

CBSE Class-12 Sociology Test Paper-05
Challenges to Cultural Diversity

General Instruction:

- Question 1-5 carries two marks each.
 - Question 6-8 carries four marks each.
 - Question 9-10 carries six marks each.
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1. Define 'authoritarian state'.
2. Give reasons when state institutions can become unable or unwilling to respond to the needs of the people.
3. Define 'Civil society'.
4. What is the main criteria for inclusion in civil society?
5. What does the Right to Information Act specifies?
6. In what context does the non-state actors and institutions become important?
7. How do the Right to Information Act forces the State to respond to the people?
8. Describe the incidents that energised the many civil society initiatives to emerge in the 1970s.
9. Explain regionalism in the Indian context.
10. Emphasise on the role of civil society on today's time.

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Challenges to Cultural Diversity

1. An authoritarian state is a state in which the people have no voice and those in power are not accountable to anyone. Authoritarian states often limit or abolish civil liberties like freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of political activity, right to protection from wrongful use of authority, right to the due processes of the law, and so on.
2. There is a possibility that the state institutions can become unable or unwilling to respond to the needs of the people because of corruption, inefficiency, or lack of resources.
3. Civil society is the name given to the broad arena which lies beyond the private domain of the family, but outside the domain of both state and market. Civil society is the non-state and non-market part of the public domain in which individuals get together voluntarily to create institutions and organisations.
4. The main criteria for inclusion in civil society are that the organisation should not be state-controlled, and it should not be a purely commercial profit-making entity. For example, Doordarshan is not part of civil society though private television channels are; a car manufacturing company is not part of civil society but the trade unions to which its workers belong are.
5. The Act specifies that citizens have a right to: request any information (as defined under the Act) take copies of documents inspect documents, works and records take certified samples of materials of work obtain information in form of printouts, diskettes, floppies, tapes, video cassettes or in any other electronic mode or through printouts.
6. The state is indeed a very crucial institution when it comes to the management of cultural diversity in a nation. The state can also become somewhat independent of the nation and its people. To the extent that the state structure – the legislature, bureaucracy, judiciary, armed forces, police and other arms of the state – becomes insulated from the people, it also has the potential of turning authoritarian.

There is also the possibility that state institutions become unable or unwilling to respond to the needs of the people because of corruption, inefficiency, or lack of resources. In short, there are many reasons why a state may not be all that it should be.

Non-state actors and institutions become important in this context, for they can keep a watch on the state, “protest against its injustices or supplement its efforts.

7. The Right to Information Act 2005 is a law enacted by the Parliament of India giving Indians (except those in the State of Jammu and Kashmir who have their own special law) access to Government records. It forces the State to respond to the people in the following ways: i) Under the terms of the Act, any person may request information from a “public authority” (a body of Government or instrumentality of State) which is expected to reply expeditiously or within thirty days. ii) The Act also requires every public authority to computerise their records for wide dissemination. iii) To proactively publish certain categories of information so that the citizens need minimum recourse to request for information formally. iv) This law was passed by Parliament on 15 June 2005 and came into force on 13 October 2005. Information disclosure in India was hitherto restricted by the Official Secrets Act 1923 and various other special laws, which the new RTI Act now overrides.
8. The following are the incidents that energised the many civil society initiatives to emerge in the 1970s: i) The Indian people had a brief experience of authoritarian rule during the ‘Emergency’ enforced between June 1975 and January 1977. ii) Parliament was suspended and new laws were made directly by the government. iii) Civil liberties were revoked and a large number of politically active people were arrested and jailed without trial. iv) Censorship was imposed on the media and government officials could be dismissed without normal procedures. v) The government coerced lower level officials to implement its programmes and produce instant results.

The Emergency shocked people into active participation and helped energise the many civil society initiatives that emerged in the 1970s. This period thus saw the resurgence of a wide variety of social movements including the women’s, environmental, human rights and dalit movements.

9. Regionalism in India is rooted in India’s diversity of languages, cultures, tribes, and religions. It is also encouraged by the geographical concentration of these identity markers in particular regions, and fuelled by a sense of regional deprivation. Indian federalism has been a means of accommodating these regional sentiments.

After Independence, initially the Indian state continued with the British-Indian arrangement dividing India into large provinces, also called ‘presidencies’. These were large multi-ethnic and multilingual provincial states constituting the major political-administrative units of a semi-federal state called the Union of India.

In addition to the presidencies, there were also a large number of princely states and

principalities all over India. All these units of the colonial era had to be re-organised into ethno-linguistic States within the Indian union in response to strong popular agitations. Language coupled with regional and tribal identity – and not religion – has therefore provided the most powerful instrument for the formation of ethno-national identity in India.

All states however, haven't been created on the basis of linguistic communities. For instance, in the creation of three new states in 2000, namely Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal and Jharkhand, a combination of ethnicity based on tribal identity, language, regional deprivation and ecology provided the basis for intense regionalism resulting in statehood.

Respecting regional sentiments is not just a matter of creating States: this has to be backed up with an institutional structure that ensures their viability as relatively autonomous units within a larger federal structure. In India this is done by Constitutional provisions defining the powers of the States and the Centre.

10. Today the activities of civil society organisations have an even wider range, including advocacy and lobbying activity with national and international agencies as well as active participation in various movements.

The issues taken up are diverse, ranging from tribal struggles for land rights, devolution in urban governance, campaigns against rape and violence against women, rehabilitation of those displaced by dams and other developmental projects, fishermen's struggles against mechanised fishing, rehabilitation of hawkers and pavement dwellers, campaigns against slum demolitions and for housing rights, primary education reform, distribution of land to Dalits, and so on.

Civil liberties organisations have been particularly important in keeping a watch on the state and forcing it to obey the law. The media, too, has taken an increasingly active role, specially its emergent visual and electronic segments.

Among the most significant recent initiatives is the campaign for the Right to Information. Beginning with an agitation in rural Rajasthan for the release of information on government funds spent on village development, this effort grew into a nation-wide campaign. Despite the resistance of the bureaucracy, the government was forced to respond to the campaign and pass a new law formally acknowledging the citizens' right to information.