

## Idea of India 2019 Socratic Dialogue

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### General Instructions

- Students can send in their research write-ups in teams of three
- There are two parts- Analysis and Synthesis
- All the questions in first part (Analysis) are compulsory, for required subject background.
- Students can pick any 3 out of 5 aspects in Synthesis section.
- Mind-maps summarizing learnings of Analysis section are to be submitted, while the Synthesis section requires a 200word response.
- The team which would have submitted the best research shall present during the event.
- Interesting wrong answers are valued more than correct answers, at Sciensation!
- If you disagree with any implicit assumptions in the question, please state your point of view explicitly. You'd receive extra marks.
- Sciensation is very generous while awarding points, creative answers receive extra-marks!

### Selection Criterion

- Examples- Can the student provide intuitive examples to justify the logic?
- Eloquence- Were the arguments explained carefully?
- Rigor- The arguments/assertions need to be justified.
- Robustness- Can the argument break down easily? How general is it?
- Elegance- Were the arguments beautifully constructed?

### Questionnaire Structure

#### Analysis

- 1- Science, Art and Technology
- 2- Markets and Economics
- 3- People, Planet and Profits

#### Synthesis

- 1- People of India
- 2- Arts and Crafts of India
- 3- Markets/Economy of India
- 4- Globalized Economy
- 5- Techno-Economic context

## Science, Art and Technology

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*One hears the bells of the Rajarajeshvara temple built by King Rajaraja Chola. The townspeople are all praise for its architect Kunjaramallan Rajaraja Perunthachchan who has proudly carved his name on the temple wall. Inside is a massive Shiva linga.*

*Sculptors carved scenes depicting peoples' lives in towns, villages, as well as in the forest. Many of these sculptures were used to decorate railings, pillars and gateways of buildings that were visited by people.*

*In many cities, archaeologists have found rows of pots, or ceramic rings arranged one on top of the other. These are known as ring wells. These seem to have been used as toilets in some cases, and as drains and garbage dumps. These ring wells are usually found in individual houses.*

*Arikamedu was a coastal settlement where ships unloaded goods from distant lands. A massive brick structure, which may have been a warehouse, was found at the site. Stamped red-glazed pottery, known as Arretine Ware, named after a city in Italy, was made by pressing wet clay into a stamped mould.*

Q1. Did Raja Raja Chola help Kunjara Mallan in becoming famous or did Kunjara Mallan help Raja Raja Chola in becoming famous? How can a king help an artist? How can an artist help a king? How can art help people? Why did these two want to create a temple with beautiful architecture?

Q2. Would consider sculptures, pots as art or technology? Were people of the past interested in arts? Are people interested in arts today? Why do people like art? Which time period was easy for artists- 15<sup>th</sup> century or the 21<sup>st</sup> century? When was art valued more? Can an artist earn a livelihood in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Do children aspire to take up arts or to make beautiful ceramic rings? Have arts declined?

Q3. If science is organized study of nature and if technology is about inventing useful things and solving problems, are Science and Technology same or different? Why are they then used interchangeably?

Q4. Was it possible to mass manufacture ceramic rings in the 15<sup>th</sup> century? Would they make it by hand? What about the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Why would machine be preferred over people? Did technology kill arts? The definition of technology was "useful arts", about 200 years back (MIT), so would you consider these ceramic rings or temples to be art or technology? Would it be considered technology today?

Q5. How do we then understand Technology? Does history play a role in understanding Technology? Would industrial revolution, Henry Ford and the emergence of large factories change society's perception of Technology? Does India's history suggest a rich tradition of art and culture? Does India then have a rich history of Technology? So, if India studied primary school (Art) well and didn't do well in the middle school (Industrial Revolution), how should she deal with senior school (DeepTech age)?

## A2: Markets and Economics

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*Several traders, especially horse traders, formed associations, with headmen who negotiated on their behalf with warriors who bought horses. Since traders had to pass through many kingdoms and forests, they usually travelled in caravans and formed guilds to protect their interests. There were several such guilds in south India from the eighth century onwards – the most famous being the Manigramam and Nanadesi. These guilds traded extensively both within the peninsula and with Southeast Asia and China.*

*The Panchalas or Vishwakarma community, consisting of goldsmiths, bronze-smiths, blacksmiths, masons and carpenters, were essential to the building of temples. They also played an important role in the construction of palaces, big buildings, tanks and reservoirs. Similarly, weavers such as the Saliyar or Kaikkolars emerged as prosperous communities, making donations to temples. Some aspects of cloth making like cotton cleaning, spinning and dyeing became specialised and independent crafts.*

Q1. Why did art and craft communities and trade guilds develop in this period? If there was a huge need for buildings and clothes, why would art and craft communities earn a lot of money? Why would parents teach their children art and craft? Why would their children continue the same work? Why would we call them a community? Would such communities lead to development of the art and craft?

Q2. Why would the weavers and associations make huge donations to the temples? Can temples be compared to today's governments? How would temples use this money? Would people benefit if temples receive a lot of donations? Were temples merely places of worship or did they evolve socio-cultural transformation through public discourse, music and dance?

