

Reading Comprehension

Passage-1

Centralisation of power and the structures and procedures flowing out of such an overbearing arrangement have proven to be not only damaging to any work culture that may exist in government departments but have also led to an oppressive network of sycophancy and nepotism. While the focus of decentralization so far has been on the development of local bodies and panchayati raj institutions, little attention has been paid to the need to devolve administrative authority from the national capital.

1. Which of the following is the primary purpose of the passage?
 - a. To build a case for decentralization of administrative authority vested in the national capital.
 - b. To highlight the adverse impact of centralization of power.
 - c. To critically analyze the effects of centralization of power on administration in the country.
 - d. To discuss the need for shifting the focus of devolvement of power from local administration to the national capital.
2. The author of this passage will agree with which of the following statements?
 - a. Centralization of power is needless and should be done away with.
 - b. Centralization of power has bred favouritism and turned out to be detrimental to the working of the government.
 - c. Centralization of power has led to states being given a step-motherly treatment by the administrative authority in the capital.
 - d. Centralization of power should be substituted by panchayati raj institutions and local bodies.

Passage-2

To know Bombay is to know modern India. It is the channel for a billion ambitions. And it's globalization you can touch and walk around, a giant city where change is pouring in and rippling out around the globe. What makes this dynamism all the more stunning is that it exists in spite of India's political and bureaucratic dysfunction. Ironically, for Bombay bad government may have meant good business. Decades of inept and sometimes corrupt rule have produced a city of self-starters. Sanjay Bhandarkar, managing director of Rothschild's India, says the city is a "disaster" in terms of government: "From that point of view, there are absolutely no arguments for being based in Bombay." But lack of state backup has helped to create an exceptionally able talent pool for employers. "The quality of the workforce is amazing," he says. "Things just happen here, because people have to make things work themselves." Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, a billionaire stock investor based in Bombay, says that with liberalization, the central government has sufficiently reduced its role in managing the economy that it can be virtually ignored. Bosses can now devote their energies to straightforward business, rather than outwitting the bureaucracy. That's not to say the government is actively helping. "Right now, India is like a runner without shoes," says Jhunjhunwala. "But look at that speed."

3. What does the line "India is like a runner without shoes" imply?
 - a. Indian businesses are struggling due to the lack of government support.
 - b. Indian businesses are self reliant and don't require much of government support.
 - c. Indian industry holds its own despite the absence of state backing.
 - d. Indian industry has been doing well since the government has curtailed its economic interference.
4. Which of the following can be inferred from the line "To know Bombay is to know modern India"?
 - a. Bombay and modern India are two sides of the same coin.
 - b. One must understand Bombay to understand present day India.
 - c. Bombay enjoys an unparalleled pride of place in today's India.
 - d. Bombay is the quintessential example of contemporary India.

Passage-3

Anna Hazare's anti-corruption crusade (Team Anna), whatever one thinks of it, has certainly brought the issue of corruption to centre stage. But to reduce this to a campaign against one party – thereby possibly paving the way for the victory of another – a stubborn insistence on only one law to deal with every aspect of corruption is to diminish the importance of the issue and the relevance of citizen involvement. Anna Hazare and his followers are in danger of squandering the opportunity presented by this growing awareness and demand for cleaner politics. There is no silver bullet for ending corruption. A law is only the first step. The greater challenge is its implementation and ensuring citizen involvement.

5. Which of the following can be inferred from the line "There is no silver bullet for ending corruption"?

- a. Relentless efforts are required to root out a tough problem like corruption.
- b. There is no immediate solution for corruption and the problem will have to be solved gradually over a period of time.
- c. Unidimensional approach towards corruption is not going to bear fruit.
- d. Corruption must be dealt with using non violent measures such as laws and citizen involvement.

Passage-4

Populism has come to mean many things but it can be seen as a style of politics and rhetoric that seeks to arouse a majority. Leaders believe this majority thinks it is outside the polity. Populism implies that the democratic spirit can get out of hand.

