

Q 3. Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions given at the end. (20)

Civil society refers to all of the places where individuals gather together to have conversation, pursue common interests and, occasionally, try to influence public opinion or public policy. In many respects, civil society is where people spend their time when they are not at work or at home. For example, a group of people gather at a local park every Thursday afternoon for a game of football. Most of them arrive well before the game begins and stay for some time after it ends. Some of them go out for dinner or a drink after the game. In the course of their meetings they talk about a wide range of topics, including football but also extending to include issues such as work, family, relationships, community events, racial issues and politics. This kind of solidarity can be found in a variety of other places in civil society – such as sports clubs, bowling leagues, reading groups and social movements – where individuals get together to associate on the basis of some shared interest fostering more effective forms of citizenship. Even though people may come together on the basis of an interest they all share in common, they eventually have to develop productive strategies for dealing with conflicts and differences that emerge within the association. Team mates in a bowling league discover, on certain issues, significant differences of opinion. And yet, because they value the association and look forward to participating in its activities, they do not respond to these differences by exiting the scene. Instead, they search for the ways of interacting that will not threaten the solidarity of the group. In the process, they learn to appreciate and to tolerate social differences, a valuable skill to have in an increasingly multicultural nation. They also develop a general sense of social trust and mutual obligation, which makes society function more efficiently (this is what political scientists and sociologists are talking about when they refer to the importance of social capital). Gathering together in an association, people begin to think about their shared private interest as a collective public interest, and they try to make sure that this public interest is safe and secured. For example, the group that gets together for a weekly football game begins to talk about the park as an important community resource; if they feel that the park is being mistreated or mismanaged, will organize a 'save the park' campaign to try to influence their local politicians and the other residents of the community. Recently, there has been growing concern that civil society is weaker than it used to be, because people are losing interest in joining associations. As citizens become increasingly disconnected from voluntary associations, they will experience less trust and less social connection, and as a result political institutions will function less efficiently. However, some scholars opine that many people are simply choosing to participate in different kinds of associations with fewer face-to-face meetings but supplemented with 'virtual' interactions facilitated by resources.

Questions: (4 marks each)

- 1 How does the author characterize the concept of civil society?
- 2 Why does civil society strive towards better socialization driven by tolerance?
- 3 What do you understand by the term 'Social Capital' used in this passage?
- 4 Why does a civil society assume the role of a public stakeholder?
- 5 What impact is feared by the weakening state of civil society?

Comprehension (CSS-2022)

Q#1

The author characterized the civil society as a place where people or individual gather together to have conversation. It is a place where people spend time when they are free. People often to share their opinion on different aspects of life or current situation. They can develop strategies for dealing with conflicts of their common interest.

Q#2

When people meet another and a civil society develops, they start to trust each other. Instead of responding to conflicts badly, they try to find out a way of solidarity. In this process, they learn to tolerate the social issues. And this all makes a society work well and drive in a way of peace.

Q#3

Social capital refers to the networks of social relationships, trust, cooperation, and shared norms and values that exist within a community, group, or society. It represents the social resources and connections that individuals and groups can leverage for mutual benefit. Social capital plays a significant role in shaping social interactions, community development, and overall well-being.

Q#5

The weakening state of civil society is directly linked with the well-being of a community or a state. If it starts weakening then ~~with~~ people will start experiencing less trust and less social connection. And when the social relationship vanishes, then ~~there government~~ will be no one to analyze political situations and to hold them answerable, that will ultimately distort the whole social system of that community or state.

