

EVALUATION INDICATORS

1. Alignment Competence
2. Context Competence
3. Content Competence
4. Language Competence
5. Introduction Competence
6. Structure - Presentation Competence
7. Conclusion Competence

Overall Macro Comments / feedback / suggestions on Answer Booklet:

1.

2.

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6.

All the Best

SECTION - A

(2) Revisiting ancient glory - can it shape India's future?

"Unlocking history is the key to the future"

"History repeats itself"

- famous phrases.

India has had a glorious past, right from the Indus Valley Civilisation and the Rig Vedic period to the advent of the British, who developed at the cost of its glory. India was rightly referred to as the "golden parrot". Such was its glory that across medieval and modern history, from Mohal Ghori to Nadiri Shah to Alauddin and finally the British were constantly attracted to it. Although history books cover accounts of such invasions & kingdoms & interests along the entire historical narrative, there have been few attempts at drawing learnings from the past.

This essay attempts to connect the past and the future. In the scheme of the essay, India's current challenges have been discussed in various spheres - political, social, economic, environmental, scientific, architectural, security, etc.; and an attempt is made to relate them to possible learnings from the ancient past.

Governance & Political Ideology

India is a young nation. Our nation-building exercise, which began in 1947, is a continuous pursuit, for which much has been drawn from international systems. The first sphere of consideration is the role of the state in our polity. We started with market socialism & welfare state. This entailed the state taking up non-governmental functions like economic production, import-export control, licensing procedures, etc.

This goes against Adam Smith's

Laissez Faire principle, which espouses a free market and minimal role of the state. This has come to be the largely accepted way forward, and although it relates to capitalism, even purely socialist & communist countries have been drawn towards it in modern times.

India witnessed this approach in ancient times. As evident from Kautilya's Arthashastra, role of state during Mauryan times was limited to governance, tax collection and provision of security. Traders were free to trade with outsiders. This is evident from Persian traders using the favourable monsoon ('mausim') to ferry their ships to trade on Indian land. Although India has opened up its economy & delicensed spheres, we can draw from Kautilya's Statecraft to further reduce state's role. This will

give a push to people's initiatives & further, growth and development.

For citizen centric governance, although we have already drawn from participative democracy, the concept of Panchayati Raj, we can further refine our systems by learning from the later Vedic concepts of 'Sabhas' & 'Samitis', and Ashoka's pillar inscriptions as ^{effective} citizen engagement & participation mechanisms.

Town Planning & Architecture

The recent disasters in terms of Kashmir, Uttarakhand & Chennai floods are indicative of poor town planning & construction activities. This leads to blocking of drains and poor water management. Environmental change indicates that this problem is only going to increase.

It is well documented that city planning in the Harappan Civilisation period was more advanced than even present times. We can prevent disasters by adaptation of those techniques & incorporating them into our urbanisation process. The drainage system was efficient and complemented the roads, which were cut at right angles. Although the citadel was at a greater height, planning was in sync with the slope of the town, which facilitated water run off.

Although the Harappan script is not yet deciphered, we must study whatever evidence we have of those times to improve our present town planning & architectural systems.

Science & Technology

Science is the key to advancement. We are presently undergoing the 4th Industrial Revolution, the driver of which is technology & its application to reform human processes. Although India is a participant in this process, it is far from being the driver of the revolution. This is because of the lack of spirit of innovation that our educational system symbolises.

Ancient India was the golden period of scientific innovations.

Aryabhatta's geometry, discovering 'zero', astronomy, charaka & sushruta's medicine & surgery are some examples of ancient Indian scientific innovation. We must learn that organising an Indian Science Congress is only the first step. we need

to facilitate innovation. AYUSH systems of medicine need to be given a further push to find a way of integrating them with modern medicine. Further, our educational system needs to be reformed to transform rote-learning into better systems of discoveries and inventions.

