

Social Science

(Social and Political Life) (Chapter - 7) (Public Facilities)
(Class - 8)

Question 1:

Why do you think there are so few cases of private water supply in the world?

Answer 1:

There are very few cases of private water supply in the world because water is an essential amenity; water supply is a public facility that every government must provide to all citizens of a State. In cases where water supply was placed in the hands of private companies, the prices of water rose, making it unaffordable to the masses. This resulted in riots, protests and violent demonstrations in countries like Bolivia. Hence, it has been deemed best that the government must handle water supply services.

Question 2:

Do you think water in Chennai is available and affordable by all? Discuss.

Answer 2:

Water supply in Chennai is marked by shortages. Municipal supply meets only about half the needs of the people of the city, on an average. There are areas which get water more regularly than others. Those areas that are close to the storage points get more water whereas colonies further away receive less water. The burden of shortfalls in water supply falls mostly on the poor. The middle class, when faced with water shortages, are able to cope through a variety of private means such as digging bore wells, buying water from tankers and using bottled water for drinking. Apart from the availability of water, access to 'safe' drinking water is also available to some and this depends on what one can afford. Once again the wealthy have more choices. They buy bottled water and water purifiers. People who can afford it have safe drinking water, whereas the poor are again left out. In reality, therefore, it seems that it is only people with money who have the right to water-a far cry from the goal of universal access to 'sufficient and safe' water.

Question 3:

How is the sale of water by farmers to water dealers in Chennai affecting the local people? Do you think local people can object to such exploitation of ground water? Can the government do anything in this regard?

Answer 3:

The sale of water by farmers to water dealers in Chennai has drastically affected the local people. This water is taken away from agricultural use and drinking water supply for the locals. Water which was free or affordable is now too expensive for the poor to buy. Local people can object to such exploitation of ground water because water is an essential amenity that should be provided free or at basic costs to all. The government must disallow private companies from buying and supplying water since this is a public facility- a function of the state governments.

Question 4:

Why are most of the private hospitals and private schools located in major cities and not in towns or rural areas?

Answer 4:

People living in major cities can afford to send their children in private schools or get treatment in private hospitals. In cities the people lead a busy life where they prefer to get their work done fast by taking appointments in spite of standing in long queues in government schools or hospitals. Various facilities like transportation, electricity, water supply are easily available in major cities in comparison to towns or rural areas.

Question 5:

Do you think the distribution of public facilities in our country is adequate and fair? Give an example of your own to explain.

Answer 5:

The distribution of public facilities in our country is inadequate and largely unfair. For example, urban areas are provided with and consume more electricity than villages or townships. Most metropolitan cities consume vast amounts of power for market-places, multiplexes and air-conditioning while villages and towns bear huge power-cuts even in summer so much so that there is no electricity available to them for domestic purposes too. This is a gaping gap in the distribution of just one of the public facilities provided by the government.

Question 6:

Take some of the public facilities in your area, such as water, electricity, etc. Is there scope to improve these? What in your opinion should be done? Complete the table.

	Is it available?	How can it be improved?
Water		
Electricity		
Roads		
Public transport		

Answer 6:

	Is it available?	How can it be improved?
Water	Yes	
	If- No	By construction of a separate water tank in our area.
Electricity	Yes	
	If-No	Electricity should not" be wasted, electricity theft should be checked
Roads	Yes	
	If-No	By construction of flyovers, new roads and highways.
Public transport	Yes	
	If-No	By introducing new buses.

Question 7:

Are the above public facilities shared equally by all the people in your area? Elaborate.

Answer 7:

No, the public facilities mentioned in question 6 are not shared equally by all the people in our area. Nearly 25 percent people are living below the poverty line. They cannot think about pure drinking water for all members of their families. Nearly 20 percent people are very rich. They purchase mineral water. In their homes they are having water-tap connection also. Nearly 40 percent are from the middle-class. They depend on water supply of municipal Committee as well as they call private water suppliers according to their needs. Nearly 25 percent people are from the lower classes. They get water from bore well as well as community's tap.

