

CLAT LAW — WORKSHEET

ARTICLE 15 — PROHIBITION OF DISCRIMINATION

Clauses (1) to (6)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Batch: _____

Instructions

1. Read each passage carefully before answering.
2. Answer the questions **on the basis of the passage and the constitutional principles stated in it.**
3. Do not assume that every form of different treatment is unconstitutional.
4. Pay close attention to:
 - **Who is acting?**
 - **Against whom?**
 - **On what ground?**
 - **What is the purpose of the measure?**
 - **Does the Constitution itself permit the special treatment?**
5. Each question has **one best answer.**

PART A — PASSAGE-BASED QUESTIONS

PASSAGE 1 — ARTICLE 15(1)

Article 15(1) provides that the State shall not discriminate against any citizen **on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any of them.**

The provision is aimed at preventing the State from making certain specified identities the sole basis for adverse treatment. The word **“only”** is important. It indicates that the mere presence of one of these grounds in a factual situation does not automatically resolve every constitutional question; the nature and basis of the State's action must be examined.

For example, if a State university refuses to admit an otherwise eligible student solely because the student belongs to a particular religion, the action would directly raise an issue under Article 15(1).

Question 1

Which of the following is most directly prohibited by Article 15(1)?

- A. A State university denying admission to a citizen solely because of her religion.
- B. A State university requiring all applicants to satisfy an academic qualification.
- C. A State university charging different fees for undergraduate and postgraduate courses.
- D. A State university requiring applicants to submit proof of age.

Question 2

The word “**only**” in Article 15(1) is significant because:

- A. discrimination is permitted whenever religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth is involved.
- B. every classification involving one of the specified grounds is automatically unconstitutional.
- C. the specified ground must be the basis, by itself, of the prohibited discrimination contemplated by Article 15(1).
- D. Article 15(1) applies only when all five grounds are simultaneously involved.

Question 3

A State government provides a scholarship only to students who are economically disadvantaged. A student argues that Article 15(1) is violated because the scholarship is not available to all students.

Which is the best response?

- A. Any difference in treatment automatically violates Article 15(1).
- B. Economic disadvantage is one of the five grounds expressly listed in Article 15(1).
- C. The measure cannot be assessed under Article 15(1) merely because it treats students differently; the constitutional basis and nature of the classification must be examined.
- D. Article 15(1) prohibits every government scholarship.

PASSAGE 2 — ARTICLE 15(2)

Article 15(2) provides that no citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to access to specified public places and facilities.

These include **shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment**, as well as **wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort** maintained wholly or partly out of

State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.

The provision is therefore concerned not merely with formal government employment or education but also with access to certain public facilities.

Question 4

A restaurant located on a public road displays a notice:

“Members of a particular caste will not be served.”

Which provision is most directly implicated?

- A.** Article 14 only
- B.** Article 15(2)
- C.** Article 16(1)
- D.** Article 18

Question 5

Which of the following situations most clearly falls within the type of conduct addressed by Article 15(2)?

- A.** A private company selecting employees on the basis of professional experience.
- B.** A government office requiring applicants to submit educational certificates.
- C.** A public restaurant refusing to serve a citizen solely because of the citizen's caste.
- D.** A university setting different academic requirements for different degree programmes.

Question 6

A shopkeeper refuses to sell goods to a citizen solely because the citizen belongs to a particular religion. The citizen argues that Article 15(2) is relevant.

Which is the best answer?

- A.** Article 15(2) is potentially relevant because it expressly concerns access to shops and prohibits specified forms of discrimination.
- B.** Article 15(2) can never apply to shops.
- C.** Article 15(2) applies only to government employees.
- D.** Article 15(2) applies only when the discrimination is based on economic status.

PASSAGE 3 — ARTICLE 15(3)

Article 15(3) provides that nothing in Article 15 shall prevent the State from making **special provision for women and children**.

This recognises that constitutional equality does not always require identical treatment. A measure that provides a special benefit or protection to women or children is not automatically unconstitutional merely because the same benefit is not given to everyone.

