QUESTION PAPER SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

(Please read each of the following instructions carefully before attempting questions)

The ESSAY must be written in the medium authorized in the Admission Certificate which must be stated clearly on the cover of this Question-cum-Answer (QCA) Booklet in the space provided. No marks will be given for answers written in medium other than the authorized one.

Word limit, as specified, should be adhered to.

Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Question-cum-Answer Booklet must be clearly struck off.

Write two Essays, choosing ONE from each of the Sections A and B, in about 1000-1200 words each :

2018

A good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge.

A people that values its privileges above its principles loses both.

Alternative technologies for a climate change resilient India

Customary Morality cannot be a Guide to Modern Life

Management of Indian border disputes – a complex task

Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere

Reality does not conform to the ideal, but confirms it

'The past' is a permanent dimension of human consciousness and values

A good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge

Philosophy

Introduction

This is a quote from British philosopher Bertrand Russell's essay 'The good life'. He says that although both love and knowledge are necessary, love is more fundamental as it makes people look for knowledge about how to benefit those whom they love. Knowledge is necessary because without it, people will accept what they have been told, which might spell harm to the one for whom they bear the most genuine feeling of love and benevolence. So, a good life primarily results from the feeling of love as inspiration and is guided by knowledge.

Many decades later, the legendary Zen Buddhist teacher **Thich Nhat Hanh** was to echo Russell when he said "to love without knowing how to love wounds the person we love." Russell however, is careful enough to note that 'knowing how to love' requires that we first come to know of love's many dimensions.

Many Dimensions of Love

According to Russell, love includes a variety of feelings. To him love "on principle' doesn't seem genuine. It moves between two poles: (i) pure delight in contemplation; and (ii) pure benevolence. In respect of love for inanimate objects, delight is the sole feeling of love, for according to Russell, "we cannot feel benevolence towards a landscape or a sonata." He claims that the source of art is to be presumably found in this type of delight, as a rule; and we may guess from our own experience that it is stronger in very young children than in adults. This is because, the adults are prone to view objects in a utilitarian manner; as something of use to fulfil some purpose which is not the case with young children. When love finds its expression as feelings towards human beings considered as an object of aesthetic contemplation, we tend to see them as charming or reverse. The other pole of love is benevolence; mother Teresa and others loved and served lepers who could have given no aesthetic delight; parents love and sacrifice everything for their children even if they are hideous to look at.

Russell says, love at its fullest is an indissoluble combination of the two elements, delight and well-wishing. For instance, the pleasure of a parent in a beautiful and successful child combines both elements; so does such couple-love where there is secure possession and no jealousy. A person, who wishes to be loved, wishes to be the object of love containing both these elements.

Love and knowledge for Good Life

There have been at different times and among different people many varying conceptions of the good life. To some extent the differences were amenable to argument; this was when men differed as to the means to achieve a given end. Some think that prison is a good way of preventing crime; others hold reformation and education would be better. A difference of this sort can be decided by sufficient evidence. But some differences cannot be tested in this way. Tolstoy condemned all ways; others have held the life of a soldier doing battle most deserving of the right to be very noble. Here there was probably involved a real difference in terms of ends. Those who praised the soldier usually consider the punishment of sinners a good thing in itself; Tolstoy did not think so. On such a matter no argument is possible. This view of the good life cannot, therefore, be proved right; however, it is worth agreeing to: The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge.

Knowledge and love are both indefinitely extensible; therefore, however good a life may be, a better life can be imagined. Neither love without knowledge, nor knowledge without love can produce a good life. In the Middle Ages, when pestilence appeared in a country, holy men advised the population to assemble in churches and pray for deliverance; the result was that the infection spread with extraordinary rapidity among the crowded masses of supplicants. This was an example of love, without knowledge. The late war afforded an example of knowledge without love. In each case, the result was death on a large scale.

We've seen it is primarily love that inspires one to seek knowledge that would guide them to benefit those whom they love and make their life good. But, on the other hand, if knowledge does not exist, one will be content to go on believing what they have been told, which could possibly harm the person they love and want to benefit. Medicine affords the best example of this. A physician with his knowledge is more useful to a patient than the most devoted but ignorant friend; and progress in medical knowledge results in far greater benefit to the health of the community than ill-informed philanthropy.

Love inspires people to live a life of principles and morality. However, morality per se is a curious blend of utilitarianism and superstition. The latter is the origin point of all moral rules. It all started with certain acts being considered as angering the gods and causing divine wrath to descend upon

the entire community even though the guilty would be an individual. So, these acts were forbidden by law with the conception of sin, as that which is displeasing to God. Curiously, no reason can be assigned to why certain acts were branded thus displeasing. Utilitarianism focuses on the knowledge of outcomes to determine whether something is right or wrong. It considers the one that will produce the greatest good for the greatest number of people as the most ethical choice. This is how, war is justified and so is a business decision. However, Utilitarianism has limitations; we do not know the future, and hence cannot say if the consequences of our actions will be good or bad. It is evident that a man with scientific knowledge will not be intimidated by sacred scripture or religion. He will not accept any act as sin without inquiring what will cause harm—the act itself or the belief that it is a sin. He will invariably discover superstition, and will realize that like the Aztecs, it involves needless cruelty instituted by the custodians of traditional morality perhaps to afford a legitimate outlet for their sadistic desire to inflict pain. Superstitions and sin would vanish if people were actuated by feelings of love and benevolence towards their fellow humans.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that to live a good life in the complete sense a man must be inspired by love for the self as well as for the others; and also love for knowledge as well as human values which will guide him to act with kindness, morality and benevolence for the love of humanity.

A people that values its privileges above its principles loses both

Social

Introduction

A principle is a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behaviour or for a chain of reasoning. The fundamental feature of principles is that they are discovered. On the other hand, concepts and procedures may be said to be invented; they are abstract.

The content quality of principles, however, is par excellence in that they represent the truth in a significantly decisive way. Facts, on the other hand, can be misrepresented. While principles are applied in life situations, facts are learned and memorized. In comparison to principles, facts are trivial. Principles are generalized after extended period of experience whereas facts are particulars.

Procedures too do not enjoy the status of principles because they may or may not produce the desired goals or outcomes. Procedures fail to inform us on the way things work. Procedures are amenable to change and yet offer the desired results. Moreover, there can be several procedures leading to the same desired goal. Procedures when contrasted with principles stand on a lower pedestal because principles are the key to understanding the world around us. They explain why things happen and how they happen.

Therefore, principles are the most important content we can have. We only need to know how to apply them to new or emerging situations.

What Principles Are

Principles form the very foundation of all our knowledge. Our truths and beliefs are based on principles. They create values and guide our actions. Principles are rule sets, guidelines, or theories. Everything that we know can be reduced to a set of principles and laws.

Principles are present everywhere from rules of society and ethics to those of philosophy and political science; from the laws of Newtonian and Einsteinian physics to those of biology and chemistry, and so on. Principles are

comprehensive enough to cover the entire spectrum of human consciousness including all concepts and all sciences in the form of axioms, maxims, morals, concepts, legal guidelines and official policies.

Broadly speaking, principles serve the purpose of suggesting the guidelines for application in situations. For instance, it is possible for people to check the value and veracity of their action based on a relevant principle before they act.

Man's core beliefs are more or less based on well justified philosophical theories and moral principles. This saves much of human action based on ignorance. Acting without principles is as futile as trying to do mathematics without the number system. However, principles themselves are only guidelines as they do not say anything concrete or factual.

Privileges versus Principles

Privilege is an entirely different notion. Privileges have a lower priority than principles; because unlike the comprehensive reach of the latter, they are applicable to only a select few. For instance, all human beings have the right to basic things such as healthcare and education, health insurance and company cars are privileges enjoyed by senior management.

Privilege is a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a select few on the basis of birth, position, status, performance, or wealth. While principles are permanent, privileges can well be snatched away if principles are compromised. Privileges of birth enjoyed by the royalty and other wealthy elite continue only as long as these people live by principles. History is replete with examples of unscrupulous kings overthrown and stripped of their privileges. Similarly, revered scholars or teachers have often found themselves losing their privileged status overnight by some path-breaking, iconoclastic discovery.

A people or a society that values its privileges above its principles stands to lose both. Privilege being exclusive and socially conferred straddles on selfishness and immorality in violation of the principle of equality. The universal principle says that principles have the highest value while privileges have lower value. A people that values its privileges clearly violates this principle. There numerous examples of this in history. The colonialism based on conquest was defended as white people's privilege. In the end they lost not just their colonies but also their moral authority based on principles. The Brahmins in India historically were privileged but the times changed and the notion of equality demanded that privileges be based on merit. It should be earned rather than demanded. The Brahmanical community lost

their privilege as well as the principles on which they had commanded their privilege. .

In the United States, the black people were treated poorly in times of apartheid the institutionalised oppression based on skin colour prevailing in South Africa. They were labelled as law breakers and criminals. The whites were privileged. Their position of privilege was gone with the Civil Rights Movement spearheaded byMartin Luther King Jr.

It may be noted here that when privilege is not deserved but is based on demand or when privilege is given a priority over principles, it is a distinct sign of the decay of that people or social strata which is identified as privileged. In fact, privilege is an outdated notion; it was prevalent in medieval societies and can find no place in the modern times of equality. The reason privileges are given in modern societies is because the position holder is burdened with responsibilities which can be offset with privileges. This being the reason or rationale of privileges, it cannot be offered to a class as entitlement or right. When privileges begin to be confused with entitlement or right, it is a distinct sign of the loss of principles.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that there are several benefits of living by principles. It cannot be compared to privileges. Consistency with values imparts the peace of mind and establishes a moral universe. Prioritizing privileges above principles, on the other hand, implies social degradation, loss of the moral universe and an undesirable overload of stress. This situation leads to anarchy and emergence of social rebels who question privileges that in their opinion are neither due nor deserved. Unquestioned privileges too graduate into immoral excesses and loss of virtues. When people begin to compromise with principles the society begins to fall in the trap of moral decadence.

When a person lives by principles, he becomes the torch bearer of society like Buddha and Gandhi. He creates a moral society with high standards of virtue. Gandhi did not demand privileges; his principles made him the Father of the nation. Quite unlike the leaders that followed him. Those who were in a position to frame rules on high principles for a welfare society constituted privileges by statutory provisions. Over a period of time, the privileges of the ruling elite would corrupt them beyond redemption and an anti-incumbency wave pushed by new principles would sweep them away into political exile. With this, the principles they adhered to would also get buried in the sands of time. The political class that valued privileges over principles clearly lost both.