Social challenges

The biggest social challenge in India today is poverty & health indicators. Education & health have a direct bearing on this. Ever since the British drained India of its wealth, recovery has been slow. Although there is little to learn from ancient educational & health systems as modern society has advanced substantially, we must

learn the 'spirit' of the same from our past. The Gyrfuul system indicated complete devotion to education & learning, ^{unlike} modern distractions discount from our education, any unnecessary diversions. Similarly, we must attempt to integrate AYUSH medicine systems with modern medicine.

History also teaches us what not to learn from it. The Rig Vedic 'Varma system' is one such thing. Although it started as a distinction of profession, it gave way to the caste system. The caste system is a huge social evil, that is the root cause of most problems today - inequality, manual scavenging, menial jobs, attitude of 'upper' caste & class, poverty, marriage, etc.

Similarly, women have not been given their due through history. Apart from being equally capable, they constitute half of our workforce, the economic benefits of which, we simply squander away. That additional economic growth could have been used for betterment of health & social indicators.

Although ^{modern} hermance & thinking did affect some of the Indian reformists like Raja Rammohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, etc, caste & women prejudices are deeply rooted in our society. This lesson from the ancient past - the sooner we unlearn, the better it is for our future.

Peace & Serenity

The ancient concept of 'Ahimsa Bhakti'

as espoused by Krishna & Ashoka,
truly mean 'One India', sending
~~for~~ for Indians, one nation.

However, this is being misused
by right wing extremists today,
as a tool of division along
religious lines. We must reify
this & use it to ensure internal
& external security, defence
against border incursions & fostering
spirit of oneness among all
Indians, irrespective of religion,
caste, gender, etc.

Our frequent military interactions
with Pakistan & China must be
forged with unbearable
borders & unifying spirit of
brotherhood of the Indian
people.

Environmental challenges.

Human 'greed' has led to deterioration of mother nature, and climate change poses the biggest risk to humanity today. It is ironical how in the ancient past, we used to worship mother nature as our god. - Indra, Agni, Vishnu, in the Rig Vedic & later Vedic periods. Even the Shramana tradition espoused respect for the environment.

Respect for the environment is perhaps the biggest lesson we can learn from India's past. Today's irony is well documented in the modern day saying:-

"If trees gave WiFi, everybody would be planting them. Too bad, they only give out the oxygen we breathe."

Conclusion

Hence, man's journey on this planet is an evolutionary process. For this, man has developed governance systems, societies and the rules that govern them. In this process, we must gain from the benefit of hindsight to relearn & unlearn the past experiences, which help in achieving the most appropriate future.

SECTION - B

(4) "Corruption free status: Can India dream of achieving it?"

"Dreams are not those that you see while you sleep, they are those that don't let you sleep"

— A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

In recent times, corruption in India has made ministers resign, governments fall, the common man rise to power [AAP], given hope to millions of common people, and betrayed those hopes, and led to broken aspirations, fuelling public anger and mass agitation, almost raising another mass leader after Mahatma Gandhi [Anna Hazare]. Evidently, corruption holds a very important position in our political discourse. Unfortunately, selling the dream of a corruption free India has also become a political time pass, overshadowing the real heroes

who silently work towards the dream. This essay attempts at examining the reason behind corruption becoming such an entrenched problem. It then deals with various spheres of activity that suffer from corruption, and the steps being made/taken to address these issues, that would holistically move towards a corruption free India.

How did corruption become so widespread?

Corruption began in India as a colonial hangover. The officials who inherited posts from colonial officers suddenly saw unbridled power, with limited transparency, and very little accountability.

As we know - "Power corrupts. And absolute power corrupts absolutely." This was a case in point in India.

The next fuelling source was our forefathers' decision to adopt a closed economy - a liberal version of socialism. This entailed government action in all spheres - polity, economy, society. This increased the power violence by the officials to every sphere of activity.

Licensing systems were put in place, all of which increased red tape & corruption. Political collusions added fuel to fire.

Another factor that played a major role was our population explosion. The mouths to feed increased manifold & Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' kicked in, which fuelled the quest for short term gains & created a culture of getting work done quickly by paying some money under the table.

Governance.

