

Question No.

प्रश्न संख्या

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Name of Candidate - Neelesh Goyal

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Topic 1 - The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

According to a legend, Raja Harishchandra was the ruler of a prosperous city in ancient times. He had everything that marks a successful person - health, wealth, family etc. Everything was going well, until wheel of time took a turn. Suddenly the king lost everything - his kingdom, wealth etc. and was forced to work as 'chandal' - the lowest occupation of those times.

Further his son lost his life due to snakebite, and the

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king didnot have money even to perform last rites of the prince. In such extreme situations, a person could have moved away from his principles but this king did not. This is what made him famous as 'Satyavadi Raja Harish-chandra', who is referred to as the benchmark of integrity.

In this essay, we will discuss that why most of the people choose not to move out of their comfort zone? what are the qualities that make some people rise up to the occasion? How we can ensure that our future generation is not devoid of such people?

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Comfort zone : zero growth here

'A caterpillar can-not become butterfly until it sheds its cocoon.' During this transition phase, it may go through unbearable pain, but this process is a must to make its muscles strong enough to flap the wings and fly.

Similar is the case of human beings. Though moments of comfort and convenience might seem necessary for peace of mind but moments of challenges and controversy are the one that impart them enough emotional intelligence and mental resilience to navigate through the life. Attitude of the person, when handling such turbulent situations, determines the altitude, he will achieve

in terms of this worldly success.

Mahatma Gandhi, a lawyer by profession, was discriminated against, racially while travelling in a train. He would have chosen to remain in his comfort zone and not raise his voice against injustice but instead he chose path of struggle and became immortal in history.

Sometimes people fear to raise their voice in the face of adversity. They are afraid that they might be harmed physically, emotionally or economically by the opposition. But as it is said - "more than act of evil, it is the silence of good men that harms"

Malala Yousufzai, a young girl, was shot in the head by

Talibani terrorists for supporting the cause of girl education. But indomitable spirited Malala, recovered from the wounds, and doubled down on her efforts towards girl child education, which got her nobel award at the youngest age.

Often people believe that their alone action can not change the world and they opt to remain in comfort zone, even in the face of adversity. But if ~~everything~~ everyone in the world thought so, there would be no change, what-so-ever in the world and our society will decay with time. As Grandhiji said - "Be the change you want to see in the world".

Bhagat Singh, willingly chose the path of Martyrdom for the cause of Indian independence in his 20s, an age when most people do not

even start to live the life. He was clear that his act will inspire millions of youth to strive for independence of their motherland. With this act he became 'Shahid-i-ajam Bhagat Singh', whom the youth looks upto even today.

Similarly, Ram was a prince of Ayodhya. He was declared as 'Yuvraja', which meant he was to succeed his father as the king of Ayodhya. But due to unforeseen circumstances, his father ordered him exile of 14 years and crown to the younger son. He had the option of rebelling and seizing throne with power, but he chose the path of peace and accepted his father's order, which made him 'lord Shri Ram' and a benchmark as 'maryada purushottama'

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Qualities required to face adversities

Mahatma Gandhi had a very lean physique, short height, bald head, walked with a stick. But he had, what was required to drive away the britishers from India - An indomitable willpower, truth, non-violence, and a strong character. With these qualities, he overpowered the mighty british who had everything - manpower, musclepower etc.

Challenges and controversies are inevitable in the life of all, whether an individual, organization or a nation, but what matters is their attitude while dealing with such challenges. For example - once upon a time, Nokia was the market leader in mobile handset manufacturing. With changing times, technology changed,

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along with which customer preferences evolved, but Nokia refused to adopt to changing times and ultimately was thrown out of the competition by the market.

Similarly India faced severe balance of payment crisis in 1991. In the face of this adversity, Indian government exhibited qualities like - adaptability, flexibility etc. and incorporated structural reforms to the economy as suggested by noted economists of the time such as - Dr. Manmohan Singh. This action put India on the path of economic growth and today we are world's fourth largest economy and well on the path to become a developed nation by 2047.

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However, facing adversity and showing courage does not mean foolhardiness. One must weigh various options in his mind before taking an action and choose the best possible option. for example - Gandhiji was determined to oppose british, but he chose the path of non-violence, as choosing the path of violence would have given an upperhand to the british as well as we would be laying the foundation of an independent nation with violence, which won't be ~~last~~ long lasting.

Similarly, Hitler who rose to power, during turbulent times in Germany, chose to spread racial violence, mass murder of jews etc. could not be justified under any

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circumstances. History will never forget and forgive him for this.

To sum it all up, humankind needs to rise up to the occasion in the face of adversity, otherwise it will decay just like any dead organic matter. Had Grandhiiji not risen up to oppose the British, we would not have our freedom. Had Harishchandra lost his integrity in such extreme circumstances, no one would remember and revere him as an ideal personality.

