NEXT IAS

ESSAY–Test 1
निबन्ध–परीक्षा 1
CSE 2024

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<tr><td>कार्यालय के प्रयोग हेतु
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निर्धारित समयः तीन घंटे
Time Allowed: Three Hours

अधिकतम अंकः 250
Maximum Marks: 250

General Instructions

This question-cum-Answer (QCA) Booklet contains 32 pages. Question Paper in detachable form is available at the end of the QCA Booklet which can be taken away by the candidate after examination.

Two blank pages (Page Nos. 31-32) have been provided for rough work.

On receipt of the Booklet, please check that this QCA Booklet does not have any shortcomings, torn or missing pages, etc. If so, get it replaced with a fresh QCA Booklet.

सामान्य अनुदेश

इस प्रश्न–सह–उत्तर (क्यू० सी० ए०) पुस्तिका में 32 पृष्ठ हैं। प्रश्न–पत्र क्यू० सी० ए० पुस्तिका के अन्त में संलग्न है, जो अलग (वियोज्य) किया जा सकता है और उम्मीदवार परीक्षा के उपरांत अपने साथ ले जा सकते हैं।

रफ़ कार्य के लिए दो खाली पृष्ठ (पृष्ठ सं० 31-32) दिए गए हैं।

पुस्तिका प्राप्त होने पर, कृपया यह जाँच कर लें कि इस क्यू० सी० ए० पुस्तिका में कोई कमी न हो, फटा हुआ पृष्ठ न हो अथवा कोई पृष्ठ गायब न हो इत्यादि। यदि ऐसा हो, तो इसके बदले नई क्यू० सी० ए० पुस्तिका प्राप्त कर लें।

COURSE ID: GSMACT24A1187

(To be filled by candidate)
All fields mandatory
(Inaccurate/Incomplete information may lead to delay in the evaluation process)

Name of Candidate : RIYA SAINI

Next IAS Roll No. : NIS202365396

Test Code → TC- 0 6 1   **Date of Examination :** 24.07.2024

Exam Centre : Old Rajinder Nagar ☐   Jaipur ☐   Prayagraj ☐   Online ☑

निरीक्षक के हस्ताक्षर
Invigilator's Signature

कार्यालय के प्रयोग हेतु
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Student's Queries for the Evaluator (if any write them below)

Evaluator's response

प्राप्तांक के विवरण (परीक्षक द्वारा भरा जाए) / Marks Details [To be filled by the Examiner(s)]

	निबन्ध विषय सं० Essay Topic No.	अंक Marks	
खण्ड–A Section–A			
खण्ड–B Section–B			
सकल योग / Grand Total			

Your performance vis-a-vis other examinees–

Front Runner	Achiever	Aspirant

EVALUATOR'S FEEDBACK: ESSAY SECTION-A

Parameters	*Exemplary*	*Good*	*Average*	*Needs Improvement*
Understanding				
Coherence				
Lucidity				
Structuring				
Presentation				

EVALUATOR'S FEEDBACK: ESSAY SECTION-B

Parameters	Exemplary	Good	Average	Needs Improvement
Understanding				
Coherence				
Lucidity				
Structuring				
Presentation				

In the flood of data, the thirst still remains

Candidates must not write on this margin

'5 missed calls, 10 retweets about your last tweet, 3 notifications about your favourite celebrity.' This is something that we are accustomed to today. We are connected to the world 24X7 and that has made our lives so much easier. We can be in constant touch with our relatives and friends around the globe. We have truly become 'cyber - beings' with our devices acting as second brain.

In this content, it is surprising to know that despite the interconnectedness, WHO has declared 'LONELINESS as a GLOBAL HEATH THREAT'. The above scenario rightly points out that 'In the flood of data, the thirst still remains.'

