

Gender, Religion and Caste

Level - 1

CORE SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQs)

- Option (B) is correct
Explanation: The equal treatment of women in a democratic society means that women have the legal right to fight for their rights and gender equality through various channels, including the legal system. It signifies a framework where women can seek justice, advocate for their rights, and participate fully in societal and political activities.
- Option (A) is correct
Explanation: Statement I is correct as a communal mindset can indeed lead to efforts to secure political influence for a specific religious group. This is common in societies where religion and politics become intertwined, leading to groups seeking power based on religious identity. While members of the majority community may seek political influence in response to communal dynamics, the idea of creating a separate political entity specifically as a response to such dynamics is generally more associated with minority communities who feel marginalised or under-represented. Historically, it's the minority groups that have sought separate political entities (such as in the case of partition or movements for autonomy) rather than the majority group. Hence Statement II is incorrect
- Option (D) is correct
Explanation: Feminism refers to the belief in and advocacy for the social, political, and economic equality of women. Feminists are individuals who support the rights of women and work toward achieving gender equality in society.
- Option (B) is correct
Explanation: India is described as a secular state in its Constitution, which means that the government does not favour any particular religion and ensures that all communities have the freedom to profess and practice any religion. This aligns with the given statements that India has no official religion and provides religious freedom to all communities.
- Option (C) is correct.
Explanation: Women empowerment means giving women the ability to make decisions, access education, employment, and participate in social, economic, and political activities on equal terms with men.
- Option (D) is correct
Explanation: In 1992, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act was passed, which introduced reservations for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (local self-governments). This amendment reserved one-third (33%) of seats for women in Panchayats at all levels, allowed women to actively participate in local governance and decision-making. The reservation system did not apply to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, or Legislative Council in 1992.
- Option (A) is correct
Explanation: Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) have consistently had the highest women's representation in their national parliaments. These countries have strong gender equality policies and quotas to ensure higher female participation in politics. As of 2018, Nordic countries had the highest percentage of women in parliaments globally, often exceeding 40% representation.
- Option (B) is correct
Explanation: Statement I is correct as India follows secularism, meaning the government does not favour or establish any religion as the official state religion. Statement II is correct as the Indian Constitution guarantees the freedom of religion, allowing individuals to profess, practice, and propagate their faith. Statement III is incorrect as the Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Discrimination based on religion is not legal in India. Statement IV is correct as the government has the power to intervene in religious practices that

violate fundamental rights, such as abolishing untouchability or ensuring equal rights for women in religious communities.

9. Option (A) is correct

Explanation: Statement I is correct as India is a secular country, meaning it does not endorse any official religion.

Statement II is correct as the Indian Constitution guarantees religious freedom under Article 25.

Statement III is correct as the Indian Constitution allows minorities to establish and administer educational institutions and receive state aid.

Statement IV is incorrect as Theocracy is a system

where the government is based on religious authority, but India is a secular state.

10. Option (C) is correct

Explanation: Sweden has one of the highest representation of women in its national parliament compared to the other listed countries. Sweden is known for its strong commitment to gender equality and women's rights. The Swedish parliament, also known as the Riksdag, has consistently maintained a high proportion of female members. As of recent data, women make up around 47 per cent of the members of the Swedish parliament, ranking among the highest percentages of female representation globally.

MATCH THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. Option (A) is correct

Explanation: Women lag behind men in education, with lower literacy rates and fewer opportunities for higher education.

The unequal pay between men and women despite the equal remuneration act, highlights the gender wage gap in the workforce.

Patriarchal norms in society hinder women's opportunities and advancement, leading to disadvantages and discrimination.

Various forms of violence and discrimination faced by women, including sex-selective abortion, unequal treatment in education and employment, and domestic violence.

2. Option (A) is correct

Explanation: Traditional gender roles assign

specific responsibilities to men and women within households, reflecting gendered expectations regarding household responsibilities.

Historical barriers that limited women's participation in public life, such as restrictions on voting and holding public office, resulted in limited representation of women in politics and public affairs.

