

**Q.1) What do understand by gender neutrality? Explain with the help of suitable examples. What are your views on the same? Discuss.**

### Approach

The question has three parts. The first part simply asks about common definition of gender neutrality. The second part of the question asks to explain concept of gender neutrality with suitable examples. The third part is asking about your views on the topic. You can have your take on the subject but it should be rational, inclusive and ethical. You have to address all the demands of the question. The tailing word here is 'discuss' so we have to give in-depth details about the topic covering all the dimensions. Explore different perspectives through which the topic can be explained. Give a logical conclusion.

Related concepts:	Keywords in the answer:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• POCSO Act.</li> <li>• Decriminalising Adultery law.</li> <li>• Social construct of gender.</li> <li>• Women empowerment.</li> <li>• Same sex marriages issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's Rights.</li> <li>• LGBTQ Rights.</li> <li>• Fundamental rights.</li> <li>• Gender bias.</li> <li>• Gender neutral language.</li> </ul>

### Introduction

Gender neutrality is a concept or an idea that envisages neutrality on various socio-cultural aspects hitherto being dominated by men. Gender neutrality movement endeavours that policies, language, and other social institutions (social structures, gender roles, or gender identity) should avoid distinguishing roles according to people's sex or gender. This is in order to avoid discrimination arising from the impression that there are social roles for which one gender is more suited than another. The disparity in gender equality throughout history has had a significant impact on many aspects of society, including marketing, toys, and education and parenting techniques.

### Body

- i. **Public utilities:** Proponents of gender neutrality emphasize on making public utilities gender neutral. For example; gender-neutral bathrooms the proponents argue that public restrooms should be available to everyone without distinguishing the gender of the person using them.

- ii. **Language:** With growing awareness, people are moving away from gendered terms and embracing gender-neutral language. Now that women are able to hold these positions, using gender inclusive terms like 'firefighter' or 'chairperson' reflects the reality that the person fighting the fire or chairing the board could be a man or a woman. Another example is 'Actor' instead of using actress for female actors. These are more gender-neutral terms. Also, those who don't fall neatly into the male or female categories, these constant references to the binary male and female groupings can be alienating.

Example of gendered terms	Examples of gender-neutral terms
Mankind	Humankind
Policeman, policewoman	Police
Fireman	Firefighter
Chairman	Chair, Chairperson
Stewardess, Steward	Flight attendant
Actor, actress	Actor
The common man	The common person

- iii. **Occupation:** There are sectors which have been dominated by specific genders for very long periods of time. Gender neutrality concepts envisage eradication of stereotyping of occupations on basis of gender. For example; hospitality sectors have preferred females as front desk workers, air hostesses, secretaries, etc. and men have dominated sectors like transport, mechanical engineering etc. Now, there has been a change. Waitresses and waiters are now frequently called servers, mailmen are now mail carriers, and many actresses are now going by actor. Similarly, there have been positive steps in inducting women in combat forces, mechanical industry, etc. In a very recent instance Morris Garages (MG) produced 50000 vehicles totally made by women workers breaking the shackles in a male-dominated sector.
- iv. **Dressing:** There is now a concept of unisex dressing. Gender neutrality champions popularized unisex dressing. There are dressing items, shoes, caps, etc in market almost all over the world which can be worn by any gender. The idea is to remove the restrictions or taboos attached to a particular type of dressing.
- v. **Technology:** technology has proven to be a great gender equalizer. Technology has ruled out the use of animate power which men used to have advantage of. Machines can be

operated with push of a button now and advancement in Artificial Intelligence has added to the gender neutrality concept in the modern world.

- vi. **Children's toys:** In the marketing of children's toys, gender-specific marketing has been very prevalent. According to a study conducted in 2012, "children learn about the toys seen as appropriate for their gender not only from adults and children but also through the media, which serves as an important source of socialization and gender socialization."

Note: you can add other examples as well.

### **Our view;**

Gender neutrality is a great concept to alleviate the excesses done by men to subjugate other genders over the period of time. Also, it opens up new doors for all the genders to explore the opportunities this world presents. World has advanced so much that social construction of gender seems to have lost its relevance today. People around the world have come to realize the importance of individual rights and identities. Also, to adopt a particular identity and role in shaping one's life is totally acceptable. LGBTQ rights have become one of the most important issues all over the world with most of the countries recognizing their rights and liberties. Gender neutrality is a welcome development for 'other' gender as well.

If more families raise their children as gender neutral, gender identity development and expression will become less problematic. The discourse can become more intelligent. More girls can be persuaded to go for sports and science while more boys can take up dance and design. Gender neutrality does not necessarily mean conforming to the opposite gender norms, as most gender neutrality is flexible and fluidic.

