

DO's AND DON'Ts FOR RESPONDING DEBATABLE/CONTROVERSIAL QUESTIONS AT INTERVIEW

By Manoj K. Jha

The controversial questions are provocative, confusing and consist of dilemma, i.e., there are many sides of such issues, making it difficult to take sides. These questions come in an unanticipated manner and we are mostly unprepared and compelled to come out with answers which are logically unbalanced or reactive or we draw from general layman's perspectives mostly based on sentiments, emotions or popular viewpoints. We may check mishandling of such questions at interviews by keeping in mind some do's and don'ts.

1. One needs to be cool, calm and emotionally balanced.
2. Take your time (a few seconds) to think before you speak. It is not necessary to answer like a programmed robot.
3. You should measure your words and ideas before you let them out. Speaking more is not important; but speaking sensibly and logically is indispensable.
4. Never get overwhelmed or bogged down by your personal location in the context of the questions. If you do, then you lose your reason and rationality and rather than "responding" you start "reacting" with hidden "**emotions**"(which the interviewers understand). For example, if you belong to reservation category or among socially lower or upper castes, keep yourself (your strong feelings due to social and economic deprivation and constraints you face) out when you answer.
5. In such questions you are free to have your own observations. Observations are fine, but they should be rational, logical and free from prejudices or popular misgivings. You can take any side depending upon your real life observations and wisdom.
6. Have standard benchmarks to decide your side of an idea. The standard bench marks include educated and informed opinions, reason and rationality, scientific temper, ethics and moral underpinnings, social and national interest, individual freedom, etc. You should not be led by political outbursts and popular paradigms which are illogical.
7. Ideal and honest stands are good but stands also require clever and practical handling. For doing such an intelligent act, there is one thumb rule- Be polite and never try to take extreme stands which offer you little or no space of accommodation of legitimate interventions and points from other side of the arguments.

Some examples of Controversial and opinion based topics

1. **Tier 2 diplomacy is only eyewash; what matters is Tier 1 diplomacy.**
2. **Winning consecutive elections cannot be taken as proof of moral, ethical and political correctness.**
3. **Corruption and crimes are seriously determined by the proof (evidence and prosecution), those who are detected are thieves, and those who are not detected are heroes.**

4. Infidelity falls under right to privacy and right to freedom; therefore, the provisions pertaining to infidelity in the Criminal penal code should be scrapped.
5. The right of police to encounter the dreaded criminals is well within the policing duty and therefore it should not be questioned on the basis of human rights.
6. Use of human shield as was resorted to by one of the defense personnel for a SOS situation in J&K to deter the militants and protesting people from taking lives of the officers on duty is justified both morally and practically and such officers with innovative responses at the time of crisis must be rewarded.
7. To instill patriotism in the central universities, whether display of battle tanks would be a nice idea or not.
8. Patriotism should be judged by a person's ability to give up his/her cultural and religious identity and accept the majority's culture and customs.
9. Women are not qualified to do the last rites of their parents and the widows are bad omens for rituals like marriage and worship.
10. Administration must have elements of all pervading fear and restrictions and regulations to achieve the desired results.
11. Democracy is an inefficient system because decision making process is vertically and horizontally divided in several layers and so it leads to differences and delay.
12. India should not go for bullet trains till general railways are marked by poor facilities, services & security. It is not only wastage of money for the elite who have other options (airplane) but also mockery of the common people.
13. Patriotism comes out of love and respect for one's nation and that cannot be force-fed to anyone just by making them stand up while the national anthem plays and the national flag is on view.
14. Will abolition of Article 370 and section 35 A help in assimilation of J&K with rest of India.
15. Social or Economic criteria: which is better for reservation in government jobs
16. Should provision of reservation be provided in the private sector
17. Forcing use of Hindi in official language can have serious repercussions on the national unity, peace
18. Banning of books and films to safeguard people's beliefs and sentiments: Is it against Right to freedom
19. Conceding the demand for new smaller states, will it improve governance
20. Uses and misuses of AFSPA
21. Need for revisiting sedition act
22. Identity politics vs Hindu nationalism- which is more democratic and unifying?
23. President Election : Symbolism vs Empowerment
24. Future challenges to judiciary - new rules, cyber crimes, globalisation

25. How Finance Commission bring Cooperative Federalism
26. Delay in the winter session of parliament, concerns regarding parliamentary functioning.
27. Unlike some countries like Germany & Portugal, India has no legal provision for enforcing internal democracy in a political party apart from few related provisions in section 29A of RPA & in election Commission guidelines
28. Electoral Bonds: Will it be able to reduce corruption?
29. National citizen register - issues of illegal migrants
30. Moral policing and its feasibility in present times
31. Making triple Talaq illegal, is punishment feasible or will it lead to misuse of laws?
32. Allowing traditional festivities which imply cruelty to animals such as sacrifice in Kali Pooja, Jallikattu or penances doing harm to human beings
33. Madarsa education or modern education to the Muslim community
34. GST - a half baked and hasty reform, doing more harm than gains
35. Deify or demonize demonetization?
36. 55 Lakh jobs or jobless growth- what's the reality?
37. Cutting food and fertilizer subsidies because there is corruption, leakages, mis-targeting and inefficient and poor outcomes.
38. Liberalization is the root cause of rising corruption and extremism.
39. Provision of Universal Basic income instead of subsidies.
40. To tax agriculture or not to tax?
41. Hazards of Chemical Farming - Farmers death in Yavatmal
42. Measuring poverty-Uni-dimensional or multidimensional measure? Income criterion or consumption criterion?
43. Is MNREGA a threat to Agriculture?
44. Government plans for lateral entry in higher administrative posts: is it a rationale decision?
45. Smart cities or smart villages- which should be priority of India?
46. Odd-even policy for plying cars to control pollution
47. Flaws in the concept of loan waivers
48. Will apathy of rich Nations derail climate action?
49. Giving the rivers the legal status of living being
50. Social Media and terrorism