Data has become ubiquitous today. Many believe that we are witnessing the 4th Industrial revolution. The rise of big data, Artificial intelligence and information of about anything and everything brings hope for a brighter future. Today, we can get any information at a click of a thumb. Feeling anxious? Here's a 5 minute breathing routine. Need help regarding a presentation? Here's a summarized document for the same.

In the midst of all this flowing data, we are more anxious, stressed, confused and lonely as never before. Despite access to different medical research and the best psychologists explaining the concepts in simpler terms, we seem to be detached from ourselves. Our thirst for meaning is yet to be ~~found~~ quenched.

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Victor Frankl, in his book 'Man's search for meaning', highlights the significance of meaning for living a purposeful ~~life~~ life. Detailing about his experience during Holocaust in a concentration camp, he highlights that a sense of purpose can be a ray of light in a dark room.

However, today, with the wealth of information about careers we are unable to find 'PURPOSE'. The moment we think we have made a breakthrough we have another article telling us 'THE DARK SIDE' of your supposed career breakthrough. Then, we are back to square one. This lack of clarity is not confined to career but stretches to all walks of life. The question that remains ~~of~~ is: 'why are we still thirsty?'.

<u>A major reason</u> for this is the fact that today, we are becoming <u>knowing beings and not experiencing beings.</u> We have all the information in the world but we are unable to muster courage to act on it. For instance, the moment we think of going on a meditation retreat or a vacation after reading others' experience, we start thinking about the negatives. We think about the logistical costs, the missed workdays, the rent big event etc. This indecision hurts us in the long run as we are unable to act out on our plans.

Despite the knowledge and the reasons why we should do something, we start finating on the negatives. This ensures that the thirst that could have been quenched by a new experience, remains.

The <u>second reason</u> for the permanence of thirst despite data is summarized in the wisdom: '<u>Comparison is the thief of joy</u>'. With the rise of social media and the ease of google search, we can easily access the information about our friend's life. Better still, we can actually find out how Jeff Bezos or Mukesh Ambani live their lavish lifestyles.

One would assume that this might be a source of motivation. However, today we are more focussed on comparisons. Even if we are satisfied in our lives as is, we'll feel a sense of <u>relative thirst</u>. This is because now we know how our friend, who we haven't talked to in 7 years is leading a dream life while we are stuck in our monotonous routines.

Thirdly, we fail to acknowledge that while flood brings in a large amount of water, it is not potable. Similar to the natural calamity, data and information, though available might not be practical.

Everyday we are confronted with 100s of advice on "How to be the best version of yourself?" However, in the midst of our familial commitments, work schedules, future plans, it is a challenge to implement them.

The quest to implement advices from waking up at 4 a.m, working out, practicing minimalism, writing a journal, having a sleep routine is exhausting and alienating. It is not possible to implement all of these "self-help advices" in a single

day while coping with the stress and workload of our day to day lives. Having discussed the various reasons, we must now look at the structural causes of the flood of data.

Most of the time we believe that it is our fault that in spite of knowing everything there is to know, we are lagging behind. However, we fail to encounter the structural realities i.e the large industrial complex behind this.

The MNCs of the world use every play in the book to keep us hooked to these social media websites. They employ psychologists, data analysts to keep us in the loop. In the midst of 'doomsday scrolling', we are unable to think on our own. The CEO of Netflix, for example,

once remarked that sleep is ~~their~~ biggest competitor. In the midst of flood water, we are unable to satisfy our thirst by grabbing a bottle of potable water next to us. This is because, we are too focussed on ~~focusing on~~ the ~~flood we~~ data and social media rather than exploring ourselves.

Blaise Pascal once said : "All of humanity's problem stem from the inability of humans to sit quietly in a room alone." This is true especially in the present content as we are drowning in new information rather than assimilating our wisdom. The feeling of 'FEAR OF MISSING OUT' is not just our doing but also because of the structural design of data platforms.

In the midst of all of this, we must ask ourselves : " Is there really a flood of data everywhere ?" On close analysis we'll realise that it is not just flood that is causing the thirst, but also drought.

