

READING COMPREHENSION – 3

Read the following passages carefully and answer the questions that follow:

PASSAGE – 1

The custom of child marriages was a problem that had remained in spite of decades of legislation. As a Presiding Officer at public hearings across the country, I was looking forward to preaching about the evils of child marriages. After having attended almost half a dozen public hearings across the country in states as diverse as Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, I realize that the reality is more complex than what it seems to be when one sits in one's office.

A marriage in rural India is not just a relationship between two individuals. Marriages form the backbone of the networking that is essential for survival in a world where the idea of state providing protection seems an alien concept. The urban mind tends to ignore this concept of marriage and looks at marriage in its Western form. In Europe and America, marriage is a licence to have sex and procreate. In all communities where child marriages are prevalent, the sexual aspect of marriage is absent at the time of marriage.

In fact a child marriage is so essentially different from a normal marriage, that it should be called an engagement rather than a marriage. After such a marriage, the girl does not go with her husband. She continues to live with her parents. The marriage is not consummated for many years. When the girl and the boy attain maturity, another ceremony (called Gauna in North India) is held. It is only after Gauna that the girl can meet her husband. The marriage is consummated only after Gauna.

The custom of Gauna has not been recognized by Indian lawmakers who treat marriage as a one-step process while in many communities of India, it is a three-step process. The first step is primary fixing up of the marriage. At this stage, some token gifts are engaged between the two families. The second stage is marriage where the rituals of sapta-padi and seven circles of holy fire are performed by the bride and bridegroom. The third step is Gauna or Bidaii when the bride is sent to the bridegroom's house. In urban India, the second and the third steps are held in quick succession, say, within a few hours time. But in rural India, the three stages are distinct and often have a time gap between them.

Almost all problems that one mentions about child marriages seem to be a result of the inability of the law to come to terms with the customs prevailing in society. If child marriage is regarded as a legally binding arrangement between two families (since the bride and bridegroom are children and cannot consent to a contract), it will be possible for one family to enforce the arrangement against the other. At every public hearing, we were told of the cases where the boy's family refuses to accept the girl on attainment of majority. In other words, the boy refuses Gauna and marries elsewhere. In such a case, there is no legal remedy available to the girl. She cannot even get compensation or maintenance from the person to whom she was married.

There is no doubt that early motherhood is most harmful for a girl's long-term health and that this should be discouraged. However, this should be done with empathy and understanding about Indian society, customs and rituals, rather than with arrogance and haughtiness. Let us learn to listen with compassion instead of preaching and making laws that ride roughshod over everything traditional.

1. The author's chief purpose of writing this passage is
 - a) to educate the readers about a prevailing practice
 - b) to analyse the evil of child marriages
 - c) to re-evaluate the practice of child marriages from a sociological perspective
 - d) to understand why the practice of child marriage refuses to die out
2. The chief problem regarding child marriage, according to the author of this passage, is:
 - a) the lack of education which allows such practices to flourish.
 - b) the inability of the educated urban middle class to understand the sociological compulsions behind the practice of child marriage
 - c) the fear of officialdom that encourages such practices surreptitiously.
 - d) the fact that child marriage continues to be practised among rural communities, even though they are aware that it is illegal and harmful.
3. What is the author's tone in the last sentence of this passage?
 - a) She objectively states the need for laws that take into consideration social realities
 - b) She scathingly states that the lawmakers have no understanding of or compassion for social realities
 - c) She is worried that society in general and lawmakers in particular have lost touch with social realities.
 - d) She urges society in general and lawmakers in particular to be more compassionate and understanding
4. All of the following are true about Gauna in child marriages EXCEPT that:
 - a) it is a three-step process
 - b) it is sometimes not carried out by the groom's family.
 - c) this ritual is carried out sometimes after many years and sometimes after a few hours of marriage.
 - d) it's more a rural practice than an urban one

5. The prevalent belief about marriage in urban India is
 - a) more akin to the Western concept which sees marriage as a licence to procreate
 - b) that it should adhere to a specific set of conditions.
 - c) one in which the survival aspect of marriage is considered unimportant
 - d) both [a] and [c]

PASSAGE-2

Years after the movement to obtain civil rights for black people in the United States made its most important gains, scholars are reaching for a theoretical perspective capable of clarifying its momentous developments. New theories of social movements are being discussed, not just among social psychologists, but also among political theorists.

