

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

1)

GLOBAL REFUGEE CRISIS: ENMESHMENT OF POLITICS, ECONOMICS AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The President of the United States of America recently sanctioned the building of a wall, to prevent refugees from the poorer Central and South American regions entering the country.

It was a key poll promise that he had made - to stem the influx of these refugees who 'take away our jobs' and 'threaten the nation's security' through gang violence and drugs.

It is ironic that the concept of America is that of a 'melting pot' of cultures. The nation was built on immigrants' resolve.

Yet, the refugee crisis in the world today is highly complex. It represents an entanglement of politics, economics and national security.

ROOT OF THE CRISIS :

At some point, all of us have been refugees. Anthropological studies indicate that all humans have migrated from Africa, seeking shelter in other continents, just like the refugees of today do.

Today there is a crisis of people fleeing their

homes for a better life.
Some seek economic upliftment
as did the Venezuelan and
Mexican refugees that the Presid-
ent of USA was determined to
stop. With their hyperinflated
economies, and financial crisis,
nations like these often trigger
an exodus of migrants -

Often, this is a
result of mismanaged, despotic
rule, as seen in case of
the North African nations of
Tunisia and Egypt. Some flee
in search of liberty that is
denied to them under this
despotism. The North Korean
nationals are frequently caught
trying to infiltrate into the
democratic, prosperous South
Korea.

Many simply flee to save their lives. Persecuted ethnic minorities like the Rohingyas of Myanmar or the Chakmas of Bangladesh often run away from what they call a 'certain death' in their home countries.

This sense of urgency is even more acute among those from war-torn nations like Syria or Yemen. Geopolitical ambitions of the world's superpowers can be blamed for the humanitarian crisis that ensues. ~~is~~

Moreover, the sense of insecurity to one's life is compounded by disasters and epidemics. For the refugees

it is a shift from hunger to livelihood, threat to security and despotism to liberty. Thus, at the heart of the refugee crisis, lies the trinity of economics, politics and national security.

CURRENT SHAPE OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Refugees are rarely greeted with a welcoming glance. They are often seen as competing for jobs and livelihoods with the locals. As an impending global financial slowdown emerges, this sentiment intensifies.

The American resentment for skilled Indian immigrants or Syrian refugees that might take up low-paying

jobs exemplify this. Resource distribution is increasingly being seen as a zero-sum game, where some benefit at the cost of others.

Genuine resource crunches may hit the destination country. For instance, Bangladesh houses millions of Rohingya refugees, and is running out of land, food and shelter to support them. The United Nations and India's Operation Insaniyat have been rather inadequate.

The rise of anti-refugee leaders in most Western democracies is testament to the impact of these sentiments. The failure to sign the UN Compact on Migration or the New York Declaration on rights of refugees is deeply mixed in domestic politics.

At the local level, there is a resentment against 'outsider' aggression. Vulnerable tribal groups in Tripura (India) and Assam (India) have voiced this sentiment. The Assam Accord of 1985, aimed to send back some Bangladeshi refugees, and disenfranchise others for a fixed time period.

The refugees often suffer statelessness, and the denial of voting rights, in the absence of a targeted response, as seen in case of Rohingyas.

Alternatively, they might get absorbed into local politics as vote banks and this might create antagonism among locals. The threat of

Xenophobic violence, hate crimes and riots is ever present, and brings a threat to internal security.

Moreover, due to a 'clash of civilisations' with the destination population, there are concerns about the integration of refugees.

Even if refugees integrate, as seen in case of Siberian Refugees in India, external conflict might ensue like the Indo-China war of 1962. The movement of refugees may create hostility between the countries of origin and refuge, as seen in case of Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Further, the threat of Transnational Organised

Crime like human trafficking, drug smuggling and insurgency is ever present. It is the women and children that suffer disproportionately. The harrowing ordeals narrated by victims from Rohingya and North Korean refugees, are a testament to the moral crisis.

Moreover, this crisis threatens to intensify. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that almost 180 million will migrate due to climate change in the near future.

Increasing hostilities and the threat of nuclear war and strife, especially in Asia might be another crisis.

that refugees will be forced to flee. Thus, an integrated response is the need of the hour.

RESPONDING TO THE CRISIS:

THE WAY FORWARD

The global community must actively co-operate to tackle the three elements of the refugee crisis: economy, politics and national security.

Firstly, it must ensure that adequate economic support is available to the nations housing the refugees. This is especially required for the developing nations that are reeling under the adverse economic impact. Thus, supporting the nations of origin and destination through

'Common but Differentiated responsibility' is a key imperative, as pointed out by the International Organisation of Migration.

Further, tackling the reasons why refugees flee in the first place is imperative. Lacking conflict, strife and war through non-violent negotiations and mediations might avert the crisis.

Moreover, a concerted effort is needed to ensure that human rights including civic, political and economic rights are respected in every nation. Ensuring a crackdown on human trafficking through UN conventions is imperative.

Finally, any approach to 'tackle' the refugee crisis must be an ethical and humanitarian one. 'Non-refoulement' or not sending refugees back to areas where they might be persecuted is important.

We must remember the ancient Indian maxim of VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM [The world is one family].

In dealing with the refugee crisis, we can't let, as few Rabindranath Tagore put it, our nationalism get in the way of our humanity.