While millions are dealing with first world problems, there are billions of others constrained by the lack of data and the ensuing digital divide. On one corner we have people who are confused about so many choices and on the other, people who do not have the ability to educate themselves via internet.

The multidimensional poverty reports calls it " THE NEW GENERATION OF INEQUALITIES" wherein the drought of data and knowledge is constraining people in quenching their thirst for a

better life. Secondly, the technological divide is also causing 'A GENERATIONAL DIVIDE'. While we are constantly connected to our peers, we are not connected to our parents and grandparents because they are not adept in technology.

This leads to a scenario wherein there's a <u>lack of sense of identity</u> that is the new form of thirst of identity. The question that remains is 'what can we do to remedy this?'

<u>Firstly</u>, as individuals, we must embrace our limitations. We must acknowledge that '<u>PERFECT is the ENEMY OF GOOD</u>'. In chasing a perfect life, we are missing out of a good life guided by love and knowledge. We must seek what truly matters to us and that alone can

quench the thirst of self - actualization

Secondly, as a society, we must ensure equity so that social mobility is not constrained. The government and civil society must work in tandem to bridge the technological divide. Gandhi ji talked about value of community in the idea of 'village republics'. By focussing on decentralization, building community centres and partaking in community service, we can actually go a long way.

Lastly, at an international level, there is need for regulation. EU, for example, has restricted advertising for children and ensured higher accountability of 'gatekeepers'. This ensures that the the originators of flood of information are held to account.

similar co-operation is needed round the globe.

In the end we must remember that data and/information is a double edged sword. We must not drown ourselves in the flood. We should learn to carefully navigate the flooded waters and quench our thirst. This can happen only if we remember the first line of <u>Yuval Noah Harari's</u> book: <u>21 lessons for 21st century</u>:

6 <u>In a world deluged with irrelevant information, clarity is power.</u>

A single drop never feels responsible for the flood.

'what's the point of doing that? We all know who is going to win. Furthermore, what will be gain out of it? The government hardly does anything for us.' These are words which ashutosh spoke when his friend asked him if he had gone out to vote. Sadly, similar sentiments are held by a vast majority of population.

Some don't even exercise their right while the others who do, do on the basis of caste, religion or personality cult. It is ironic however that in spite of failing to perform their duties judiciously, many

then, criticize the government for corruption, poor quality infrastructure, high taxes and criminalisation and communalisation of politics.

The above scenario aptly explains how "A single drop does not feel responsible for the flood." Not just in political life but also in social, economic and cultural life; we usually blame the 'system', 'other people'. We conveniently ignore our contribution in the challenges, which are akin to floods, that surround us.

Whether it is gender inequality, climate change, corruption or the broader degradation of morals in society, we always have somebody to blame. Regrettably, we don't share

the same degree of responsibility. It is akin to a common scenario where we always exclaim : ' I am stuck in traffic.' and never admit ' I am part of the traffic.'

The question that arises, then, is ' Why doesn't the drop feel responsible for the flood ?' The answer to this is multidimensional.

Firstly, it is because of the self-serving bias and moral rationalizations that we employ on a day to day basis. For instance, many will be the first to highlight that ' it was a one time thing.', ' It was an exception to the rule', ' It's how the world runs' such rationalizations are employed by people to justify

simple transgressions like violating a traffic light to serious ones like bureaucrats justifying corruption as "That's how the system is." Thus, the drop does not feel responsible because either 'The other drops have been doing it' or that they were commanded by a senior | bigger drop.

Such rationalizations can have disastrous consequences. During the trial of members of Nazi party, for example, political scientist Hannah Arendt found that the officials, themselves, had no animosity for the Jews. What they lacked was 'moral reasoning' as they pleaded that they were 'JUST FOLLOWING ORDERS' Thus, there was BANALITY OF EVIL i.e evil was being committed without thought.