Alternative technologies for a climate change resilient India

Environment

'We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.'

This soul-stirring thought reveals the reality of climate change and its brutal effects on the environment. It also reminds us of the urgent responsibility of mankind to pass on a greener, safer and resourceful earth to the future generations; and to save them from suffering because of the thoughtless human actions that are deteriorating the conditions of life on the planet.

'Climate Change' is a major threat which the global community faces at present but it is the unpredictability of climate change that makes sustenance of life more challenging. Basic science defines climate as the average state of everyday weather in a region over a period of 30 years; but with shifting weather patterns as of today, the climate of a region changes with every passing year!.

It is evident in the untimely rain and the more frequent cyclones, floods and droughts that manifest altogether the drastic changes unleashed on the face of the earth as a result of uncontrolled and unplanned human activities. Climate change is real and it is expanding across oceans and continents without any check.

Leave alone agriculture which is directly dependent on weather conditions, every other sector, be it infrastructure, health, energy, drinking water and so on, is at risk which is further capable of affecting millions across the globe. It is difficult to foresee any future for humanity in such a scenario and if timely interventions are not made in the appropriate directions; it would not be easy to sustain the growing human population.

The big question is, 'How prepared are we for this challenge?' or 'Are we ready to change our ways to create a better world for the forthcoming generations?'

Necessity is the mother of invention, human evolution has so established. And arresting Climate change is a dire necessity today. So, the only way forward is to make technological inventions that would minimize the harm to the Nature

Challenges ahead

The IPCC at COP 25 held between December 2, 2019 – December 13, 2019 in *Madrid*, Spain reaffirmed the goal of arresting global warming at 1.5 degree or else there will be catastrophic losses, especially for emerging economies like India, and the climate change effects will become irreversible.

This sounds an alarm bell especially for India in terms of the importance of urgent adoption of alternative technologies to build climate change resilience. The effects of climate change being multidimensional, it calls for enforcement of alternative technologies in order to resist the impacts in all aspects of life: agriculture, energy needs, lifestyle, food and so on.

The problem of climate change does not just stay static but worsens progressively. The challenge is more discomforting given the limited knowledge of the masses to understand the severity of the problem. Here comes the role of education and youth who can be real leaders in their community. So, the need of the hour is to make one and all environmentally-aware and prepared to tackle the issue at their specific levels.

Agriculture

The contribution of agriculture to the GVA has decreased from 18.2% in 2014-15 to 16.5% in 2019-20. The decline was mainly due to a decrease in share of GVA of crops from 11.2% in 2014-15 to 10% in 2017-18. (https://www.prsindia.org/report-summaries/economic-survey-2019-20)

In India 50 % of our population is dependent on agriculture for employment. (https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/india-needs-farm-revolution-to-attain-9-10-gdp-growth-amitabh-kant/articleshow/68473771.cms?from=mdr) More than half of the total land under agriculture still remains devoid of irrigation and depends on monsoon rains. At the same time, the complexity of the Indian monsoon as weather phenomena brings forth the extremities that the crops can face if there is a small disturbance on one link which can disrupt the rainfall pattern throughout.

We also can't overlook the contribution of agriculture to greenhouse gases and its consumption of a significant amount of freshwater.

So, innovative infrastructure and timely response is what we require here. Sourcing of more energy from renewable alternatives is a must. **Retention ponds** created to accept rain and storm water during periods of increased precipitation and diversion channels can help store water for future use. **Rainwater harvesting** is effective in ensuring regular sufficient water amount to the farmlands. **Greenhouse technology** is another important technique where crops are grown under partially or fully controlled conditions to get optimum growth and productivity.

Energy

Major bulk of energy in India is derived from coal and gas based thermal power plants. However, the dependence on coal which is the largest contributor of green house gas CO_2 can be reduced through alternative technologies. **Hydroelectric power** from water in motion (waterfall, mainly) is the major one among these. S**olar energy** is being harnessed through evolving technologies like solar heating, photovoltaic, solar thermals and so on. The International Solar Alliance headquartered in India pictures the seriousness of India in this direction. **Wind energy** from windmills, **nuclear energy** from fission and fusion, **geothermal energy** from steam sourced beneath the earth's crust far down to the earth's hot molten rock, magma; **ocean thermal energy** produced by using the temperature difference between deep cold ocean water and warm tropical surface waters; and **tidal energy** are other alternatives which save harm to the environment.

Infrastructure

Concrete, a major component in construction has a lower albedo; i.e., they absorb a very high percentage of incoming radiation. Big cities are thus called 'heat island'. Use of glass in exteriors of high rise buildings in tropical countries like India is contributing to greenhouse effect. So, using heat reflecting materials would be a way forward. Roads and terraces can be painted white to reflect back the sunlight and avoid weather extremities.

Health sector

Global warming has created an upward swing in warm and moist environment, which is favourable for reproduction of various disease vectors like mosquitoes, rats, cockroaches. Using information technology to spread awareness on these can be useful. CRISPR is an interesting scientific innovation which edits the gene in vector mosquitoes and uses it to eradicate a particular species from an area.

Unprecedented overexploitation of land and water resources, while contributing to climate change, depletes the ability of humanity to feed itself. Malnutrition due to food shortage can be addressed through food fortification technology. Technological innovations can be employed to improve food storage facilities and to provide pure drinking water, proper nutrition and sanitation to all.

Waste management is another challenge; and administrative and municipal bodies should partner in this regard to eliminate emissions and diseases caused by rotting waste.

Desirable Approach

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has mandated **sustainable development, mitigation** and **adaptation** as the Climate Change resilient pathways**.**

1.   At individual level, basic changes in lifestyle like switching to energy efficient solar or LED lights, jute bags and eating at restaurants in edible paper plates and cups can make a huge difference.

2.   At societal level, Self Help Groups and community participation and adaptation to changes for greener environment can bring positive results.

3.   At national level, leveling up of a National Mission on Climate Change Resilience along with already proposed National Mission for Green India and National Action Plan on Climate Change will cater towards enhanced energy efficiency. Deploying of Artificial Intelligence for mapping people's environmental behaviour can help conserve resources.

Customary Morality cannot be a Guide to Modern Life

Social

Introduction

Ethics deals with conduct. Ethical theory offers a systematic view of our choices in conduct with respect to their moral import—good, bad; right, wrong. Customary morality is the morality based on traditions and customs. This form of morality dictates everything from what we should eat and how we should dress to what should be our conduct. A large part of this morality comes from religions. In modern times, this form of morality may be seen imprinted in several facets of our life including business. For instance, a business person may act in a certain way because they are guided by customs in their sense of morality.

For many business persons, there is no such thing as absolute morality. They do not believe in doing things because the modern business culture demands it but they are instead guided by the custom of their trade. For instance, in India many businessmen do not give their goods or products on credit unless they have made their first transaction because they are guided by customary morality.

Reflective morality is based on and guided by rational conduct. It is not based on custom or culture. In the face of tradition and habit, the rational thinker floats a viewpoint based on reform.

Problem of Customary Morality

Customary morality is rigid and hard to change. That's the main problem with it. It refuses to change even when the change is needed. Anyone who dares to revolt against custom is punished and excommunicated. This type of morality continues ad infinitum unless the society itself changes drastically by war, conquest, invasion, epidemic, calamity, etc.

The guardians of customary morality not only adhere to it rigidly but offer strange explanations to justify irrational beliefs. For instance, they insist that the entrance door of a house should be facing east, because east is the realm of gods; and never to the south as that is the region of death. A large number

of superstitions occupy the landscape of customary morality with no rational explanation for any. Many Hindus objected to man landing on the moon because to them moon was a god. In the past, Hindus did not venture out into the seas because irrational customary morality made *samudrollanghana* or crossing the seas punishable by stripping away the offender's caste orientation. As a result, Indians were deprived of the opportunity to become explorers, navigators or overseas traders.

Customary morality in Modern Times

It must be acknowledged that customary morality is not going to serve us well in the modern times. It is a vicious trap of ignorance and our effort should be to come out of it. The reason we cling to customary morality is rooted in fear psychosis which evokes our emotional and psychological responses. When subjected to reflection based dispassionate reason, none of it makes sense. The reflective morality of the informed modern man finds customary morality actually non-ethical and hence stands opposed to it. It is the constant struggle between the two that is hallmark of the present times.

Open-minded Examination and Judgement

Reflective morality is critical and based on inner examination, according to John Dewey, the noted philosopher. Dewey held that a person's customs and habits come to be questioned when they clash with their experience. They realize that they themselves are the judge of their actions, not customary morality. The fact of its existence is no moral warrant. Thus, reflection is adopted and fostered as a responsibility in a person's mind. Active consideration becomes an obligation of a person to his or her society.

As an ethical concept, open-mindedness is the gateway to transition between customary thought and reflective thought. To adopt the viewpoint that despite what one has been taught and what one believes to be right, there may be something which is possibly more right, which one may not be knowing of at the moment, but should actively search for the same. This conscious and active search for what is actually right or ethical is the means by which a person is able to find their individual ethical values, as opposed to that customarily imposed in the name of will of God or decree by a King or Dictator. This can be understood with the analogy of a vehicle as a metaphor for life. Adopting customary morality is analogous to being a passenger on a bus which is driven by else, while living with reflective morality would mean being the driver of your own vehicle. One has to be open-minded which is what will make you get off the bus and begin driving your own car or exercise moral freedom.

However, the means by which a person comes to want open-mindedness is a concept tenfold complex. People like their habits and cling to their customs. To convince an individual to cast aspersions on their customary morality is as hard as convincing them to doubt that the sun will rise the next day. For them, to think differently is to err. How does one change and become a reflective thinker, then? What driving force can there be for open-mindedness to overpower customary morality? The answer is visible everywhere around us. When we travel to other societies and receive culture shock, our instinct to survive kicks in and we open our minds to accept the new lest we should perish within the walls of our customary beliefs.

Thus, active open-mindedness may not be difficult to foster when there is something that impresses the mind with such force as experience. This understanding can be the ideal starting point to consciously inculcate the open mindedness to reflect upon and question irrational beliefs and practices; and also to draw courage to replace customary morality with informed ethical values in life.

Conclusion

It is evident that customary morality cannot be a guide in modern life because they are the two ends of the pole. The former is rooted in irrationality and shrouded in mystery and religious conundrums, starkly opposed to the modern age of information and scientific enquiry. If we adopt customary morality as our guidepost, we might stumble often. Simply put, customary morality that decides our living, eating, dressing, and work habits would directly clash with the corresponding standards set forth in the modern age. For instance, 'early to rise and early to bed makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise' cannot guide the life of an executive working night shift in an MNC of the modern world.