Of the many competing formulations of the “classical” social psychological theory of social movement, three are prominent in the literature on the civil rights movement: “rising expectations,” “relative deprivation,” and “J-curve.” Each conforms to a causal sequence characteristic of classical social movement theory, linking some unusual condition, or “system strain,” to the generation of unrest. When these versions of the classical theory are applied to the civil rights movement, the source of strain is identified as a change in black socioeconomic status that occurred shortly before the widespread protest activity of the movement.

For example, the theory of rising expectations asserts that protest activity was a response to psychological tensions generated by gains experienced immediately prior to the civil rights movement. Advancement did not satisfy ambition, but created the desire for further advancement. Only slightly different is the theory of relative deprivation. Here the impetus to protest is identified as gains achieved during the premovement period, coupled with simultaneous failure to make any appreciable headway relative to the dominant group. The J-curve theory argues that the movement occurred because a prolonged period of rising expectations and gratification was followed by a sharp reversal.

Political theorists have been dismissive of these applications of classical theory to the civil rights movement. Their arguments rest on the conviction that, implicitly, the classical theory trivializes the political ends of movement participants, focusing rather on presumed psychological dysfunctions: reduction of complex social situations to simple paradigms of stimulus and response obviates the relevance of all but the shortest-term analysis. Furthermore, the theories lack predictive value: “strain” is always present to some degree, but social movement is not. How can we know which strain will provoke upheaval?

These very legitimate complaints having frequently been made, it remains to find a means of testing the strength of the theories. Problematically, while proponents of the various theories have contradictory interpretations of socioeconomic conditions leading to the civil rights movement, examination of various statistical records regarding the material status of black Americans yields ample evidence to support any of the three theories. The steady rise in median black family income supports the rising expectations hypothesis; the stability of the economic position of black vis-à-vis white Americans lends credence to the relative deprivation interpretation; unemployment data are consistent with the J-curve theory. A better test is the comparison of each of these economic indicators with the frequency of movement-initiated events reported in the press; unsurprisingly, none correlates significantly with the pace of reports about movement activity.

6. It can be inferred from the passage that the classical theory of social movement would not be appropriately applied to an annual general election because such an election
 - a) may focus on personalities rather than on political issues
 - b) is not provoked primarily by an unusual condition
 - c) may be decided according to the psychological needs of voters
 - d) may not entail momentous developments
7. According to the passage, the “rising expectations” and “relative deprivation” models differ in which one of the following ways?
 - a) They predict different responses to the same socioeconomic conditions.
 - b) They disagree about the relevance of psychological explanations for protest movements.
 - c) They are meant to explain different kinds of social change.
 - d) They describe the motivation of protesters in slightly different ways.
8. The author implies that political theorists attribute which one of the following assumptions to social psychologists who apply the classical theory of social movements to the civil rights movement?
 - a) Participants in any given social movement have conflicting motivations.
 - b) Social movements are ultimately beneficial to society.
 - c) Only strain of a socioeconomic nature can provoke a social movement.
 - d) Psychological motivations of movement participants better illuminate the causes of social movements than do participants’ political motivations.
9. The validity of the “better test” as proposed by the author might be undermined by the fact that

- a) the press is selective about the movement activities it chooses to cover
- b) not all economic indicators receive the same amount of press coverage
- c) economic indicators often contradict one another
- d) the pace of movement-initiated events is difficult to anticipate

10. The main purpose of the passage is to

- a) Persuade historians of the indispensability of a theoretical framework for understanding recent history.
- b) Discuss the reasoning behind and shortcomings of certain social psychological theories.
- c) Account for a shift in a theoretical debate.
- d) Show the unity underlying the diverse classical models of social movement.