Gender neutrality movement has helped us make laws that would have been biased if not for this concept. If we take example of POCSO or Adultery law, both would have had inherent bias in absence of concept of gender neutrality. Therefore, gender neutrality helps us to make this world a better and inclusive place to live in.

Keeping all these considerations in mind there is also a flipside to this concept of gender neutrality. Solely using gender neutral language can lead to a lack of representation or acknowledgment of certain identities. When pronouns such as "he" or "his" are used to refer to gender-neutral persons, there is a subconscious "sex bias" towards males over females, despite the subject being gender neutral. In sports, studies have shown that more gender references are made to women's versus men's sports, distinguishing female sports as "other." However, these

same studies point out that having a gender neutral sports environment could lead to a near complete lack of acknowledgement of women's sports/teams.

### Conclusion

There is an urgent need of Gender Neutral Society. Equality should be in real terms, not just in our thoughts and books. The liberties which are given to boys by birth should be the same for girls too. Male or female should become only a matter of words, in our conscious mind both should be same, with equal rights and equal duties. Gender neutrality is intrinsically linked to sustainable development, educational attainment and political empowerment. There is a need to make the world a better place for current and future generations. It will only happen when all people are valued as equals that we can really achieve a brighter future, full of ideas and inputs from people across society.

### Q.2) Examine the threat perception with respect to external non-state actors in the context of India's internal security.

#### Approach

The question is about India's internal security. The question wants us to examine India's internal security threat perception due to non-state actors. We have to briefly describe non-state actors with examples and then evaluate the threat they possess for India's internal security. The tailing word here is 'examine' so we have to explore the pieces of evidence and facts related to the topic and inform our analysis.

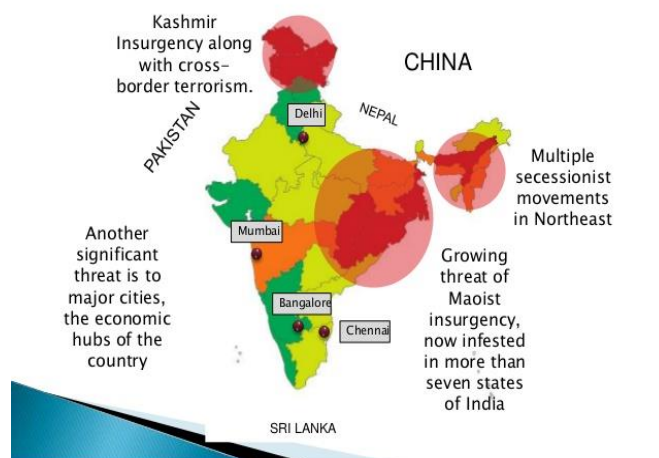
<p><b>Related concepts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money laundering.</li> <li>• External security.</li> <li>• Asymmetrical warfare.</li> <li>• Extreme ideology.</li> <li>• Cross-border terrorism.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Keywords in the answer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counter insurgency.</li> <li>• Illegal immigration.</li> <li>• Use of drones.</li> <li>• Counterfeit currency.</li> <li>• Social media misuse.</li> </ul>
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#### Introduction

Non-state actors are indigenous social, political, and military organizations who often receive international support. The military arms of non-state actors do not rotate at a prescribed time; rather they fight from their own homes for a conflict's duration and upon conclusion of the conflict, non-state threat members become the political and social leaders who emerge to lead

local and federal governments. Such arrangements allow both the non-state threat and their supporters to continually confront and attrite a common opponent frequently without global awareness and world opinion turning against them.

### India's (Internal) Security Scenario



### Body

The use of non-state actors is essentially the employment of a proxy element, which in India's case, gives the state of Pakistan a degree of deniability. However, there is no doubt that none of the so called non-state actors like the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) could have operated with impunity without the active funding, logistical and military support of Pakistan.

#### Threat to India's internal security;

- **Logistics threat:** Non-state actors have exploited growing vulnerability of the coastline and also of the airspace in India. Use of traditional land insurgency routes has given way to tactical transport of men and material. For example; Mumbai terror attack and Purulia arms dropping case incidents.
- **Illegal migrations:** There is a larger threat to India's internal security from illegal migrations. Anti-social elements can enter country through porous borders and incite violence over various issues. The illegal migration from Bangladesh and smuggling activities reflect the porosity (concern highlighted in Kargil Review Committee) of our borders.