Management of Indian border disputes – a complex task

Politics

India shares 15,106.7 km of its land boundary with seven nations—Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. The land borders run through varied geographical terrains like deserts, fertile lands, swampy marshes, snow-covered peaks and tropical evergreen jungles which throw unusual challenges for the security personnel manning them.

In addition, India's coastal boundary runs 5,422.6 km on the mainland and 2,094 km around its islands; with maritime borders shared with the island nations of Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Maldives and Thailand. India's territorial sovereignty extends till 12 nautical miles from the coast into the waters; a further 12 nautical miles beyond this lies the 'zone of hot pursuit' where intrusion calls for action from its coastal states; and extending 200 nautical miles further into the waters lies India's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) granting exclusive fishing, mining and oil exploration rights to its coastal states.

Managing such diverse borders is a complex task in times when national security and international trade are equally important for economic prosperity and social stability; more so, when national borders divide common socio-cultural landscape and ethno-linguistic groups, and land disputes abound.

Indo-Pak border challenges

Since the Partition of 1947, incessant border skirmishes have marked the line of actual control. Neither side has formally recognized the accession of the territories claimed by the other even after several wars and conflicts between them. The border dispute over Pakistan occupied Kashmir and over Sir Creek tidal estuary between Gujarat and Sindh, including the maritime border in that area, are highly contentious issues. India is highly susceptible to Pakistan sponsored cross-border terrorism, separatist movements, disruptive activities and counterfeit Indian currency commissioned for destabilizing the economy. Infiltration by armed militants, smugglers of narcotics and even for Illegal migration is common. These issues often renew hostilities and peace initiatives have largely failed. The border forces are not equipped to handle these with their poor intelligence capabilities and severe resource crunch.

Securing the border stretches lying on dangerous snowy cliffs like Kargil are particularly challenging.

Indo-China border challenges

Since China's occupation of Tibet in 1950, the original Indo-Tibet border is the disputed Indo-China border at the McMahon line with Arunachal Pradesh and at the Johnson Line with Ladakh. India adheres to the Johnson Line of 1865 which puts Aksai Chin within Jammu and Kashmir territory, but China claims Aksai Chin in accordance with the Macartney-Macdonald line of 1899. The claim of China over the Aksai Chin, trans-Karakoram tract and Arunachal Pradesh is a constant irritant. Despite Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and several bilateral peace incursions have not stopped. Border stand-offs in 2013 and 2014; the Increased presence of Chinese troops towards their rapid infrastructure build-up in Tibet; the Doklam stand-off in 2017; and the BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) have raised India's apprehensions and necessitated aggressive border patrolling; but a yet more effective border management strategy is called for.

Indo-Bangladesh border challenges

The partition of India in 1947 gave rise to a sensitive situation among the inhabitants of some scattered plots of lands lying on the Indo-Bangladesh borer areas who were paying revenues to one state but were surrounded by the territory of another. The boundary line drawn by Sir Radcliffe made them enclave (chhitmahal) dwellers – Indian citizens in Bangladesh territory and Bangladeshis in the Indian states of West Bengal, Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya. The 2015 Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) and the exchange of enclaves and adverse possessions between the two countries resolved the severe identity crisis to an extent but challenges remain. The international boundary is fenced only along the Tin Bigha corridor, elsewhere smuggling of goods and trafficking of cattle thrive despite BSF patrolling as well as surveillance cameras.

India and Bangladesh had also locked horns over the tiny New Moore island or South Talpatti in the Bay of Bengal before rising sea levels claimed it. The issue of 40,000 Rohingya refugees who infiltrated through Bangladesh border needs cooperation of both countries for a sustainable solution.

Indo-Myanmar border challenges

India's border with Myanmar is susceptible to cross border activities of Naga, Mizo, Meitei, and Assamese insurgents who exploit the strong cross-border ethnic linkages to find sympathy, shelter and support for their 'cause' among their own people across the border. Arms trafficking from Thailand,

Cambodia and China; and narcotics smuggling from the Golden Triangle of Laos, Thailand and Myanmar are big concerns. Most battalions are deployed in counter-insurgency operations, which leaves the border posts undermanned and the threats heightened. An unprecedented challenge arose when Myanmar's military crackdown sent more than 700,000 Rohingya refugees fleeing to Bangladesh and subsequently into India through Indo-Bangladesh border.

Indo-Sri Lanka border challenges

Ethnic conflicts between indigenous Sinhalese and Indian-origin Tamils had strained India- Sri Lanka relations but today the two are one of the largest trade partners. They are signatories to a trilateral maritime security cooperation agreement with Maldives, for improving surveillance and anti-piracy operations and reducing maritime pollution in the Indian Ocean Region. However, dispute over fishing rights in Palk bay and control over Kachchatheevu Island continue. China's steadily increasing investments in Sri Lanka's infrastructure building, weaponry and development loans have also raised threats.

Friendly neighbours Nepal and Bhutan

Indo-Bhutan relations are friendly and the border is secure with a collaborative Group Border Management and Security. However, an otherwise friendly Nepal has renewed its claim on Kalapani as part of its Darchul district, since the latest Map of India released after the reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir shows Kalapani in the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand.

Way Forward in the face of border threats

Effective border management can no longer be restricted to border security in the changing world. Ensuring a seamless legal movement of people and trade across the borders as well as curbing illegal flow is imperative. Opening borders is essential for economic growth, but risks of insurgency, militancy and smuggling of drugs and arms must be addressed with cooperation. This can only be accomplished through proper planning and a three-pronged approach of people, process and technology.

India needs to upgrade border security with latest technologies for border control and surveillance, especially in the high altitude snowy posts. At the same time, development of integrated systems for entry, exchange and storage of data is indispensable to facilitate the movement of people and products without endangering security. With the development of various economic corridors, the BSF will have to evolve from a restrictive to a permissive organization without compromising on security aspects. At the same time,

giving the BSF investigative powers for specific border crimes will help in improving prosecution of border crimes and prevention of crimes therewith.

Diplomatic overtures should be aggressively followed up for bilateral and multilateral cooperation towards countering insurgency and addressing other security concerns. Myanmar's recent crackdown on insurgents is a good result of such attempts by India. US–Mexico cooperation for developing border areas economically, socially and demographically to minimize border crime can prove a good model. Knowledge exchange and experience sharing with international border-guarding forces can also be taken into consideration.

Sustained community interaction programmes to sensitise the border communities to participate in nation building exercise can also ease things, but security infrastructure must be people-friendly and cause minimum inconvenience to the local population.

Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere

Economy

In the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Philadelphia Declaration, 1944, 'poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere' was declared as the main objective for protecting rights and the dignity of humans. It was considered to be the main aim of governments around the world and also to include it as the aim of its governance policy and economic planning. The impact of poverty is far and wide, and greatly impact prosperity and standard of living of people. "Extreme poverty anywhere is a threat to human security everywhere" was quoted by Kofi Annan, the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Poverty can have multiple definitions. It could be the lack of material possessions, a deficiency of income, or the scarcity of the basic necessary things required for a person to live. It is, in the easiest terms, that state of being extremely poor, wherein an individual has no access to the basic amenities of life. It is a state or condition in which a person for society does not possess the financial resources which are necessary for ensuring minimum standard of living. It has greater implications as people who suffer from poverty are deprived in many different ways such as lack of nutrition, limited access to education and various other essential necessities without which a person cannot perform its day to day activities.

Poverty breeds social ills

In economic terms of country, region for household is considered to be poor when the per capita income of the individual and purchasing power of such individual or a household is below a certain minimum standard investment on essential sector like medical and education is low. Politically when a country is poor and does not have the capacity to raise their voice and is dependent on others who are more powerful. Poverty in a country breeds all types of socially unacceptable behaviours like gambling, violence, drug addiction, etc. which are not acceptable in a family or a community and thus degrade human moral values and social values of the society leading to people becoming intolerant in the society.

Poverty and environmental degradation

When it comes to the environment, poverty destroys the living environment of not only those who suffer from poverty but also of those who are non-human and are dependent on the same resources and the ecosystem on which those living in poverty depend and survive. The World Bank Organization, whose main goal is to eradicate poverty completely, describes it in a unique way. "Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job and fear for the future, living one day at a time."

To be considered poor, one's income should be falling below the minimum income level necessary to provide for the basic needs of a person in their daily life. This minimum level, also known as the international poverty line, is set at $1.90 a day. But as the World Bank Organization has so appropriately described, poverty cannot be defined solely by the income level. To quote Nelson Mandela, "Poverty is not an accident. Like slavery, and apartheid, it is man-made and can be removed by the actions of human beings." He once said, "Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life."

Ways to reduce poverty

There are several steps that should be taken in order to reduce the levels of poverty in the world. Most of these steps must be taken by the government. There are multiple charitable organizations to join, or even websites, NGOs that accept donations, which they then carefully spend in helping poor people.

Population control

Population control is to be done as population in India has been increasing rapidly recent studies reveal a growth rate of population of 1.8% which must be lowered so as to combat poverty. Increase in employment rate should be promoted through various employment schemes, small scale and cottage industry should be incentivized. Main focus of government should be on equitable distribution of income as population control will not combat poverty itself.

Agriculture in poverty eradication

Agriculture sector should also strive to remove poverty. The productivity of the labour should be increased, thus the rapid rate of growth of agricultural production will help in removing urban as well as rural poverty. This can be done by harnessing modern agricultural machines and equipment. Marginal

farmers should be given financial assistance to increase their productivity ensuring timely access to funds which can boost their income and the government's target of doubling farmers' income.

Evaluating poverty alleviation strategies

Government should take suitable steps to meet minimum needs of the poor. For example, drinking water and provision of primary health centres and primary education is something which is an incumbent necessity for everyone, thus, it should be the priority of the government to promote these areas.

The public distribution system should be strengthened to remove poverty where the poor should get food grains at subsidised rates and in ample quantity. To bring changes in production techniques, India should adopt labour-intensive techniques which should not reduce the productivity rather should provide employment avenues to the vast workforce available in the country so the demographic dividend can be fully harnessed.

According to the World Bank, between 2004 and 2011, poverty declined in India from 38.9% to 21.2%. Such positive results were possible because of the government intervention in various sectors through various policies and schemes like MGNREGA, PM Gramin Aawas Yojana, National Skill Development Mission and various other initiatives for self-help groups. The sustainable development goal 1 aims at ending poverty in all its forms from everywhere which is the first goal of 2030 sustainable development agenda which talks about ensuring social protection, enhancing access to basic services and building resilience against the impact of natural disasters which can affect severely the resources of the people and their livelihood opportunities, it is widely accepted that the economic growth must be inclusive specially for the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable, thus, it aims to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere.