The goals of women's movements and feminist activism include demands for equal rights, opportunities and recognition of women's contribution to society.

Societal perceptions of ideal womanhood include expectations for women's behaviour and roles in society, such as prioritising housework and childcare.

ASSERTION-REASON QUESTIONS

1. Option (A) is correct

Explanation: Over the years, women's participation in the workforce has significantly increased due to better access to education, legal rights, and social awareness.

Movements for women's rights, government policies (like reservation in Panchayats), and legal reforms have helped women gain better representation in different fields.

Thus, assertion and reason are true and reason correctly explains the assertion.

2. Option (A) is correct

Explanation: Women across different parts of the

world have organised movements and agitated for equal rights, including voting rights, equal pay, and access to education and employment. Examples include the suffrage movement, the feminist movement, and campaigns for legal and social reforms.

Women's movement not only fought for political and economic rights but also focused on equality in personal and family life. Issues like domestic violence, property rights, equal marriage laws, and parental rights were also part of their struggles.

Both assertion and reason are true and reason correctly explains the assertion.

VERY SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. (i) Women representation are ensured in our democratic processes.
(ii) 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendment have given 33% reservation to women at local level.

- (iii) Due to education and training more women are coming forward to take part in policy making process in the country.
(iv) Women are heading panchayats.

- (v) Women are heading the posts of President and Cabinet Minister in India, as well as Chief Ministers of various states.
- (vi) Indian voters have elected women to numerous state legislative assemblies and national parliament of many decades.
(Any two)
2. (i) Some Parents prefer to spend more resources for their sons rather than for their daughters.
(ii) Many women often face domestic violence.
(iii) Many a times highly paid valued jobs are very less for women.
(iv) In many areas of work in private sectors women are not provided equal wages to men.
(Any two)
3. (i) When beliefs of one religion are presented as superior to those of other religions.
(ii) Communal politics is based on the idea that religion is the principal basis of social community.
(iii) Communalism leads to the belief that people belonging to different religions cannot live as equal citizens in a nation.
(iv) People of one religion do not have the same interest and aspirations in every context.
- (v) Religious prejudices, stereotypes of religious communities and belief in the superiority of one's religions over other religions.
(Any two)
4. (i) There is no official religion for the Indian State.
(ii) Our Constitution does not give a special status to any religion.
(iii) The Constitution provides to all individuals and communities freedom to profess, practice and propagate any religion.
(iv) The Constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion.
(v) Secularism is an idea that constitutes one of the foundations of our country.
(vi) At the same time the Constitution allows the State to intervene in the matters of religion in order to ensure equality within religious communities.
(Any two)
5. (i) Shift from one occupation to another.
(ii) When a new generation takes up occupations other than those practiced by their ancestors.
(iii) Socio- economic changes are happening due to occupational mobility.
(Any two)

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Women empowerment has taken leaps and bounds from yesteryears to the present. We can see the following developments:
- (i) Passing of Women Reservation Bill, 2023.
(ii) Improved literacy rates.
(iii) Women have equal rights as men on their father's property.
(iv) Women could be seen in all the fields of development- science, economy, education, media, corporate etc.
(Any three)
2. (i) Government should initiate literacy enhancing programmes for urban as well as grass root level.
(ii) Counselling sessions for parents and society for the promotion of enrolment and education.
(iii) Increase literacy campaigns to educate the girl child by enrolling them in formal schools.
(iv) Initiating educative programs and propaganda to break down traditional prejudices, against girl's education.
(v) Granting concession in the form of scholarships to poor and meritorious girl students.
(vi) Effective enforcement of compulsory education of girls.
(vii) Providing other convenience and incentive. Such as adjustment of school timings, free mid-day meals, free medical and health facilities etc.
3. (viii) Develop an environment where women could demand information.
(ix) Inculcate the confidence in women.
(Any three)