- **Nexus:** The deep-rooted nexus between drug **mafias, arms dealers, and money launderers** for financing terrorism is another internal security threat for India. Organisations are using drug money to finance terrorism in Indian states like Kashmir and Northeast.
- **Organized crime:** Of the many problems that north-eastern states have been facing one such challenge is organized Crime. The **United Wa State Army (UWSA)** is the largest of the organized criminal groups in the region and operates freely along the China and Thailand borders.
- **Ideology:** there are non-state actors which incite violence through spread of extreme ideologies. Insurgent Groups which can encourage Left Wing Extremism (LWE), trans-border terrorism and separatist tendencies are dangerous for India's unity in diversity.
- **Technological use by non-state actors:** The Chief of the Indian Air Force, Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhaduria, highlighted the challenges posed by rapid progression in technological innovations coupled with lower costs, leading to disruptions in how threats and warfare are now being perceived. The Air Chief specifically highlighted the potency of these technological disruptions in the hands of non-state actors, increasing their capabilities of achieving disproportionate effects in a conflict theatre.
- **Counterfeit currency:** Non-State actors also try to weaken the economy of a nation adopting different ways. The flooding of the country with counterfeits is also a way of weakening the economy. Militant outfits often use counterfeit currencies via Nepal route to cripple economy of India and help their elements to create disturbance.
- **Social media:** Non-state actors like terrorist outfits have been making use of Social media to carry out their operations. Examples of youth getting recruited through social media apps by ISIS are a grave threat. Also, Social media looks like the biggest threat as we can conclude from last year misinformation which spread through social media resulted in Mob lynching in Rajasthan and many states in the country.

Note: you can add other points as well.

## Conclusion

Non-state actor groups aim not only to create instability in few states but they also have a larger aim of destabilising the country. This is done through sporadic terrorist strikes, which spreads terror and panic. This could also adversely affect the ability of the Indian state to pursue economic modernisation.

**Q.3) You are serving as the secretary in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry of the Government. Your office has been receiving many complaints against the online streaming platforms for showing abusive, violent and sexual content. The parents are concerned that the shows being streamed are having a bad influence on the impressionable minds of their children. While there are safeguards available in the form of parental control of the content that kids can watch, they aren't effective. Kids do find a way to watch the content of their liking by using proxies or even stealing the login credentials. Pressure is mounting on you to regulate the content and put a ban on shows streaming adult content. However, the proponents of the rights of the entertainment industry are quite vociferous about the creative freedom of directors/ producers of online shows. They are in complete opposition to any regulation of the content being streamed. They give examples of many western countries where censorship of content is hardly done.**

**As a senior servant and policymaker, what decision would you take and why? Substantiate your views. (250 words) (20)**

### Approach

As the situation given in the question is too complicated, candidate needs to adopt the approach of 'divide and rule'. A serving secretary in the information and broadcasting ministry has the apex powers of implementing the decisions of that Ministry. In these kinds of questions, it is necessary to adopt the stakeholders' approach. As it will help to look at the issue from different dimensions, consider their positives and negatives and then take the decision accordingly.

Related concepts:	Keywords in the answer:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Powers of Secretary</li> <li>• Regulations regarding abusive, violent, sexual content</li> <li>• Role of parents in a child's life</li> <li>• Right to freedom of expression, Right to profession</li> <li>• Ethics in private and public</li> <li>• Attitude in public life, professional life</li> <li>• Social influence and persuasion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duty</li> <li>• Personal values</li> <li>• Decision making</li> <li>• Right to life, Right to creation</li> <li>• Human values</li> <li>• Balanced decision making</li> <li>• Attitude, Behaviour</li> <li>• Persuasion</li> </ul>

### Introduction

Handling the apex level job in a bureaucracy is a tough and challenging task. A civil servant many of the times have to face this kind of difficult and multi-dimensional situation. These tasks not only test the decision making of a public servant but also it tests whether the civil servant adheres to the long cherished human values or not. In this way it becomes necessary to look at the basics of human values and their integration and implication with that of public and professional life and modern civilizations laws and regulations. Here, Attitude of civil servant also comes in to picture as it influences the decision making.

## Body

Stakeholders involved:

- Me as a secretary
- Parents
- Children
- Proponents of rights of entertainment industry
- Employed people in the industry

Issues involved:

- Duty as a civil servant vs. Personal values: Though as a secretary I sit at the apex table of decision making, my personal values as a parent or values imbibed by my parents influence my decision making.
- Decision and prospective implications are contradictory. For instance, decision of regulation may be a positive sign for parents and the children. However, it's a negative sign for the people who are working in the Entertainment Industry.
- Right to creative freedom vs. Right to live: For instance, People in the entertainment industry may argue under Article 19. However, Parents and children may argue over the encroachment on their Right to life under Article 21.
- Right to life due to its wide interpretations hampers both sides' stakeholders. For instance, regulation and ban will jeopardize life of those people who are employed in the entertainment industry. However, Easy availability of abusive, violent and sexual content may jeopardize life of children who might get misdirected.
- Conflict of whether adhere to traditional cultural value in which I grew up or change as per the society changes and then take decision accordingly.

