3. Equality

Q1. Some people argue that inequality is natural while others maintain that it is equality which is natural and the inequalities which we notice around us are created by society. Which view do you support? Give reasons.

Answer:

There is this debate that inequality is natural because nature has endowed different men with different capabilities. We see someone as a gifted poet, other as a musician and some other as an engineer.

Natural Inequalities:

1. Natural inequalities emerge due to differences in personal traits either physical, or mental or emotional.
2. These are the result of different characteristics and abilities of inborn qualities of a man.
3. These natural differences cannot be changed also.

Social inequalities:
1. Socially inequalities emerge as a result of unequal opportunities, i.e. family background,educational factors, etc.
2. Social differences reflect the values of society,which may appear to be unjust.

Conclusion:
(a) The discrimination based on gender, colour,race etc. have been made by society rather than based on inborn characteristics.
(b) Some natural differences have become alterable also, i.e. advancement in medical sciences and technology has helped several differently abled persons to work more efficiently.
(c) Some inequalities have been existing for centuries seem justified and are based on natural inequalities, i.e. women are considered weaker than man in every aspect, and hence to deny them equal rights is considered the justifiable.

Q2. There is a view that absolute economic equality is neither possible nor desirable. It is argued that the most a society can do is to try and reduce the gaps between the richest and poorest members of society.Do you agree?

Answer:

Economic equality:

It refers to availability of equal opportunities to one and all present in the society, without any discrimination.
(a) Absolute economic equality of income has never existed in society. But democratic set up provides equal opportunities to at least those who are capable and possess potential with equal opportunities, inequalities may exist between individuals, but one's position may be improved with the sincere efforts in the society.
Economic Inequalities:
I. Economic inequalities exist if there are differences in wealth, property or income between different sections of society.
II. It enhances the gap between the upper, middle,poor-rich and persons living below the poverty line
Measurement of economic inequalities:
a. To estimate the number of people who are living below the poverty line
b.To find out the differences between the rich and poor.
Importance of economic equality:
a. Economic equality guarantees each and everybody equal opportunities
b.Economic equality reduces the gap between the rich and the poor or high or middle class,etc.
c. Economic disparities can make society more violent because the reforms cannot take place in such a society.

Q3. Match the following concepts with appropriate instances:

(a) Affirmative action (i) Every adult citizen has a right to vote
(b) Equality of opportunity (ii) Banks offer higher rate of interest to senior citizen
(c) Equal Rights. (iii) Every child should get free education

Answer: Affirmative action: Banks offer higher rate of interest to senior citizen.

Appropriate instances:
1. Senior citizens have contributed to the development and service of society throughout their life.
2. Their age increases but their income decreases due to medical needs and social needs.

(b) Equality of opportunityAppropriate instances:
(i) Every child should get an equal opportunity to get education, i.e. on one should be discriminated on any ground
(ii) This type of inequalities is against the principle of equality.
(c) Equal Rights: Every adult citizen has a right to vote.
(i) This principle is based on one person one vote one value, i.e. every adult citizens enjoys the right to vote.
(ii) No citizen should be discriminated on any ground to exempt from enjoying right to vote.

Q4. A government report on farmers' problems says that small and marginal farmers cannot get good prices from the market. It recommends that the government should intervene to ensure a better price but only for small and marginal farmers. Is this recommendation consistent with the principle of equality?

Answer:
Yes, this recommendation is consistent on the basis of the principle of equality.
(i) A democratic country should have the provisions to protect the interests of small and marginal farmers.
(ii) The small and the marginal farmers can get assistance from government for their betterment.
(iii) The farmers (medium and small) can get social, economic and political justice due to this arrangement.

Q5. Which of the following violate the principles of equality? And why?

(a) Every child in class will read the text of the play by turn.
(b) The Government of Canada encouraged white Europeans to migrate to Canada from the end of the Second World War till 1960.
(c) There is a separate railway reservation counter for the senior citizens.
(d) Access to some forest areas is reserved for certain tribal communities.

Answer:

(a) This does not violate the principle of equality because every child is asked to perform the same activity without any discrimination
(b) This violates the principle of equality due to discrimination on the basis of colour.
(c) It is not violating the principle of equality because senior citizens should be honoured and every individual one day can enjoy the same privileges.
(d) This do not violates the principle of equality because all tribal people have right to maintain their own culture.

Q6. Here are some arguments in favour of the right to vote for women.Which of these are consistent with the idea of equality? Give reasons.
(a) Women are our mothers. We shall not disrespect our mothers by denying them the right to vote.
(b) Decisions of the government affect women as well as men, therefore they also should have a say in choosing the rulers.
(c) Not granting women the right to vote will cause disharmony in the family.
(d) Women constitute half of humanity. You cannot subjugate them for long by denying them the right to vote.

Answer:

The statement (b) and (d) both are consistent with the idea of equality because:
(i) Decisions of government affects every individuals either men or women equally.

(ii) Women should not be discriminated on the basis of gender.

(iii) Equality and freedom are the two vital principles in a society; hence women cannot be denied the right to vote.