

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.

Comprehension

- 1) How does the author characterize the concept of civil society?

According to the author, the civil society refers to all the places where people gather to have conversation and common interest and try to influence the public opinion and public policy. Moreover, civil society is the place where people spend their leisure time outside the house.

- 2) What does civil society strive towards better socialization driven by tolerance?

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Part of what the ^{word} "civil" implies is tolerance. Tolerance is a key to better civilization for which a civil society strives. There is always a difference of opinion when people sit together. However for the sake of common ~~and~~ interest they tolerate the difference and maintain solidarity in group.

3) What do you understand by the term "social capital" used in this passage?

Social capital refers to individual who develop a sense of social trust and mutual obligation. This protects the interest of society and try to make society work efficiently. Social capital allow the people to work together effectively.

4) What does a civil society assume role of a public stake holder?

A civil society assume the role of a public stake holder in the sense that while in association people start taking their private interest as public interest. The author

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gives a example of football group in park. The group shall be concerned about the park maintenance. Otherwise they hold a campaign against local politicians and community. And they influence the public opinion or policy.

5) What impact is feared by weakening state of civil society?

Civil society rises voices on a range of issues. If citizens do not involve themselves into the voluntary associations, then they will experience not only less trust but also less social connection. As a result political institutions will not be able to perform its function efficiently and effectively.