The provision is intended to permit measures that advance or protect women and children, subject to the broader constitutional framework.

Question 7

The State government introduces a programme providing free nutritional assistance specifically to pregnant women and young children.

A student argues:

“This violates Article 15 because men and older adults are not receiving the same benefit.”

Which is the best response?

- A. Correct, because Article 15 always requires identical treatment.
- B. Correct, because Article 15(3) prohibits special treatment based on sex.
- C. Incorrect, because Article 15(3) expressly permits the State to make special provisions for women and children.
- D. Incorrect, because Article 15 applies only to discrimination in employment.

Question 8

A State government establishes a scholarship exclusively for female students to encourage their participation in higher education.

Which constitutional provision most directly supports the State's authority to make such a special provision?

- A. Article 15(3)
- B. Article 16(3)
- C. Article 17
- D. Article 18

Question 9

Which statement best captures the principle behind Article 15(3)?

- A. Every distinction based on sex is constitutionally prohibited.
- B. The Constitution may permit beneficial or protective special treatment for women and children.
- C. Women and children can never claim equality.
- D. Article 15(3) allows the State to discriminate against women whenever it considers it convenient.

PASSAGE 4 — ARTICLE 15(4)

Article 15(4) permits the State to make **special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.**

This provision reflects the idea that substantive equality may sometimes require measures designed to address existing social and educational disadvantage.

Thus, a measure is not automatically unconstitutional merely because it treats one group differently from another. The constitutional question includes whether the special treatment falls within a category that the Constitution itself permits.

Question 10

The State government introduces a special educational programme for the advancement of a socially and educationally backward class of citizens.

Which provision most directly authorises such a measure?

- A. Article 14
- B. Article 15(2)
- C. Article 15(4)
- D. Article 16(1)

Question 11

Which of the following is **NOT** expressly mentioned in Article 15(4) as a category for which special provisions may be made?

- A. Socially and educationally backward classes of citizens
- B. Scheduled Castes

C. Scheduled Tribes

D. Economically Weaker Sections

Question 12

A student says:

“Article 15(4) is unconstitutional because Article 15(1) prohibits discrimination based on caste.”

Which is the best response?

A. Correct, because Article 15(1) always overrides every other clause of Article 15.

B. Correct, because the Constitution requires identical treatment in all circumstances.

C. Incorrect, because Article 15(4) itself permits special provisions for the advancement of specified disadvantaged groups.

D. Incorrect, because Article 15(1) applies only to private individuals.

PASSAGE 5 — ARTICLE 15(5)

Article 15(5) enables the State, by law, to make **special provisions for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes** in relation to their admission to educational institutions.

The provision covers educational institutions, including **private educational institutions**, whether aided or unaided by the State, but it does **not** apply to the minority educational institutions referred to in Article 30(1).

Question 13

Which of the following is most directly covered by Article 15(5)?

A. A law making special provisions for admission of socially and educationally backward classes to certain private educational institutions.

B. A law requiring all private companies to reserve jobs for every citizen.

C. A law providing special provisions only for government employment.

D. A law abolishing all private educational institutions.

Question 14

A State law provides special admission provisions for Scheduled Tribes in a private educational institution that is not a minority educational institution under Article 30(1).

Which statement is most accurate?

- A. Article 15(5) is potentially applicable because it covers certain private educational institutions.
- B. Article 15(5) applies only to government schools.
- C. Article 15(5) applies only to employment.
- D. Article 15(5) prohibits all special provisions in education.

Question 15

A law seeks to impose special admission provisions under Article 15(5) upon a minority educational institution protected under Article 30(1).

Which is the best answer?

- A. Article 15(5) expressly excludes minority educational institutions referred to in Article 30(1).
- B. Article 15(5) expressly requires every minority institution to follow the same admission policy.
- C. Article 15(5) applies to every educational institution without exception.
- D. Article 15(5) concerns only public employment.

PASSAGE 6 — ARTICLE 15(6)

Article 15(6) permits the State to make special provisions for the advancement of **Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)** of citizens, other than the classes mentioned in Article 15(4) and 15(5), in relation to admission to educational institutions.

