



PSIR Answer Writing Module 2023

Test 2

Time Allowed: 1 Hour 30 Minutes

Max Marks: 120

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Test Submission Date: 24 - 12 - 2022

Email Address:

Instructions:

1. All questions are compulsory.
2. All questions are for **15 marks** each.
3. Word limit for each question is **200 words**.
4. Answers must be written in the medium authorized in the admission Certificate, which must be stated clearly on the cover of the booklet in the space provided.
5. Content of the answer is more important than its length.
6. Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Question-Cum-Answer Booklet must be clearly struck off.
7. All parts of the question should be written at one place itself.
8. **Filling all the details in BLOCK LETTERS is mandatory.**

Q. No.	Marks	Q. No.	Marks
Q1		Q5	
Q2		Q6	
Q3		Q7	
Q4		Q8	
Total Marks:		Evaluator Code:	

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	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Understanding of Questions					
Structure & Flow					
(a) Introduction					
(b) Conclusion					
(c) Overall					
Subject Knowledge					
Presentation					
(a) Underline					
(b) Paragraph					
(c) Overall					

Overall Remarks:

Dear Student,



Que.1

Inspired by philosophy, Hannah Arendt warned against the dangers of philosophy obfuscating the plurality and reality of our shared world. Comment (200 words, 15 Marks)

Hannah Arendt is regarded as one of the most original thinkers because of ~~her~~ ^{for} her phenomenological view of history i.e., understanding based on observation.

She was an ardent supporter of civil republicanism or direct democracy. She comes near to Plato in dividing the activities of human into Labour, Work & Action, where action or participation in public sphere is regarded as the highest form of contribution. Arendt believes that though philosophy can guide us through



the complexities of power and public sphere, it is only by action that humans truly contribute to the society.

She regarded people as "zoon politikon" implying that we are a political animal and it is our responsibility to contribute and participate in the society.

It is only when people come together and intervene that power finds its actualization. It can't be materialised because it is "vis generis".

As people come together, power emerges and disappears as people retreat to their private sphere.



These views are expressed/contemplated in her 'Theory of Action'. She warns people against philosophy ~~at~~ shadowing the power of masses and collective action.

However, this view has been criticised by feminists who argue that such clear division of personal & political has been the driving force of patriarchy. The situation of women can only be improved when personal becomes political.

It would be inconclusive to argue that the contexts and objectives of Hannah Arendt are much wider and original to be negated.



Que.2

"Politics is the place and activity of shared communication based on the distinct perspectives of equal human beings". HANNAH ARENDT.
Comment (200 words, 15 Marks)

Hannah Arendt is the proponent of 'power of speech' in politics and advocated civic republicanism as an antidote to tyranny.

She argues that politics is the shared responsibility of people and only by participation through active speech that we truly achieve the distinction from animals.

Her thoughts are guided by the totalitarian regimes in Europe during World Wars. She argues that totalitarianism takes roots only when people retreat in their private sphere.



Political activity is an equal right of all citizens and that is how power comes to fore. Her belief of 'power being sui generis' is unique and ~~a~~ novel. ~~Second~~ Accordingly, power comes finds expression when people come together raising their voice and disappears when people retreats.

Therefore, power can only be actualised and not materialised.

This coming together of people is a part of civic republicanism tradition.



However, this distinction between 'oikos' and 'polis' is criticised by feminists and libertarians.

Feminists argue that such a distinction is the source of $\frac{1}{2}$ discrimination against women. It guided patriarchy over these years and keeps women within four-walls of home.

Such criticisms also need to take into account that sectional or gendered liberty is possible only when society and polity is free from dogmas and propagandas.

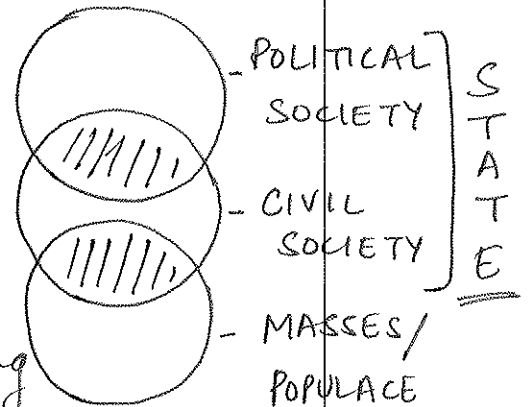
Thus, the writings of Hannah Arendt remains relevant till day.



Que.3

Gramsci saw capitalist state as being made up of two overlapping spheres, a political society and a civil society. Elucidate (200 words, 15 Marks)

Gramsci is considered one of the greatest thinkers who questioned the apparatus of capitalist state as being 'hegemonic' and 'far from people'.



Gramsci argued that state is not just the political society but also the civil society. Political society consists of administrators and leaders while civil society comprises of individuals intellectuals.

