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**MEMBERS AREA**

**‘RC DAILY DOSE’**  
**Volume 36**

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**Passage – 1**

India is one of the few countries of the world, certainly the only country of considerable size and claim to world distinction, that entered the 21st century with half of its people illiterate and its women facing a dowry death every one hour and 42 minutes, a rape every 54 minutes, a molestation every 26 minutes. India also produces an impressive cross-section of the world's technical personnel and some of the world's most celebrated novelists in the English language; exhibits and auctions organised by such illustrious agencies as Christie's would suggest that an increasing number of Indian painters and other artists are now selling at very good prices in the global art market. How are these contrasting facts related to the state of culture in India half a century after Independence?

‘Culture’ is a difficult word. In one range of meanings, ‘Culture’ refers to the cultivation of superior intellectual abilities and spiritual refinements, as reflected, for example, in institutions of higher learning and the arts. Novelists, painters, professors, theologians, scientists, filmmakers, and specialists of various kinds are crucial for this sense of ‘Culture’. But ‘Culture’ also means ‘a whole way of life’ as it is sedimented historically and lived in concrete material practice by people, whether organised in units of nationality or not. Third, however, it is often presumed that culture as ‘a whole way of life’ is crystallised in a ‘High Culture’ of superior learning and finer perception. A country that has a large number of litterateurs, scientists, sculptors and so on is presumed to have attained a high level of culture. Finally, ‘Culture’ may also refer to aggregate patterns of civic life: a ‘culture of civility’ may be distinguished from a ‘culture of cruelty’ and the one may give way, in conditions of social transition, to the other, as is happening in large parts of India today.

The definition of ‘Culture’ as a ‘whole way of life’ is perhaps the most arresting, since this can be read in a great many ways. For instance, references are often made to ‘Indian culture’ or ‘Hindu culture’ or, more plausibly, to ‘Brahminical culture’ or ‘upper class culture’. The latter two claims are more plausible because members of the same consolidated caste or class do tend to share broad parameters of a certain culture. But usages where culture is identified with a nation-state or a religion tend to obfuscate matters considerably, and they often conceal a demonstrable degree of aggressivity behind benign-sounding cultural invocation. For example, the Hindutva ideologues claim that there is what they call the ‘Indian cultural mainstream’ to which Hindus seem to belong by birth and all the rest - Dalits, Adivasis, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists - are urged to swim into. Similarly, ‘Hindu culture’ can only be the culture of caste Hindus. No one is ever urged to join the ‘Culture’ of the casteless who are generally presumed to be culture-less as well. The penetration of some odd habits of the caste-ridden into the cultures of some of the casteless is what Indian cultural anthropology quaintly calls ‘Sanskritisation’, of which too independent India has witnessed a good deal.

Social conflicts of various kinds, along lines of class, caste, gender, ethnicity and so on actually leave very little room for a ‘whole way of life’ to be shared by ‘a people’ or a whole nation to any significant extent. Compared, for example, to the number of illiterates in the country, the number of those who get science degrees or those who read Salman Rushdie or Anita Desai is minuscule. This is a fair index of the cultural situation in India at the present time, since depriving the vast majority of people any access to modern cultural goods is itself ‘a whole way of life’ in India and thus a ‘national culture’ in its own very material way, which requires that cultural capital, like money-capital, be not re-distributed but greatly concentrated.

Culture in the sense of ‘High Culture’ (for example, techno-managerial strata, Midnight's Children, Christie's auctions, and now The God of Small Things), and culture in the sense of ‘a whole way of life’ (for example, illiteracy, violence against women, child labour) have not been mutually unrelated in independent India, and the latter is not on the way to being eradicated by the former. These patterns within a single national culture have been but two aspects of our specific kind of embourgeoisment. Culture, in other words, is not an arena for the harmonious unfolding of the Nationalist Spirit, nor merely a zone of the aesthetic. It is, rather, a field of very material contentions and conflicts. Every nation has at any given time not one culture but several, and not only as unity in diversity but also as unity of opposites.

