

Chapter 1 "On Equality"

Q.1 In a democracy why is a universal adult franchise important?

Solution: In a democracy, a universal adult franchise is important as it is based on the idea of equality. It states that every adult in a country, irrespective of their wealth and the communities she/he belongs to, has one vote.

Q.2 Re-read the box on Article 15 and state two ways in which the article address inequality?

Solution: Article 15 addresses inequality in terms of discrimination based on religion, race, caste, gender, place of birth etc. It also addresses that the fact that the use of public places such as wells, tanks, bathing Ghats, roads under full or partial government funding are not subject to discrimination based on the criteria's mentioned above.

Q.3 In what ways was Omprakash Valmiki's experience similar to that of the Ansaris?

Solution: Omprakash Valmiki was discriminated on the account of his caste, while the Ansaris were discriminated on account of their religion. The core similarity is that they both were discriminated because of their birth, which is prohibited under Article 15. Omprakash Valmiki was not allowed to sit with his fellow classmates on account of his birth as a Dalit and was made to sweep the school and its environs, thus hurting his dignity. The Ansari's were denied a flat to rent as their religion differed to those of others who were in majority the occupants of the apartment complex.

Q.4 What do you understand by the term "all personnel are equal before the law"? Why do you think it is important in a democracy?

Solution: The statement means that every citizen, be it from the Prime Minister or President to a daily labourer, is equal in the eyes of the law. No one can be or will be discriminated on the basis of their birth such as religion, gender, caste etc.

The very essence of democracy is the idea of equality as it gives equal and if not important recognition to all. It would never have existed in the first place if there were inequalities on the basis of race, religion and gender etc.

Q.5 The Government of India passed the Disabilities Act in 1995. This law states that persons with disabilities have equal rights and that the government should make possible their full participation. The government has to provide free education and integrate children with disabilities into mainstream schools. This law also states that all public spaces including buildings, school etc. should be accessible and provided with ramps.

Look at the photograph and think about the boy who is being carried with the stair. Do you think that the law stated above is being implemented in this regard? What needs to be done to make the building accessible?



Solution: It is evident that the boy in the photograph is disabled. As per the Disabilities Act 1995, the building should have been accessible to him. But the law here is not being enforced here. In fact, it can be quite dangerous for him to be carried down by security personnel down the stairs like that. In addition his dignity is being hurt as he is made to feel inferior here. This should be referred to the court of law