- These intellectuals though try to assert their independence from polity but are indirectly / unknowingly a part of the state.



These traditional intellectuals and civil society act as a cushion or shock absorber. The anger and complaints of ~~the~~ mass populace is channelized to the leaders through them and ~~acts as~~ functions as a safety valve.

Gramsci argues that due to these mechanisms there is no major revolution breaking out in capitalist societies.

Another important task of civil society is to create hegemony of existing ~~the~~ structure and create false consciousness about the interests of masses being aligned with the interests of capitalists.



Gramsci went on to suggest that for workers to come to power, there will be a 'war of position'.

This protracted war will establish counter-hegemony of sub-altern classes and subsequently, 'war of manoeuvres manoeuvre' will establish Socialism.

Thus, Gramsci tried to rescue Marxism from economic determinism and gave adequate weightage to the superstructure and its institutions as well. This distinction and classification ~~is~~ results into the understanding of true nature of capitalist state.



Que.4

"Gramsci gives us, not the tools with which to solve the puzzle, but the means with which to ask right kinds of questions". STUART HALL. Comment. (200 words, 15 Marks)

Gramsci is an influential thinker for contemporary times who divided societies into 'open' ~~and~~ 'transparent' and 'opaque', going against the intuitive definitions.

He argues that totalitarian and authoritarian societies are actually transparent because the exploitation of people is clearly visible. Whereas capitalist societies like Britain are opaque in nature because their exploitation is hidden under the garb of civil society.

Gramsci made a clear distinction between political sphere/society and



civil society and highlighted their working mechanism. He also argued that the hegemony of capitalist state is propounded and re-enforced by the civil society through cultural and non-political means.

Eg., Television, Advertisements, Culture, Religion, etc.

All these avenues lead to one end i.e., maintaining status quo.

In this way, Gramsci enlightened masses about the ways of working of state and creation of false consciousness.

As a way out, he advocated creating counter hegemony and



are developing organic intellectuals who are specialised leaders with specific functions to guide the masses out of the system of exploitation.

Hence, it is argued by scholars like Stuart Hall that Gramsci ~~did~~ may not have given tools to solve the puzzle but he ensured that people know that there exists a puzzle / a maze and we better tread carefully.



Que.5

"Religion is the opium of masses".-MARX. Discuss (200 words, 15 Marks)

Marx is considered one of the greatest thinker for his structuralist, determinist and materialist approach.

Marx propounded the base - superstructure model defining economy as the base of society and all other institutions as superstructure.

He argued that religion, culture and such institutions create 'false consciousness' among masses that their interests lie with the capitalists. In this way, the masses are actually working towards their own exploitation.



The intellectuals, religious leaders are all a part of the apparatus that supports capitalist mode of production and workers become just a cog in the wheel, losing their human essence.

Marx argues for workers/masses to unite against capitalism, realise the forms of exploitation and overthrow the existing structure of society.

These revolutionary thoughts of Marx are equally appreciated and criticised by subsequent thinkers.

Gyamsai tried to rescue Marxism from economic determinism by arguing that superstructure has its



own relevance and it is wrong to assume that economy is the only aspect that needs modification.

Gandhi also criticised such an approach by arguing that religion is an important aspect of one's life and personality.

Neo-marxists like Marcuse also attempted to make the praxis of Marx more practicable.

Hence, it is right to conclude that Marx gave an honest and blunt observation of human history but there has been no society where true Socialism exists. Thus,

"Marx is a god, that has failed."



Que.6

Marxism consists of three ideas: Theory of history, Critique of capitalism and a vision of ideal society. Evaluate. (200 words, 15 Marks)

Marxism was the emerging philosophy during inter-war period when capitalism was at an all-time low and people were ~~suff~~ suffering.

The basic tenets of Marxism includes -

(a) Theory of history : Marx has given the concept of dialectical materialism wherein he argues that history of every society has been defined by the ownership of mode of production. Eg. Master - Servants
Lord - Serfs
Capitalist - Workers.

<u>HAVE</u> Δ	vs	
		<u>HAVE NOT</u> Δ

(b) Critique of Capitalism : Marx argues that capitalism is bound to



end due to its exploitative nature.

The main objective of capitalism is profit or greed and there is no end to either. Also, it is environmentally unsustainable.

① Vision of ideal society :

'Socialism', Marx argues, is the ~~not~~ ultimate end of history. A society where production is to fulfil basic needs and man is truly free.

A ^{society} ~~state~~ of equality and peace will prevail and 'state' will gradually wither away.

These three ideas of Marxism are the reason Marxism is considered 'deterministic' and 'structuralist'.



Liberals like Karl Popper have criticised such ideas as the propounder of totalitarianism. He argues that historicism, holism and essentialism are the features that make Marx an enemy of open society.

Such lofty visions have been hijacked (~~by~~ Laski) and used to justify totalitarian and authoritarian states like Nazi Germany.

