

Long Answer Questions

Q. 1. Describe the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

Ans. (i) The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act was framed in 1989 to protest against the domination and violence of the powerful communities against Dalits and other tribal groups.

(ii) In order to indicate to the government that untouchability was still being practised and in the most hideous manner, Dalit groups demanded new laws that would list the various sorts of violence against Dalits and prescribe stringent punishment for those who indulge in them.

Q. 2. Mention the crimes that have been dealt with by the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act?

Ans. This act contains a very long list of crimes, some of which are too horrible even to contemplate. The act distinguishes several levels of crimes

(i) Firstly, it lists modes of humiliation that are both physically horrific and morally reprehensible and seeks to punish those who:

- a. Force a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe to drink or eat any inedible or obnoxious substance.
- b. Forcibly removes clothes of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe member or parades him or her naked or with painted face or body, or commits any similar act which is derogatory to human dignity.

(ii) The act recognises crimes against Dalit and tribal/women and therefore seeks to penalise anyone who:

- a. Assaults or uses force on any woman belonging to a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe with intent to dishonour her.

(iii) Actions that disposes Dalits and Adivasis.

Q. 3. Define the demands of Adivasis and the 1989 Act.

Ans. (i) The 1989 Act is important as Adivasi activists refer to it to defend their right to occupy land that was traditionally theirs.

(ii) Adivasis, often unwilling to move from their land, are forcibly displaced.

(iii) This Act merely confirm that the land belonging to the tribal people cannot be sold to or bought by non-tribal people.

(iv) C K Janu, an Adivasi activist, has pointed out that one of the violaters of Constitutional Rights guaranteed to tribal people are governments in the various states

of India—for it is they who allow non-tribal encroachers in the form of timber merchants, paper mills, etc. to exploit tribal land and to forcibly evict tribal people from their traditional forests in the process of declaring forests as reserved or as sanctuaries.