	Overlapping Differences	Cross-Cutting Differences
(i)	When one social difference reinforces another, creating deep divisions.	When one social difference does not reinforce another, reducing tensions.
(ii)	Leads to social tensions and conflicts as the same group faces multiple disadvantages	Reduces conflict as different groups share common interests in some areas.
(iii)	Example: USA - Racial differences (Black and White) overlap with economic inequality, as Black people have historically faced poverty and discrimination.	Example: Netherlands - Both Catholics and Protestants can be rich or poor, so religion does not align with economic status, reducing conflict.
(iv)	Overlapping differences divide society deeply.	Cross-cutting differences encourage unity and co-existence.

4. (i) In Indian society, gender division tends to be understood as natural and unchangeable. It is based on social expectations and stereotypes.
- (ii) This attitude leads to sexual division of labour, i.e. boys and girls are brought up to believe that the main responsibility of women is housework and bringing up children, whereas all the outside works are to be done by men. The result of this division of labour is that though the women constitute almost half the population, their role in public life is minimal.
- (iii) Political expression and political mobilisation on this question helped to improve women's role in public life. We now find women working as scientists, doctors, engineers, teachers etc. Now, with a lot of efforts, 33% seats are reserved for women in local government bodies.
5. Secularism is the foundation of our country.
 - (i) There is no official religion of India.
 - (ii) Our Constitution does not give special status to any religion.
 - (iii) The Constitution prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion.
 - (iv) The Constitution provides all individuals and communities the freedom to profess, practice and propagate any religion or not to follow any religion.
 - (v) The Constitution allows the state to intervene in the matters of religion in order to ensure equality. (Any three)
6. (i) Expression of caste differences in politics give many disadvantaged communities the space to demand their share of power. In this sense, caste politics has helped dalits and OBCs to gain better access to decision-making.
- (ii) Several political and non-political organisations have been demanding and agitating for an end to discrimination against particular castes, for more dignity and more access to land, resources and opportunities.
- (iii) Exclusive attention can produce negative results as well. It can divert attention from other pressing issues such as poverty, development and corruption. In some cases, it leads to violence.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. In our country, women still lag behind the men despite some improvements since independence. Women face disadvantage, discrimination and oppression in various ways:
 - (i) The literacy rate among women is only 54% as compared with 76% among men.
 - (ii) Similarly, a small proportion of girl students go for higher studies. Girls are performing as good as boys in school. But they drop out because parents prefer to spend their resources for their boys' education rather than spending equally on their sons and daughters.
 - (iii) The proportion of women among the highly paid and valued jobs is still very small. On an average, an Indian women works one hour more than an average man every day.
 - (iv) The Equal Wages Act provides that equal wages should be paid for equal work. However, in almost all areas of work, from sports and cinema to factories and fields, women are paid less than men, even when both do exactly the same work.
 - (v) Women face harassment, exploitation and violence even on the domestic front.
2. Communalism can take various forms in politics:
 - (i) The routine beliefs involve religious prejudices, stereotypes of religious communities and belief in the superiority of one's religion over other religions.
 - (ii) A communal mind often leads to a quest for political dominance of one's own religious community.
 - (iii) For those belonging to the majority community, this takes the form of majoritarian dominance. For those belonging to the minority community, it can take the form of a desire to form a separate political unit.
 - (iv) Political mobilisation on religious lines is another frequent form of communalism. This involves the use of sacred symbols, religious leaders, emotional appeal and plain fear in order to bring the followers of one religion together in the political arena.
 - (v) Sometimes communalism takes its most ugly form of communal violence, riots and massacre.

Solutions provided by the Constitution:
The makers of our Constitution were aware of this challenge. That is why they chose the model of a secular state. This choice was reflected in several constitutional provisions like:

 - (i) There is no official religion for the Indian State.
 - (ii) The Constitution provides to all individuals and communities freedom to profess, practice and propagate any religion or not to follow any.