PASSAGE – 3

In *Democracies and its Critics*, Robert Dahl defends both democratic value and pluralist democracies, or polyarchies (a rough shorthand term for Western political systems). Dahl argues convincingly that the idea of democracy rests on political equality—the equality capacity of all citizens to determine or influence collective decisions. Of course, as Dahl recognizes, if hierarchical ordering is inevitable in any structure of government, and if no society can guarantee perfect equality in the resources that may give rise to political influence, the democratic principle of political equality is incapable of full realization. So actual systems can be deemed democratic only as approximations to the ideal. It is on these grounds that Dahl defends polyarchy.

As a representative system in which elected officials both determine government policy and are accountable to a broad-based electorate, polyarchy reinforces a diffusion of power away from any single center and toward a variety of individuals, groups, and organizations. It is this centrifugal characteristic, Dahl argues, that makes polyarchy the nearest possible approximation to the democratic ideal. Polyarchy achieves this diffusion of power through party competition and the operation of pressure groups. Competing for votes, parties seek to offer different sections of the electorate what they most want; they do not ask what the majority thinks of an issue, but what policy commitments will sway the electoral decisions of particular groups. Equally, groups that have strong feelings about an issue can organize in pressure groups to influence public policy.

During the 1960s and 1970s, criticism of the theory of pluralist democracy was vigorous. Many critics pointed to a gap between the model and the reality of Western political systems. They argued that the distribution of power resources other than the vote was so uneven that the political order systematically gave added weight to those who were already richer or organizationally more powerful. So the power of some groups to exclude issues altogether from the political agenda effectively countered any diffusion of influence on decision-making.

Although such criticism became subdued during the 1980s, Dahl himself seems to support some of the earlier criticism. Although he regrets that some Western intellectuals demand more democracy from polyarchies than is possible, and is cautious about the possibility of further democratization, he nevertheless ends his book by asking what changes in structures and consciousness might make political life more democratic in present polyarchies. One answer, he suggests, is to look at the economic order of polyarchies from the point of view of the citizen as well as from that of producers and consumers. This would require a critical examination of both the distribution of those economic resources that are at the same time political resources, and the relationship between political structures and economic enterprises.

11. The characterization of polyarchies as “centrifugal” emphasizes the

- a) way in which political power is decentralized in a polyarchy
- b) central role of power resources in a polyarchy
- c) kind of concentrated power that political parties generate in a polyarchy
- d) dynamic balance that exists between economic enterprises and elected officials in a polyarchy

12. In the third paragraph, the author of the passage refers to criticism of the theory of polyarchy democracy primarily in order to

- a) refute Dahl’s statement that Western intellectuals expect more democracy from polyarchies than is possible
- b) advocate the need for rethinking the basic principles on which the theory of democracy rests
- c) suggest that the structure of government within pluralist democracies should be changed
- d) point out an objection to Dahl’s defense of polyarchy

13. According to the passage, the aim of a political party in a polyarchy is to do which one of the following?

- a) determine what the position of the majority of voters is on a particular issue
- b) determine what position on an issue will earn the support of particular groups of voters
- c) organize voters into pressure groups in order to influence public policy on a particular issue
- d) ensure that elected officials accurately represent the position of the party on specific issue

14. Which one of the following is most closely analogous to pluralist democracies as they are described in relation to the democratic principle of political equality?

- a) an exact copy of an ancient artifact that is on display in a museum
- b) a performance of a musical score whose range of tonality cannot be completely captured by any actual instruments

- c) a lecture by a former astronaut to a class of young students who would like to be astronauts
 - d) the commemoration of a historical event each year by a historian presenting a lecture on a topic related to the event
15. The passage can best be described as
- a) an inquiry into how present-day polyarchies can be made more democratic
 - b) a commentary on the means pressure groups employ to exert influence within polyarchies
 - c) a description of the relationship between polyarchies and economic enterprises
 - d) a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of polyarchy as a form of democracy