Our governance structure is the most affected by corruption, which seeps into every officer-citizen interface.

The more the interaction between officers & citizens, the more the scope for corruption. This is probably what made PM Modi's slogan of "minimum government, maximum governance" an instant hit.

From the legal perspective, our laws have increased the amount of delegated legislations required from the executive, which has led to increased power with the executive, & framing of rules, which leads to favoritism.

Although the present government has taken a few steps to undo this, we are still a long way

from achieving the said dream.

Some of these reforms are -

- (1) Repealing around 160 old & archaic laws.
- (2) Further opening up hitherto unopened sectors, eg. defence to the private sector.
- (3) Exiting non-core governance functions.
- (4) Ease of doing business - to reduce interactions with the government, reducing control.
- (5) Accountability of ministers & officials through direct engagement with the public through media debates, twitter, etc.

Economic Sector

The biggest effect of corruption is on the economy of India. It leads to black money, inflation, hoarding, mis-targeting of beneficiaries of government schemes, etc.

The following steps take us closer to achieving our dream:-

(1) JAM Trinity - Jan Aardhan, Aadhaar, mobile.

→ Aadhaar ensures correct targeting of beneficiaries of government schemes & dices false accounts.

Jan Aardhan ensures and facilitates direct benefits transfer in the form of cash transfer of subsidies.

Mobile uses tele-density penetration to use the first two benefits.

eg. CPG subsidy - around Rs 15,000 crores of government money was saved due to DBT. This money can be used for other benefits for the people, to better social indicators, etc.

(2) Reforming PDS system

PDS system (Public distribution of food grains) had the most number

of gloft beneficiaries. However, government initiatives like chip card authentication (चाटिंगार्) and use of technology have substantially reduced corruption.

(3) Electricity - transforming & sending power distribution through technology have reduced power thefts, hence indirectly affecting corruption. ~~Corruption is reduced~~

(4) Fertilizers - subsidy used to be diverted to foreign countries & the rich who used it for industrial purposes.

Neem coating has reduced this substantially. Alternatives are being sought for canalisation of imports.

(5) Black money - penal provisions, international agreements to

Reduce corruption & black money in society.

(6) Banking reforms, including technology to reduce cash flow & encourage cashless transactions are being undertaken.

(7) Reduced effort of APMC through National Electronic Agricultural Market (e-NAM), which will reduce corruption by middle-men.

(8) Election Commission has taken a tough stand on use of cash during elections.

Social change & conclusion

At the end of the day, ~~the way of the day~~ what is required is a paradigm shift in social thinking.