- (iii) The Constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion.
- (iv) At the same time, the Constitution allows the state to intervene in the matters of religion in order to ensure equality within religious communities.
- 3. The influences of politics of caste system are:
 - (i) Each caste group tries to become bigger by incorporating within its sub-castes.
 - (ii) Various caste groups are required to enter into a coalition with other castes or communities.
 - (iii) New kinds of caste groups have entered politics like 'backward' and 'forward' castes.
 - (iv) Politics in caste has allowed many disadvantaged caste groups to demand their share of power.
 - (v) Caste politics has helped the dalits and OBCs to gain better access to decision-making.

Level - 2

ADVANCED COMPETENCY FOCUSED QUESTIONS

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQs)

1. Option (D) is correct
Explanation: This statement highlights the active involvement and contributions of women in social movements and political life in India. It reflects that women have been politically aware and participative. They have led and supported democratic struggles. Despite challenges, their presence indicates growing empowerment and engagement in democracy.
2. Option (C) is correct
Explanation: In a secular democracy like India, citizens are free to hold and express their religious beliefs. However, the state must remain neutral and cannot favour or discriminate against any religion. While individuals may be guided by their beliefs, they cannot impose religious views on others or let religion dominate political decisions. This ensures freedom of religion, equality, and harmony in a diverse society.
3. Option (B) is correct
Explanation: The Right to Equality (Articles 14 to 18 of the Indian Constitution) ensures that no person is discriminated against on the basis of caste, religion, race, sex, or place of birth. It guarantees equal protection of the laws and equality before the law. It also includes the abolition of untouchability (Article 17). This right is crucial in promoting social justice and inclusiveness in Indian democracy.
4. Option (C) is correct
Explanation: This option clearly highlights gender inequality, as women in India still face lower literacy rates compared to men. They often have limited access to quality education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Many women are underrepresented in skilled jobs and leadership roles, indicating a gap in gender equity.
5. Option (C) is correct
Explanation: The statement means that caste identities still play a role in how political support is gathered. Political parties often mobilise voters based on caste groups and their interests. While caste-based discrimination is legally banned, its social and political influence continues in various forms. This reflects that caste remains a relevant factor in elections, candidate selection, and vote-bank politics in India.

ASSERTION-REASON QUESTIONS

1. Option (A) is correct
Explanation: Assertion is true as women's representation in the Indian Parliament has remained low — significantly below the global average of many democratic countries. Reason is also true. A major reason for this underrepresentation is that political parties often do not nominate enough women candidates, despite demands for greater inclusion. Since lack of party nominations directly explains the low number of women in Parliament, reason is the correct explanation of assertion.
2. Option (A) is correct
Explanation: Assertion is true because India is a secular state, which means it does not favour any religion and maintains a clear separation between religion and state affairs, especially politics. Reason is also true because when religion is mixed with politics, it can result in communal tensions, polarisation, and conflicts between religious groups, which harms national unity and democratic values. Both assertion and reason are true and reason correctly explains why religion should be separated from politics in a secular democracy.
3. Option (A) is correct
Explanation: Assertion is true. In recent decades, the caste system in India has weakened in many areas, especially in urban and economically developed regions. Reason is also true because factors like economic growth, spread of education, job opportunities in cities, and urbanisation have helped people move beyond traditional caste-based occupations and identities. Since these social and economic changes are the key reasons behind the weakening of the caste system, reason correctly explains assertion.