Question 8:

Data on some of the public facilities are collected as part of the Census. Discuss with your teacher when and how the Census is conducted.

Answer 8:

Census is conducted after every ten years. The last Census was done in 2001. The next Census will be done in 2011.

(a) The Census work is very useful from many angles. This work provide detailed and complete data on some of the public facilities. Looking at these data we can compare the socio-economic status of different people, classes, communities, regions and even of genders.

(b) We can get a clear picture of development of urban as well as of rural areas.

(c) The local, state and central government can plan for future basic facilities, for social and economic justice etc.

Question 9:

Private educational institutions – schools, colleges, universities, technical and vocational training institutes are coming up in our country in a big way. On the other hand, educational institutes run by the government are becoming relatively less important. What do you think would be the impact of this? Discuss.

Answer 9:

Private educational institutions- schools, colleges, universities, technical and vocational training institutes are coming up in our country in a big way. On the other hand, educational institutes run by the government are becoming relatively less important. This will have a multifarious impact on India, in the long run. Private institutions charge high fees and seem to serve the elite more than the poor. This is one of the banes of capitalism that privatization entails. If people stop using educational facilities provided by the government, the latter will soon become redundant. Poor people cannot afford to educate their children in private institutions; consequently, this trend will only serve to heighten the gap between the rich and the poor.

It cannot be denied that private institutions offer a wider range of better facilities than the government does. Hence, in the global economy, India's position is strengthening on account of amplified privatization, especially in the educational sector. Nevertheless, an ideal situation would be one where these facilities are provided "equally" to all, by the government because that would be truly representative of a democratic nation based on ideals of freedom and equality.

❖ Intext Question Pg- 88

Question 1:

You have seen the four situations illustrated above. Based on these, what impression do you get of the water situation in Chennai?

Answer:

From the above four situations it is clearly visible that the water situation in Chennai is drastically worse. The people who get water do not value it rather keeps on wasting it abruptly whereas the others suffer due to them. They have to travel long or wait with a lot of patience in order receive water. In most of the areas of Chennai, there isn't any direct supply of water rather the people either go to the nearby water source to fill their pots or they hire the water tankers in order to get the water.

Question 2:

Pick out the various sources of water for household use from the description alongside.

Answer:

Various sources of water for household use are as follows:

- (a) Water tankers
- (b) Tap water
- (c) Bore well water
- (d) Water purification system

Question 3:

What, in your view, is similar, and what is different in Subramanian's and Padma's experiences.

Answer:

Both the families of Subramanian and Padma experiences scarcity of water. Both of them have bore well as their water source. But at the same time the difference is that Subramanian uses bore well water only for washing clothes and toilets whereas for drinking he hires water tankers which give him pure water. On the other side Padma has to use bore well water both for drinking and washing clothes. Hence, Padma faces a severe water crisis.

Question 4:

Write a paragraph describing the water supply situation in your area.

Answer:

In my case, I live in the region of New Delhi where there is a shortage of pure water. We use bore well water coming into our taps only for washroom purpose and washing utensils whereas for drinking and cooking purpose we have to purchase the filtered water daily which costs around 30-35 rupees on a daily basis.

Question 5:

Why does water flow in a trickle in summer in most places in India? Find out. Discuss: Is there a general shortage of water for everyone in Chennai? Can you think of two reasons why different people get varying amounts of water?

Answer:

This is because due to the dense rays of the sun the level of ground water decreases and along with this there is less rainfall during summer season.

Yes, there is general shortage of water for everyone in Chennai except government officials as even in the shortage of water families of these officials are provided with the water tankers efficiently but other people do not even get the water for their basic needs. They have to struggle for getting water on a regular basis.

Two reasons are as follows:

(a) As water is costly there so everyone cannot afford the equal amount of water on regular basis.

(b) Government provides facility of water only to the government officials and the other have to suffer.

❖ Intext Question Pg- 91**Question 1:**

Whose point of view do you agree with?

