

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

If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they don't want to hear

It was a warm sunny day in Athens. On a platform, many people had gathered to watch a strange trial. The judge listening to the arguments was now announcing the judgement and he punished the culprit with death by poisoning. After the judgement, the accused was provided a cup full of poison — hemlock and asked to drink. After drinking it, he felt delicious and couldn't walk properly. After a few moments, he fell to the earth and died! The person was Socrates and his crime was 'Corrupting the youth of Athens with his ideas'.

Was his death morally right?
What did he have to say in his

defence. Well, Socrates said that if his crime ~~was~~ what is alleged to be, then he was ready to die for it because he believed that 'if liberty means anything, it means the right to tell people what they don't want to hear'.

In this essay, we are going to understand the meaning of liberty, why it is to tell people what they don't want to hear, incidents when this liberty has changed societies and sometimes the whole world, why people don't want to hear some things and what can we do as a society to inculcate the value of liberty & tolerance.

Liberty can be defined as the freedom to express oneself without any restraints in an environment that is conducive leading to one's growth. It can range from as simple as comedy

about society to as serious as dissent in the form of sedition.

Voltaire once remarked that 'I might not believe one word of what you say but I will defend to death your right to say it'. This quote of his perfectly sums up a society that values liberty in its truest form. But why should a society value liberty?

It is quite evident, if we look at our civilisation at this point, that most of the products that we use, the buildings that we live in, the planes that we fly in, the clothes that we wear are all nothing but the products of human thought.

All those thoughts that led to these things were at some point in our history considered blasphemous but it was their expression that helped human civilisation create its foundation. As Sam Harris says, 'liberty

is literally built into our walls.

Christopher Hitchens once said, 'By denying anyone the liberty to speak, you are not just denying his/her right to speak but you are denying yourself the right to hear'. This quote perfectly sums up other facet of liberty — the ultimate quest to find truth. By denying someone the liberty to tell us what they think, we might be denying ourselves the right to know the truth. This is also evident in the Jain philosophy of Anekantavada — there are many facets of truth. But what more does liberty offer beyond truth & progress?

Noam Chomsky once famously defended a holocaust denier which he later expressed as 'protecting a ~~person's~~ person's right to say stupid things'. Liberty means saying things that might be stupid but

only once you say them and you are countered do you realise that you were wrong. Hence, liberty reforms a person & helps him/her in their growth. Liberty doesn't just have ramifications on an individual level though. Sometimes liberty has changed whole societies and even the world.

In 15th Century Europe, the world was a different place. Slavery was rampant, women were burned as witches, there was persecution of jews, etc. In fact, historians have named this period as the 'Dark ages' of Europe. The question arises that how did a Europe in dark ages emerge out of them to manifest itself in the form of modern, prosperous, progressive, democratic Europe to which whole world looks up to!

The answer lies in the enlightenment movement whose basis was the idea of liberty of telling people what they don't want to hear. From people like Voltaire, to Rousseau, scientists from Galileo to

Issac Newton, every one of thinkers was coming up with truths that were too difficult and painful for Europe to hear but ultimately as is said — Satyameva Jayate (Truth alone wins)

Another example from Europe that comes to mind is the example of Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther who was saddened by corruption of church went ahead and published his criticisms of the Catholic church and even put them on the gates of churches. Though the Catholic church was infuriated at first but it had to reform itself after Protestant church came up as a reformed church in competition. Europe might seem far beyond but many examples can be found back home.

Ancient India was a bastion of liberty all in the earlier days. Every type of idea flourished on this soil which lead to Amartya Sen, the famous economist and philosopher, call the Indian people as 'Argumentative Indian'. But with

time, stagnation came due to orthodoxy and people were divided into castes with no mutual commensality. This led to a sort of Indian dark age where little progress was made. In this society was born a prince named Siddharth who changed everything. Telling people what they did not want to hear, he opposed the caste and gender segregation and started his own movement—Buddhism. He came to be known as Buddha. With his ideas, Hinduism had to reform itself to reduce the orthodoxy.

In modern India, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar presents the perfect case of 'liberty leading to reform and restructuring of society'.

Born in a lower caste family, he rose up by educating himself. Being agitated by the caste divisions of the society, he voiced his criticisms of casteism in the strongest terms and even converted to Buddhism in his later years. Although initially, the Hindu society was not ready to hear his grievances, but later as the

As the chairman of the drafting Committee, he drafted ~~the~~ a Constitution that abolished untouchability, provided special treatment to marginalised and ensured that the cycle of marginalisation is reduced if not stopped. ~~His~~ His liberty to tell India what it did not want to hear was what led to the modern democratic India that we all so cherish

Other examples might be the Anna Hazare movement and the passing of Lokpal Act, J P Narayan movement against emergency, etc. Though sometimes liberty has changed societies for the better, other times it has led to violence and tragedy.

Salman Rushdie, who published his book 'Satanic Verses' in 1988 was threatened by the supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei and thousands of protests happened worldwide. For 15 years, Salman had to travel with security provided by U.K police. Though Salman was lucky, but

others were not. Charlie Hebdo, a French cartoon publishing house lost its editors to the mob violence after they published 'derogatory' cartoons of Muhammad. The book 'Satanic verses' and the cartoons were both banned in India. Along with them, hundreds of books, articles, etc have been banned in India over the last seven decades.

The trend of banning and punishing people for liberty seems to have reached a new low with the recent contempt of court case against Prashant Bhanu. This raises the question of how to inculcate the value of tolerance and ability to hear.

Value based education is a must. As Gandhiji said, 'Education without values is no education at all'. The values of liberty, tolerance have to be taught so that 'New India' reaps the benefits of human thought.