INDIAN POLITICS : VOTES ARE CASTE , NOT CAST

On a hot sultry day in the month of April, Hukum Singh of Jazilka village (Haryana) stood in line to cast his vote. Throughout the month, candidates had been campaigning relentlessly. Poll-promise after poll promise was made, much to the bewilderment of the average voter.

Finally, when it was his turn to vote, Hukum Singh chose the candidate with the same surname - Prakash Singh Rathore. Despite the many cases of murder and corruption that hung like an Albatross around his neck,

This candidate was an easy choice. Caste affinity had prevailed, yet again.

Voting based on caste identity is nothing new in India. Post the breakdown of the one-party Congress system, complex caste calculations are made before every election.

Identity politics based on caste and ethnicity often triggered subnationalism and secessionism. This was evident in the Dravidian political movement of the South. Mobilised based on their caste identity, they sought to carve out a separate nation.

Another example is the mobilisation of the 'Dalit' community; first under Dr.

B. R. Ambedkar during the Poona Pact, and later under caste based political parties, like Bahujan Samaj Party founded by Kanshi Ram. This marginalised group of Dalits saw politics as a key intervention for empowerment.

Thus, there is a very strong cultural affinity associated with one's caste in India. Similar food habits, common residence, and a common narrative of history bind the caste group together. Inadvertently, it also strengthens the caste hierarchy, and causes polarisation based on caste.

One would have thought that with the emergence of modern technology.

and globalisation, the influence of caste on voting patterns will diminish. However, today, analytics is being used for election-centric caste calculation.

The caste identity receives a second lease of life from politics. Polarising hate speech, appeals to identity only strengthen it during the elections. Thus, Political Scientist Rajni Kothari famously remarked that in India, Caste needs politics as much as politics needs caste.

Moreover, the lack of good education in the country prevents individuals from making independent, objective decisions. The rote-learning devoid of political education only perpetuates this

trend .

As a consequence, manifestos are rendered useless. Development needs of education, health, water, electricity and shelter are promptly sidelined, because they don't matter in the election. India's dismal ratings on the Human Development Index is testament to this fact.

Amartya Sen's

development goal of giving every person the kind of life that they have reason to value, is forgotten. People have selected caste, time and time again, and made it clear that only that matters.

Social Justice
goals of equity, inclusive growth

and equality as enshrined in our constitution are left unfulfilled. As per a Thomas Picketty report, 1 percent of India's population owns 22 percent of its resources.

Moreover, the marginalised groups like minorities, Scheduled caste, tribals and women suffer disproportionately. Because people like to vote their caste, they resent reserved seats for these groups. It is telling that the amount of NOTA (none of the above) votes were higher in the reserved constituencies this year's election.

Further, when the marginalised are not represented in politics, their empowerment and uplift is

derailed, and they are reduced to sub-citizens of the nation.

For women, this means that traditional caste roles stand strengthened. In reserved Panchayat seats, it is common to find women in "purdah" contesting the election. They seldom leave the house. Campaigning and, indeed, the work of the representative later is controlled by male family members, in what is called the PANCHAYATI PATI syndrome.

Thus, democracy gets derailed in many ways, when votes are caste, not cast. Perhaps it would be apt then, to quote

Winston Churchill -

'The best argument
against democracy is a
five-minute conversation
with the average voter'

The average
Indian voter often chooses
caste over everything else.
Consequently, parties don't
hesitate in fielding corrupt
or criminal candidates.

Corruption is not
an excuse to reject a candi-
date at all. Almost 60 percent
of our 17th Lok Sabha MPs
have criminal cases in their
kitty. Yet, they are the chosen
ones.

However, caste,
though a key consideration,
may not be the only one.

India as a country with continental diversity, absorbs people of multiple ethnicities and thus, multiple identities.

A nation of 1.2 Billion people fragmented on caste, religion, gender, ethnicity and region, might be a nightmare for psephologists who might try and predict the election results.

Which of these identities is prominent for which person at what time, is ~~an~~ unpredictable. Some might vote en bloc as a religion and others may reject identity politics altogether, preferring a discourse centered around political identity instead.

Consolidation of marginalised groups can be

based on religion or ethnicity for instance, the tribal movement for a TWIPRALAND or a GREATER NAGALIM has little to do with caste.

Further, the rise of charismatic leaders, and political dynasties can complicate election outcomes. They can often convince people to vote in their favour, transcending caste.

The rise of 'appeasement politics, vote banks and populists is also testament to a non-caste based mobilisation. However, this caste based politics is common in as well.

The reform movement and the rise of sects and cults like Deras in North India have also weakened caste. But they have led to a new form of political mobilisation. Politicians are now frequenting high profile 'godmen' in the hope for votes.

The way forward, would be to change the political discourse in favour of the people. Given that we have a rising youth population, and are rearing our demographic potential, it is an opportunity to center the politics around issues, not identity.

The rising middle class and urban population

constitute what Amartya Sen would have called - The Argumentative Indian.

They are vocal on social media and otherwise, and are independent thinkers.

Political education of the people was a key imperative for the National movement in colonial times. Perhaps it is time to revive this and take political education to the people again.

This must be done carefully, and without an imposition of views. As Margaret Mead put it - Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.

Only then, can we
free our politics from the
shackles of caste. After all,
it is true that :-

'YATHA RAJA TATHA PRAJA'

[The ruler reflects the
people's choice - As the people
so as the ruler].