

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 conversations, 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 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.

ENGLISH (PRECIS & COMPOSITION)

Questions:

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 stake holder?
5. What impact is feared by the weakening state of civil society?

(4 marks each)



Ans 1: The author characterizes the civil society as a place where people belonging to a particular society come forth to talk and discuss mutual goals, pursue common interests and where solidarity can be found among the members at different stages of life. Civil society fosters an effective citizenship where people take the responsibility of being an active members of society where productive strategies are developed in order to root out the differences. This develops a general sense of brotherhood and social trust that enables the society to function more efficiently.

Ans 2: A civil society strive towards better socialization driven by tolerance as it will eventually lead the society as a whole towards a prosperous future where mutual aims and targets for the betterment of people residing in a society would be achieved through mutual cooperation. Socialization and tolerated attitude of people towards each other help them at better understanding.

Through this, they influence public policy making and pursue common goals with a strong sense of nationhood. They do so in order ~~to~~ to accept differences and develop a multicultural society.

Ans³: 'Social Capital' used in the passage refers to the mutual gains and positive approach of a civil society that adds on the concept of integrity, nationhood, solidarity in a particular society. The importance of social capital is determined ~~with the~~ from ~~the~~ a diverse and multicultural society, where acceptance of different beliefs along with tolerance among members of society is achieved.

Ans⁴: Civil Society takes the role of Public Stake holder as it develops a sense of connection, mutual understanding between masses. Civil society also helps to draw attention towards common goals and pursue them. It also eradicates differences among people and gather them at a common platform. It also influence public policy and formulate ways to develop solidarity among the members of a civil society.

Ans⁵: Weakening state of a civil society is a leading cause behind lack of trust and fewer social connections. These in turn are hampering political institutions, making them function inefficiently. The original concept of civil society is now changing with the advancement of technology and resources. When people used to meet, they would've better understanding of problems and concerns. Virtual meetings are not as influential as physical setups of civil societies. Hence, ~~the weakening~~ a prominent decline in its strength is being observed.