Q3. Would temples then be compelled to help the communities? If the king needs temples to be prosperous, would he try and help the trading communities? Would he try and solve the problems of the trading community? Would he build ports for them to sell their goods to other countries? Would he develop policies and schemes to ensure that the communities develop?

Q4. Why did people focus on cotton cleaning alone, why did they specialize in this craft? When there is a lot of money available to people doing one job, would you focus on it or would you do more things? Would you be better off making jilebis and earn a lot of money or would you spend time making laddus, mysorepak aswell, when you know jilebis alone can give you a lot of money? Why focus, why specialize?

Q5. Padma Mr. Malleshm invented a spinning machine to automate "cheneta"(handloom) community's style of weaving, which revived this art. However, Vishwakarma community also lost its importance, how do you think they can revive their art? Can their associations think of nurturing technology? Can innovators talk to these guilds or associations to negotiate and make it easy for them to get Vishwakarmas to use their technology? Are guilds useful? Should you form learners' guild?

*Surat began to decline towards the end of the 17th century. This was because of many factors: the loss of markets and productivity because of the decline of the Mughal Empire, control of the sea routes by the Portuguese and competition from Bombay where the English East India Company shifted its headquarters in 1668. Today, Surat is a bustling commercial centre.*

*Both the Dutch and English East India Companies attempted to control Masulipatnam as it became the most important port on the Andhra coast. Fierce competition among various trading groups – the Golconda nobles, Persian merchants, Telugu Komati Chettis, and European traders – made the city populous and prosperous. As the Mughals began to extend their power to Golconda their representative, the governor Mir Jumla who was also a merchant, began to play off the Dutch and the English against each other. It was a part of the new policy of the English East India Company that it was not enough if a port had connections with the production centres of the hinterland. The new Company trade centres, it was felt, should combine political, administrative and commercial roles. As the Company traders moved to Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, Masulipatnam lost both its merchants and prosperity and declined in the course of the 18th century, being today nothing more than a dilapidated little town.*

Q1. Why did competition help Masulipatnam? When multiple groups compete to sell their goods, does it help the people? Why did Mir Jumla make the Dutch compete with the English? Would you want India to make Samsung compete with MI? Should it be easy for everyone to do business? Level-playing field?

Q2. Should the king try to make clothes on his own or should be encourage people to do it and then collect taxes? Should the government do the work or should it encourage competition through a level playing field? Why is it much easier to let the experts make the clothes? Is it a smart move?

Q3. Should the king protect his local weavers by stopping British from selling their clothes or should he encourage trade with them? Would competition make our weavers better? What if they are unable to compete? Once we are capable, are we better off competing or should we close our doors?

Q4. What do the stories of Surat and Masulipatnam tell us? Why did Surat survive and the other fall? Can we take things for granted? Can the state of the economy change? What would you do if you were the king of Masulipatnam at the time when the port moved away? Did you lose everything if you lost the port? Do you still have an economy? Do you depend on the benefit of having a port or do you focus on producing very good goods so people take it to their ports and then sell it to different countries? Do you wait for an opportunity or port or advantage or do you focus on what you can do, the best?

Q5. Why did East India company its port move away from Masulipatnam? Why did they want control? What do you mean by political and administrative role of a port? Why did they not like competition? Why did they want the port to be situated in a place ruled and administered by them?

## Planet, People and Profits

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*Human beings interact with the environment and modify it according to their need. Early humans adapted themselves to the natural surroundings. They led a simple life and fulfilled their requirements from the nature around them. With time needs grew and became more varied. Humans learn new ways to use and change environment. They learn to grow crops, domesticate animals and lead a settled life. The wheel was invented, surplus food was produced, barter system emerged, trade started and commerce developed. Industrial revolution enabled large scale production. Transportation became faster. Information revolution made communication easier and speedy across the world. Have you ever thought why you love eating a juicy watermelon in summer and hot roasted peanuts in winter? A perfect balance is necessary between the natural and human environment. Humans must learn to live and use their environment in a harmonious way.*

Q1. Can you give one example which shows that people changed the environment to suit their needs? Can you quote an example from the above passage itself? Why do you think people do this?

Q2. Does the textbook tell us that people should not modify or change the environment? Can I remove a small pebble and keep it somewhere else? Would this modification hurt the environment? How different is this modification compared to chopping a tree and making a chair out of it? Can we cancel or undo the damage? Does this mean that our needs are not important? Do we think of our needs or about the environment? Both? Can you imagine man on one side and the tree on other side of a balance?

Q3. Should we try to develop substitutes for wood so we don't chop too many trees? Should we plant more saplings when we cut down trees? Can we plant these saplings in an area where ground water levels are less? Should we think before acting, should we consult ecologists? Harmonious co-existence?

Q4. When children are taught economics or the science of money, should they be taught to look at benefits to people alone or should they also look at the impact on environment? Should economics then be seen as the management of ecology and not just human utility? Would this lead to balance?

