BLOGS

MCQ’s on Constitutional Law for CLAT PG [Part 6]

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The Constitution of India embodies a transformative vision that places individual dignity, equality, and liberty at the core of constitutional governance. While freedom of religion is guaranteed under Articles 25 and 26, these freedoms are not absolute.

They are subject to public order, health, and morality—where morality must be understood not as popular or sectarian morality, but as constitutional morality grounded in the values of the Constitution. The Court emphasized that religious practices, even if long-standing, cannot claim immunity from constitutional scrutiny when they result in exclusion, discrimination, or indignity.

The practice excluding women of a particular age group from entry into a public temple was examined against the guarantees of equality under Articles 14 and 15 and the right to dignity under Article 21. The Court observed that classification based solely on biological or physiological factors, without a constitutionally valid objective, cannot satisfy the test of reasonable classification. Any practice that stigmatizes a class of persons or treats them as lesser participants in civic or spiritual life undermines the egalitarian promise of the Constitution.

In interpreting Articles 25 and 26, the Court reiterated that the right to manage religious affairs is limited to matters that are essential and integral to religion. The determination of what constitutes an essential religious practice cannot be left solely to subjective assertions of religious authorities. Instead, it must be assessed with reference to constitutional principles and evidence. Practices that are merely accretions or products of social prejudice cannot be elevated to the status of essential religious practices so as to override fundamental rights.

The judgment highlighted that Article 25(2)(b) represents a constitutional commitment to social reform and the opening of public religious institutions to all sections of society. This provision reflects the framers’ intent to dismantle exclusionary practices rooted in notions of purity and pollution. The Court noted that religious freedom under the Constitution is individual-centric and inclusive, ensuring equal access to places of worship for all believers, irrespective of gender.

The Court also underscored the relevance of constitutional amendments that have reinforced equality and dignity, particularly the expanded interpretation of Article 21 after the Maneka Gandhi line of cases and the incorporation of Fundamental Duties under Article 51A, including the duty to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. These developments demonstrate that the Constitution is not static but a living document capable of responding to evolving understandings of justice and equality.

Ultimately, the judgment affirmed that the Constitution does not permit patriarchy to be constitutionalized through religion. Customs and usages, even if sanctioned by tradition, must yield when they conflict with the transformative ideals of the Constitution. Faith, the Court observed, cannot be used as a means to deny equal citizenship or to perpetuate structures of exclusion incompatible with constitutional democracy.

Q1. The Court's reliance on constitutional morality over social morality reflects which deeper constitutional choice?

a. Judicial substitution of moral philosophy

b. Supremacy of individual rights over community autonomy

c. Normative prioritisation of the Constitution as a transformative text

d. Preference for liberal secularism over pluralism

Q2. In reconciling Articles 25 and 14, the Court implicitly adopts which interpretive hierarchy?

a. Article 25 overrides equality when belief is sincere

b. Equality operates as an internal limitation on religious freedom

c. Religious freedom and equality exist in separate constitutional spheres

d. Equality applies only where State action is explicit

Q3. The judgment's treatment of "essential religious practice" doctrine signals which doctrinal shift?

a. Abandonment of the doctrine entirely

b. Transfer of authority to religious denominations

c. Subordination of essentiality to constitutional rights

d. Conversion of essentiality into a purely historical inquiry

Q4. By rejecting exclusion grounded in notions of purity, the Court primarily challenges:

a. Ritual autonomy

b. Scriptural authority

c. Structural subordination embedded in social norms

d. Denominational self-governance

Q5. The Court's use of Article 25(2)(b) demonstrates that religious freedom in India is constitutionally framed as:

a. Negative liberty alone

b. A hybrid of liberty and reform

c. A group-based autonomy right

d. A privilege subject only to legislation

Q6. Which conception of secularism is most consistent with the judgment?

a. Strict wall-of-separation secularism

b. Neutral non-interference

c. Principled interventionist secularism

d. Cultural accommodationism

Q7. The judgment's emphasis on dignity under Article 21 indicates that dignity functions as:

a. A supplementary right

b. A meta-constitutional value

c. An interpretive bridge between liberty and equality

d. A negative right against physical harm

Q8. The Court's insistence on individual access to religious spaces most directly limits which traditional justification?

