

**ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE**  
**III SEMESTER BCA/BVC MID SEMESTER TEST AUG 2019**  
**MCT - Media, Culture and Technology**

**Time: One hour**

**Max marks: 30**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. This paper contains **Three** printed sheets and is intended for students of both A and B sections.
2. You will lose marks for exceeding word limits.
3. You are allowed to use a dictionary, during the examination

- I. Read the following extract from Shubhda Chaudhary's article from the internet site 'The Citizen':

**The Politics of Food in India: The Zomato Controversy**

As the Zomato controversy comes to a head, the advent of food politics in India within the context of ultra-nationalism exposes a worrying concern. Founded in 2008, this Indian restaurant search and discovery service is now in the eye of a Twitter storm. Amit Shukla from Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh had recently requested Zomato to cancel an order being delivered to him by a 'non-Hindu' rider. He supported his stand in the context of the holy *Saavan* month and religious freedom endowed by the Indian constitution.

In response, Zomato replied 'Food does not have a religion.' While Zomato's response was welcomed by many, with social media seeing an outpour of support, there was criticism as well. The hashtags #StandWithAmit and #BoycottZomato started trending. When Uber Eats, the American online food delivery app, supported Zomato, Twitter once again went berserk with the viral hashtag #BoycottUberEats. Several Zomato customers uninstalled the app and tweeted about it. Zomato also received several one-star reviews on the Google play store. Deepinder Goyal, the founder of Zomato, tweeted, 'We are proud of the idea of India - and the diversity of our esteemed customers and partners. We aren't sorry to lose any business that comes in the way of our values.'

If we take a step back and think, this entire social media storm reveals several caveats in the very idea of India.

2018 Global Hunger Index report stated that India ranks 103rd out of the 119 countries in terms of level of undernutrition and hunger. India is not on track to achieve the nine Nutritional goals set up WHO for 2025, the report also states. In fact, 195.9 million Indians were reported to be under-nourished for 2015-2017, as revealed by Food and Agricultural Organisation. In a country where food is still a privileged commodity, one can hear no hue and cry about it. Instead, the politics of food revolving around communal lines is a manufactured distraction.

Zomato is a food aggregator app. It entails several restaurants that specifically add 'halal meat' information in their portfolio for customers to make informed choices. The very trend of ordering 'jhatka meat' is not prevalent. This policy framework is followed by several online food delivery apps. It has no communal agenda to aggravate Hindu-Muslim differentiation. In the same way, there are several restaurants at Zomato who customise food for Hindu religious festivals and fasting rituals. There has been no accusation against them in the past.

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Zomato is also known for employing riders who are hearing impaired. Every rider's small family history is mentioned, stating how many kids he has, to endow a human touch. With the amount of hatred, differentiation and toxic culture of politics prevalent in today's India, even this empowering step might be criticised, who knows?

So, are we using social media platforms like Twitter for cheap titillation in the context of food politics? Are we witnessing the emergence of a Hindu Pakistan in the façade of India? Have we forgotten to perceive each other as humans?

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To understand the politics of food in the context of India, vegetarianism signifies caste(ist) purity in Hinduism. It also marks the upper caste identity in the entire food hierarchy. When scrutinised in the context of ultra-nationalism, this vegetarianism has also unleashed its own kind of violence and hegemony, revealing the structural violence still prevalent in India, in the name of moral superiority.

In the same way as caste hierarchy, food politics reveals the Hindu hegemony, turning more and more nationalistic every day. The idea of India, the basic concept of its emergence and democratic functioning, perhaps is now a mere mirage. And as days go by, we will witness these pent-up acts of hatred and toxicity in various contexts, till it eventually destroys the entire idea.

I.A. Answer TWO of the following questions based on your reading the article in around 200 words each: (2x15 = 30 marks)

1. The author suggests that “the politics of food revolving around communal lines is a manufactured distraction.” What do you think is meant by “manufactured distraction”? According to you, how is this ‘distraction’ manufactured on the internet?
2. The author raises an important question, when she says, “are we using social media platforms like Twitter for cheap titillation in the context of food politics?” Do you find merit in the ‘Zomato Controversy’ as a case of contrived caste-based discrimination bent on creating intolerance or do you think it is purely a topic of ‘cheap titillation’? Elaborate on your stand with examples.

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