Q5. Why do people ignore the environment despite so many campaigns? Should the idea of economics as management of ecology be deeply ingrained right from childhood, to make it a way of life?

*No country can be described as being completely democratic. There are always communities and individuals trying to expand the idea of democracy and push for a greater recognition of equality on existing as well as new issues. Central to this is the struggle for the recognition of all persons as equal and for their dignity to be maintained. In this book you will read about how this issue of equality affects various aspects of our daily lives in democratic India. As you read these chapters, think about whether the equality of all persons and their being able to maintain their dignity is upheld.*

*In 1994, the government gave the rights for fishing in the Tawa reservoir to private contractors. These contractors drove the local people away and got cheap labour from outside. The contractors began to threaten the villagers, who did not want to leave, by bringing in hoodlums. The villagers stood united and decided that it was time to set up an organisation and do something to protect their rights. The newly formed Tawa Matsya Sangh (TMS) organised rallies and a chakka jam (road blockade), demanding their right to continue fishing for their 119 livelihood. In response to their protests, the government created a committee to assess the issue. The committee recommended that fishing rights be granted to the villagers for their livelihood. In 1996, the Madhya Pradesh government decided to give to the people displaced by the Tawa dam the fishing rights for the reservoir. A five-year lease agreement was signed two months later. On January 2, 1997, people from 33 villages of Tawa started the new year with the first catch. With the TMS taking over the fishworkers were able to increase their earnings substantially. This was because they set up the cooperative which would buy the catch from them at a fair price. The cooperative would then arrange to transport and sell this in markets where they would get a good price. They have now begun to earn three times more than they earned earlier. The TMS has also begun giving the fishworkers loans for repair and the buying of new nets. By managing to earn a higher wage as well as preserving the fish in the reservoir, the TMS has shown that when people's organisations get their rights to livelihood, they can be good managers.*

Q1: Do benefits of development reach everyone? Are city people considered equal to villagers? Are fishermen's problems considered as important as that of educated urban elite? Can we attribute the above problem to lack of dignity or respect? Would the government give away the waters to private contractors if it respected the fishermen? Why are fishermen more likely to lose their resources, in comparison to the urban educated elite? Why wouldn't someone oppress the educated elite?

Q2: How did TMS improve the lives of farmers? How did their income improve? How were they able to carry fish to the market? How did they manage to get new nets? Did their salaries or wages increase?

Q3. Do we wait for people to protest or do we ensure equality of opportunity to everyone? Does everyone have a right to live and more importantly a right to grow? What if the people do not have the courage the protest even they are oppressed? Do we take care of people because of the fear that they would protest or because they deserve a right to grow? [Ethical argument]

Q4. What does the TMS story tell us? Did the cooperative lead to economic development in the area? Do we see more buying and selling activity going on? Does the country's GDP improve if our people are all engaging in productive activities? Would the country develop if it's people develop? So do we take care of our people just because we are nice or does it actually help the economy? [utilitarian argument]

Q5. Does equality affect the economy? Ethical or utilitarian argument? Can the country develop if the people are not healthy and educated? Would dignity and equity play a role in our Idea of India?

## Synthesis

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### Idea of India

What is your Idea of India? How would you describe India? How would you visualize India? How would this help? Why should we discuss our ideas of India? Will it help us in having a dream for India? Will it help us in contributing to the nation? Will it help us in understanding the problems of the nation? **Come up with a 200word description of your Idea of India, covering any 3 out of these 5 aspects.**

#### 1. People of India

A famous Telugu song says that a country is not the land, but the people, would you agree? What do you know about India's people? Urban and rural? Tribals? Languages? Cultures? Genders? LGBT? Should our Idea of India include everyone or should it privilege a few? Can we leave out Gonds or Mizos or women? Should every Indian's aspiration be a part of our Idea of India?

#### 2. Arts and Crafts of India

Does India have a rich tradition of art and craft, what does your history textbook suggest? Would this rich tradition then imply an edge in Technology as well? Can we utilize these traditions to improve our economy? Can we create more livelihood opportunities for our people? Would you want to emphasize on our art and craft, when you describe India? Are they an integral part of an Idea of India?

#### 3. Markets/Economy of India

Did India have very well organized markets and ports? Was India a very strong economy (state of a country or region in terms of the production and consumption of goods and services and the supply of money)? Is India a strong economy today? Do we pay attention to the domestic market? Does India have to concentrate on exports alone or can development emerge from domestic markets? Would we need to factor this in our Idea of India, would it then changed our perspective towards development?

#### 4. Globalized Economy

Is the world flat today? Can goods and services of one country reach another country? Are we competing with the best in the world? Why do Indian engineers do well in the USA? If all the countries are competing, how would India define her position to gain a competitive advantage?

#### 5. Techno-Economic context

How would you change your Idea of India given the advent of Deep-Tech, with machines taking away the works like manual scavenging or even a white collared job like telemarketing which humans need not do in the first place? How can India move from being a low-cost outsourced process destination to a center of excellence and Deep-Technology? Will our new Idea of India change our education system?