Looked at this way, it is really quite astonishing how closely culture is connected with politics and economy, and how much it has to do with pedagogical functions of the state. The organisation of the cultural field in independent India, which has concentrated cultural resources in the main cities, notably Delhi and secondarily some State capitals, while making little effort to eradicate illiteracy, provide mass education or develop peri-urban townships as centres of modern creativity, was entirely in keeping with the Mahalonobis mode of economic growth, in which development of industry, especially the capital goods industry, was to lay the foundation for a much-postponed modernisation of agriculture. The emphasis was on higher education rather than on primary and secondary education; on Culture as refinement of Spirit rather than Culture as a mode of collectively shared civic values. Hence, for example, the magisterial Academies (of Arts, Letters, Dance and Music), the

Research Councils (for History, Social Science), the Institutes of Technology, the Central Universities, the state-sponsored scientific establishment. In its own curious way, the model has worked. At the upper end of the scale, India has an intelligentsia that aspires to, and can and does rub shoulders with the best and the brightest in the metropolis of capital and culture in the North. The bottom half of India does not read or write, and another 30 per cent or so does but barely.

This, then, is reflected in linguistic cultures, which too rest on a three-part system of English education, vernacular literacy and a wide variety of oral cultures without benefits of literacy. Compared to the colonial period, English now has a broader social reach and the English-speaking intelligentsia is now more numerous and confident than ever before. Even though perhaps not much more than five per cent of the population actually reads it with any degree of fluency, English alone accounts for roughly 40 per cent of all Indian publishing, thanks partly no doubt to textbook consumption and government printing. Though spoken by relatively few, English performs four key functions: it plays an integrative role in trans-regional cultural contacts; it signifies deepening penetration of society by the national state and the national economy; it serves as one of the barriers against imposition of Hindi on the rest of Indian society; and it serves as the medium for transactions between the Indian intelligentsia and currents in world culture. In production of scientific and social-scientific knowledges, the role of English is predominant. In the world of literary creativity, Indian writers of English command high visibility and disproportionate power but remain a minority current. All in all, English is the language of a small minority. Among the rest of the literate, however, knowledge of English is reduced to a bare smattering, while knowledge of regional languages has greatly advanced. The upper layers of the Indian intelligentsia are thus more integrated than before through the English language, electronic and print media, government presence and market forces, but the bulk of this intelligentsia is also more regionally based in daily routines of culture, literacy and communication. These contradictory trends then raise a significant question.

The historic trajectory of nation-states and industrial societies, as these developed in Western Europe and North America, has been toward mono-linguistic cultures. This trend will probably succeed in East Asian zones as well. The socialist countries in Europe, notably the USSR, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, attempted to create multi-lingual societies in the course of brisk industrialisation, but the experiment collapsed with the collapse of socialism; the one seemed to have presumed the other. Within this historical perspective, then, India is unique in that it has sought to create an industrial capitalist society out of a notably backward socio-economic structure, more or less hothouse-fashion, but one that would also be multi-lingual. Whether or not these twin projects, of industrialised society and multi-lingual culture, can be completed simultaneously, and whether this combination of industrialisation and multi-lingual culture is possible without the creation of a socialist society, shall be one of the more exacting questions over the next half century.

This question remains open in India thanks to what has been our principal achievement in arenas of politics and culture alike, namely the creation of a broad culture of democratic values and secular civilities through stable mechanisms of universal suffrage and constitutional governance. This culture of democratic values is indispensable in the struggle against linguistic or cultural hegemonism of particular groups and against onslaughts of religio-cultural fascism, which presents itself in the garb of 'national culture'. The survival of secular democracy and the survival of India as a multi-lingual, multi-denominational, multi-cultural society are thus irrevocably linked. This is the specific form, the central expression, of our modernity.

The past decade has witnessed three fundamental shifts in the cultural field. First, the Hindutva forces, which used to be marginal to national culture in the days of the national movement and in the opening decades of the Republic, are now the main contenders for political dominance and cultural hegemony, especially in North India. Secondly, economic liberalisation has vastly accelerated the creation of a pan-Indian culture of commodity fetishism which the electronic media is carrying far beyond the urban habitats of the bourgeoisie, fairly deep into the countryside. Together, these far-reaching attacks on the founding principles of the Republic have led to an immense brutalisation of day-to-day cultural life, certainly of the affluent but with far-reaching consequences for society at large, as spectres of greed satisfied and greed unsatisfied stalk the land. Thirdly, the lack of a national project for social justice and the acceptance of the supremacy of the market as the final arbiter of the social good, combined with full commodification of competing religiosities, has led to a new eruption of the savage identities of caste and denomination, which gets intellectual respectability from the indigenous scholars for whom secularism is the sin of modernity while savage identities of religion and community are the very essence of what they call 'tradition'. Of these, indigenism is arising as a particular pathology of 'high culture', and Hindutva poses the most immediate danger to the culture of secular civility, but the greatest long-term danger comes from that worship of the market that goes currently under the name of 'liberalisation'. For, unleashing an uncontrolled market in a multi-cultural society that rests on such concentration of wealth and magnitudes of deprivation promises to create a culture so brutish, so much at odds with itself, so devoid of any sense of culture as a 'common way of life', that neither political democracy nor the compact of a united nation may survive this brutalisation of a Republic that was born, some 50 years ago, in dreams of radical equality.

