

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.

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4.

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6.

All the Best

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Section - A

3. Life must be understood backward.
But it must be lived forward.

The year was around 300 B.C.
Chakravartin Samrat, Ashoka, had just conquered Kalinga. However, he had got no peace of mind - he saw thousands of corpses lying on the battlefield, the Daya river turning into blood red. He began to instantly repent his actions. The incident moved him so much that he vowed to not kill again, but instead, strived to conquer the world with love and compassion.

The above incident speaks of two things - one, experience is the greatest teacher, two, one must not only sit back and introspect, but also do something to avoid repeating it.

The present essay highlights the importance of life vis-a-vis history. It goes

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on to tell how it must be lived and understood.

An Enigma called 'life'

Life is nothing but a conglomeration of one's past, present and future and the various aspects surrounding it. It would include one's experiences, plannings, vision, hailing from every diverse area possible. Life could mean attribute to a person, a family or a nation, even a thing.

One's life gets its fullness and richness from the experiences, hence, it should not mean having a mere animal existence.

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How life must be understood

As stated above, life must be understood from historical point of view. Why?

To relieve the good ~~and~~ avert the bad in the future.

Since time immemorial, nations have undergone Wars, genocides, famines - which have only taught the humankind to avoid it. The 1st and 2nd world wars, for example, have been the most brutal ones, having resulted in millions of casualties, destruction of property, and of environment.

Sir Oppenheimer, after testing a Nuclear Bomb in the New Mexico, United States, despite having made it, warned the world against nuclear weapons.

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Indeed, the clown of reason and conscience seem to be the only saviours of this world from an impending doom. The setting up of United Nations have, at the bare minimum, succeeded in keeping the world from a third world war.

Likewise, post Industrial Revolution in England and to rest of Europe, the increased production had also resulted in poor labour conditions — ~~to~~ long working hours, child labour, unfair contracts. Colonialism in the third world countries had spread this malaise there as well. In 1919, International Labour Organisation (ILO) was born, which has served to set ~~to~~ global benchmarks for fulfilling labour welfare and is only advancing towards this goal.

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On a national level, there has been many instances of dark. The terrible Bengal famine of 1943 - had shocked the nation. ~~India~~ When India was again on the verge of famine in 1960s, she chose not to repeat history. Our visionary leader Lal Bahadur Shastri contracted with Norman Borlaug for the high yielding variety seeds that kickstarted the Green Revolution. This made India self-sufficient in foodgrains. Henceforth, India never looked back, instead, it became a net exporter of rice!

Post-independent India has witnessed its darkest period during the emergency (1975-77) - which was characterised by press censorship, arrest of millions,

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suspension of fundamental rights and civil liberties, forced sterilization policies, committed judiciary and judge packing, et al. The next government, looking at the utter use ~~is~~ and misuse of emergency provisions, amended it to make it more difficult to impose emergency. If at all a similar situation requiring emergency arises, ~~it~~^{there} is an untold conviction to not impose it. Anything that seeks to trample on civil liberties on such a wide scale goes on to backfire, hence, the aim should be to instead work objectively and treat every case individually.

On a societal level, enlightened reformers tried to eradicate the social vice and

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work positively on the upliftment of subjects. Savitri Bai Phule, for example, established a school for girls who were hitherto excluded from attending schools. Pandita Ramabai opened the Sarda Sadan, for ~~her~~ an Ashram for widows and facilitated their self growth. Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar persuaded the state to make widows remarriage valid, side-by-side, he also ~~opened~~ ^{involved} in Belhune school, a school for women. B.M. Malabari coaxed the state to raise the age of consent to 12 for girls - this ensured, even by bit, that reproductive rights of child brides were upheld. Mahatma Gandhi denounced untouchability, and called for 'upper caste' hindus to atone.
All the above examples have one thing in common - the reformers strived to eradicate

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a social evil, and at the same time, paved way for upliftment and welfare of the subjects.

On the environmental realm, the Club of Rome, a thinkbank, published in 1978 a journal titled 'Our Common Future' — proving that climate change is real and that the carrying capacities of the earth are soon to be overpowered. It made aware the world of the destruction it created to the earth. This kickstarted the 1st ever global environmental conference in Stockholm ~~19~~ which ~~to~~ gave the idea of 'Sustainable Development'. Subsequent global efforts such as in Rio, Johannesburg, Vienna and Paris have set targeted goals to slow down, if not avert, climate change. It

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has raised environmental consciousness among the people, which indeed, is a positive sign. Also, seeing the harmful effects of halogens on the Ozone layer - the world had come up with effective mechanisms and have successfully eradicated most of the notified halogens [Montreal Protocol].