VERY SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. (i) **Lack of Party Support:** Political parties often do not give enough election tickets to women candidates, limiting their chances to contest and win elections.
 (ii) **Social and Cultural Barriers:** Patriarchal attitudes, lack of financial resources, and household responsibilities discourage many women from actively participating in politics.
2. (i) **Equal Respect for All Religions:** Political leaders should not favour or discriminate against any religion, ensuring all communities are treated equally by the state.
 (ii) **Use of Religion to Uphold Human Rights:** Religion can guide political values as long as it promotes tolerance, justice, and freedom, without imposing religious beliefs on others.
3. (i) **Access to Education and Jobs:** People from lower castes often face discrimination and limited opportunities in education and employment, especially in rural areas.
 (ii) **Social Practices and Marriages:** Caste-
- based discrimination is still seen in social interactions, and many marriages continue to take place within the same caste due to societal pressure.
4. (i) **Unequal Job Opportunities:** Women are often paid less than men for the same work and are underrepresented in high-paying and leadership roles.
 (ii) **Household Responsibilities:** In most families, household work like cooking, cleaning, and child care is considered the responsibility of women, even if they also work outside.
5. (i) **Freedom of Religion (Article 25):** Every citizen has the right to freely profess, practice, and propagate their religion.
 (ii) **Prohibition of Religious Discrimination (Article 15):** The state cannot discriminate against any citizen on the grounds of religion in matters of access to public places, employment, or education.

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. (i) **Reservation of Seats:** Implementing the Women's Reservation Bill to reserve one-third of the seats in Parliament and State Assemblies for women can significantly increase their representation.
 (ii) **Encouraging Political Participation:** Political parties should be mandated or encouraged to give more tickets to women candidates during elections.
 (iii) **Awareness and Education:** Promoting political education, leadership training, and awareness programs can empower women to actively participate in politics and decision-making processes.
2. (i) **Freedom of Religion (Article 25–28):** Every individual has the right to freely profess, practice, and propagate any religion of their choice.
 (ii) **No State Religion:** The Indian state does not have an official religion and treats all religions equally before the law.
 (iii) **No Religious Discrimination (Article 15):** The Constitution prohibits discrimination by the state against any citizen on the grounds of religion, ensuring equal access to public places, education, and government services.
3. (i) **Marriage Practices:** Most people in India still prefer marriage within their own caste, and inter-caste marriages are often discouraged or opposed.
 (ii) **Political Mobilisation:** Caste is used by political parties to appeal to specific vote banks, influencing the selection of candidates and campaigning strategies.
 (iii) **Social Discrimination:** In many rural and even some urban areas, people from lower castes still face discrimination in access to education, jobs, and public spaces.
4. (i) **Household Work:** Women are expected to do cooking, cleaning, and childcare at home, while men are not expected to share these responsibilities, even if both work outside.
 (ii) **Job Preferences:** Women are often encouraged to choose teaching, nursing, or clerical jobs, while men are expected to take up leadership roles or technical fields, reflecting social bias rather than ability.
 (iii) **Decision-Making:** In many families, major decisions—like finances or marriage—are taken by men, assuming they are naturally better at leading, which reinforces gender stereotypes.
5. (i) **Protection of Rights:** Politics can ensure that the religious freedom of all communities is protected, allowing people to practise their faith without fear or discrimination.
 (ii) **Promotion of Social Justice:** Religious teachings that support equality, compassion, and justice can inspire political leaders and policies aimed at uplifting weaker sections of society.
 (iii) **Representation of Diversity:** In a democracy, people can raise religious issues in a peaceful and constitutional manner, helping the government understand and address the concerns of different communities without favouritism.

