

EVALUATION INDICATORS

1. Contextual Competence
2. Content Competence
3. Language Competence
4. Introduction Competence
5. Structure - Presentation Competence
6. Conclusion Competence

Overall Macro Comments / feedback / suggestions on Answer Booklet:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

All the Best

TOPIC : There is no path to happiness. Happiness is the path.

"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference."

- Robert Frost

These wonderful lines by Robert Frost pose a peculiar question. Is the road less travelled the road to happiness? Or is it the path of happiness?

In other words, is happiness a way of life? (Means to some end)

Or is there a path to happiness?

(Happiness as the end goal).

However, before answering those questions it is important to understand what happiness truly is and also the reasons why it is important to be happy.

Happiness, in simple terms could be referred to as a mental or psychological state of being joyful, grateful and carefree. Just imagine the picture of a baby smiling and giggling in front of its mother, that is the state of happiness - pure innocent bliss.

Moreover, happiness being a state of mind is not itself visible.

It expresses itself through various

actions or behaviours. For example, a person who is content with what they have and is yet optimistic of a better tomorrow can said to be happy.

Similarly, someone who does not dwell too much upon the past and lives 'in the moment' is a happy person. The Biblical figures of Adam and Eve - getting up everyday, thanking God for their existence and carrying out their duties - represent the state of happiness.

Now as to the question of why it is important to be happy, the answer is simple. In the timescale of this vast cosmos, the life of humans is but a brief existence.

People are mere sojourners in this transitory world. And therefore, to make the most out of life it is important to be happy.

Moreover happiness serves other purposes too. Happiness is key in understanding the purpose of life. and only a happy mind can forego unwanted thoughts and focus on what is truly important.

Having said that, the question that returns to the table - Is there a path to happiness? Or is happiness itself the path

The path to happiness

The concept of path to happiness, sees happiness as an end goal. And to reach this end goal, there are several check boxes which need to be ticked.

To begin with, Optimism is a key to happiness. The attitude of considering the 'glass half full' is helps one in being happy. In her book 'Wise and Otherwise', Shri Sudha Murthy stresses upon this very fact. 'Think positive, be happy' is what she says, for happiness has no place for pessimism.

Next, there is a wonderful philosophy known as 'Carpe Diem'. It means 'to seize the day' and make the most out of the present. Relentlessly worrying about the past and the future is of no use. In fact it simply poses as an obstacle ^{on} ~~to~~ the path of happiness.

Somewhat similar is the concept that Noble prize winner TS Eliot puts forth in 'Buent Norton'. According to him, finding happiness is like finding a 'stillpoint' in this continuously moving world. One needs

to take a pause from mundane life,
appreciate the beauty around. That
will surely lead to happiness.

Additionally, following one's dreams
and passions is something that brings
true happiness. In this money minded
world, ironically money alone does not
bring happiness. Just imagine a
wealthy billionaire who has no friends or
a social life. That is not happiness, that
is characteristic of a lonely life.

Another important aspect is being
physically and mentally fit. Health
is wealth they say, but health is
also happiness. It is so because

good health and well being brings
mental peace and satisfaction. And
as per the theories of Freud, mental
peace and psychological well being,
is undeniably important to be happy.

All that being said, can happiness
truly be achieved without being
happy in the first place? Happiness
seems to be superimposed and therefore
exists both as a path as well as an
end goal. It seems to be a paradox,
however it seems to appear true. Well,
if light can have dual nature why
can't happiness exist as two states?

Happiness as the path

The concept of happiness as the path, places happiness as a means to achieve some end goal. This end goal or purpose is by no means limited, it varies from person to person.

For example, happiness can be the path to have a meaningful life.

A meaningful life refers to a life where one is able to understand the purpose of their existence, and is able to take actions in order to fulfill that purpose.

'Our life begins when we are born, but it truly begins the day we realize why we were born.'

Furthermore, happiness is the key to make great strides both in personal and professional life. This is because a happy person is always open to challenges and faces them head on. There is no point in sulking in misery or blaming cruel fate. Happiness teaches one that one's fate is in their own hands. It matters not what happened earlier, all that matters is what and how one proceeds in the present. Smiling at the face of a problem solves half of the problem, such is the magnificence of happiness.

At the societal or national level, happiness is important for having a peaceful community which coexists together. Without happiness, the conditions would be ripe for hatred and violence to creep in and thrive.

Moreover, love and happiness are what bind the society together. It helps in building meaningful social relations and friends. A happy person always wishes to share their happiness. This results in kind and noble acts such as charity, altruism and philanthropy. This in turn helps the society to progress with improved standards of living for all.

By this point, it is quite evident that the dichotomy of happiness - as a path and as an end is could be a reality. However, in any case, remembering the words of Dr Kalam -

"when there is happiness in the heart, there is harmony in the home. And when there is harmony in the home there is peace in the society" - one can understand that be it as a 'way of life' or as an 'end goal', happiness is the key. Perhaps, the road taken by Robert Frost too was a combination of both.

TOPIC: Gentle persuasion succeeds where force fails.