Q#4

Q. 5. Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions given at the end. (20)

The majority of people have always lived simply, and most of humanity still struggles on a daily basis to eke out a meager existence under dire circumstances. Only in affluent industrialized countries do people have the luxury of more goods and services than they need to survive. On the basis of material wealth, North Americans and Europeans should be the happiest people on earth, but according to the 2012 Happy Planet Index (HPI), they are not. Surprisingly, what had begun as an experimental lifestyle evolved into a quiet revolution that spread the word through books such as Duane Elgin's best-selling *Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life that is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich* (1981), as well as numerous magazines, alternative communities of the like-minded, and, later, internet websites. Combined with a growing awareness of the environmental consequences of consumerism, the voluntary simplicity movement sought to reduce the consumption of goods and energy and to minimize one's personal impact on the environment. "Voluntary" denotes a free and conscious choice to make appropriate changes that will enrich life in a deeper, spiritual sense. "Simplicity" refers to the lack of clutter, that is, eliminating all those things, patterns, habits, and ideas that take control of our lives and distract us from our inner selves. However, this is not to be confused with poverty, which is involuntary, degrading, and debilitating. Neither does it mean that people must live on a farm or reject progress or technology, or do without what is necessary for their comfort and welfare. To practice voluntary simplicity, one must differentiate between what one wants (psychological desires) and what one needs (basic requirements of life), and seek a healthy balance that is compatible with both. In a consumer society where advertising bombards us with the message that without this, that, and the other product, we are unsuccessful, undesirable, and unimportant, being clear on what you really need and resisting what you don't can be an ongoing struggle. The beauty of voluntary simplicity is that it is a philosophy, and not a dogma. How one goes about it depends on individual character, cultural background, and climate. For this, three Rs (i.e., Reduce, Recycle & Reuse) represent the best way to get a handle on rampant consumerism. In economies driven by the quest for ever more, living with less is erroneously equated with poverty and social inferiority. By conserving energy, for instance, you are actually ensuring that more resources are available for future use. By making a frugal budget and sticking to it, you can eliminate unnecessary expenses. Recycling paper, metal, plastic, and glass and reusing building materials and old clothing keep materials in the loop and out of landfills. Pooling skills and resources through barter networks not only saves money, but sharing with others establishes bonds and fosters a sense of community. With the glut of cheap goods that are usually designed for obsolescence, quality products that last are becoming progressively harder to find. In the long run, a more expensive but durable and repairable item or even an older used item that is still in good condition is a better investment than a brand new piece of junk that will only break down and end up in the trash. Thus, at the heart of voluntary simplicity is the conscious realization that less is really more. Less consumption means more resources for future generations. Less activity that brings little satisfaction or reward is more time for yourself and your loved ones. Less stuff is more space to move around in. Less stress means more relaxation and better health. Less worry provides more enjoyment and more fulfillment in life.

Questions: (4 marks each)

1. How important is happiness to most people, and what is the relationship between material wealth and happiness?
2. How does the author characterize the concept of 'Voluntary Simplicity' as a movement and as a philosophy?
3. What impact is feared by the growing consumerism of modern society?
4. What influences make it difficult for people to reduce their consumption patterns?
5. What are the challenges and rewards of voluntary simplicity?

Comprehension passage (CSS-2023)

Q#1

Happiness is important to many most of people, as it gives material peace and spiritual satisfaction. Only a happy soul can make good decisions and can get more success instead of a stressed one. Happiness is a key to change life, thinking pattern, and help in keeping a balance in daily life. While, on the other hand, material wealth is nothing to do with happiness. It cannot give you inner happiness, but makes you rich outwardly.

Q#2

The author portrayed the concept of "voluntary simplicity" as a movement and as a philosophy by highlighting its benefit to help in reducing the consumption of unnecessary things. It also lessens the impact of one's consumerism on the environment. The word "voluntary" refers to a free choice of anyone to change their life patterns and all those things that take control of our life lives and deprived us from spiritual peace.

Q#3

If the modern society continue to consume the services and goods at the same rate, then it is feared that there will be no more resources left for future use. It will not only finish the resources, but will cause a bad impact on climate.

Q#4

The quest of having everything that we see in advertisements or around them, make it difficult for them to reduce their consumerism consumption pattern. They often feel that if they will not have that thing, then they will lose their social status and their importance will be demolished.

Q#5

The quest of having everything and a desire of show off is a severe challenge of voluntary simplicity. While, on the other hand, it has many benefits; it helps in reducing consumption habits and helps in controlling the un-important desires. Ultimately, voluntary simplicity is helpful tool in ensuring that more resources are available for future use.