CASE BASED QUESTIONS

1. (i) 10 Years
(ii) The person who fills the Census form visits every household and records the religion of each member.
(iii) (1) Census gives reliable information on the proportion of different social communities in the country and how it has changed over the years.
(2) The record shows the population proportion of six major religious communities in the country.
2. (i) Scheduled Tribes are living under the poverty line.
(ii) Large scale urbanisation is the factor that has most likely led to the shift in the economic status of lower castes.
(iii) The most likely way to improve the economic status of all people belonging to the lower castes is by improving literacy and access to education for people of lower castes. Education is a key factor in enhancing individual capabilities, increasing employment opportunities, and enabling upward social and economic mobility
3. (i) Reservation ensures equal political representation for women, helps them participate in decision-making, and promotes gender equality in the democratic process.
(ii) Caste-based mobilisation can undermine democracy by shifting the focus from developmental issues to identity politics, leading to division and vote-bank politics rather than informed decision-making.
(iii) The efforts show that active citizen participation can promote inclusive and issue-based politics. Civil society campaigns and youth voices help challenge identity-based divisions and push for education, equality, and development, thereby strengthening democratic values.
4. (i) It suggests that gender division is socially constructed, where stereotypes assign specific roles to boys and girls rather than allowing individual choice or ability.
(ii) Using religion in politics can lead to communal tensions, division in society, and undermines the secular principle of the Constitution by mixing faith with political interests.
(iii) Right to Equality (Article 15) prohibits discrimination based on religion, caste, or gender, ensuring equal treatment of all citizens. Secularism ensures that the state remains neutral in religious matters, promoting unity and fairness among diverse communities.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. (i) **Unequal Education Opportunities:** Many girls, especially in rural areas, are not sent to school or drop out early due to household responsibilities or social customs. This results in a lower female literacy rate compared to males.
(ii) **Limited Participation in Employment:** Women are underrepresented in well-paid jobs and leadership roles. Even when they are employed, they are often paid less than men for the same work.
(iii) **Household Responsibilities:** In most families, household chores and child-rearing are considered the sole responsibility of women, even if they work outside the home. This reinforces traditional gender roles.
(iv) **Underrepresentation in Politics:** Women have low representation in legislative bodies. Despite the 33% reservation in local bodies (Panchayati Raj), their presence in Parliament and State Assemblies remains below global averages.
(v) **Social Practices and Discrimination:** Practices like dowry, early marriage, and restriction on freedom of movement still exist in many parts of India. Such norms reflect a deep-rooted gender bias in society.
2. (i) **Freedom of Religion (Article 25–28):** Every individual has the right to profess, practise, and propagate any religion of their choice.
(ii) **No State Religion:** India does not have any official religion. The state treats all religions equally and impartially.
(iii) **Ban on Religious Discrimination (Article 15):** The Constitution prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, caste, race, sex, or place of birth.
(iv) **Equality before Law (Article 14):** Every citizen is equal in the eyes of the law, regardless of religious belief, ensuring justice and equal treatment.
(v) **Secularism in the Preamble:** The word “secular” was added to the Preamble by

the 42nd Amendment, affirming that India is a secular nation where all religions are respected.

3. (i) **Positive – Political Empowerment of Marginalised Castes:** Caste-based politics has led to the rise of Dalit and backward caste leaders, giving these communities a greater voice in governance and policy-making.
- (ii) **Positive – Better Representation:** Political parties now represent a broader range of social groups, ensuring that diverse communities have a stake in democracy.
- (iii) **Negative – Vote Bank Politics:** Caste is often used for mobilising voters, where parties appeal to specific caste groups instead of focusing on real issues like development or education.
- (iv) **Negative – Reinforcement of Caste Identities:** Instead of reducing casteism, politics sometimes strengthens caste divisions, making them more prominent in social and public life.
- (v) **Negative – Undermining Merit and Unity:** Caste-based alliances and favouritism in political appointments can undermine meritocracy and weaken national unity, as people vote based on identity rather than ideas.

4. (i) **Constitutional Guarantees:** The Indian Constitution provides fundamental rights such as the Right to Equality, Right to Freedom of Religion, and protection from discrimination, ensuring equal treatment of all citizens regardless of gender, religion, or caste.
- (ii) **Secularism:** India is a secular state, which means the government does not promote or favour any religion. This ensures equal respect for all faiths and protects minority rights.
- (iii) **Reservation System:** To uplift historically disadvantaged castes and women, the government has implemented reservations in education, jobs, and political representation, promoting inclusive development.
- (iv) **Political Representation:** Various policies ensure that women, religious minorities, and Scheduled Castes and Tribes (SCs and STs) are adequately represented in legislatures and local bodies.
- (v) **Public Awareness and Civil Movements:** Active civil society groups, legal activism, and media play an important role in raising awareness about social discrimination and pushing for more inclusive policies and reforms.

OSWAAL