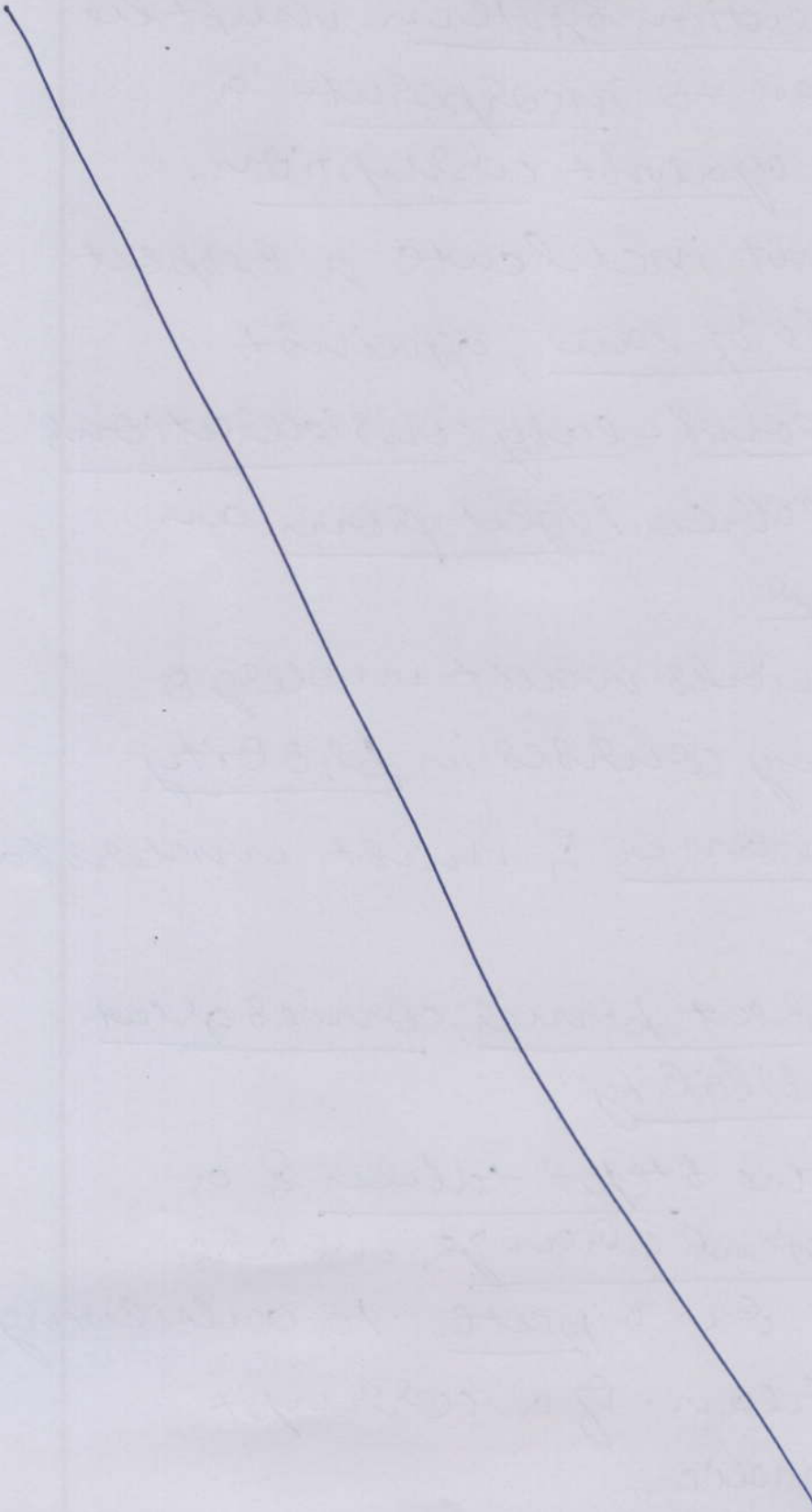
Our education system must be reformed to incorporate a culture against corruption.

we must inculcate a respect for rule of law, against extraneous - easy considerations in children right from an early age.

Our officials must undergo training courses in probity in governance & must understand that :-

"with great power, comes great responsibility".

With the steps taken & a sociological change, we are indeed on a path to achieving our dream of a corrupt free India.



Rough work.

① Revisiting ancient glory.

- History repeats itself, key to future; Benefit of critical thought.
India's challenges → ① Governance ② Security ③ Law reforms.
④ Social indicators ⑤ environment. ⑥ Power & security.

poverty

- Architecturally - Indus valley civilisation - lessons.
today - roads, planning, drainage, slope.

- socially - women

- value system vid-vid - new thinking (Kumar & Banerjee)

- Science - innovations.

↳ physics, space.

↳ water - vyabhatta

↳ medicine - Sushruta, Charaka

①

- Political system - spy system - (iii) - analysis

(i) Governance

↳ Sabha & Samiti - citizen

enthus.

Statecraft -

Irrigation -

- Security - 'Ablaya Bhadrat' - modified concept.

- 'Law' - ① King can do no wrong

② Politics & religion intertwined - Priests determine.

- Environment - mother nature worshipped.

↓

- Rig Veda etc - Indra, Varun, Agni.

So, we work around environment.

SECTION - B.

② 'Sleams' - Intro; Conclusion → 'Power, Resp'.

2008 fall, ministers resign

How? → colonial mindset - lot of power - misuse.

→ short term gains - survival of fittest - large population

→ licensing, - state & etc