The above example shows how the world rectified the ill effects of over-consumption and exploitation and now, how it is striving towards a more environment-friendly trajectory.

On the Economic front, the world had witnessed the Great Depression of 1930 - which resulted in huge unemployment, ~~depression~~ fall in global stocks - shaking the economies worldwide. This

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made the economics community more cognizant of the fragility of Keynesian economics and henceforth, sought to make amends.

The arrival of the Brettonwoods system, leading to IMF and World Bank - played a massive role in reconstruction of damaged economies.

Likewise, the flight of foreign capital which created the Asian Financial Crisis, 1997 - made countries like India & cognizant of foreign exchange capital account convertibility. So, while India ensures free trade is being done in the best manner, it also has safeguards for preventing flight of capital.

Similarly, in the Science domain, the herald of 4th Industrial Revolution, viz,

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Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, 5G, Robotics, 4D printing, cryptocurrencies. These are made to thrive but at the same time countries are being vigilant of the challenges like cyber warfare, hacking, privacy breach, phishing etc. This have prompted to bring data protection laws nationally and globally. The Talinn Manual, for example, is a guideline on cybersecurity for NATO countries.

The above example shows that while the world is vigilant of the harms caused due to cyber security issues, it is/must be equipped to handle them.

The Bottomline

The above essay highlights how life is understood backward, but also how it is ~~lived~~ lived forward. Great men have

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learned to use, introspect,
challenge and strived to make
the world a better place to
live in. How do we make such
great men? Inculcate a
habit of questioning things,
building curiosity about
anything and everything,
teach values of objectivity and
rationality, good and bad,
teach the importance of history,
raise environmental consciousness,
spread values of empathy and
compassion to look at the
world from a good-man's
perspective.

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Sec-B

5. Dissent is the safety valve of Democracy

"I may not support what you say, but I will defend to death for your right to say it."

— Voltaire

[French philosopher]

Dissent is a form of speech and expression which signifies some form of criticism towards the government's policies. It is an essential function element of every democracy.

Most recently, the global think tank VDem Institute, ~~Rated~~ downgraded India to status of 'electoral autocracy' (2021), from the status of a democracy. India has also fared low in Reporters Without Frontiers report on freedom of

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Press — highlighting the incremental suppression of freedom of speech.

This essay is an attempt to define and highlight the importance of dissent, why we need dissent in a democracy, what happens if dissent is suppressed, and suggests the way forward.

Dissent and Democracy - Significance

Democracy is a form of government that is of the people, for the people and by the people. Government is elected by the people, who, in turn, work for the people. It is the people who shall elect the government and it is again the people who can question, critique, praise or even bring down the government. That is the meaning & essence of a democracy.

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Now, Dissent is a form of speech directed against the government's policies which are prima facie against the public. According to the Indian Constitution, every citizen has the freedom of speech and expression [Art. 19(1)(a)], which is a fundamental right. This shows the intent of our constitution makers towards protecting freedom of speech.

The Role that dissent plays

A Dissent can be made in many form, be it words, cartoons, recordings, films, articles that signify contempt against the govt.

It can play its role constructively by asking government to watch out. For example, in 2018-19, Jean Dreze, a well-known Food Activist highlighted in a newspaper about the deaths of few people in Jharkhand because

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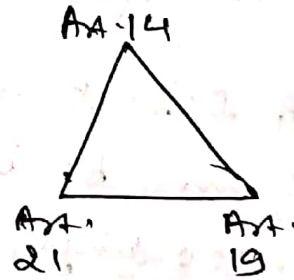
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of hunger and starvation that was result of sheer administrative apathy. He called on the government to investigate the matter on where the Public Distribution System failed. This resulted in massive clamour on part of civil society for increased accountability on part of the government.

Dissent helps in fostering healthy debates and discussions about government policies - which further civil liberties of citizens, enshrined in Article 14, 19 and 21 of Indian Constitution, which are inter-dependent on each other.



Dissent, apart from ensuring accountability, also helps to ensure transparency in government actions. e.g. the widespread demand from government for transparency

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had led to hurting of the Right to Information Act, 2005, which is hailed as one of the sweeping reforms - aimed at promoting transparency.

Dissent promotes further quest into government's malpractices/errors - which may lead to rectification of such errors.

eg. Initially, the Aarogya Setu App was launched but which contained bugs that might have ~~hamp~~ breached privacy as it excluded the user's right to be forgotten.