Poverty is also a threat to prosperity in the sense that it acts like a sponge which sucks up the resources of the country. Again, it might be useful to look at examples from our own country. As long as poverty is allowed to exist, it will necessarily lead to an obstacle for development as well as a drain of the country's productive resources. The problem of poverty thus has to be removed through a combined effort from everyone possible. Increasing and sustaining the growth rate is also crucial as slow rate of growth is the main cause of poverty, thus, while being fast, growth rate must be accelerated and inclusive.

Reality does not conform to the ideal, but confirms it

Philosophy

Introduction

To begin with, let us first understand the difference between ideal and real. In their meanings and connotations, they are different states. The most obvious difference between them is the difference between 'what is' and 'what ought to be'. There are different senses in which these two words are used as an opposite pair. For instance, ideal is the standard against which the real can be measured. Ideal is the highest value, while real attempts to measure up to it.

Real and Ideal

Both "real" and "ideal" are used to denote various situations. They are used in a whole range of contexts such as one's life and behaviour, culture, and every other concept, entity or idea.

In philosophy, the meaning of 'real' is the objective world perceived through senses. It is the external, independent world which is pervasive and objective. Some philosophers have sought to equate 'real' to the 'Absolute' or the supreme entity. On the other hand, the 'ideal' is the subjective world derived from ideas. It is the mental world and not within the grasp of sense perception. The debate in philosophy has been between the realists and the idealists.

The words, as used in the topic of this essay, bring forth the debate between the ideal and the real. According to the topic, reality confirms the ideal, but does not conform to it. This implies that:

(a) Ideal does not precede real but real becomes prior or at least parallel to ideal

(b) Ideal is not the standard or the bench mark

(c) Ideal is based on real, and not the other way round

From the above, it can be inferred that there is no ideal situation on which the real is based. On the contrary, it is the picture of reality which gives us the notion of ideal or an understanding of the idea. In other words, reality does not conform to the ideal, but confirms it.

Based on this understanding of real, it can be claimed that the material world of concrete reality is the absolute or the ultimate. This understanding of real may lead us to believe that the notion of God as an Absolute is not something different from the real, but something that is immanent in the concrete reality.

Here, the concept of real is similar to the Marxian understanding of real. According to Marx, real comes prior to ideal. When Marx made this statement he debunked the historical notion that realty is based on ideal. Applying it in the realm of culture, Marx upheld that what happens in everyday life is culture or the real culture. And this material reality of the world gives rise to the ideal, i.e., the perfect level or form one can imagine or have an idea of and also strive to attain. In other words, real (coming before the ideal) does not conform to the ideal, but confirms, that it is attainable.

According to this understanding, all the ideas and concepts and knowledge are the products of the material circumstances. The material circumstances relate to the relationship between man and man on one hand, and the relationship between man and the method of production on the other.

Why Ideal is Unsustainable

It is said that we dream of something perfect and then attempt to fulfil this dream. In this case, the dream is the ideal and what we achieve in reality based on this dream is the real. Thus, it is claimed that real conforms to the ideal.

The above claim is fallacious. Here's how. When we dream of something, the content of this dream is borrowed from the real. For instance, when we conceptualize the notion of an ideal world, we see in this world prosperity, justice, love, material and spiritual well-being and so on and so forth. However, on careful examination, we realise that every element in this world has been borrowed from the real world, except that these elements have been exaggerated and magnified. We cannot think of an idea that is not derived from reality.

Coming back to Marx, who claimed that religion is the opiate of the masses, let us understand how religions came into existence.

Some of us may claim that religions, which are based on the notion of God, or absolute perfect form of man, came prior to mankind. However, studies show that the material condition of human beings, which has always been a function of its multiple fears and worries, gave rise to religion. These fears are about survival, disease, death, old age, etc. To overcome these fears and worries, which are results of the uncertainties of life, religions were established. Here, the reality is that man is fearful and has many worries. The ideal condition, on the other hand, as offered through religion, would be

that man is immortal like God and therefore should not have any fear. So, it is clear, that the ideal did not exist prior to mankind, but is a result of the circumstances that man lived in. The idea of God and religion came about only to give solace to mankind.

Thus, the real does not conform to the ideal but confirms it.

The ideal in itself is unsustainable because there is no 'idea' that is independent of the real. For instance, let us examine the idea of Golden Mountain. One may claim that it is an entirely imaginary idea that is not based on reality. However, the truth is that this idea is derived from reality. We have the ideas of gold and mountain. These ideas are derived from the real gold and the real mountain. When we combine them, we get the idea of Golden Mountain. There can be innumerable ideas that may be considered purely fictitious, but the ideal world is unsustainable in itself because real or the reality comes somewhere prior to it.

Conclusion

To conclude, we can claim that reality does not conform to the ideal but confirms it. There are different perceptions of the word 'ideal', and one of them is 'perfection' or 'absolute'. When we claim that we want to make our society or our state an ideal state, it doesn't mean that there exists a real perfect world to which the world we are trying to make will conform. On the contrary, it means we want to improve the present state to the maximum extent possible. In other words, the possibility that such a world can be made confirms the ideal.

'The past' is a permanent dimension of human consciousness and values

Philosophy

Is the Past permanent? Of course it is! The moment it is lived, it cannot be altered. Neither a word spoken be taken back. There can be alterations, repercussions, amendments or regret to what is done or said but nothing in the world can undo what has been done. If only we had the undo key in life! The past will always remain permanent. Past can safely be concluded as the only permanent facet of life in a world changing by the day to be advanced technologically. There is always a lesson we learn from experience, another analogical word for the past. The lesson could be of how to do or be or how not to do or be in future. Thomas Edison learnt every time he failed in making the bulb what not to do and to try something different if he had to succeed. This is one universal example that can be applied in various contexts (If only Edison knew his invention not only gave light to the world in real terms, but has since illuminated our consciousness and values also, he could be given the Nobel Prize, yet again!)

Human consciousness and values are definitely decided by our past experience, perception and understanding. Past in this context is not limited to from the time of our birth to the present, but the beginning of the thought or words in existence in this world. In fact, human consciousness is something that is so difficult to fathom and it is the topic dealt by all our sages and bhakti movements. It is said to be the purpose of life to awaken such consciousness. It is believed to be way above what meets the eye. It happens over ages and how much it determines our values and beliefs is dependent on how much in-depth knowledge we are exposed to and how much we imbibe. So, whatever values you hold dear to yourself they will be true for you. If you choose to be an atheist by going through your experiences and draw your own conclusion that there is a scientific reason for everything, then you are right. If you choose to tow the line of being religious and feel the Supreme creator is the cause, then you are right too. Whatever be your belief, one thing is for sure it is the past that affects your thoughts, beliefs and way of being.

Let us look at how the interplay of past, human consciousness and values impact our life as an individual, a society, a country and the world at large. A very common and simple story will illustrate the point better than any explanation. There were two brothers who had the same experience but chose to have value systems opposite to each other. They were born in a poor household where the father was an alcoholic who subjected their mother to domestic abuse almost daily. One brother grew up to be carbon copy of his father while the other became a teetotaller and became not only a law abiding person but rose to be a law enforcing, respected police official. So, while one became the way he experienced life, the other decided **not** to live his life the way he had experienced. This brings up one most important fulcrum that will decide our values based on past experiences and that is called choice**.**

The Indian society was divided on the basis of caste, creed and class. This led to degeneration of entire economic and social fabric of the Indian society. However, India took the initiative after Independence to curb its plight and took a U-Turn when it laid down the Fundamental rights in the Constitution of our country. A recent Bollywood movie on Article 15 has played the role of sensitising the public to these humanitarian concerns, so vital to make this world a place of coexistence for all with dignity.

Reservations to the classes that have been so long suppressed is a step that reckons that the intelligentsia of the present do not want to live their life in the default way of the past and want to make amends.

India as a state has often been termed as the land of the Mahatma which valued non-violence. However, today we are a Nuclear State. Does it mean that we no longer cherish our values of non-violence? No. It is a lesson from the past not to be so naive that the Turks and Mongals invaders plundered, looted and settled down for more than a couple of hundred years, while the Europeans entered in as traders but stayed to rule for almost the same time. Hence, one has to be strong enough and well equipped on equal footing just not to be bullied by others.

It is also true the British left behind a legacy of division and distrust where there was love and bonhomie. Though as citizens of this country, we know of this beautiful loving reality of the past, we still see the ruthless killing of our own brethren in communal riots . No human conscientiousness seems to come as a saviour to prevent such ruthless slander of our own neighbours.

Human conscientiousness is the main source of all the Bhakti movements. Seeing the ills of child marriage, sati and plight of widows, the bhakti movement Saints advocated their abolition and promoted education as a medium to promote awareness and equality in the society.

Many policies of the government are framed to set right the wrong which had been done in society in the past. First, unabashed hunting depleted our status of having a rich wild life to a country which is struggling to protect its wild life heritage through Project tigers and national parks. Deforestation led to climate change and this is becoming the gravest concern for each one of us. Pollution, the parasite that came in uncalled for, while we were ushering industrial development. All these actions are not rooted in higher human consciousness but in common sense.

Awareness has dawned that human beings need to think of sustainable development and that the world belongs to all. The trees, the mountains, the rivers and the ocean, the little sparrows and vultures, the earthworms and butterflies, all own this planet as much as we do. Even the bee that stings makes loads of honey. This is supreme human consciousness.

So let us take a pledge: Let bygones be bygones. Let us not dwell too much on the past, for that makes us judgemental and at times revengeful. Let us hold hands. Let us be united to tackle the problems of the past and save the world. For only in saving the world will we all be saved. It is all or none of us.

Supreme human consciousness to which we all need to wake up to is this. We need to take care of each other to grow and prosper just like the farmer did in village. He shared the high yielding seeds of his corn with his neighbouring farmers. He said, 'pollination is carried across his field too' with a smile.

QUESTION PAPER SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

(Please read each of the following instructions carefully before attempting questions)

The ESSAY must be written in the medium authorized in the Admission Certificate which must be stated clearly on the cover of this Question-cum-Answer (QCA) Booklet in the space provided. No marks will be given for answers written in medium other than the authorized one.

Word limit, as specified, should be adhered to.

Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Question-cum-Answer Booklet must be clearly struck off.