Alongwith the above lack of moral reasoning, many individuals fail to understand how their small actions (DROPS) can actually have massive consequences. Parents and teachers, for example, fail to understand how children learn while growing up.

Many children pick up on subtle cues like 'tone of disapproval'. In time, the girl child, having sensed the tone whenever she goes out alone will understand the 'VALUE OF DOMESTIC CHORES' and the fact that she has to 'not socialize with boys.' such small hints / drops of approval / disapproval are a significant reason of growing gender gap where women make only 77 cents for every dollar that a man makes.

Further, the conception of 'being feminine' or 'masculine' are imprinted on young malleable minds. Such small drops about gender identity manifest in domestic violence, dowry, honour killing and myriad other forms of violence.

In addition to this lack of sensitization, another reason why the drop does not feel responsible is that it is easier to hold other people guilty. It's easier to find fault in others — government, economy, society and the like. It's convenient than having the courage to accept our shortcomings. The fear of crisis of conscience and cognitive dissonance ensures that we ignore Socrates' wisdom that 'An unexamined life is not worth living.'

Having discussed the reasons for lack of sense of responsibility, of the drop, we must ask ourselves, 'Are we sure that the drop is responsible?' or 'Aren't the greater powers + government and society more responsible for the flood?'

The question is pertinent because, yes, there is a greater force of institutions, societal norms, practicalities of daily life that are responsible. However, this is only a narrow view of life and society in general.

This is because history is abound with examples where one act of defiance of one individual has changed the course of destiny. ~~Be it~~ Rosa Parks who refused to give

her seat to a fellow white American in Montgomery, changed the course of American history with her act of defiance. The political and constitutional struggle that followed ensured that the US constitutional vision of 'All men are created equal' is brought to life.

The significance of small acts of defiance and courage are more significant today when the Constitution itself begins with "We, the people of India". In democratic life, while the government is accountable, the people are responsible.

Even in our ancient history, when there was lack of this democratic ideal, we have lessons to remember. In the MAHABHARAT →

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for example, Bhishma Pitamah was responsible for the disrobing of Draupadi. He, alongwith so many others in the Hastinapur court kept silent. While Dhritrashtra, being the king, was accountable, others were indeed responsible. This aptly highlights Edmund Burke's words "the only thing necessary for triumph of ~~goo~~ evil is for good people to do nothing."

Every drop that constitutes the flood is responsible for the event. Irrespective of it's intention because the road to hell is paved with good intentions. A single drop of defiance could have possibly stopped the immortality that happened in the Kuru court. Similar to the court, the present challenges (floods) are due to lack of defiance by one individual/group/nation.

Until now, we've discussed the major dimensions of the topic. The question that remains is a 'How do we apply in our day to day lives?'

The answer to this is very simple. We must remember that 'On ounce of practice is worth more than tons of preaching.'

To tackle the challenges or floods of the world, we must remember that what we do 'now' matters the most.

The journey to a million miles begins with a single step. Whether it is about environmental conservation, a simple act of planting a tree, using electricity judiciously, minimizing food wastage

can go a long way. A similar approach was adopted by Jadav Payeng by planting a single sampling. Today, he is credited to have created a forest of 1360 acres. Thus, we must not be amiss to the fact that 'MIRACLES HAPPEN WHEN ORDINARY PEOPLE DO EXTRAORDINARY THINGS.'

~~Man~~ Resources, or lack of them, cannot be the reason for lack of action. A simple fruitseller from Karnataka Harekala Hajabba built a school in his village by utilizing his meagre savings.

A single drop of water can follow the lead of other drops and move horizontally to cause a flood. However, the same drop can also

defy expectations when it moves downwards into the Earth and recharges groundwater.

Similarly, we have a choice. A choice to control ourselves and direct our energies. Hopefully, with time others will join us too. However, today, all that matters are our own actions. As Rumi rightly said :

'Yesterday I was intelligent ~~~~ so I wanted to change the world. Today, I am wise so I want to change myself.'

change begins with a single drop.