In this kind of situation, a person's objectivity matters in decision making. Though the decision has subjective implications, it is necessary to find a right balance while taking decision.

Options available:

1. Ignore the complaints, maintain status quo



I always had a dream to be a civil servant. Now, I am at the zenith of my career and taking these kinds of decisions may hamper my career at the apex level. Also, it's a top most post and I am accountable to very few people in the hierarchy to whom I can manage easily. Hence, it will be better to maintain the status quo, ignore the complaints and don't take any action.

Pros:

- Very less work load and no problem at all for me and my staff.
- People working in the entertainment industry may get happy.
- It might also help me to have a quid pro quo.

Cons:

- Hampers the overall development of a child.
- It not only hampers the personality, thoughts, and actions of child but it also hampers growth and development of the nation as children are the future of society.
- It hampers the thinking in the society and structure of society. For instance, continuously getting influenced by abusive, violent and sexual content may develop a child's psyche in such a way that she will think abuse, violence is fine in society.
- Some of the real-life examples can be cited as a controversy emerged over web series of Mirzapur, Mentality of 2012 Nirbhaya Gang rape criminals.

2. Go through the complaints and regulate the content by putting a blanket ban

As a secretary (civil servant) I am liable to public. It is my job and duty to undergo their complaints and take necessary decisions in order to ensure social harmony and peace in the society.

Pros:

- Parents will be happy as the government is working in its best possible way to develop the society.
- Children's future is safe and secure. It will ensure good future for India.
- Also, it will reduce the crime rate in the country.
- It will also cultivate and nurture our traditional and cultural value of respecting everybody. For instance, telecast of Ramayana and Mahabharata left an unprecedented impact on the thinking of people in India.

Cons:

- A blanket ban will hamper the livelihood of the people in the entertainment industry.
- It will hamper their constitutional right to life under Article 21.
- It will not only hamper their livelihood but it will also jeopardize their family member's life. As Income source vanishes.
- It might hamper my career as many of the people's livelihood and employment lost because of my decision.

3. Go through the complaint and take a balanced decision of regulation while airing the necessary guidelines of regulation and parental control. At the same time putting a ban on highly abusive, violent and sexual content or giving them an option to air such content at late night when children

fall asleep etc. Also try convincing the entertainment industry regarding long scale impact of such programs. Also, I need to show them some of the worst examples in western countries where rate of crime and violent activities went upwards. For instance, controversy emerged in USA regarding licensing of guns and rifles.

As a secretary (civil servant) I am liable to public. It is my job and duty to undergo their complaints and take necessary decisions in order to ensure social harmony and peace in the society. At the same time, it is necessary that the decision is taken after considering comprehensive factors and not in one sided view.

Pros:

- Parents will be happy as the government is working in its best possible way to develop the society. Children's future is safe and secure. It will ensure good future for India.
- Also, it will reduce the crime rate in the country. It will also cultivate and nurture our traditional and cultural value of respecting everybody.
- It will not jeopardize the livelihood of people working in the entertainment industry and lives of their family members as they are convinced regarding future implications of such decisions.
- It will also ensure that constitutional ideals of Right to freedom of expression and Right to life are cherished.
- It will also ensure a good track record of me and my staff to take a balanced decision.

Cons:

- Due to ban on highly abusive, violent, sexual content few might lose jobs. Their livelihood may hamper.
- Some parents still might not be happy as they are ardent supporter of complete ban on such content.
- May instill wrong values in children if guidelines not implemented in true letter and spirit

In this scenario, I will take the 3rd decision i.e. going through the complaint and take a balanced decision of regulation while airing the necessary guidelines of regulation and parental control. At the same time putting a ban on highly abusive, violent and sexual content or giving them an option to air such content at late night when children fall asleep etc.

As Buddha advises that Samyak Marg is the best way out of a dilemma, moreover the principle of golden mean also says that wisdom lies in choosing between two. Since taking the extreme decision of blanket ban is detrimental for the people working in the entertainment industry and not taking any action is detrimental to the life of children and society, it is necessary to find a right balance. This decision in best possible way addresses major concerns while some of the concerns remain less addressed.

### Conclusion

As it is rightly said by Dr. Paul TP Wong, "A person's true character is often revealed in time of crisis or temptation. Make sure that you have what it takes to be your best in such times." Hence, in such a times when the traditional values are tested with changed times and the decision has a

multi-fold effect, it is necessary to have a balanced view which will do a greater good than a greater harm.