Write two Essays, choosing ONE from each of the Sections A and B, in about 1000-1200 words each :

2019

Best for an Individual is not necessarily best for the society

Biased Media is a Real Threat to Indian Democracy

Courage to accept and dedication to improve are two keys to success

Neglect of primary healthcare and education in India are reasons for its backwardness

Rise of Artificial Intelligence: the threat of jobless future or better job opportunities through reskilling and upskilling

South Asian Societies are woven not around the state, but around their plural cultures and plural identities

Values are not what humanity is, but what humanity ought to be

Wisdom finds Truth

Best for an Individual is not necessarily best for the society

Social

What is society, if not the people in it? It is not really possible to look at the actions of an individual as being inconsequential to the whole of society. It is just about the extent to which it affects everyone else. While it is true that one is likely to look at their own needs before that of the others, it is nothing but ignorance and even recklessness to believe that one's actions have absolutely nothing to do with the rest of society. In other words, while it is individuals, each with their goals and preferences that make up the society, no one's behavior is a sole experience. It does, in some or the other way, affect someone else.

In this world where everyone is connected in some way or the other, it is inevitable that the decisions and the consequent actions of a person will affect others around, whether it is within an immediate environment or not. Most people have a tendency to indulge in what makes them happy or is really useful to them, without really putting much thought into how it could possibly have an impact on others. In such cases, there is the possibility of an individual's acts negatively affecting society as a whole.

Instances of What Could Benefit an Individual but Not Society

As mentioned above, just because something seems to suit the needs or wishes of an individual, it isn't necessary that it will be beneficial for society. And here are some instances of that:

- **Is it really self-protection?:** With so much crime in the world, there is a constant need to know how to defend oneself. While many people learn martial arts as self-defence, there are many who choose the path of weapons. Weapons here refer to the firearms that many people purchase to keep themselves from harm's way. While it does seem to make a little sense, it is a very risky option. With more and more people buying and carrying guns and other firearms, there is an increased possibility of crime. Just because someone owns a gun does not mean that they would shoot someone without reason. However, owning a weapon does give one a sense of dominance and power, and things can go wrong

very easily. All that needs to happen for a crime to be committed is a shift in mood. Many instances of mass shootings in the U.S are proof of that. Without assurance and guarantee of what would be done with the weapon, it should not be given to just about anyone.

- **Lifestyle choices:** People tend to do what suits their needs and desires best, without really thinking about the bigger picture. For example, there are so many people who use plastic bags, straws, and other non-biodegradable items just because they are widely available and much cheaper than environment-friendly options. What they don't realize is how adversely decisions like these affect the earth and thus the future of all creations on the planet. Plastic dumped in the oceans kills animals, pollutes waterbodies and in general, takes many years to decompose. Other examples of people being inconsiderate are leaving the engine running at the traffic junction, purchasing items in bulk and eventually throwing them away, owning multiple vehicles thus causing traffic congestion and many more.

- **Exercising one's freedom:** Living in a democracy comes with many rights, including freedom of speech and action. People are entitled to have their own opinions and beliefs on any issue, but the problem arises when they also feel like they have the right to impose them on others. It is absolutely unfair to dictate other people's lives or to interfere in their decisions just because one might be in a position of authority. This eventually leads to unrest and the possibility of resistance, which does affect everyone around, directly or indirectly.

How to Avoid any Major Problems

Humans are bound to make mistakes whether intentionally or unintentionally, is up for debate. While some go about doing things knowing fully well what the consequences are, others don't. So, once society as a whole identifies what the problem is, the next step would be to work together towards eliminating it. Here are some ways to avoid any problems: -

- **Spreading awareness:** One of the best ways to tackle an issue is to create awareness about it. If a problem like air or water pollution, excessive wastage, violence, etc. are singled out, it is necessary to spread information about it along with the ways in which people can, at an individual level, do something to solve it. For example, when talking about minimizing plastic usage, it is necessary to advertise what the alternatives are, such as paper bags, metal straws, reusable bottles etc. It is also important to provide a means to access these alternatives since many not only lack knowledge but also the resources.

- **Being self-aware:** At an individual level, one must always be self-aware, i.e., be observant about one's habits and choices. It is imperative that one knows about the consequences of one's actions. If there is something which seems slightly problematic or harmful, one must immediately make an effort to change that habit. For instance, when it comes to owning weapons for self-defense, either it best to keep them away until needed or to resort to other options that are less likely to hurt others, accidentally or otherwise.

- **Being thoughtful:** With the way things are today, there is a lot that needs to be changed about the world, its people. It needs to be left in a condition that is habitable, especially for future generations. In such a case, turning a blind eye to a problem is not desirable. If one is aware of how a certain act could harm others, it is best to avoid it. Just because it is an easier option or is feasible does not mean it alright if it puts others in an unfavourable situation. If no one cares about the other, there is barely anything left in this world to live for, and all of mankind will gradually destroy itself.

If the nation has to progress in a meaningful manner, it is important for the people of the country to consider themselves as a part of the entire system and not view themselves as exclusive. By acting in a way that is beneficial for the entire society and not just for oneself, every citizen can help the country achieve its true potential.

Biased Media is a Real Threat to Indian Democracy

Media

Before talking about the issue at hand, it is very important to understand the terms 'democracy' and 'free press/media' in a practical sense. Democracy is a form of government which provides the right to the citizens of the country to elect their representatives. In such a system, the final decision-making authority remains with the elected government. It is for the welfare of the citizens of a country that any and every law is made. Thus it is a fundamental right of the people that they are well informed of all that is happening within the government and around the nation. This is where the role of independent media comes to the fore wherein the people get access to the latest information and updates related to important matters through different media channels.

Media plays a vital role in every single country and is perhaps the most effective way of communicating a message to the masses. Without media, no one would really know what is going on in the country or around the world. However, the mere presence of media isn't enough. It needs to be independent of any outside influence, including that of the government. That is what makes it a free press/media. For the citizens to make informed decisions, it is imperative that there is complete transparency on the part of the government as well as the media.

A biased media, on the other hand, could pose a real threat to democracy. Media is said to be biased when the media houses have some vested interests, and the news being reported by them are not offered from an independent perspective. The problem of biased media is affecting some of the biggest democracies in the world and it is an issue in India as well.

Indian Media

India is regarded as the largest democracy in the world, and it is a matter of great pride for the people of the country. But that label in itself does not suffice. It is so very necessary to maintain that status and the media plays a huge role in determining just how democratic a nation in reality is. In recent years, Indian media is losing its independent status. With increased government and

corporate involvement in what the media broadcasts and how it has become increasingly difficult to believe any news as being authentic.

Media has become a means for the government and other groups with vested interests to portray a certain image, regardless of whether that is genuine. It has become a means to exaggerate many incidents, either to their own benefit or to the disadvantage of the opposition or any dissenting parties. Media has become the perfect way to mislead the general population and to influence their opinions in the direction of the party or government in power. Issues like these make the citizens doubt the accountability of the press and that is a major obstacle in the way of India becoming a great democracy.

Problems Associated with Biased Media

Here are some ways in which a biased media can adversely affect the democratic nature of a country like India:

- **Can influence public opinion:** While not every single person is likely to believe everything they see or read, it is, however, true that a majority of people do. The media plays a key role in shaping opinions on a wide variety of issues. For example, if it blames a certain section of the society for a serious incident, it could lead to animosity towards and perhaps even alienation of that group. The media is more often than not used to marginalize, target or victimize certain groups since the masses are quite gullible at times.

- **Mislead the public:** Misuse of media is a dangerous way to mislead the citizens of a nation. Through the circulation of fake news, it could have the masses believing something which is far from the truth. For instance, by providing fake updates on a public project, the government could easily garner praise when, in fact, the project is nowhere near where it's described.

- **Can affect the country's political future:** By projecting a positive image of itself, by constantly presenting each development as a massive one, by appealing to a certain group, etc., all through the means of mass media, the government can gather a large number of supporters who are likely to vote for them in the future, thus ensuring that their political reign continues. By using the media to their advantage, the government can very easily ensure that things keep going smoothly in their desired direction.

- **Can cause confusion and panic:** By exaggerating the severity of a situation or by not giving adequate attention to a problem, the media can cause serious problems in the country. It can lead to protests, riots, violence, or the spread of more fake news, which will again cause a lot of confusion and panic among citizens.

How to Tackle the Issue of a Biased Media

Just because a major political party or the government is pulling the strings of the country's media, all is not over. Citizens are responsible for ensuring that the country remains a democracy where everyone has an equal right to speak and express opinions without fear of prosecution. Here are some ways to minimize the effects of biased media, especially in a country like India:

- **Questioning everything:** With the way the media no longer portrays an incident without depicting a certain point of view, it is necessary to not take anything at face value. The best way to avoid being caught up in the web of fake or biased news is to look at the incident from all angles before arriving at a conclusion. It would be stupid to believe everything being shown without questioning it with a pair of impartial eyes.

- **Collecting all the facts:** It is crucial to have all the details on an issue to know what it is all about. It is best to not form an opinion on the said issue with minimum information since it could lead to misconceptions and confusion. Using various forms of mass media, one can easily gather more facts.

- **Being open to diverse opinions:** What makes India a democracy is the importance it gives to accommodating many diverging opinions. It is important to be open to differing points of views so as to gain perspective and better knowledge about an issue. Being open to criticism and debate will create a conducive environment for more information to spread.

- **Be aware of vested interests:** Though one can only see what the government or media wishes to show, it is necessary to read between the lines and to follow up with new developments so as to be aware of where they stand. This will serve as the base for future comparisons and opinion formation.

The important and powerful role that an independent media can play in the progress of the nation cannot be overstated. By highlighting the major issues facing the country, fixing the accountability, offering an open platform for dissenting views, and suggesting available solutions, media can ensure strengthening of the democratic fabric of the country. It is, therefore, important for all the citizens of the country to work towards ensuring an independent media which is free from all types of biases.

Courage to accept and dedication to improve are two keys to success

Philosophy

"There are two types of people who will tell you that you cannot make a difference in this world: those who are afraid to try and those who are afraid you will succeed." ~ Ray Goforth

Introduction

Success has been defined in different words by different experts. However, success no matter what, implies movement from the present state to a better or more improved state. A primary condition to success is the dedication to succeed or the dedication to improve. But all our dedication and efforts will come to a naught, if we do not know what exactly we want to improve upon. In fact, that is the case with most of the people. They want success but are not ready to accept the area where their potential to succeed lies. Therefore, most often we mess up our efforts towards achieving success with our ostrich like approach.

The Enemy of Success

What is it that we do not want to face? What is it that we do not have courage to accept? No man is perfect. We all have follies and weaknesses. There are ghosts haunting some dark recesses of our minds. We do not want to confront them. We fear the acceptance of those weaknesses and realities will crumble our personality and dent our reputation. We ignore our limitations and let the delusion grow into a huge monster, which is our greatest enemy of success.

