

Question 1:

List two Fundamental Rights in the Constitution that Dalits can draw upon to insist that they be treated with dignity and as equals. Re-read the Fundamental Rights listed on page 14 to help you answer this question.

Solution:

Two Fundamental Rights that Dalits can draw upon to insist that they be treated with dignity and as equals are:

1. **Right to Equality** : According to the right, all persons are equal before the law and can not be discriminated against on the basis of caste, religion, or sex. Every person has access to all public places. The State cannot discriminate against anyone in matters of employment.
 2. **Right to Freedom**: This includes the right to freedom of speech and expression, the right to form associations, the right to move freely and reside in any part of the country, and the right to practise any profession, occupation or business.
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Question 2:

Re-read the story on Rathnam as well as the provisions of the 1989 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Now list one reason why you think he used this law to file a complaint.

Solution:

The 1989 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act was formed in response to the demands made by Dalits and others. The Act demanded that the Government must take serious steps to protect them against the ill-treatment and humiliation faced by Dalits and tribal groups in their everyday life.

Rathnam refused to perform a ritual and the powerful castes could not take his refusal. They ordered his community to ostracize him. Rathnam's hut was burnt and he was forced to leave the village along with his mother and other members of his family as they continued to be ostracized by the powerful castes in the village. So Rathnam used the above law to file a complaint to protest against the domination and violence of the powerful castes in his village.

Though he was ostracized from his community, the local media supported Rathnam and the ritual was called off.

Question 3:

Why do Adivasi activists, including C.K. Janu, believe that Adivasis can also use this 1989 Act to fight against dispossession? Is there anything specific in the provisions of the Act that allows her to believe this?

Solution:

The Adivasi activists including C.K. Janu believe that Adivasis can also use this 1989 Act to fight against dispossession because this Act guarantees the tribals not to be dispossessed from the land resources forcibly. They pointed specifically that this Act merely confirms what has already been

promised to the tribal people in the Constitution - that their land cannot be sold to or bought by non-tribal people. In cases where this has happened, the Constitution also guarantees the right of the tribal people to repossess their land. Tribals who are already evicted and cannot go back to their lands should get compensated. That is, the government must draw up plans and policies for them to live and work elsewhere.