The Ahmedabad Mill strike of 1918 was a page turner in India's freedom struggle. The mill workers wanted a 45% pay rise in addition to a bonus to deal with inflation. The mill owners on the other hand were willing to provide only a 20% rise. Moreover, when the mill-owners attempted to bring workers from elsewhere, the scene turned violent. The workers went on a full fledged strike. Then arrived Gandhiji, who with his skill and persuasion was able to convince both the workers and the owners. An amicable solution

was found. The owners agreed to a 35 % rise with an additional bonus. The workers too were content with the same.

This incident throws a valuable lesson. It highlights how persuasion succeeds where violence fails. Moreover, it also reveals the importance of persuasion and a consensus approach with mutual cooperation.

Persuasion as a term is defined as an attempt to make people behave or think in a certain way that is favourable to the persuader.

For example, by putting up signboards

such as 'Thank You for not smoking', people are persuaded into complying with the same. The power of persuasion is indeed strong and vast.

However, there is no place for force in ~~violence~~ persuasion. The very act of violence is antithetical to the concept of gentle persuasion. Moreover, it needs to be understood that persuasion is not the same as coercion or duping.

Use of threat or blackmail is coercion.

Similarly, a car salesman convincing a customer to buy a car where he can get a better commission is an instance of duping and not persuasion.

The reasons why ^{gentle} persuasion
succeeds where force fails are many.

It has both a psychological as well as
social dimension attached to it.

At the individual level, persuasion
succeeds because people are able to
attach themselves or resonate themselves
with a role model or a stalwart figure.

An example of the same could be
the advertisement where Akshay Kumar
promotes and encourages male members
to buy healthy and clean sanitary pads
for women. This ad campaign has
brought a change which use of force
never can, because it is voluntary.

At the societal level the success of persuasion can be explained by a concept called as 'the bandwagon effect'.

This is a situation where people are persuaded into doing something just because all others are doing the same.

The #SelfieWithDaughter campaign which originated in Haryana and took social media by storm highlights the same.

Similarly, at the national level, gentle persuasion works because it creates a feeling of oneness among all relevant stakeholders. Violence leads to separation but persuasion leads to people coming together.

Furthermore, at the international level, use of force leads to formation of bitter feelings, racial hatred and Xenophobia (excessive love for one's own country). However, persuasion on the other hand only promotes good feelings among different countries. The success of the Montreal protocol can be attributed to persuasion.

Time and again it has been seen that in different and varied fields, any time force fails, gentle persuasion is able to cover the ground and is able to bring about the desired change.

Socially speaking, campaigns such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao bank on the use of persuasion to bring a positive change. And it has worked too, as per the latest Annual Status of Education Report, the enrollment of women in higher education has significantly improved. The success story of Open Defecation Free campaign across India too supports the same argument.

Perhaps, the most important field is the political aspect. For decades, India has been facing the problem of Naxalism and Extremism. Any attempt at use of force has simply worsened

the situation. Persuasion on the other hand has been able to bring about an improvement in the situation. The Naga Peace Talks and Naga Peace Accords are proof that persuasion succeeds even in seemingly impossible situations.

Additionally, in the economic field persuasion has helped ~~than~~ in bringing subtle changes. With the advent of the JAM trinity - Jandhan Account, Aadhar card and mobile phone - financial inclusion has been a success story. The very reason behind this is persuasion. People were made to understand the benefits of financial inclusion and that made the difference.

Also, in the field of International Relations use of soft power can be equated with persuasion. The fact that India enjoys cordial relations with Afghanistan today is because of the use of soft power. India had constructed several hospitals and schools and even the parliament building. The Afghanistan scenario is the perfect example of where use of force has failed time and again - first with USSR and then with USA.

However, that being said, there exist some challenges/issues that need to be taken care of. Without that even persuasion won't bear the required fruits.

First is the problem of 'use of force culture'. Unfortunately, use of force often happens as an inherent reaction to deal with any problem. This leads to a viscous cycle of use of force and violence. The perpetuation of the problems of extremism and naxalism in India speak of the same.

To solve this, one needs to do away with the culture of violence.

The teachings of Jain philosophers must be recalled. Violence is never an answer or a solution, it may provide temporary respite, but is damaging in the long run.

Secondly, the problem of 'lack of trust' is a major roadblock on the path of effective persuasion. Moreover this when coupled with instances of coruion and duping further deteriorates the already strained relations.

The solution to this lies in something known as effective persuasion. It focuses on connecting with the people (the ones who are going to be persuaded) and building trust by being honest and transparent. The way health officials were able to convince many rural villagers to take COVID 19 vaccine is a perfect example of having a clear and transparent process.

Some other techniques that can improve the impact of persuasion is are choosing a right personality to lead the persuasion campaign. Public figures such as Amitabh Bachchan and Sachin Tendulkar are relevant examples.

Moreover, the help of various NGOs and civil society organizations too can help in improving the results of persuasion. Various campaigns of NGOs - such as Save The Girl child, Padhe Bharat Campaign, 'Hum do hamare do' (for population control) prove that persuasion is the right way.

Lastly, the world needs to recall the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. His entire life he stood for truth and non-violence. And these are the very tools required to make persuasion a success. Humanity has come a long way, humans are not brute animals who can be disciplined by means of force. Only gentle persuasion can bring long lasting success.