We needn't worry about others who tell us we cannot succeed. The real enemy of our success lies within us. It works with a grand strategy. It offers us everything that may look attractive. It gives us intoxicants and bad habits. It robs us of our critical ability to think and question. In the process, we go on adding numberless weaknesses that we never think about; and eventually suffer to realise success has drifted irretrievably far from us. The enemy within is not done yet. It next robs us of our courage to accept this. So long as we do not accept, we fail to see the demons that have taken control of our

mind and courage; and, finally languish in the hell of our making with no motivation to improve.

Success Needs Courage

Given that no man, howsoever great, is ever perfect, the successful ones are those that sooner or later confront their inner enemies head on. Gandhi, the apostle of non-violence, was not free from vices either; only, he was courageous enough to accept the flaws of his character and to make concerted effort to overcome all of those. That was how he could move ahead on the path of success. In his autobiography, Gandhi describes his addiction to smoking, fascination with the western lifestyle, and consumption of meat and alcohol. He also tells us of his realization that became the turning point in his life. Gandhi writes that he once used violence on his wife, and felt so ashamed of himself that he vowed non-violence for life, by letter and spirit.

How many of us have a similar courage to accept our weaknesses as Gandhi had? Gandhi was Gandhi not so much for his merits as for his courage to accept his faults. Let us see this point more clearly in context of the Chauri Chaura incident. Gandhi was proud that he had been leading a non-violent non-cooperation movement in India. Since non-violence was his principled stand, he did not want to comprise with it to the slightest extent. The non-cooperation movement had been highly successful so far and the freedom movement leaders were confident that it had shaken the British might. Then, violence broke out at Chauri Chaura. Since the movement was at its peak, no Indian leader was in favour of withdrawing it for one odd incident. But, Gandhi insisted that the movement had to be instantly withdrawn because the violence had said it loud and clear, that it was a failure. Ultimately, the movement was withdrawn. It shows Gandhi's unusual courage to accept. It takes more courage to accept failure when someone is at the peak of the success. It is clear, Gandhi's experiment with non-violence became so successful mainly because he had the twin traits – courage to accept and dedication to improve.

What is true of Gandhi's life is true of everyone's life. What is true of big movements based on strong ideologies like non-violence is also true of simple things in life. We all are victims of bad habits that may be ignored by others and us. Some of us speak lies. Some of us make excuses. Some of us don't mind cheating in exam, if help comes by. Some of us are never on time. Some of us lack discipline and punctuality. In other words, nearly all of us are victims of one or more of these small follies that remain with us life-long because we have neither faced them or accepted them courageously nor dedicated ourselves to improvement.

In fact, we fail to realize that what we call these minor issues can cause enormous damage. A habitual liar, if unchecked turns into a big liar and gets caught on the wrong side of law some day. Those who get away with excuses after committing a wrong get tempted to commit a bigger wrong every time and are very likely to end up as wanted criminals.

When we lack the courage to accept, we are slowly also building resistance against that which we do not want to accept. When we have built up a strong resistance, we would have also crossed the stage of dilemma with the result that we then proudly wear our weakness on our sleeve. It is a self-destructive stance, and it blinds us to the ultimate doom we would invariably be heading to. However, it is never too late; and one gets several opportunities to accept and amend.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, if we want to get success in any endeavour, we have to introspect and determine where we stand in that domain. If I want to be a successful singer, I must introspect to judge without bias where I stand. There may be some aspects of singing I would be weak in. If I have the courage to accept the reality, it will help me to dedicate my efforts to improving upon that weakness. Success will not elude me then.

Neglect of primary healthcare and education in India are reasons for its backwardness

Education/Health

Healthcare and education are the basic essentials of a flourishing democracy and a nation whose citizens are gifted with active governance that focuses on both of these elements; sets forward with much pace and zest. On the other hand, lack of good governance and political-will in a country leads to deterioration in the health and education facilities of its citizens and it lags behind in all aspects of development.

Healthcare in India

India has been foremost, since ancient times, in guaranteeing its citizens national health care as a uniform right, but as of today, primary health care in India embodies a crisis unmatched to any other social sector.

Primary level of health care includes medical services by doctors and nurses without the need for hospitalization. This is generally dispensed at community health centres (CHCs), primary health centres (PHCs), and sub- centres (SCs) or private clinics. Secondary healthcare is specialists' care provided at sub-district hospitals or private clinics; and there's no shortage of specialists like cardiologists, gynnaecoloigsts, ophthalmologists, endocrinologists and so on, either in public or private practice. The tertiary level of healthcare is specialized care on hospitalization; and quaternary, an extension of tertiary, involving highly specialized and individualized intensive care. India has some of the best and cost-effective tertiary and quaternary care in the world which, thanks to the cost of medical treatment in the developed Western world remaining high, has given it a thriving medical tourism sector. **Ayushman Bharat**, the National Health Protection Scheme, covers over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) providing coverage upto 5 lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization. However, primary care for the large numbers of rural and urban poor in the country, is still a huge challenge.

Challenges Faced in Primary healthcare

Primary healthcare gets hurdled by capital and financial viability amid the large disease burden in the face of extreme poverty; and the inclination of

people to directly approach medical facilities even for routine consultation. As the problem of aggregate supply of qualified physicians remains pressing, there is an urgent need of roping in sufficient numbers of physicians trained in alternate systems of medicine to fill the gap; they may be trained and given legal licenses to practice allopathic medicine.

A significant amount of effort is required to meet two structural challenges; making the related domains of primary care robust and integrating primary care with higher levels of care. All the countries seen as good models of healthcare delivery, such as Spain and UK in the developed world and Thailand, Brazil and Mexico in the developing world, have their primary care as the anchor around which the entire system is built; and there is a high level of integration between various levels of care with strong gate-keeping and patient management functions performed by the primary healthcare providers.

Back in 2005, The Lancet journal reported that for every 10,000 people, India had 10 doctors in urban areas but only one in rural areas. Surprisingly, not much changed over the years. The Lancet report of 2018 stated that though there was an increase in the number of health facilities in rural areas in the previous decade; yet getting enough doctors to work in villages remained an alarming challenge for India.

Healthcare needs to be re-evaluated and immediate reforms and concrete steps of improvement need to be taken. Community development, skill upgradation, capacity development and capacity reinvigoration along with eliminating the scope of practice for unqualified practitioners or 'quacks' are some of the focus areas for boosting the healthcare sector. There is also a need for a medical curriculum that is adequately oriented to primary care and community health; and a healthcare system and policy environment that gives the poorest of the citizens their due.

Education growth and required reforms

The building blocks of a nation are the citizens of its tomorrow and an investment in knowledge pays the best dividends, in words of Benjamin Franklin. In an increasingly knowledge-based global economy, quality education is more important than ever. India's education sector has expanded rapidly in the last decade but the quality of learning remains pathetic on account of unimaginative and misguided policies.

The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals include a commitment to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. India's Right to Education Act has been quite successful in achieving three broad objectives: higher enrolment, lower dropout and completion of mandatory basic education. The cause for concern, however, is that even as enrolment has improved sharply for both

boys and girls, not only at the primary but also in the 11-14 age group, literacy and numeracy skills remain dismally below par.

> *The latest Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2018) survey — the most authentic barometer of India's educational health — shows that its findings are not inspiring, and in some cases quite dismal. The fragile foundation of basic education augurs a dim horizon for India's future human capital. The students are not able to learn the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic and do not meet even elementary mathematics standards.*

The ASER survey covered 5.46 lakh children in the age group 3-16 across 596 districts. What is alarming is the decline in reading and arithmetical abilities at the Class VIII level since 2012, with government schools faring worse than private ones: More than a quarter of all children at this level cannot read a Class II text, while over half of all children cannot do division (three digits by a single digit number). Seen along ASER's previous year survey on dismal learning abilities of the 14-18 age group, those about to enter the workforce, India's "demographic dividend" riding on its largely young population seems a sour joke.

It is time the country moved beyond a singular focus on enrolment numbers and grappled with the problem of poor quality. Inefficient teaching methodologies, such as rote learning, which focuses on memorization as opposed to critical reasoning, are still widespread at the primary and secondary school levels. Real education is more about wide reading, deep thinking and asking hard questions rather than simply reproducing crammed answers faithfully. Formal teaching needs to be supplemented by in-school pull-out programmes, after-school tutoring, and summer camps supervised by NGOs with emphasis on non-conventional innovative pedagogies.

Education needs more champions than health and environmental advocates because it is one rising tide that can lift all the boats. Since education has more room for innovation than any other development sector, it holds a unique opportunity for social entrepreneurs.

The curriculum and teaching practices need t be transformed to focus less on rote learning or straightforward calculation and more on relevant skills, like communication, reasoning ability, problem-solving ability, and critical and independent thinking.

Adequate resources, higher standards for teachers and the flushing out of corruption must all be parts of a comprehensive reform package seeking to make education the nation's top priority.

Rise of Artificial Intelligence: the threat of jobless future or better job opportunities through reskilling and upskilling

Science-Technology

Artificial intelligence refers to intelligence demonstrated by machines, as compared to the natural intelligence displayed by humans and animals. From Marketing, Banking, Finance, Agriculture, Healthcare, Gaming, Space exploration, and Autonomous vehicles to Chatbots Artificial creativity and even social media handles recently, it has become a part of our pop culture and everyday lives in ways we never thought possible earlier. It is not science fiction any more. It drives meaningful innovation and assists human endeavours, but at the same time, requires regulated, responsible use lest it should outrun its mandate.

The power of AI is being harnessed relentlessly across the globe with businesses, researchers and innovators consistently exploring its practical applications and economic potentials. Looking around ourselves gives clarity about the immense potential that AI holds within itself to empower human life. For example, in the Banking and Financial Services Industry; AI is used to enhance the efficiency of anti-money laundering programs with considerable success. It also has proved its effectiveness as a risk management tool for banks, analyzing and flagging credit and fraud risk, as well as customer churn prediction which is an incredibly valuable data point.

The healthcare sector has also adopted AI. The massive amount of data collected by the industry to drive scientific discovery is increasingly being used to make sense through the application of AI. The complex data is simplified and inferences and insights are derived through the use of AI for development of medicines, equipment, disease analysis and treatment of optimization to cure ailments. AI can be useful in medical image processing and improve diagnostics by better analyzing CT scan, MRI and other images. Surgical robots control the trajectory, depth, and speed of their movements with great precision and perform repetitive procedures without fatigue.