Answer:

I agree with the point of view of Amu. Yes, she is right in her way because our constitution only talks about facilities which are provided to the people living in the cities and colonies and not about the people living in the slums which is actually a disappointment to the nation. These people are too the citizens of our nation and they too have the equal right to have their basic living and government need to find a way to enhance their situation.

❖ Intext Question Pg- 92

Question 1:

What are public facilities? Why should the government be responsible for providing public facilities?

Answer:

Public facilities are considered as the universal infrastructure facilities which are needed by every citizen of the country.

In order to live a basic life, the public facilities are very necessary for every citizen which makes the government responsible for providing them efficiently. Also provision of public facilities needs to be affordable as they require high investment to set up.

Question 2:

The government can get private companies to deliver some of the public facilities. For instance, contracts for building roads are given to private contractors. Distribution of electricity in Delhi is done by two private companies. However, the government must keep a close watch on these and ensure that they fulfill their commitment to reach these facilities to all people and at affordable prices.

Why do you think the government must assume the overall responsibility for public facilities even when if it gets private companies to do part of the job?

Answer:

In my opinion government must assume the overall responsibilities for the public facility because government is one which is elected by the people and hence it is the responsibility of the government to provide every basic need to the public at an affordable cost. Even if private companies gives us the facility but the government has to look over in order to see if they are working properly.

Question 3:

Look at your water bill and find out what the minimum rate is for municipal water in your area. Does the rate increase as the use of water increases? Why do you think the government charges a higher rate for greater use of water?

Answer:

The minimum rate of municipal water in my area is 300 rupees per month.

Yes, the rate of the water increases as the use of water rises.

The government increases the rate of water as water is a resource which needs to be conserved and when the prices of water will be higher than people will use water more sincerely and hence it would decrease the wastage of water.

Question 4:

Find out the various kinds of taxes people pay to the government by talking to a salaried person, a person running his or her own factory/business and a shopkeeper. Share your findings in the classroom with your teacher.

Answer:

Students have to do it by their own.

❖ Intext Question Pg-94

Question 1:

Discuss: Do you think this would be a right step? What do you think would happen if the government withdraws from the task of supplying water?

Answer:

No, in my opinion this won't be a right step because if the government withdraws from the task of supplying water and leaves on the private companies to provide us the water then there will be an alarming rise in the cost of water which will make water unaffordable for most of the people due to which the poor people will be deprived of one of their basic needs that is safe drinking water.

❖ Intext Question Pg-95

Question 1:

Discuss the main ideas in the above section. What do you think can be done to improve water supply?

Answer:

The major idea in the above section is that the water supply is made transparent and the rates of water are kept very low and for poor people it is even half of the price which makes the water affordable for all.

In my opinion, the main thing we can do to improve water supply is decrease the rates of water and expand its access to

every corner of the nation and also makes the water supply system transparent to the public.

Question 2:

Do you think it is also important to conserve resources like water and electricity, and to use more public transport?

Answer:

Yes, it is very important to conserve resources like water and electricity as these are the basic needs of human beings. One cannot live without getting water and without electricity as it is the era of technologies one cannot do any work neither the nation can develop or even can sustain longer. Also, we must use public transport often in order to conserve petrol and diesel because they are the non-renewable source of energy and are at verge of getting extinct.

❖ Intext Question Pg-96

Question 1:

Do you think that lack of access to proper sanitation facilities affects peoples' lives? How?

Answer:

Yes, lack of access to proper sanitation facilities indeed affects the lives of the people adversely. Lack of such facilities leads to Cholera, typhoid and also respiratory and skin problems. Lack of proper sanitation facility can also lead to death of adults and infants.

Question 2:

Why do you think that this would impact women and girls more acutely?

Answer:

Lack of adequate sanitation would have an adverse effect women and girls in particular. Women and girls don't only have different physical needs from men but they even have larger requirements for privacy when using toilets and when bathing. Inaccessible toilets and bathrooms make them more vulnerable to rape and other forms of gender-based violence. Moreover, women and girls who defecate in the open, especially in the bush, face the risk of animal attacks. Women and girls don't need toilets and bathrooms only for defecation but they also need it for the sake of privacy and dignity when menstruating.