1. *The central idea of the passage is that :*
  - (1) there is nothing of what people presumably call 'Indian culture'.
  - (2) Indian culture is full of contrasts and is on the verge of erosion.
  - (3) what is marketed as Indian culture is actually the culture of the affluent.
  - (4) Indian culture is essentially fashioned out of religious rituals.
2. *Culture can best be defined as :*

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) a whole way of life.</li><li>(3) aggregate pattern of civil life.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(2) superior intellectual abilities and spiritual refinement</li><li>(4) None of the above.</li></ol>
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3. *English, has contributed to development of Indian culture in the following way :*
  - (1) it has united the country and helped enhance communication between different parts of the nation.
  - (2) it has helped India become mono-linguistic.
  - (3) it has contributed to developing communication channels with the external world.
  - (4) None of the above.
4. *The tone of the passage can best be described as :*
  - (1) explanatory                      (2) analytical                      (3) critical                      (4) humorous
5. *Culture can be said to be :*
  - (1) intimately connected with politics and economics.      (2) made of unity of several opposites.
  - (3) closely associated with religion.                      (4) All of the above.
6. *'Sanskritisation', according to the passage is :*
  - (1) the classification of Indian society on the basis of the castes.
  - (2) the classification of Indian culture on the basis of religious association.
  - (3) the association of caste-related habits with those who did not belong.
  - (4) the penetration of caste system into the aggregate that is described as culture of the casteless.
7. *Which of the following statement is untrue according to the given passage ?*
  - (1) Culture is an arena for the harmonious unfolding of the National spirit.
  - (2) Culture is not an arena for the harmonious unfolding of the National spirit.
  - (3) Culture is a mere zone of aesthetics.
  - (4) None of the above.
8. *The word 'obfuscate' means :*
  - (1) obscure                      (2) blatant                      (3) clarify                      (4) describe
9. *Which of the following statements is not untrue according to the passage ?*
  - (1) The bottom half of India reads and writes.                      (2) The bottom half of India reads.
  - (3) The bottom half of India writes.                      (4) The bottom half of neither reads or writes.
10. *Which of the following countries do not find a mention in the passage ?*
  - (1) Europe                      (2) USA                      (3) India                      (4) Yugoslavia

## Passage – 2

Through one of those unplanned-for and unwanted sequences of events that far too often shape the course of a person's life, I have the misfortune to live on what is probably the only street in Vienna that has more foot traffic at three o' clock in the morning than at three O' clock in the afternoon. Recently, as a result of a late-night ruckus at one of the seemingly endless string of bars on our street, I was leaning out the window watching the police administer a well-deserved hassling to a couple of loud-mouthed drunks. Growing somewhat bored with the clownish antics of the drunks (and the police, too), I started looking around for more inspired entertainment. I soon spotted a large black sheep dog lying down in the middle of the street. While for all intents and purposes this dog looked dead to the world, it was still of marginally greater interest than either the police or the drunks. So I continued to watch to see if it would give any sign of life to indicate what it thought it was doing in the middle of a busy street at such an ungodly hour of the morning.

As I watched, the dog was joined by a tattered-looking tomcat of indeterminate colour and disposition, no doubt out for a hot night on the town. The cat went over to the dog, sniffed it as a potential playmate or antagonist, and receiving no response whatsoever, moved off down the street in search of more animated companionship. Later, as I turned my attention back to my own living room, a large moth flew in through the window and started putting on quite a show with its fluttering around inside the shade of my favourite reading lamp. Thinking later about these three animals - the dog, the cat, and the moth - I wondered just what it was about their physical appearances that caused me immediately to recognize each of these animals as being alive. It certainly wasn't their movement or lack of it, since the dog never so much as moved a muscle the whole time I was watching, while both the cat and the moth were moving about all over the place. And it wasn't sound either, as none of the animals uttered so much as a peep. Or at least nothing that could be heard above the din of the "music" blasting out from the clubs on the street below. Could there have been any unambiguous sign that would have immediately stamped these objects as "alive," while denying that label to the police car and to the cobblestones in the street ?