AI is also revolutionizing the landscape in the insurance industry. It is being introduced to streamline processes and reduce turnaround times and improving profitability. Even at personal level, AI is helping in the form of virtual assistants. From Alexa, Watson, Cortana to Siri —digital voice assistants have become the trend today.

On the other hand, regular reports warn us about an impending automation apocalypse.

Jobs at Threat

In 2013, a highly cited study by Oxford University academics called 'The Future of Employment' examined 702 common occupations and found that routine work such as telebusiness, teleservices, sports referees and big data oriented jobs of analytics, tax assessment, etc., are more at risk than specialised and individualized ones like psychologists, dentists and physicians.

Routine telemarketing runs a 99% risk of automation; and so does mechanical processing of large amounts of predictable tax assessment data according to The Future of Employment report. Robots will very likely take over the repetitive tasks in law, with paralegals and legal assistants facing a 94% probability of having their jobs computerized. Fast food cooks also face an 81% probability of having their jobs replaced by robots like Flippy, an AI-powered kitchen assistant which is already flipping burgers in a number of CaliBurger restaurants.

Jobs less at threat

Martin Ford, futurist and author focusing on artificial intelligence and robotics, and the impact of these technologies on the job market, economy and society, classifies resilient jobs in three areas.

- The first is of professions involving genuine creativity, for instance, working as an artist, designer, scientist, strategist, architect, planner, etc. Ford does not forget to caution in the same breath, "For now, humans are still best at creativity but there's a caveat there. I can't guarantee you that in 20 years a computer won't be the most creative entity on the planet. There are already computers that can paint original works of art. So, in 20 years who knows how far it's going to go?"

- The second area is of occupations that involve forging a close connect with people: for example, doctors, nurses, advocates or business roles that require building of relationships with clients.

- The third area is of jobs that are unpredictable and contingent– for example, plumbers and electricians who attend, on call, to emergencies in different locations.

So, those at least risk of automation may include therapists; programmers, supervisors, installers and repairers of machines, occupational as well as recreational therapists, healthcare providers and social workers. However, while jobs in a creative domain or people-focused industry may remain afloat for the next few years or so, it's very hard to predict what will happen some decades later into the future. So, we should be wary of downplaying just how much computers and robots might change the working world; and think about survival in an automated world.

Need of the hour

The 2020s must, therefore, be a decade redeployment, rather than, unemployment. Presumptions about indispensability of human beings will be self-destructive, because machines are already doing things we thought only humans could do. They're composing original music, for example, and beating professional players at complex board games like chess with creative moves.

They're even helping us with our relationships with God. While the clergy only has a 0.81% probability of automation, according to data from The Future of Jobs, algorithms might one day replace even the ordained. There are already apps like Confession which offer "drop-down menus for tracking sin". So, the pressing need of the hour is to continually learn new skills and upgrade the existing, too match pace with inevitable automation. AI has unleashed a great opportunity for a whole new set of jobs to get the most out of machines. Human mind has aced over all species of life on earth; it will master machines too.

Combat measures: reskilling and upskilling

Technology plays a fundamental role in creation of successful products and services. But even for physical products, in many cases, it's the accompanying software which makes all the difference by lending that extra edge. The point to be noted is that to use novel, ground-breaking software, companies require constant updation of skills in their workforce. As a result, training and continuous skill development is one of the most important tools for organizations to achieve long-term success. Training not only upgrades skillsets, but also raises several other parameters, namely motivation, efficiency, benchmarks and inter-personal relationships.

Providing people with training opportunities is one of the most effective ways of retaining talent. Today, talented and qualified professionals enjoy the luxury of choosing where they want to work. So, unless business leaders take pro-active steps towards training, reskilling and upskilling the workforce, they will be prone to facing "talent shortage."

Futuristic organizations like Amazon have integrated AI and robotics for resources and increased productivity. They use skilled workers for non-repetitive work –monitoring and management of technology, logistics, processes, trouble-shooting, and so on. So, through reskilling and upskilling humans to complement the tasks performed by cognitive technology and to ensure that the work of machines is effective, fair and transparent, a wide range of better job opportunities can be ceated.

Government agencies should collaborate with industry partners and educational institutions to customise programs to prepare workers skilled to thrive in an AI-driven world. The financial incentives for governments to create such programs are high; without them, unemployment costs could be considerably high.

South Asian Societies are woven not around the state, but around their plural cultures and plural identities

Social & Culture

South Asia is a cultural rather than a geo-political construct. The intra-regional and inter-regional migrations of people demonstrate that the South Asian cultural space is not limited to what is usually conceived as South Asia (the sub-Himalayan countries of the Indian sub-continent and the island nation of Maldives). The Rohingyas of Myanmar and the Afghan refugees in Pakistan are cases in point. Both migrations happened into South Asia due to cultural affinities existing across the borders.

Plural identities and plural culture in South Asia

Plurality consists in the existence of a mix of multiple heterogeneous communities differing in their beliefs, language and cultural and social norms, as well as in the geographical terrain they inhabit, ranging from hills, mountains and river valleys on the one hand, to sandy deserts or seas on the other. In a plural society, all the different autonomous units are woven together into a smooth cultural and social fabric characterized by interactive engagement in complete harmony.

South Asia is marked by its varying geographical conditions; ethnic and cross-ethnic diversity; and multifarious systems of beliefs, values, customs and rituals. Political boundaries separate nations but do not separate cultures. The demographic and traditional similarities between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Pakistan, India and Nepal, Bangladeshis and the Rohingyas of Myanmar, Nepalis and the Lhotshampas of Bhutan, all demonstrate that inter-state and inter-regional cultural links exist. This is ample proof that South Asian societies are not marked by their national boundaries, but by plural cultures and plural identities co-existing as one.

Countries of South Asia have a common tendency to take pride in their cultural diversity. Culture played an important role in a nation state's political landscape and there was always the need to acknowledge plurality of culture within even as a nation tried to build a distinct identity of its own. It is clearly manifested in the expressions of culture which get reflected in literature, music,

cinema, lyrics, drama, paintings, architecture, culinary innovations, etc. The writings of Sadat Hasan Manto, Sahir Ludhianvi, Amrita Pritam, Khushwant Singh, Sunil Gangopadhyay and the like reflect the trans-boundary nature of culture.

South-Asian societies are a product of the rich royalties of the past that patronized culture and celebrated its plurality. Buddha is a major unifying motif in South Asian nations. Buddha was born in Nepal; he roamed and died in India. The Mauryan emperor Ashoka propagated Buddhism in the entire region and even beyond. Buddhism is the back bone of Bhutan's culture. Afghanistan was never inhabited by a single ethnic group; rather, various tribes that shared some common traits lived together as one. Religion was what united them. In the last three decades, however, Afghanistan has suffered successive political transformations which have dealt a blow to its society and culture, too. For example, it has lost the iconic symbol of plural cultural heritage, the monumental twin statues of Buddha at Bamyan valley, to military strikes. War-ravaged Afghanistan can hope for peace from the plural culture of the South Asian region as multiculturalism breeds tolerance and harmony keeping racism and bigotry at bay.

Indian society within South Asia

India exhibits a mosaic of socio-cultural heterogeneity, diversities and pluralities, integrated in a multicultural federal polity. This heterogeneous culture has evolved over centuries, through a continuous process of adaptation and amalgamation of the diverse cultural influxes coming with the hordes of invaders---The Aryans, the Sakas, the Huns, the Pathans, The Mughals and the Europeans.

While the drawing of the geographical boundary at the time of partition divided the population; the overzealous mission of constructing distinctive national identities of their own created yet more boundaries that rejected commonality of any kind, whatsoever, between the two nation-states. For India, culture as a foreign policy tool in the neighbourhood held limited appeal and was often perceived with suspicion. However, there has been a metamorphic change in South Asia in recent years and there is greater openness to accept diverse identities and use culture as an instrument to bring countries and people together. This opens up an opportunity for India to use culture as a foreign policy tool to further regional understanding and bilateral relations.

Culture transcends borders, which is why, the people to people level of interaction and exchange bears a tremendous reservoir of goodwill towards one another despite tensions at the border. The run-away success of the movie 'Bajrangi Bhaijan' and the case of the Indian girl Geeta lost in Pakistan, yet

raised as a Hindu there, demonstrate that there are many common threads that bind people across the border and that will continue to bring people together in the entire region.

Plurality of culture as a tool of unity and progress

Linkages of culture and civilization across national borders in South Asian region owe their origin to 'confluence of culture' that happened because of successive civilizations, namely Indus Valley, Vedic age, Indian kingships, Islamic period, Mughal period, British Imperialism and the modern age; which also effected a conglomeration of different religions in the region. This plural culture has only ingrained tolerance and peaceful co-existence among the people. It also gets reflected in their archaeology, architecture, arts, aesthetics, food, fashion, diaspora, ideas, institutions, thoughts and philosophies.

South Asia is a mixed bowl of religions, mainly Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. India, Bhutan and Nepal have great cultural similarity in terms of religion, especially Hinduism and Buddhism. Sufism connects the societies of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. This culture of Islamic mysticism originated in the 10th or 11th century during the Delhi Sultanate, and promotes a liberal philosophy of life transcending difference of any kind between humans. Religious festivals like Diwali, Dussehra, Id are common across borders and food habits are very similar, too. Political boundaries do not coincide with linguistic boundaries either. Hindi is also spoken in Nepal; Urdu, in India; Hindustani, in Pakistan; Tamil in Sri Lanka; Begali in Bangladesh, and so on.

Despite cultural similarities, the economic asymmetry in South Asia inhibits the pace of regional cooperation. Culture can play a role in propelling regional cooperation as the nations of the region share historical linkages. Cross cultural sensitization should be made a continual process so that the negative stereotypes that enter into countries through TV channels can be mitigated. There should be more access to each other's repositories of culture. Cultural societies and NGOs must work for new harmonization, a realignment of interest. The future of South Asian integration lies in the strategic use of soft power to promote values which are beneficial for the region as a whole. Bilateral economic exchange taking cognizance of each other's interests can strengthen their relationship and boost cooperation.

Cultural diversity within the borders, and cultural ties beyond, is a unique phenomenon in South Asia. So, policies and programmes based on cultural heritage would be a very effective tool to bring people across borders together and also to overcome political barriers.

Values are not what humanity is, but what humanity ought to be

Philosophy

Elvis Presley once said, "Values are like fingerprints. Nobodies are the same but you leave them all over everything you do."

Values are defined as the principles or standards of behaviour; one's judgment of what is ethical and important in life. Values are defined as the ideas, beliefs or actions which are desirable and worthy of esteem for their own sake. Human values are defined as those values which help man to live in peace and harmony with the whole world.