After widespread protest, government was forced to include citizens' right to be forgotten in lines with right to privacy.

Dissent often brings and showcases creativity of the dissenter by way of cartoons and films, making it more easy and legible for others to understand and gain interest in a subject.

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Dissent ensures that a democracy does not transform into autocracy and authoritarianism. An autocracy signifies the rule of few, and not of the people, essentially meaning the death of democracy. Hence, dissent is a sine qua non of a democracy.

When is dissent harmful for democracy?

In general, dissent is essential, but at times, dissent is not healthy for democracy. It is when a person calls for waging war against the state, threatens the sovereignty and integrity of the nation, defamation, frivolous contempt of courts, against security of state, et al.

Such kind of speech is not protected by the Indian laws and a person can be

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punished, reasonably so, for such act.

Thus, dissent is important, but must not transcend into form that may create violence.

How is dissent crushed ?

Crushing dissent is symbolic of a country turning authoritarian, as it signifies that government is not responsive, or accountable, instead it is fearful of hatred.

In India, there are numerous safeguards for state, which are lately seen as misused in order to suppress dissent. Prominent among them is the sedition law, mentioned under section 124A of Indian Penal Code. It states that whoever, by words, signs or visible representation, invokes disaffection against the state -

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is guilty of sedition. It is a recognizable and non-bailable offence. Governments have often misused this provision to crack on journalists, cartoonists, authors. Even the Law Commission has recommended ~~it~~ making amends to this provision, or use it sparingly. Despite the narrowed interpretations of this provision by Supreme Court, Sec. 124A IPC continues to ~~to~~ crush dissent.

The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) was passed to curb terrorism. However, ~~these~~ scholars have pointed out incidents of its misuse as the same is slapped on people who participate in protests against government. As per National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Report, less than 1% of the ones accused under UAPA

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have been convicted. This only signifies one thing - dissent is crushed.

Even dissent in Parliament can amount to dissent. The doing away of Question hour in many occasions ~~protects~~ ^{protects} governments from questioning.

The judiciary is also not immune from suppressing dissent. Seen as breakwaters to authoritarian tendencies, sometimes it also falters. The Contempt of Courts Act - is seen by scholars to be used by judges ^{even} where it is unnecessary. Especially the powers of criminal contempt - is slapped on advocates or individuals who question the judge. It must be noted that Independence of Judiciary is of paramount importance, however, it does not mean that judges are ^{to be treated as} completely immune from questioning [held by Justice ~~to~~ Markandey Katju].

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How Do We Ensure Dissent prospers ?

It has been established that dissent ensures a healthy functioning of democracy. Now the question arises is, how do we ensure it ?

In media jurisprudence, State acts as a parent, as *Parens Patriae*. His role is confined to maintaining law and order. [As a *Night Watchman*].
It should, thus, only show greater tolerance to dissent and intervene ~~only~~ only when a law and order situation is dire.

State must follow international best practices and ~~use~~ use the provisions of sedition, UAPA, et al with restraint, if not misuse it.

The hon'ble Judiciary must stand tall and be

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vigilant in upholding citizen's freedom of speech and expression.

Also, the Judiciary must not use criminal contempt powers in excess, against dissent. This is in line with especially the United Kingdoms which has abolished contempt powers, from where it came to India.

Regulation of Media is desired. ~~the~~ The recent Information Technology Rules, 2010 is a step in the right direction. However, over-regulation may not serve this purpose.

The notorious section 66A of Information Technology Act - known for punishing persons accused of threatening public interest - was struck down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in 2016. However, there have been incidents of its use by many governments. It is advised to repeal such provisions.

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The cracking down on
for NGOs through Foreign Contribution
Amendment Rules (FCRA), 2020 -
has weakened dissent, among
other things. It must be looked
into. In a healthy democracy,
civil societies are ones that
flourish.

Also, the RTI Act has
seen many backlogs. Effort must
be to expedite the issues so that
transparency is enhanced.

All over the world,
in the past and the present,
countries have undergone revolutions,
gained independence, changed
governments - all through dissent.
It is, thus, necessary that
this jewel of a crown called
democracy remains preserved.

(Please do not write anything except the question number in this space)

कृपया इस स्थान में प्रश्न संख्या के अतिरिक्त कुछ न लिखें।

UPSC

Answer Questions in NOT MORE THAN the Word Limit specified for each in the Parenthesis.
Content of the Question is more important than length.
(Specimen Answer Booklet - For Practice Purpose Only)

उम्मीदवारों को इस हाशिए में नहीं लिखना चाहिए
Candidates must not write on this margin