a. Popular morality

b. Religious majoritarianism

c. Denominational exclusivity

d. Legislative supremacy

Q9. The reasoning suggests that long-standing religious practices lose constitutional protection when they:

a. Are not universally followed

b. Conflict with evolving social morality

c. Perpetuate constitutionally impermissible hierarchies

d. Lack legislative recognition

Q10. The judgment implicitly redefines religious freedom by shifting focus from:

a. Belief to ritual

b. Group autonomy to individual conscience

c. Custom to legislation

d. Faith to reason

Q11. In treating women as rights-bearing individuals rather than devotees subject to custom, the Court advances which equality model?

a. Formal equality

b. Protective discrimination

c. Anti-subordination equality

d. Utilitarian equality

Q12. The Court's rejection of biological determinism aligns most closely with which constitutional concern?

a. Administrative convenience

b. Reasonable classification

c. Essential difference doctrine

d. Substantive equality

Q13. The judgment's understanding of religion assumes that religious institutions:

a. Exist outside constitutional governance

b. Are private associations immune from rights review

c. Are subject to constitutional discipline when exercising public character

d. Are governed solely by statutory regulation

Q14. By invoking constitutional duties alongside rights, the Court subtly indicates that:

a. Duties override fundamental rights

b. Duties supply enforceable obligations

c. Duties inform the ethical content of rights

d. Duties dilute judicial review

Q15. The overall constitutional vision emerging from the judgment best characterises India as:

a. A religiously neutral State

b. A pluralist State without reform mandate

c. A transformative constitutional democracy

d. A majoritarian democratic republic

Answers

Q1. Correct Answer: C – Normative prioritisation of the Constitution as a transformative text

Explanation: Constitutional morality is not moral substitution but constitutional supremacy. The Court treats the Constitution as a document meant to reshape society, not merely reflect existing norms.

Q2. Correct Answer: B – Equality operates as an internal limitation on religious freedom

Explanation: Article 25 is not absolute; equality principles constrain religious practices from within the rights framework itself.

Q3. Correct Answer: C – Subordination of essentiality to constitutional rights

Explanation: Even if a practice were essential, it cannot survive if it violates dignity or equality.

Q4. Correct Answer: C – Structural subordination embedded in social norms

Explanation: Purity-based exclusions are rejected not merely as irrational but as perpetuating caste–gender hierarchies.

Q5. Correct Answer: B – A hybrid of liberty and reform

Explanation: Article 25 protects belief while enabling reform through Article 25(2)(b), reflecting India’s unique constitutional secularism.

Q6. Correct Answer: C – Principled interventionist secularism

Explanation: The State does not withdraw from religion but intervenes to ensure equality and dignity.

Q7. Correct Answer: C – An interpretive bridge between liberty and equality

Explanation: Dignity unifies Articles 14, 15, and 21 into a coherent rights framework.

Q8. Correct Answer: C – Denominational exclusivity

Explanation: Group claims cannot override individual constitutional entitlements.

Q9. Correct Answer: C – Perpetuate constitutionally impermissible hierarchies

Explanation: Longevity cannot sanctify discrimination.

Q10. Correct Answer: B – Group autonomy to individual conscience

Explanation: The Constitution protects individuals within religious communities, not communities at the cost of individuals.

Q11. Correct Answer: C – Anti-subordination equality

Explanation: The Court addresses systemic exclusion rather than mere formal discrimination.

Q12. Correct Answer: D – Substantive equality

Explanation: Biological difference is rejected as a proxy for social exclusion.

Q13. Correct Answer: C – Subject to constitutional discipline when exercising public character

Explanation: Religious institutions with public functions must comply with constitutional norms.

Q14. Correct Answer: C – Duties inform the ethical content of rights

Explanation: Duties guide interpretation without becoming enforceable commands.

Q15. Correct Answer: C – A transformative constitutional democracy

Explanation: The judgment reflects the Constitution’s role as an agent of social change.