Values that may be included in the general definition of human values are love, brotherhood, respect for others — including plants and animals — honesty, sincerity, truthfulness, non-violence, gratitude, tolerance, a sense of responsibility, cooperation, self-reliance, secularism and internationalism.

Every human value is an idea of 'goodness' that exists in people's minds. It exists as **a socio-metric construct** that guides collective and individual action. Parents, friends, relatives, educational and religious institutions, personal experiences, prevailing belief systems and to some extent socio-economic conditions contribute to the formation of values in individuals. One is predisposed to imbibe the values one is raised with; and therefore, associates those values with general righteousness. However, those make the set of core cultural values encouraged, legitimised, and rewarded by the particular cultural system they are born in; and one or more of those values may potentially differ in other cultures. Thus, it is extremely important to understand differences in cultural values, if problems arising out of cultural differences are to be resolved.

Why values are important in human life

Values are important because they help us to improve and develop in the right way. They guide us towards creating the ideal life humanity should experience. So, values are not about what humanity is at present, but what it ought to be in times to come.

Maintaining our values keeps us on track regarding why we do what we do, and helps us live a consistent life. All our actions and decisions are affected by our core values. Anthony Robins, in his book titled 'Awaken the Giant Within' states that values guide our decision and, therefore, our destiny. Those who know their values and live by them become the leaders of our society. Knowing our values helps us design our life goals since we know what is most important for us today and on an ongoing basis. Values are as important as competencies to achieve our goals.

Every individual and every organization is involved in making hundreds of decisions every day. The decisions we make are a reflection of our values and beliefs, and they are always directed towards a specific purpose. That purpose is the satisfaction of our individual or collective (organizational) needs.

When our actions and words are aligned with our values, happiness and contentment prevail. But when our behaviours are not consistent with our core values, we sense an uneasiness growing inside us. This uncomfortable feeling tells us that something is not good as it is.

Values are important because they guide our actions to help us gain acceptance from people who matter to us, whose love and respect we crave for. This also explains why there seems to be a universal desire for pride and a universal hatred towards hypocrisy. Pride is the overwhelming feeling of pleasure, confidence and self-respect derived from one's accomplishments. Hypocrisy is the pretension of adhering to values while actions demonstrate the contrary.

So, we need values in our lives —
• to lead us on the right path
• to learn the importance of goodness and morality
• to develop character
• to experience the joy of fulfilment in life
• to preserve our culture and heritage
• to change negative thoughts and behaviour into positive
• to attain peace in life
• to promote peace and harmony in society.

Core values humanity ought to have

Personal values are subjective in nature and reflect what people think through their words and actions. Individuals behave in ways that allow them to express their important values and attain the goals underlying them. Thus, understanding personal values means understanding human behaviour. Man is provided with reason and intellect, which enable him to differentiate between good and bad and help him adopt the most important values

that can raise him to the level of the Divine. The gods in our religious scriptures were but men of highest human values. They were the epitomes of truth, righteousness, peace, compassion, love, forbearance, sacrifice and nonviolence.

Truth is the highest value to be cherished and practised. ' Satyameva jayate' (Truth always wins) say our sacred scriptures. The Vedas proclaim " *satyam jnanam anantam Brahma*" (Knowledge of truth is the absolute consciousness). It was to be true to his word that the great King *Harischandra* suffered untold miseries! It may be very difficult, but it is worth living for truth! A life of falsehood is the worst that one could live.

Practice of Truth amounts to Dharma or virtuousness. Scriptures assign great importance to moral values, calling the life of high morals dharmic life. Human conduct shouldn't stray away from the accepted principles of ideal behaviour.

The Vedas mandate " *satyam vada, dharmam chara, matru devo bhava, pitru devo bhava, acharya devo bhava, atithi devo bhava,*" i.e., speak the truth, show right conduct, consider as god your mother, father, teacher as well as the unexpected guest. Alas, humans are more prone to disregard than to observance! Truth is displaced by falsehood and dishonesty, dharma by adharma! Father, mother and the teacher are no more respected or loved. On the contrary, they are mistreated and excluded.

Love is a value of paramount importance in human life, manifested in numerous forms of relationship from the time of birth to death. One should nurture all encompassing love for fellow humans and universal love should be the ideal for all humanity.

The value of *ahimsa* or nonviolence in thought, word and deed is the prerequisite for establishing world peace. Harsh thoughts, words and deeds hurt and breed negativity. One ought to cultivate the habit of talking politely; for, harsh words are like poisoned arrows that pierce the hearts of people! Jainism teaches, 'No creature should be injured wantonly.' Hindu scriptures emphasize, "*Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah*" - non violence is the highest moral virtue. Violence begets violence, of which we have examples aplenty in the present world. ISIS operated atrocities and genocides; Pakistan sponsored terrorism; never-ending clashes between Israel and Palestine; and turmoils in other parts of the globe are proof of human propensities to be overpowered by demonic streaks. Man has controlled almost everything on earth, but curiously enough, has lost control over himself!

The need for these human values is much greater in the strife-torn world of the present day than ever before for humanity as it ought to be.

Wisdom finds Truth

Philosophy

"The wise man has the knowledge of all things, in so far as possible" ~
Aristotle

Introduction

Aristotle, reckoned among the greatest Greek philosophers devoted his life
to search for truth which to him was the highest knowledge to be attained
through wisdom. Philosophers, Greek or Indian, right since the ancient times,
have devoted themselves to the search for truth. The implication is clear.
Truth, per se, is not a unique entity, but is like a chameleon that changes
its colours.

Philosophical Scrutiny

In human history, there has never been any universal truth in the world of
science except self-evident principles that require no wisdom to be applied in
their recognition. Of these self evident truths, rationalists like Descartes have
maintained that these truths are recognized as soon as they are brought to our
cognition. For instance, it requires neither wisdom nor intelligence to cognize
that a triangle is a three sided figure or even that a triangle is 180 degrees.

If that is the case, what meaning lies in the assertion that wisdom finds
truth? The truth being referred to here then must be an altogether different
kind of truth than $2+2=4$. After all, the Greek philosophers and the Indian
philosophers devoted their ageless wisdom in search of the truth. And did
they find it? Most certainly, they did. Only, we, the lesser mortals devoted to
sensory pleasures and the material world, fail to recognize or appreciate the
truth they found through wisdom.

All philosophers can be said to be devoted to the enterprise of truth. Descartes
was a rationalist, who arrived at the truth of *Cogito Ergo Sum* or I think,
therefore, I am. This self discovery for Descartes was indubitable because
as he maintained, "the more I think of I, the more certain I become of its
existence which even an evil genius could not have put into my mind". Let
us not forget here, that a philosopher is one who loves wisdom because by

its very definition, philosophy is the love of Wisdom. Therefore, we can argue that Newton dedicated himself to the love of wisdom when he discovered the law of gravitation, even as our own philosophers like Buddha, Gautam, Shankaracharya, and Kanad discovered their truths through their wisdom.

There now emerges a conundrum about truth. Is truth one or many? Is my truth different from your truth? Is the world of plurality a mirage? The wisdom of our holy sages contained in Upanishads answers this question beautifully. Our Upanishads claim, *Ekam sat, Vipra Bahuda vadanti*. This aphorism means: "That which exists is ONE; sages call it by various names."

Yet, the quest for truth is a never ending pursuit that has led to civilizational transformations, crusades, jihads and burning at the stake. For much of human history, the creation theory of Adam and Eve held as much sway as the geocentric theory of our world. These were truths patronized by the holy church. They could not be questioned because it was the Biblical truth believed to have descended directly from God. However, some brave and courageous men like Darwin and Copernicus questioned these truths. Hundreds of men before them were already sacrificed at the altar of truth for holding contrary beliefs. When these men brought the new truths before the world, they also simultaneously transformed the world. However, there is no guarantee that the truth brought out by these men will remain permanent and set in stone and who could have said it better than wise Siddhartha, the Buddha in as precise words as "The only constant in this world is change" or the wise Greek Philosopher, Heraclitus who claimed "You cannot bathe in the same river twice."

Wisdom and Intelligence

These incidents in human history clearly point out the unmistakable distinction between wisdom and intelligence. While intelligence will help us discover, invent or innovate, wisdom allows us to attain the consciousness of truth. The truths found through intelligence can be short-lived, but the truths found through wisdom are permanent.

If you are a great devotee to science or scientific truths, you may in all likelihood, question the above assumptions. You may, for instance, want to know how truths established by science can ever be challenged. You only need to look at the progress of science, which has in its journey revised the truths a number of times. The Newtonian laws of motion perfectly explained our physical world till the time particle theory began to dominate the field of science. The laws of motion failed in their explanatory power when an altogether new world, the microscopic world was opened to us. Similarly, our understanding of diseases underwent a paradigm shift when the discovery of germs and germs theory came to dominate the medical world.

We are constantly discovering new knowledge and science is no doubt enriched by those, but they can never establish truth for good, as we continue to hop from one truth to the next, and so on. Therefore, wisdom of Lord Buddha can surely take us closer to the truth of the world of flux, the truth of constant change.

So, the adage wisdom finds truth can be seen to operate in our world like clockwork. The question then for us is what truth we want to find and how wisdom can help us discover the truth. In other words, this adage operates in very personal and private lives of individuals. There are many things that we discover with our own wisdom, and sometimes what we learn has the status of grand truth. These adages are aptly expressed by wise poets and saints like Kabir and Rahim. Let us see few examples.

Rahim says, "Rahiman nij man ki bitha man hi rakho goy, sun ithlainhe log sab, banti na lainhe koi". Rahim cautions us not to disclose our personal grief to others because people will not share our pain, rather, will draw malicious pleasure out of it. This is the kind of worldly truth many of us discover through our wisdom. Similarly, Kabir states, "Mati kahe kumhar se, tu kya ronde moy, ek din aisa ayega, main rondungi toye". This couplet, in a very simple and plain language, expounds a profound and undeniable truth. The truth of mortality, or impermanence of life, is well known but it requires wisdom to string this truth in a language that strikes an instant chord of awareness.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that wisdom finds truth. The wise either discover the truth themselves, or realize the truth spoken by masters. The unwise, far from the truth, spend their days without self reflection and self-cogitation. One may be knowledgeable, may have mastered the encyclopaedia; but all of it amounts to nothing if one has not invested an iota of wisdom in searching the truth. We are, with all our knowledge and learning, like robots fed with data that we churn out when needed and that really makes no difference to us. But when we apply our wisdom to find the truth of life, we are a transformed individual.