As stressed by ~~our~~ our Constitution, scientific temper needs to be inculcated in children and adults so that they develop the ability to question things and not just go with the masses.

Parents need to practice democratic parenting so that the child understands the value of discussions, ideas and tolerance. This will lead us to a new prosperous India.

Curriculum of schools needs to be reformed to include a course on 'Critical thinking' so that students get to know the art of argument rather than jumping to conclusions as humans usually do.

To fulfil the dream of our founding fathers, we need to inculcate and imbibe the idea of liberty in its true sense. We need to learn the art of handling offence. ~~Not from our hands~~ Rather than using hands, we need to learn to use our minds.

"Where the mind is without fear & the
head is held high;

where the knowledge is free;

where words come out from the depths of truth;

Into that heaven of freedom, my father, let
my country awake."

(Rabindranath Tagore)

Legislative measures alone are not enough to ensure women's safety

September 2020: India woke up to yet another horrifying rape story. This time the victim, a 19 year old girl, from Hathras, was allegedly raped by four men from the same area. In the coming days, as the country was watching & waiting in horror, the victim died in a hospital. Murdered in an undignified manner, she also lost her right to a dignified cremation when the police cremated her forcibly. Media was not allowed to visit the cremation site and in the later days, her family's communication to the outside world was cut off.

This story, one of the thousands in India, represents a typical case of violence against the women, the apathy of law enforcement agencies and the case against law alone being able to ensure the safety of women.

In this essay, we will discuss the statistics about women's safety in India, the legislative measures to ensure their safety, the reasons of inadequacy of legislative measures alone to ensure their safety and the steps that need to be taken to ensure their safety.

Thomas Reuters survey in 2019 held India as 'the most dangerous country for women', a shame for any thinking Indian. Similarly, according to NCRB, there has been a 4% increase in crime rate against women in the last one year with 12% increase in rape cases. These statistics go on to show the acute problem of women safety in India. This is despite the various legislative measures that India has taken over years.

Govt of India over years has come up with legislative measures to ensure women's safety. These include laws like:

Dowry Prohibition Act (1986), Domestic Violence Act, Prohibition of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act (2013), Criminal Law (Amendment) Act (2013), amendments to rape & murder provisions in IPC and CrPc to make them more stringent. Despite these measures, violence against women is rising not declining. The pertinent question to ask is why?

Though the enactment of legislative measures is a necessary condition to reduce the violence against women but it is not sufficient.

The first problem is that laws work when cases are reported. Without reportage, laws are just words in a book. In case of domestic violence, it has found through surveys that 86% of the cases go unreported. This stark figure goes on to prove the worst fears of all - that the domestic violence cases that we come to know of are just the tip

of the iceberg. But why do women not report the cases?

Women most of the times don't report the cases because of the societal stigma. This stigma emerges from the fact that in our society, people judge the victim more than the perpetrator. This is clear in case of rapes when the blame is put on the woman for wearing short clothes or not being characterised enough, etc. This societal stigma is reinforced by other ~~social~~ ills.

Apathy on part of the law enforcement agencies adds to the stigma and leading to minimal reporting by women. Police and administration ~~has~~ in ~~so~~ many cases been found guilty of being reluctant of even filing an FIR, Haryana providing a recent example. Investigation in a lackadaisical manner adds to the apathy, last but not the least, police

and administration come from the same society and embody its values such as patriarchy and blaming the victim.

Apart from these, women also fear reporting the cases of violence as most of the violence in India is domestic in nature i.e., it happens within the family and by the close relatives. This makes it difficult for them to choose between reporting and losing the home & ~~home~~ reporting and enduring the abuse. Usually they choose the latter.

Laws might change the behaviour if the law enforcement is strict but they cannot change the attitude. The attitude of patriarchy is what fuels the violence and to eliminate the violence, that attitude has to be changed. In addition to these legislative measures, many other things can be done that will help in reducing and ultimately eliminate the violence ensuring women's safety.

Value based education is the first and foremost responsibility of the education system. Inculcating the values of gender equality, empathy, compassion and non-violence will go a long way in cutting the roots of the menace of violence against women.

Democratic parenting can be a game changer. Parents need to transmit values of gender sensitivity and love to their children. Further, segregation of gender roles should be eliminated and both boys & girls should be raised up similarly.

Awareness campaigns about the presence of laws against gender violence will lead to warning of to-be criminals and also ensure that women know their rights and the laws against violence. This can be done via media TV, cinemas, etc. celebrity voices can be used to

ensure adequate effect on the people.

Sensitisation of law enforcement personnel

about the gender stereotyping and violence prevalent against women is a must. It will resolve the problems of late FIRs, lackadaisical investigations, etc.

The media should be empowered to report each and every case. But it ~~also~~ should be ensured that the reportage is truthful and not divisive. This can go a long way to enhance the reportage and demand of justice by the people.

~~Also~~ women and especially young girls should be taught self-defence so that they can tackle an emergency when no one is around. This is also help in reducing the crimes in the first place as the criminals would fear the defensive violence.

Public transport should be regulated and proper data management of all

the public transport personnel should be ensured in a centralised database. Modern technologies of GPS should be used to track and trace every public transport vehicle.

Helpline numbers and apps need to be launched that can be used 24*7 by women in order to get help in case of an emergency. These helpline numbers and the app details should be posted on the public transport vehicles and sideways of roads so that women are aware.

In the recent times, government has come up with many initiatives such as Beti Bachao Beti Padao, Gender awareness campaigns on girl child in rural areas, Helpline numbers such as 100, etc. These and other initiatives like He 4She are a step in the right direction.

"No better tool of women empowerment than women themselves" (Kofi Annan).