PASSAGE – 4

The old belief that climatic stability accounts for the high level of species diversity in the Amazon River basin of South America emerged, strangely enough, from observations of the deep sea. Sanders discovered high diversity among the mud-dwelling animals of the deep ocean. He argued that such diversity could be attributed to the absence of significant fluctuations in climate and physical conditions, without which the extinction of species should be rare. In the course of time new species would continue to evolve, and so the rate of speciation would be greater than the rate of extinction, resulting in the accumulation of great diversity. Sanders argued that the Amazon tropical rain forest is analogous to the deep sea: because the rain forest has a stable climate, extinction should be rare. Evidence that some species of rain-forest trees have persisted for some 30 million years in the Amazon basin, added to the absence of winter and glaciation, supports this view.

Recently however, several observations have cast doubt on the validity of the stability hypothesis and suggest that the climate of the Amazon basin has fluctuated significantly in the past. Haffer noted that different species of birds inhabit different corners of the basin in spite of the fact that essentially unbroken green forest spreads from the western edge to the eastern edge of the region. This pattern presented a puzzle to biologists studying the distributions of plants and animals: why would different species inhabit different parts of the forest if the habitat in which they lived had a stable climate?

Haffer proposed a compelling explanation for the distribution of species. Observing that species found on high ground are different from those on low ground and knowing that in the Amazon lowlands are drier than uplands, he proposed that during the ice ages the Amazon lowlands became a near-desert arid plain; meanwhile, the more elevated regions became islands of moisture and hence served as refuges for the fauna and flora of the rain forest. Populations that were once continuous diverged and became permanently separated. Haffer's hypothesis appears to explain the distribution of species as well as the unusual species diversity. The ice-age refuges would have protected existing species from extinction. But the periodic geographic isolation of related populations (there have been an estimated 13 ice ages to date) would have facilitated the development of new species as existing species on the lowlands adapted to changing climates.

Although no conclusive proof has yet been found to support Haffer's hypothesis, it has led other researchers to gauge the effects of climatic changes, such as storms and flooding, on species diversity in the Amazon basin. Their research suggests that climatic disturbances help account for the splendid diversity of the Amazon rain forest.

16. The author of the passage would most likely agree with which one of the following statements about Haffer's hypothesis?
- a) It provides an intriguing and complete explanation for the high rate of species diversity in the Amazon basin.
 - b) It is partially correct in that a number of climatic disturbances account for species diversity in the Amazon basin.
 - c) It has not yet been verified, but it has had an influential effect on current research on species diversity in the Amazon basin.
 - d) It is better than Sanders' theory in accounting for the low rate of species extinction in the Amazon basin.
17. According to the passage, lowlands in the Amazon basin currently differ from uplands in which one of the following respects?
- a) Lowlands are desertlike, whereas uplands are lush.
 - b) Lowlands are less vulnerable to glaciation during the ice ages than are uplands.
 - c) Uplands support a greater diversity of species than do lowlands.
 - d) Uplands are wetter than are lowlands.
18. The author of the passage mentions the number of ice ages in the third paragraph most probably in order to
- a) provide proof that cooler and drier temperatures are primarily responsible for the distribution of species in the Amazon
 - b) explain how populations of species were protected from extinction in the Amazon basin
 - c) explain how most existing species were able to survive periodic climatic disturbances in the Amazon basin
 - d) suggest that geographic isolation may have occurred often enough to cause high species diversity in the Amazon basin.
19. The passage suggests that which one of the following is true of Sanders' hypothesis?

- a) He underestimated the effects of winter and glaciation in the Amazon basin on the tropical rain forest.
- b) He failed to account for the distribution of species in the Amazon basin.
- c) He failed to take into account the relatively high rate of extinction during the ice ages in the Amazon basin.
- d) He overestimated the length of time that species have survived in the Amazon basin.

Passage-5

Although surveys of medieval legislation, guild organization, and terminology used to designate different medical practitioners have demonstrated that numerous medical specialties were recognized in Europe during the Middle Ages, most historians continue to equate the term “woman medical practitioner,” wherever they encounter it in medieval records, with “midwife.” This common practice obscures the fact that, although women were not represented on all levels of medicine equally, they were represented in a variety of specialties throughout the broad medical community. A reliable study by Wickersheimer and Jacquart documents that of 7,647 medical practitioners in France during the twelfth through fifteenth centuries, 121 were women; of these, only 44 were identified as midwives, while the rest practiced as physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, barbers, and other healers.

