we see a lot of news articles like the son of an auto-rickshaw driver who cleared UPSC or the daughter of a gardener topped in board exams. But why do we see news about the children of the people who are very rich economically and don't do jobs that in our society earn a certain status and respect to the person in the society? Why there is no news about a doctor's son becoming a doctor or an engineer's son becoming IAS. We can say that one possible reason may be to encourage the children of normal middle and lower-middle-class families to achieve something big in their lives. Yes, you are correct. This is the reason why these news articles are published. but the question why only the children coming from the lower middle class need these kinds of motivations. Why government needs to do mid-day meal types of programs to make the child of the poor come to school. Because the society in which we live has established some rules or man-made rules and traditions that we as individuals are bound to follow. Like the society has taught the child of a gardener that yes your father, your hero is a low wage worker and you will be the same in future. No one expects you to earn more or reach a respectable position as to how can you. Because it is a rule of society that the son of a doctor will become a doctor not the son of a cobbler. Since these children are breaking these self-made rules of society. These articles are being published so that more and more people can come and achieve big in life and the joy of achievement does not get limited to a particular section of society. As the feeling of achievement has come to that boy after he decided to choose a route that will be very difficult as his father is not very capable of coaching, books, and other accessories. He has chosen a route that will take a lot of effort to defeat society.

He chose according to his wish to defeat society. The girl who topped the board exams showed society that she has the ability to decide for herself. She showed that her choice also matters and not that always she needs to give up because of the societal structure that tells the girl to do household chores as what will she achieve by studying. It is not her job. She has shown society that she knows what her job is and no one else can decide it for her.

REFERENCES

1.1.<https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/emergencies/COVID-19-VAW-full-text.pdf>

2.acrwebsite.org/volumes/7565/volumes/v21/NA