

Question 1:

Write in your own words two or more sentences of what you understand by the word ‘marginalisation’.

Solution:

The word ‘marginalisation’ simply means exclusion from the mainstream. Marginalisation of any community or a person can be because of many reasons like -

- (i) Speaking a different language,
- (ii) Following different customs,
- (iii) Belonging to different religious groups from the majority community etc.

The minority groups may also feel marginalised because they are poor, considered to be of "low" social status and viewed as being less human than others. Marginalisation is linked to experiencing disadvantage, prejudice, poverty and powerlessness. It is a complex phenomenon which results in a low social status and not having equal access to education and other resources.

Question 2:

List two reasons why Adivasis are becoming increasingly marginalised.

Solution:

Adivasis are becoming increasingly marginalised because firstly, they follow different culture, language and traditions from mainstream Indian society which leads us to wrongfully classify them as exotic, primitive and backward. Often, Adivasis are blamed for their lack of advancement as they are believed to be resistant to change or new ideas.

Secondly, they are used to a way of life close to nature, and with the cutting down of forests, they are being forced to migrate to urban areas where they feel out of place. They follow a very different lifestyle from their countryside background and there are no efforts to help them cope with their new lives. These are the reasons for Adivasis becoming increasingly marginalised.

Question 3:

Write one reason why you think the Constitution’s safeguards to protect minority communities are very important?

Solution:

The Indian Constitution recognised that the culture of the majority influences the way in which society and government might express themselves. In such cases, size can be a disadvantage and lead to the marginalisation of the relatively smaller communities. Thus, safeguards are needed to protect minorities against discrimination and marginalisation by the majority community. The Constitution's safeguards to protect minority communities are very important because they ensure that India's cultural diversity is protected from becoming largely unitary. They also help to promote equality and justice to all.

Question 4:

Re-read the section on Minorities and Marginalisation. What do you understand by the term minority?

Solution:

"Minorities" is the term used for the communities that have smaller population in comparison to the communities that have greater population. For example, in India, Muslims are around 13.4 per cent of India's population and are considered to be a minority community.

Question 5:

You are participating in a debate where you have to provide reasons to support the following statement: 'Muslims are a marginalised community'. Using the data provided in this chapter, list two reasons that you would give.

Solution:

Two reasons in support of the statement "Muslims are a marginalised community" are:

- (i) The Muslim community has not been able to gain much from the country's socio- economic development as statistics on basic amenities, literacy rate and public employment in 1994 show. 63.6% Muslims live in kutchha houses as compared to only 55.2% Hindus. Also, the literacy rate amongst Muslims was the lowest at 59% in a 2001 survey.
 - (ii) Their customs are distinct from other religious communities, so much so that they are identified as separate from the "rest of us". For example, Muslims may wear a burqa, sport a long beard, wear a fez, and these become ways to identify all Muslims, leading to unfair treatment and discrimination against them.
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Question 6:

Imagine that you are watching the Republic Day parade on TV with a friend and she remarks, "Look at these tribals. They look so exotic. And they seem to be dancing all the time". List three things that you would tell her about the lives of Adivasis in India.

Solution:

The three things I would tell a friend about the Adivasis in India would be:

- (i) The lives of Adivasis are actually very rich but people seem to know very little about the realities of their lives. Adivasis practise a range of tribal religions that are different from Islam, Hinduism and Christianity. These often involve the worship of ancestors, village and nature spirits, the last associated with and residing in various sites in the landscape – 'mountain-spirits', 'river-spirits', 'animal-spirits', etc.
 - (ii) They are usually shown in sympathetically in colourful costumes, headgear and dancing.
 - (iii) Often, people wrongly believe that Adivasis are exotic, primitive, backward and immune to development. They have been displaced from their lands because of industrialisation and find it difficult to cope with their new lives.
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Question 7:

Would you agree with the statement that economic marginalisation and social marginalisation are interlinked? Why?

Solution:

Yes, economic marginalisation and social marginalisation are interlinked because-

(i) The minorities are rendered marginalised economically because they are denied access to the benefits of economic development. They struggle for their basic needs and are unable to get educated and develop their skills.

(ii) When there is no improvement in their skills, the minorities, do not develop socially and get marginalised. Their community does not experience the fruits of social development. Hence, they remain backward and are unable to develop economically.

Hence, there is a link between economic marginalisation and social marginalisation.