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UPSC ID No.
UPSC ID No.

QUEST. NO.

प्रश्न संख्या

UPSC

12

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Topic 2 : A single drop never feels responsible for the flood

Suresh woke up to the alarm clock's sound at 6:30 AM. It was a lovely morning. After rising up from bed, he freshened up and went to jog in the nearby park. On the way, there was an empty plot. Today he stopped there and thought about buying it for investment purpose. He observed the plot size, its location, neighborhood etc. and made up his mind to purchase it.

While going to office at 9:30 AM, his wife asked him to take the trash outside as 'Kudewala bhaiya' had not come that day.

Hesitatingly he took the trash bag out

Question No.
प्रश्न संख्या

UPSC

and while on the way to office dumped that bag on the empty plot, thinking the municipality people would pick it up.

About a month later, when he passed by the same plot again, he was horrified to see the condition of that plot, for it was filled with waste and smell was making it difficult to breathe. "Is desh ka kuch nhi ho sakta", cursing the municipality he jogged on, dumping the purchase of that plot.

Indeed, a single drop never feels responsible for the flood. Here a single drop could be an individual, an organization or a nation. for example - in a group of

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(3)

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5 people, even if one person is having any bad habits such as addiction, ^(to gambling) sooner or later it will spread to other members also. The best possible option for these members is to leave the company of such person.

Similarly in 1789 french revolution gave birth to the ideas of liberty, equality, fraternity, which were radical ideas, considering social design of those times, but they spread across the globe and considered as basic civil rights today.

Taking an example of traffic rules, some people violate these rules thinking how it can harm the whole order if just one person broke them. But it can harm in two ways: what if everyone thought on similar lines? and what if he suffers accident due to this?

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A single drop may be small in shape and size, in its physical volume, but the psychological impact it creates is great enough to inspire other drops to create flood. Taking example of freedom fighters like - Ramprasad Bismil, who wrote

"Sarfarooshi ki tamanna ab hamare dil mein hai"

Their martyrdom put a great deal of motivation for the youth of this country, which ultimately drove the British out.

Similarly social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, were just a single drop in the ocean of Indian population but their sheer willpower, brought the flood of

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social reforms which swept away social evils like - sati, child infanticide etc.

Sometimes a single drop may be underconfident to take action that bring flood, but does so when supported by peers. eg. IAS officer, Lame Armstrong, with the help of local people, without any financial support by the government, built road through crowdfunding.

Though volume of a single drop may be negligible, it shows the direction of flow to the rest of drops, which finally culminates into flood. for example - After defeat in 2023, ODI world cup, whole Indian cricket team was demotivated. Even coach Rahul Dravid

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offered to resign. But Indian team captain Rohit Sharma, showed confidence in the team and successful lead the team to become T-20 world cup champions in June, 2024.

To make sure that Indian space programme continues, Dr. Vikram Sarabhai took the blame of launch failure on himself, which pushed the fellow scientists to try harder and succeed in their efforts of successful launches. This had resulted in the flood that has placed India today in the front line of countries that are equipped with latest space technology.

Therefore it is upto the single drop, which if flown into right direction can bring the flood of scientific innovation, economic

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7

prosperity, political stability, environmental sustainability etc. On the other hand it can be responsible for catastrophies such as - world war-II, which can be attributed to policies of Hitler.

Providing right direction to this ~~seg~~ single drop begins at home with the way parents socialize their child. If there is harmony among parents, child will learn the values such as compassion, empathy etc., while if there are frequent tensions, child may not inherit such values.

Similarly ideals of a person also provide a guiding direction to the person. for example - Swami Vivekananda, who brought about a flood of social reforms,

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was taught and inspired by his guru 'Ramkrishna Paramhansa'.
Shivaji inculcated the teachings given to him by his mother 'Tijabai'

However, in a few extraordinary circumstances, it takes more than a drop to bring the flood. for example - Indian princely states, fought against the british individually, could not achieve desired success. But when whole of Indian population united and took part in agitations under the leadership of Gandhi, India became independent.

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To summarise, at most of the times, revolutionary changes can be traced back to a ~~star~~ single individual or a single factor. This single drop when supported by others, whether intentionally or un-intentionally snowballs into huge events. These events might be positive for human kind, environment and future generations, if the spark behind it, has backing of ethical values.

Suresh, instead of throwing the trash into the empty plot, should have found a dustbin or dispose of it in a proper manner, which would keep the neighbourhood clean and his dream of purchasing the plot alive.

Question No.

प्रश्न संख्या

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For
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Question No.
प्रश्न संख्या

UPSC

11

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