

# CHAPTER : TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

## Questions

### Understanding the text

1. What is Sen's interpretation of the positions taken by Krishna and Arjuna in the debate between them?

[Note Sen's comment: 'Arjuna's contrary arguments are not really vanquished... There remains a powerful case for 'faring well' and not just 'faring forward'.]

2. What are the three major issues Sen discusses here in relation to India's dialogic tradition?
3. Sen has sought here to dispel some misconceptions about democracy in India. What are these misconceptions?
4. How, according to Sen, has the tradition of public discussion and interactive reasoning helped the success of democracy in India?

### Talking about the text

1. Does Amartya Sen see argumentation as a positive or a negative value?
2. How is the message of the Gita generally understood and portrayed? What change in interpretation does Sen suggest?

## Appreciation

1. This essay is an example of argumentative writing. Supporting statements with evidence is a feature of this kind of writing. For each of the statements given below state the supportive evidence provided in the essay
  - (i) Prolixity is not alien to India.
  - (ii) The arguments are also, often enough, substantive.
  - (iii) This admiration for the Gita, and Krishna's arguments in particular, has been a lasting phenomenon in parts of European culture.
  - (iv) There remains a powerful case for 'faring well', and not just 'forward'

## Answers

### Understanding the text

1. Sen interpreted that Arjun's progress should not be ignored or underestimated, contrary to what is mentioned in Bhagavad Gita. Sen quoted, 'Arjuna's contrary arguments are not really vanquished. There remains a powerful case for 'faring well' and not just 'faring forward''. Sen believed that Krishna's faring forward thought might not be appropriate in case of war and violence and to support this statement Sen gave the example of the man who lead the creation of the Nuclear bomb, J.R. Oppenheimer.
2. Gender, caste, and voices revolting for breaking stereotypes are the three major issues in India's dialogic tradition. He states that these social barriers are being broken since ages but couldn't persist for long.
3. Misconceptions about Indian Democracy that Sen displayed were:
  - Democracy would suit Indian society due to it's fluctuated history
  - Democracy was a gift to Indians from the western world and it was easy to adopt
4. According to Amartya Sen, public discussions and arguments bought a good change to the social culture in India and gave a better version to democracy. The argumentative tradition let the

citizens think and apply their skills and it even helped to eradicate the orthodox beliefs which were practiced for a long time. Sen also mentioned that consistent arguments may be better for the society as it brings a positive change the increase the capability to think.

### **Talking about the text**

1. Amartya Sen considered argumentation as a positive value to Indian society and democracy. It helps in the decline of various public issues and also brings morals to society which were diminishing gradually. It has made the public think for the nation and express their thoughts for the betterment of democracy.
2. Message from Gita, well depicted by Krishna says that one should perform his deed with full dedication for a cause and don't bother for the consequences. But contrary to this Arjuna's message said that consequences should be considered while acting for a cause as if it won't be considered then it might bring a bad change to which Sen was in support.

### **Appreciation**

1. Supportive evidence for a given situation are as follow:

- Without bothering for his health and with extreme devotion to his nation, Krishna Menon delivered a nine-hour speech in the UN assembly
- Full of contradictions between two morals and thought process, the 'Bhagawad Gita' came up which is just small instance from the Mahabharata
- Krishna focused on doing one's deeds without bothering for consequences but Arjuna defended considering the bad consequences
- Bhagawad Gita was translated into English and many of its incidents were endorsed by popular authors like T.S Elliot.