However, these ideals can not altogether be rejected as vague because they have contributed to betterment of society and reforms in capitalism.



Que.7

"The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way..." - J.S. MILL. Comment (200 words, 15 Marks)

"If someone is truly liberal, it is Mill."

Mill was the first scholar to bring liberalism out from the shadow of capitalism. He propounded theories of liberalism in various spheres like society, academia, culture, etc.

In his essay "On liberty", Mill stands for negative liberty. He advocated for minimum intervention of government in a person's life.

To bring about clarity, he made an arbitrary distinction between 'self-regarding' and 'others regarding' actions.



The State is allowed to intervene only when one's actions cause harm to another's liberty.

"Your liberty ends where my nose begins."

State has no role to play in one's personal sphere. To quote Mill, "a person is sovereign master over his mind, his body."

In this way, Mill advances liberty as a way to pursue happiness in 'classical liberal' perspective.

This has been criticised by modern liberal scholars like Barker who advocates positive liberty or welfarism.



Barker calls Mill as 'prophet of empty liberty', and scholar of 'abstract individualism'. Barker

suggests that there are a very few actions that can be considered purely self regarding.

Eg.. State can stop a person from crossing a bridge that's about to fall. Mill suggests this because the person is ignorant.

However, this opens a plethora of opportunities for state to intervene and a person's private life.

These inconsistencies in Mill are because of his times. Moreover, the utility of a thinker is in his relevance, not consistency.



Que.8

Mill was a champion of democracy who failed to bring the idea of democracy to its logical conclusion. Critically examine (200 words, 15 Marks)

- J.S. Mill outrightly supported the institution of democracy because democracy allows the expression of one's opinion in the free as a fundamental right. This draws the distinction between humans and animals & a way to lead a happy life.

However, Mill was not advocating for democracy universally. He believed democracy is not a gift, it is something to be earned. Therefore, a pre-condition for democracy is a civilised society. For colonies, Mill supported the benevolent despotism.

For societies like India and China, which once were civilised but not now, it is better to rule with a firm hand.



Such views of Mill are influenced by the accounts of Alexis De Toquerville / Tocqueville on democracy in USA.

CL Wayfer called Mill 'reluctant democrat' for this reason. Others also argue that Mill considered democracy as an end in itself. While democracy is a means to an end. The end of democracy is empowerment of masses.

Mill's view stand in stark contradiction with views of Gandhi and Nehru in Indian context. Gandhi believed in strengthening of masses and 'Panchayati Raj' institutions.

Nehru argued for taking democracy to the doors of people.



Thus, Mill being a champion of democracy falls short of the expectations from him. Although criticised for his reluctant approach, history has proved Mill right.

The numerous ~~a~~ examples of third world countries where democracy in a premature stage paved way for totalitarian regimes is a testament of Mill's objective thinking.

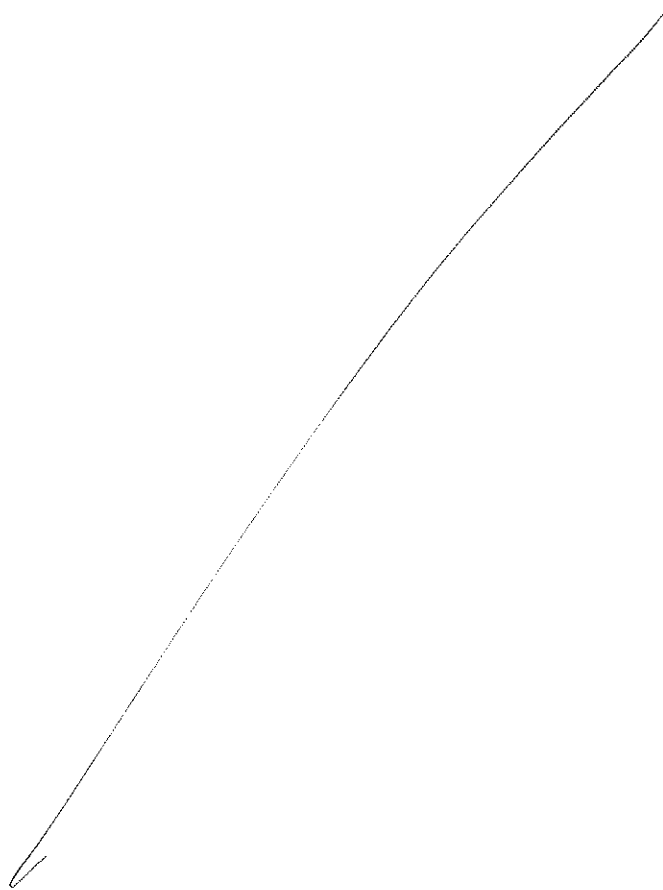


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Space for Rough Work





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