The provision also permits reservation in educational institutions, including private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the State, subject to the constitutional framework. The minority educational institutions referred to in Article 30(1) are excluded.

Article 15(6) was introduced by the **103rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2019**.

Question 16

Article 15(6) primarily deals with special provisions for:

- A. Women and children
- B. Scheduled Tribes only
- C. Economically Weaker Sections
- D. All persons belonging to rural areas

Question 17

A State introduces an EWS-based admission reservation in a private educational institution that is not a minority educational institution.

Which statement is most accurate?

- A. Such a measure can never be constitutionally permitted because private institutions are outside Article 15.
- B. Article 15(6) can provide constitutional support for such a measure, subject to its conditions.
- C. Article 15(6) applies only to government employment.
- D. Article 15(6) applies only to women.

Question 18

Which statement correctly distinguishes Article 15(4) from Article 15(6)?

- A. Article 15(4) concerns women, while Article 15(6) concerns children.
- B. Article 15(4) concerns socially and educationally backward classes and SCs/STs, while Article 15(6) concerns EWS.
- C. Article 15(4) concerns public employment, while Article 15(6) concerns private employment.
- D. There is no constitutional distinction between them.

PART B — CLAT-STYLE FACT-BASED QUESTIONS

Question 19

The State of Aryavarta passes a law providing that:

“No citizen belonging to Religion X shall be permitted to enter restaurants maintained by the State.”

Which of the following is the strongest constitutional objection?

- A. The law potentially violates Article 15(2) because it denies access to a specified public facility on the ground of religion.
- B. The law violates Article 16(4) because it concerns public employment.
- C. The law is automatically valid because the State owns the restaurants.
- D. Article 15 applies only to admission into educational institutions.

Question 20

A State government establishes a special scholarship exclusively for children from a particular disadvantaged community. The scholarship is intended to improve their educational opportunities.

Which is the best constitutional analysis?

- A.** Any special benefit to one group is necessarily unconstitutional.
- B.** The measure may potentially fall within constitutionally permitted special provisions, depending upon the identity of the group and the precise constitutional basis.
- C.** Article 15 never permits special educational measures.
- D.** The measure must necessarily violate Article 16 because scholarships are employment benefits.

Question 21

A State university announces:

“Only male students can apply for the university's new scholarship because the university believes women are less capable of academic success.”

Which is the strongest constitutional concern?

- A.** Article 15(1), because the adverse treatment is based on sex.
- B.** Article 15(3), because Article 15(3) prohibits all distinctions based on sex.
- C.** Article 16(4), because scholarships are public employment.
- D.** Article 18, because the university is creating a distinction between students.

Question 22

A State government announces a programme that provides additional educational support to Scheduled Caste students to address educational disadvantage.

A student argues:

“This is unconstitutional because Article 15(1) prohibits caste-based distinctions.”

Which answer is most appropriate?

- A.** The student is correct because caste can never be considered for any government policy.
- B.** The student is incorrect because Article 15(4) expressly permits special provisions for the advancement of Scheduled Castes.

- C. The student is correct because Article 15(4) applies only to women.
- D. The student is incorrect because Article 15 does not apply to education.

Question 23

A State government introduces a law providing special admission provisions for socially and educationally backward classes in a private unaided educational institution. The institution is not a minority educational institution under Article 30(1).

Which provision is most directly relevant?

- A. Article 15(3)
- B. Article 15(4)
- C. Article 15(5)
- D. Article 16(6)

Question 24

A State introduces an EWS admission reservation in a private unaided educational institution. The institution is not a minority educational institution under Article 30(1).

Which is the most appropriate constitutional provision?

- A. Article 15(3)
- B. Article 15(4)
- C. Article 15(5)
- D. Article 15(6)

Question 25

A government policy provides a special educational benefit to women.

A student argues:

“Because Article 15(1) prohibits discrimination on the ground of sex, the policy must necessarily be unconstitutional.”

Which is the best response?

- A. Correct, because Article 15(1) contains no exceptions.