Zoologist Stephen Wainwright has phrased my query in somewhat more compact and elegant terms: "Is there some single observation that can explain how all organisms are different from non-living forms ?" When stated in such bald fashion, the question seems to cry out for a resounding negative reply in view of the almost endless variety of life forms here on Earth. Nevertheless, Wainwright gives a surprisingly simple, and quite convincing, affirmative response: The bodies of multi-cellular plants and animals are cylindrical in shape. Can this really be true ? Is cylindrical form a generally reliable indicator of life ?

To address this point, let's first of all clarify what we mean by cylindrical. For purpose of our discussion, a cylinder is nothing more than a body that has a more or less round or elliptical cross section and a readily identifiable longitudinal axis. Familiar everyday examples include things like clarinets, pipes, spyglasses, cardboard mailing tubes, and rifle barrels.

Thinking about Wainwright's claim, obvious exceptions come to mind -cauliflower plants, stingrays, sponges, The Blob. Yet the exceptions really are exceptions, and the overwhelming majority of plants and animals truly do seem to be shaped like cylinders with numerous appendages. On the other hand, very few naturally occurring, non-living objects take on cylindrical forms. Again there are exceptions: certain crystals, icicles, stalagmites, stalactites - and that's about it. So it does seem that a cylindrical shape is a good discriminator for separating living from non-living objects. The immediate question then becomes: What's so special about a cylindrical shape ?

Earlier we noted that every living organism is simultaneously the end-point of two developmental pathways : ontogenesis, its developmental history as an individual organism, and phylogenesis. The second path, the evolutionary history, is the one that is of concern here, leading us to wonder about the following issues in regard to cylindrical shape :

What functional abilities does cylindrical shape confer upon an organism ? That is, what can cylindrical bodies do better than bodies of any other shape ?

Do the attributes of cylindrical body shape give species possessing this shape an evolutionary advantage ?

In other words, do such species get a selective leg up in the Darwinian race for survival and reproduction ?

In what manner did the cylindrical shape arise in the phylogenetic history of each species ? And how does this shape emerge during the ontogenetic development of an individual ?

While there's no room here to enter into details, let's at least take a few pages to gnaw around the edges of these tantalizing queries.

The form of an adult organism is basically the shape of the organism's mechanical support system, i.e., its skeletal system. Thus, it's reasonable to suppose that the shape will be strongly influenced, determined even, by mechanical considerations arising from the environment in which the organism must try to make its living. After some back-of-the-envelope calculations, it turns out that the most efficient use of materials in systems that have to reach out to identify friends, gather food, or fend off enemies occurs in cylindrical bodies. For example, if the organism moves through its environment, it will expend less energy in looking for food if it's cylindrical, since such shapes are streamlined. Moreover, for animals to move about on land or in the air, appendages supported by stiff cylindrical rods appear to be the best design for things like arms, legs, and wings. These elementary mechanical considerations suggest a host of functions that can be better performed by cylindrical bodies than by those of any other shape. But how did such shapes ever get started ? After all, the original life forms on Earth were very likely just small, roughly spherical blobs. What features of cylindrical bodies caused these ancestral multi-cellular blobs to rearrange themselves into cylindrical form ?

11. *The opening lines of the passage give a hint of :*

- |                               |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) subtle underlying humour. | (2) unreserved anger.      |
| (3) unchristened eulogy.      | (4) atypical happenstance. |

12. *The author was not particularly interested in watching the policemen and the drunks.*

- |                |           |          |                       |
|----------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|
| (1) Irrelevant | (2) False | (3) True | (4) None of the above |
|----------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|

13. *The author wants to say that :*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (1) the dog lying in the street was dead.          | (2) the dog lying in the street was asleep. |
| (3) the tomcat tore apart the dog and devoured it. | (4) None of the above.                      |

14. *The author agrees that sound can be a crucial discriminator in knowing the living from the dead.*

- |           |                |          |                       |
|-----------|----------------|----------|-----------------------|
| (1) False | (2) Irrelevant | (3) True | (4) None of the above |
|-----------|----------------|----------|-----------------------|

15. *All non-living things are non-cylindrical. The author (will) :*

- |           |              |                 |                               |
|-----------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) agree | (2) disagree | (3) be in a fix | (4) comment after a reference |
|-----------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|

16. *We can vaguely conclude from the foregoing discussion that :*

- (1) the cylindrical shape is better than any other shape for living beings.
- (2) the cylindrical shape has evolved from some very different shape.
- (3) the cylindrical shape is inconvenient in living beings.
- (4) there is no living being that is non-cylindrical.

