

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 they feel that the park is being mistreated or mismanaged, they 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.

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## ENGLISH (PRECIS & COMPOSITION)

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

## Comprehension (2022)

Q.1

Aus: According to the author, civil society is a place of engagement with people. Civil Society is a place where people have conversations, share their thoughts, and they also try to influence public opinion through it. The Author has also considered civil society as a place free from any work or even home.

Q.2

Aus: Civil Society can drive towards better socialization because it focuses on associations not differences. Despite having differences of opinions, they value the coordination and interaction with each other. They also learn to appreciate each other. And by such activities, people will learn to tolerate social differences leading to a better socialization.

Q.3

Aus: Social capital in this passage has been used as an umbrella for social trust, mutual obligation, and these factors are essential for a society to function efficiently.

Q.4

Aus A ~~Civil~~ Civil Society assumes the role of public stake holder as the people focus on their shared private interests as a collective public interest. The people, if they are at any particular place, they will also talk about other personal and social issues for the betterment of society. And if they feel any mistreat or misusage, they will try to highlight it to the people and to the local politicians. These all activities are usually of a public stake holder, which are being performed by a civil society.

Limit answers to 5-7 lines.

Q.5

Ans: Civil Society is becoming weaker nowadays, because the people are disconnected from such associations and limited to virtual interactions. The impacts of this weak society will be highlighted from moral to social issues. The people will lose their trust within each other and there will be less social engagement, and these factors will result in inefficient ~~functioning~~ functioning of political institutions.

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