We should understand the difference between what the public is interested in and public interest. There must be some better democratic, not populist, way of deciding matters. The populists' mode of democracy is a politics of arousal more than of reason, but also politics of diversion from serious concerns that need settling in either a liberal democratic or a civic republican manner. The currents of populism run deep in the country's political life and they too have their own moral compulsions. It would appear therefore that the people of India are destined to oscillate endlessly between the two poles of Constitutionalism and populism without ever discarding the one or the other.

Dr Ambedkar attached great importance to Constitutional morality in the working of the Constitution. He endorsed the view of the Greek historian Grote, that Constitutional morality required a paramount reverence for the forms of the Constitution, enforcing obedience to authority acting under and within these forms. Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. The Constitution also insists on cultivating the habit of being self-restrained. Violation of Constitutional morality leads to 'grammar of anarchy'. Thus Dr Ambedkar regarded any civil disobedience movement as against the spirit of the Constitution.

6. Which of the following best expresses the theme of the passage?

- a. Constitutionalism and populism are the two facets of Indian polity.
- b. The distinction between populist and democratic ways of political functioning.
- c. Populist politics needs to be discouraged since it is more engaging than constructive.
- d. The spirit of politics must be constitutional and not overly democratic.

7. Which of the following can't be inferred from the passage?

- a. Practicing constitutionalism or populism comes with its own set of obligations.
- b. Populist politics, not constitutional morality holds sway over Indian populace.
- c. Populism fails more often than not in addressing issues of grave civic concern.
- d. Dr. Ambedkar saw 'Dharna' as an illegitimate means of protest.

Passage-5

When a term acquires popular currency and power, we need to be more careful about what it stands for and how we should formulate our responses to the actual phenomenon it represents. Terminological precision is routinely craved in universities. The case for such precision is greater when the stakes are so high in the "real world".

So what is civil society? Is the distinction between civil society and political society, so often drawn, sustainable?

Hazare and Ramdev both claim to be non-political. In some intellectual circles, too, it is customary to draw the distinction between civil and political society. But this distinction is deeply untenable. It is premised upon equating politics with elections. It also implies, or openly suggests, that civil society, a middle-class phenomenon, is governed by laws; and political society, driven by elections and mass politics, is deeply compromised in patron-client deals and riddled with corruption. Civil society is virtuous; political society lacks morality.

The first problem with this formulation is that the middle-class also violates the laws. Middle-class associations and NGOs, not simply the political parties, can be dens of corruption and unaccountability.

Second, politics is not only about elections. It is also about values, visions, issues that shape political consciousness. Some of these values and issues, of course, can determine election results. Of late, I have been travelling in Tamil Nadu and my overwhelming impression is that corruption had a lot to do with the DMK's massive election defeat. But politics does not have to be about elections only.

Moreover, there is no guarantee that the current leaders of civil society will not run for elections tomorrow. India has a remarkable history of such transitions. Whether or not the Bhushans will be candidates in elections, can we be sure that Baba Ramdev will not be? Movement politics has often seamlessly morphed into election politics in the past, and might well again.

The distinction between civil and political society, thus, does not make sense. They are deeply intertwined. A more precise definition of civil society has to do with its relationship with the state. Civil society is not necessarily non-political, but it inhabits the non-state space of our life. It deploys any political means it can get to pressure the state to achieve its goals, but it is not part of the state. Indeed, the classic definition of civil society is that it is the organizational space between the family on one hand and the state on the other. In this space can exist social organizations such as Lions and Rotary Clubs, festival organizations, soccer and cricket leagues, yoga ashrams and bird-watching societies — some of which can also be used politically. But trade unions and social movements, too, are part of civil society, and they are, more often than not, explicitly political.

