

Jadavpur University
Bachelor of Arts in Sociology
Admission Test 2019

Full Marks: 50

Time: 2 hours

1. Do you have a role model in your life who inspires you and why? (Write within 300 words)
25
2. Read the passage and answer the question that follow.

When men have concerned themselves with the careful cultivation of the body, the muscular body has been the ideal. For many who have taken it up, muscle building becomes compulsive or addictive as eating disorders are for women. In his book, *Muscle*, for example, Sam Fussell describes how he took up muscle building to help control his feelings of inadequacy and anxiety about himself as 'weedy'. From being skinny, he became very muscular indeed – but then couldn't stop. He was unable to carry on his daily activities without including hours of weight training each day. The muscle builder can never be muscular enough, just as the anorexic can't ever be thin enough (Fussell 1991).

Some women have now taken up muscle building, but most don't look in this direction when trying to achieve a body that conforms to these ideals. Their anxieties concentrate on fear of fatness. The modern ideal of the desirable woman is one who is thin and trim. Anorexia and bulimia are illnesses of the *active* woman. They don't just happen; they have to be actively accomplished. The anorectic individual sticks to a rigid, minimal diet and may do aerobics every day of the week.

Anorexia and other eating disorders reflect a situation in which women play a much larger part in the wider society than they used to, but are still judged as much by their appearance as their attainments. Eating disorders are rooted in feelings of shame about the body. The individual feels herself to be inadequate and imperfect; and her anxieties about how others perceive her become focused through her feelings about her body. Ideals of slimness at that point become obsessive – shedding weight becomes the means of making everything all right in her world. Once she starts to diet and exercise compulsively, she can become locked into a pattern of refusing food altogether, or of vomiting up what she has eaten. If the pattern is not broken (and some forms of psychotherapy and medical treatment have proved effective here), the sufferer might actually starve herself to death.

- a) Do you think that there is an increasing obsession with body or body image in recent times? Elaborate in not more than 300 words. 25