While preserving terminological distinctions somewhat increases the quality of the information extracted from medieval documents concerning women medical practitioners, scholars must also reopen the whole question of why documentary evidence for women medical practitioners comprises such a tiny fraction of the evidence historians of medieval medicine usually present. Is this due to the limitations of the historical record, as has been claimed, or does it also result from the methods historians use? Granted, apart from medical licenses, the principal sources of information regarding medical practitioners available to researchers are wills, property transfers, court records, and similar documents, all of which typically underrepresent women because of restrictive medieval legal traditions. Nonetheless, the parameters researchers choose when they define their investigations may contribute to the problem. Studies focusing on the upper echelons of “learned” medicine, for example, tend to exclude healers on the legal and social fringes of medical practice, where most women would have been found.

The advantages of broadening the scope of such studies is immediately apparent in Pelling and Webster’s study of sixteenth-century London. Instead of focusing solely on officially recognized and licensed practitioners, the researchers defined a medical practitioner as “any individual whose occupation is basically concerned with the care of the sick.” Using this definition, they found primary source information suggesting that there were 60 women medical practitioners in the city of London in 1560. Although this figure may be slightly exaggerated, the evidence contrasts strikingly with that of Gottfried, whose earlier survey identified only 28 women medical practitioners in all of England between 1330 and 1530.

Finally, such studies provide only statistical information about the variety and prevalence of women’s medical practice in medieval Europe. Future studies might also make profitable use of analyses developed in other areas of women’s history as a basis for exploring the social context of women’s medical practice. Information about economic rivalry in medicine, women’s literacy, and the control of medical knowledge could add much to our growing understanding of women medical practitioners’ role in medieval society.

20. Which one of the following best expresses the main point of the passage?
 - a) Recent studies demonstrate that women medical practitioners were more common in England than in the rest of Western Europe during the Middle Ages.
 - b) The quantity and quality of the information historians uncover concerning women’s medical practice in medieval Europe would be improved if they changed their methods of study.
 - c) The sparse evidence for women medical practitioners in studies dealing with the Middle Ages is due primarily to the limitations of the historical record.
 - d) Knowledge about the social issues that influenced the role women medical practitioners played in medieval society has been enhanced by several recent studies.
21. Which one of the following is most closely analogous to the error the author believes historians make when they equate the term “woman medical practitioner” with “midwife”?
 - a) equating pear with apple
 - b) equating science with biology
 - c) equating supervisor with subordinate
 - d) equating member with nonmember
22. The passage suggests that a future study that would be more informative about medieval women medical practitioners might focus on which one of the following?
 - a) the effect of social change on the political and economic structure of medieval society
 - b) the effect of social constraints on medieval women’s access to a medical education
 - c) the types of medical specialties that developed during the Middle Ages
 - d) the reasons why medieval historians tend to equate the term “woman medical practitioner” with midwife
23. The author refers to the study by Wickersheimer and Jacquart in order to
 - a) demonstrate that numerous medical specialties were recognized in Western Europe during the Middle Ages
 - b) demonstrate that women are often underrepresented in studies of medieval medical practitioners

- c) prove that midwives were officially recognized as members of the medical community during the Middle Ages
- d) prove that midwives were only a part of a larger community of women medical practitioners during the Middle Ages

24. In the passage, the author is primarily concerned with doing which one of the following?

- a) describing new methodological approaches
- b) revising the definitions of certain concepts
- c) comparing two different analyses
- d) arguing in favor of changes in method

Answer Key:

1.C	2.B	3.D	4.A	5.D	6.B	7.D	8.D	9.A	10.B
11.A	12.D	13.B	14.B	15.D	16.C	17.D	18.D	19.B	20.B
21.B	22.B	23.D	24.D						