- B.** Correct, because every form of differential treatment based on sex is unconstitutional.
- C.** Incorrect, because Article 15(3) expressly permits the State to make special provisions for women and children.
- D.** Incorrect, because Article 15 applies only to men.

Question 26

A State government provides a special admission scheme for Scheduled Tribes in a private unaided educational institution. The institution argues:

“Article 15 applies only to government institutions.”

Which is the strongest response?

- A.** Correct, because Article 15 never concerns private educational institutions.
- B.** Incorrect, because Article 15(5) specifically permits certain special provisions concerning admission to private educational institutions, subject to its constitutional conditions.
- C.** Correct, because private institutions are governed only by Article 16.
- D.** Incorrect, because Article 15(6) automatically applies to every private institution.

Question 27

The State creates a special educational programme for a group that is **socially and educationally backward**. The government does not provide the programme to every citizen.

Which statement is most accurate?

- A.** The programme is necessarily unconstitutional because all citizens must receive identical benefits.
- B.** Article 15(4) recognises that special provisions may be made for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes.
- C.** Article 15(2) requires every educational programme to be available identically to everyone.
- D.** Article 15(6) automatically prohibits the programme.

Question 28

The State introduces a policy giving special educational assistance to EWS citizens.

A student claims:

“Economic disadvantage can never be considered under Article 15 because the five grounds in Article 15(1) do not include economic status.”

Which is the best response?

- A.** Correct; the Constitution contains no provision concerning EWS.
- B.** Incorrect; Article 15(6) expressly provides for special provisions for EWS, subject to its constitutional conditions.
- C.** Correct; Article 15(4) is the only exception to Article 15(1).
- D.** Incorrect; Article 15(3) covers all economically disadvantaged citizens.

PART C — MIXED CLAT APPLICATION

Question 29

Consider the following policies:

Policy I: A State university refuses admission to a student solely because of the student's religion.

Policy II: A State provides special nutritional assistance to pregnant women.

Policy III: A State introduces special educational measures for Scheduled Tribes.

Policy IV: A State provides EWS reservation in admissions in a qualifying private educational institution.

Which option correctly identifies the principal Article 15 provisions involved?

- A.** I–15(1), II–15(3), III–15(4), IV–15(6)
- B.** I–15(2), II–15(4), III–15(3), IV–15(5)
- C.** I–15(3), II–15(1), III–15(6), IV–15(4)
- D.** I–15(5), II–15(2), III–15(1), IV–15(3)

Question 30

A student creates the following chart:

Article 15(1): Prohibits specified discrimination

Article 15(2): Prohibits specified discrimination in access to certain public places

Article 15(3): Permits special provisions for women and children

Article 15(4): Permits special provisions for SEBCs, SCs and STs

Article 15(5): Permits certain special provisions regarding admission to educational institutions

Article 15(6): Permits special provisions for EWS

Which statement best describes the overall constitutional philosophy reflected in these provisions?

- A. Equality requires that every person must always receive exactly identical treatment.
- B. The Constitution prohibits all forms of classification.
- C. The Constitution prohibits certain forms of discrimination while also permitting specified measures designed to advance disadvantaged groups.
- D. Article 15 primarily concerns criminal law and punishment.

BONUS — CLAT TRAP QUESTIONS

Question 31

A State government says:

“We have treated two groups differently, therefore we have violated Article 15.”

Which is the best response?

- A. Correct. Every difference in treatment violates Article 15.
- B. Incorrect. The Constitution itself permits certain special provisions, including those under clauses (3), (4), (5) and (6).
- C. Correct. Article 15 requires identical treatment in every circumstance.
- D. Incorrect. Article 15 has no connection with equality.

Question 32

Which of the following pairs is **INCORRECTLY MATCHED**?

- A. Article 15(3) — Special provisions for women and children
- B. Article 15(4) — Advancement of socially and educationally backward classes, SCs and STs
- C. Article 15(5) — Certain special provisions regarding admission to educational institutions
- D. Article 15(6) — Special provisions exclusively for religious minorities