17. *The underlying tone of the passage is :*

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| (1) analytical | (2) discursive   |
| (3) rambling   | (4) not in keeping with the basic subject being dealt with |

18. *Who of the following gave the statement that "Is there some observation that fails of explain how all organisms are different from non-living forms ?"*  
(1) Darwin                      (2) S. Wainwright              (3) Both (1) and (2)              (4) None of the above
19. *Which of the following are not mentioned in the passage ?*  
(1) Stalacities and icicles.              (2) Crystals and stalagmites.  
(3) All of the above.              (4) None of the above.
20. *The word 'appendage' means :*  
(1) detachment              (2) attachment              (3) continuation              (4) differences

## Detailed Solutions

1. **Ans.(2).** Options (1), (3) and (4) are not upto the mark and therefore the only option left is option (2) which suit the main theme of the passage.
2. **Ans.(4).** Options (1), (2) and (3) are incomplete and thus, fail to define culture. Culture has been defined in the second para of the passage. Option (4) is the right answer.
3. **Ans.(4).** Option (4) is the correct answer because remaining options fail to give the contribution of English in the development of Indian Culture.
4. **Ans.(2).** Option (2) is the most appropriate answer as the author tries to analyse the constituents and components of Indian culture. Options (1), (3) and (4) are incorrect.
5. **Ans.(4).** Culture as a term is very diverse and difficult to define (as stated in the 2nd para of the passage). Options (1), (2) and (3) together form the right mix and therefore option (4) is the answer.
6. **Ans.(3).** The last few lines of the third paragraph define 'Sanskritisation' and hence, the remaining options are incorrect.
7. **Ans.(1).** Option (1) is right answer, as it finds mention in the 5th paragraph. Last few lines of the options (2) and (3) are true according to the passage and are mentioned in para 5. Option (4) is incorrect.
8. **Ans.(1).** Option (2), (3) and (4) fail to give the correct meaning of the word 'obfuscate', which means 'ambiguous, vague, hazy, confusing'. Therefore option (1) is the most suitable answer.
9. **Ans.(4).** Option (1), (2) and (4) are incorrect and do not find a mention anywhere in the passage. Option (4) is the right answer and finds a mention in para 6th, the very last statement.
10. **Ans.(2).** Option (1), (3) and (4) find a mention in the passage but option (4) U.S.A. is nowhere mentioned in the passage.
11. **Ans.(1).** Option (1) is the correct answer as the opening lines depict humour. All the other options are incorrect.
12. **Ans.(3).** Statement 3 of para 1 states same reason as given in the question. Remaining options are wrong.
13. **Ans.(4).** Para 2 discusses the dog and his motion. Therefore option (4) is correct. All the others are nowhere mentioned in the passage.
14. **Ans.(1).** Option (1) is clearly denied in 6th statement in the second paragraph. All the other options are incorrect.
15. **Ans.(2).** Options (1), (3) and (4) are incorrect. Option (2) is denied by the author in the third statement of 5th para.
16. **Ans.(1).** Option (1) can be deduced from the last para of the passage. Remaining options are untrue.
17. **Ans.(1).** Options (2) and (3) are incorrect because, the author does not talk about more than one thing at a time. Option (4) is wrong. Option (1) is the correct answer.
18. **Ans.(4).** Option (1) is incorrect. Option (2) happens to be wrong because Wainwright's statement differs from the one given in the question. Option (3) is wrong. Option (4) is the correct answer.
19. **Ans.(4).** Option (4) is the correct answer as, it is mentioned in fourth line of the fourth para. Remaining options are all mentioned in the same para.
20. **Ans.(2).** Option (1) is opposite of the given word. Option (2) gives the exact meaning of 'appendage' – which means accessory, part, affixation. Options (3) and (4) are not suitable.

### Answer Keys

11.(1)	12.(3)	13.(4)	14.(1)	15.(2)	16.(1)	17.(1)	18.(4)	19.(4)	20.(2)
1.(2)	2.(4)	3.(4)	4.(2)	5.(4)	6.(3)	7.(1)	8.(1)	9.(4)	10.(2)