

Short Answer Questions

Q. 1. What would happen if politics and religion go hand in hand?

Ans. Gandhiji used to say that religion can never be separated from politics. What he meant by religion was not Hinduism or Islam but moral values that inform all religions. He believed that politics must be guided by the morals and ethics drawn from religion.

Human rights group in one country has argued that most of the victims of communal riots in India are people from religious minorities. They have demanded that the government should protect religious minorities.

Women's movements have argued that 'family laws' of all religions discriminate against women. So they have demanded that the government should change these laws to make them more equitable.

Q. 2. How can you say that women's role in public life is minimal?

Ans. Earlier, only men were allowed to participate in public affairs, vote and contest for elections and public offices.

Gradually, the gender issue was raised in politics.

Women in different parts of the world organised and agitated for equal rights.

There were agitations in different countries for the extension of voting rights to women.

These agitations demanded enhancing the political and legal status of women and improving their educational and career opportunities.

More feminist movements have taken place for equality of women.

We now find women working as scientists, doctors, engineers, lawyers, managers and college and university teachers, which were earlier not considered suitable for women.

Q. 3. How are religious differences expressed in politics?

Ans. A communal mind often leads to a quest for political dominance of one's own religious community.

Political mobilisation on religious lines is another frequent form of communalism.

Sometimes, communalism takes its most ugly form, in communal violence riots and massacres.

Q. 4. How can a relationship between religion and politics be established?

Ans. The relationship between religion and politics can be established by setting up the following constitutional provisions:

(i) There is no official religion. The Indian Constitution does not give special status to any religion.

(ii) The Constitution provides to all individuals and communities freedom to profess, practise and propagate any religion, or not to follow any.

(iii) At the same time, the Constitution allows the state to intervene in matters of religion in order to ensure equality within religious communities.

Q. 5. Do you agree that caste has not disappeared from contemporary India?

Ans. Some of the older aspects of caste are continuing.

Even now, most people marry within their own caste or tribe.

Untouchability has not ended completely, despite constitutional prohibition.

The caste groups that had access to education under the old system have done very well in acquiring modern education as well.

Those groups that did not have access to education or were prohibited from acquiring it have naturally lagged behind.

Caste continues to be closely linked to economic status.

Q. 6. What factors matter in politics other than caste?

Ans. The voters have strong attachment to political parties which is often stronger than their attachment to their caste or community.

People within the same caste or community have different interests depending on their economic conditions.

Rich and poor or men and women from the same caste often vote very differently.

People's assessment of the performance of the government and the popularity rating of the leaders matter and are often decisive in elections.

Q. 7. What does 'gender-division' mean?

Ans. Gender division is a form of hierarchical social division seen everywhere, but rarely recognised in the study of politics. It tends to be understood as natural and unchangeable. However, it is not based on biology but on social expectations and stereotypes.

Q. 8. What do you understand by 'sexual division of labour'? Give some examples.

Ans. It is a system in which all work inside the home is either done by the women of the family, or organised by them through the domestic helpers.

It is reflected in most of the families. Women do all the work inside the home such as cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, tailoring, looking after children, etc. and men do all the work outside the home.

It is not that men cannot do housework; they simply think that it is for women to attend to these things.

In villages, women fetch water, collect fuel and work in the field.

Q. 9. What does 'feminist' mean? What are feminist movements?

Ans. Feminist can be a woman or a man who believes in equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

Feminist movements aim at equal rights and opportunities for women and men. More radical women's movements aimed at equality, both in personal and family life.