8. Which of the following is the most suitable title to the passage?

- a. 'Civil society' vs. 'political society'
- b. Understanding 'civil society'
- c. Civil society-an imprecise term
- d. Defining 'civil society'

9. The content of this passage does not support which of the following?

- a. Certain political establishments exist outside the state space.
- b. Semantic exactness vis-à-vis prevalent expressions is more desirable outside the academic world than within it.
- c. Mass politics has often transformed itself into election politics.
- d. There is a tenuous difference between 'civil society' and 'political society'.

Passage-6

The economy of contemporary India is a great paradox. It is a strange combination of outstanding achievements as well as grave failures. Since independence, India has achieved remarkable progress in overcoming its economic backwardness. From being a very poor country in the 1950s and a 'basket case' in the mid 1960s, it has emerged as the fourth largest economy in the world (in terms of purchasing power parity). Our economy has become one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Now the country is one of the leading players in the world knowledge economy with vast intellectual capital and booming software and information technology services. While our country has joined the league of the world's top five fastest growing economies, we are in the bottom 20 among all countries in terms of the Human Development Index. While the country is celebrating its growth rate and technological wonders, it is witnessing social contradictions and the paradox and ironies of development. Thus, there are 'two Indias' in contemporary India.

10. Why is the Indian economy considered 'a great paradox'?

- a. It is a leading player in information technology services with low levels of literacy.
- b. There is poverty amidst plenty in agricultural produce.
- c. It is one of the largest economies with low human development.
- d. It has scientific achievements with social contradictions.

11. Why is India being referred to as a leading player in the world knowledge economy?

- a. India's knowledge base in science and technology is one of the world's best.
- b. India has huge reserves of human intellectual capital and information technology services.
- c. India is among the World's five fastest growing economies and technology reserves.
- d. India has a huge reservoir of human capital and scientific knowledge export potential.

12. What does the author imply by the phrase 'two Indias'?

- a. There is the India that has vast intellectual capital and the other that is largely illiterate.
- b. There is the India of burgeoning growth and the India of widespread want and misery.
- c. There is the India of progressive mindsets and the other who are socially conservative.
- d. There is an India of outstanding achievements combined with gigantic failures.

Passage-7

A moral act must be our own act; must spring from our own will. If we act mechanically, there is no moral content in our act. Such action would be moral, if we think it proper to act like a machine and do so. For, in doing so, we use our discrimination. We should bear in mind the distinction between acting mechanically and acting intentionally. It may be moral of a king to pardon a culprit. But the messenger carrying out the order of pardon plays only a mechanical part in the king's moral act. But if the messenger were to carry out the king's order considering it to be his duty, his action would be a moral one. How can a man understand morality who does not use his own intelligence and power of thought, but lets himself be swept along like a log of wood by a current? Sometimes a man defies convention and acts on his own with a view to absolute good.

13. Which of the following statements best describe/describes the thought of the writer?

1. A moral act calls for using our discretion.
2. Man should react to a situation immediately
3. Man must do his duty.
4. Man should be able to defy convention in order to be moral.

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

- a. 1 only b. 1 and 3 c. 2 and 3 d. 1 and 4

14. Which of the following statements is the nearest definition of moral action, according to the writer?

- a. It is a mechanical action based on official orders from superiors.
- b. It is an action based on our sense of discretion.
- c. It is a clever action based on the clarity of purpose.
- d. It is a religious action based on understanding.

15. The passage contains a statement "lets himself be swept along like a log of wood by a current." Among the following statements, which is/are nearest in meaning to this?

1. A person does not use his own reason.
2. He is susceptible to influence/pressure.
3. He cannot withstand difficulties/ challenges.
4. He is like a log of wood.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- a. 1 only b. 1 and 2 c. 2 and 3 d. 1 and 4

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|---|---|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | A | 6 | D | 11 | B |
| 2 | B | 7 | B | 12 | D |
| 3 | C | 8 | B | 13 | D |
| 4 | D | 9 | C | 14 | B |
| 5 | C | 10 | C | 15 | B |

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