

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.

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6.

All the Best

CHILD LABOUR : A NECESSARY EVIL OR JUST PLAIN EVIL ?

Working with tools and teacups,
The little hands move everyday
For need and for survival,
They are ready to walk everyway
Some have an ailing sister
While some have a mother
To get home a penny
They get beaten by the 'other'.

Do these kids know, they are losing their
childhood ??

According to reports of United
Nations, there are around 30 million
child labourers in India in 5-18 yrs
age group. This striking figure represents

a gloomy picture of the 'State of Childhood' in India.

Being an agriculturally dominant country, it is natural that more than 50% of child labour is concentrated in the farm sector.

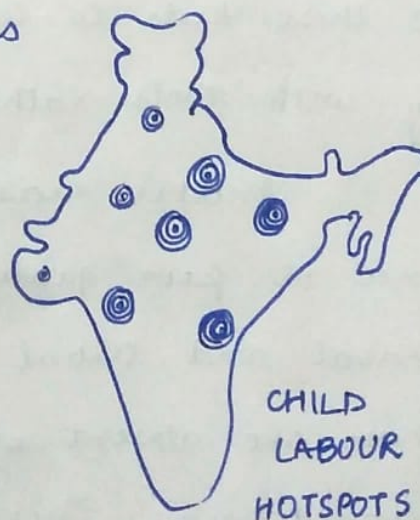
Besides this, children work in hazardous places like firecracker making, bangle making, zari work and in carpet weaving. A sizeable population in the central belt is busy rolling bidis with their hands.

In urban areas, roadside 'Dhabas' and other hotels employ children largely. Families, with both parents working, often employ girls to do daily chores and care for their children at home. These girls rarely

get proper food and rest while are often abused or beaten. What worth a child would feel, if treated this way?

A closer look at prevalence of child labour shows that just 5 states in India contribute to around 50% of incidence. These states are Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. This ^{depicts} ~~explains~~ the skewed reality today.

But what explains this reality? Why do these children work, is a question we must ponder upon. This is the only way to address this evil.



The child labour map finds a close resemblance to areas where chronic poverty persists. Indeed, poor households are the first to send their kids to work. Rarely are the incomes from marginal farms enough for the big family. Children work in the fields, specially in harvest season; while their mother works as agricultural labourer elsewhere. The pangs of poverty are Economic Compulsions that force these kids to leave their home early with 'tools' rather than 'pencils'.

Another reason, is the absence or poor quality of schools in rural and tribal areas. Either teachers are absent or the teaching is unindulging. This makes many

children to drop out. These out of school children are a potential pool of child labourers. But this perpetuates as a vicious cycle. Illiterate parents are unable to help their kids at home and more often do not bother about the 'Long' term Education benefit.

These incidences are more common in marginalised households, like that of Dalits or Tribes. Even so, the girl child faces more risk.

India still accounts for 30% child marriages worldwide (World bank).

Due to early marriage, girls have to give up school even if they wish to continue.

Another dimension of the 'State of Indian Economy' offers a

grim reason for child labour. Most people in India are 'self employed'. Meaning they have their own farms, or petty shops and businesses. Asking kids to extend a helping hand is seen as almost natural. It somehow adds to the meagre income of ~~the~~ informal households. Due to poor nutrition and lack of healthcare, members are often pushed into diseases and infections. This adds burden to overall family.

But all is not out of own compulsive will. Many children today are trafficked into factories and informal workplaces. Middlemen get hefty sums for each 'lost child'. Unfortunately, sometimes it's the father himself who sells off the child.

Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi, sadly recounts how a poor girl rescued from a garment industry explained her plight — "Baba, they sold me off for ₹10,000, that is less than the price of a buffalo...."

This heart wrenching reality has consequences on various walks of life. The psychological and physical trauma, the child themselves face is indescribable. They are often abused and girls are sexually assaulted. The child labour deprives them of equal opportunity to a better life. This is no less than a human right abuse.

It also negatively impacts child's health when hazardous smoke from bangle making or tobacco laced

on hands is inhaled / ingested. This leads to lung diseases, TB, heart problems and disabilities.

Depriving children from proper education and skill development makes them vulnerable to market forces. They continue to work in poorly paid jobs through adulthood. Is this the Demographic Dividend we talk about?

The deprived and ill nutritioned girls, when give birth, it feeds on the Infant mortality and maternal mortality. This continues the cycle of stunting, wasting and hidden Hunger.

To account for the heavy cost ~~we~~ at politico-International level, ~~a~~ huge losses are incurred.

With increasing abhorrence for child labour worldwide, European nations have included this clause in their Non-Tariff Barriers. Any product with such inclusion is rejected. Besides, ^{for} our growing stature and economy it's only shameful to employ child labour.

At this juncture, we must think, have we taken any steps to tackle child labour? The child labour law in India was recently amended to prohibit all kinds of work for 5-14yrs and hazardous work also. But exceptions for media entertainment and own family business were made. These are grey areas that can be exploited badly.

Besides, the new Anti Trafficking legislation establishes a stringent framework to nab the perpetrators and rehabilitate the victims. Also, many NGOs and govt institutes like Bachpan Bachao Andolan, Child Rights and You (CRY) work towards alleviating the conditions.

But these efforts might not be enough. For a problem that is deeply rooted in our socio-political milieu, a punitive or temporary provisions cannot be a long term solution.

It is time we realize, that if the poor household is sending the child to work out of sheer necessity; our duty is not only to protect the child but also to

alleviate the household from poverty. If illiterate mother cannot care about a hardworking daughter, its imperative that going to school is made much easier for her. Striking at childhood labour should start from striking at poverty. Schemes like MGNREGA, the goals of doubling farmer incomes etc should be achieved soon.

In urban slums, gainful employment for women and men must be arranged. At the same time, awareness for family planning needs to be spread. Households with more kids are more prone to sending elder children for work.

Besides, the factories which employ children must be severely fined and punished.

As for the tribals, education in local dialect, role model teachers from same area be appointed. This can keep away children from work. Recent schemes like Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana can better their incomes.

~~Then~~ One must also note, that in the Global scenario, countries of Asia and Africa due to low incomes and weak governance account for the major share of child labour. In conflict zones like West Asia, the disrupted households have taken a toll on child's life. Many are now forced to work in pitiful conditions.

Hence, only a collaborated and a multi-dimensional effort can help rein in the evil of child labour.

even if its a necessity, its nothing more than plain evil, depriving children of their best days. We need active participation at the level of family, community, provinces and nations to defeat the 'culture' of employing a child!

Their time is for playing
And making merry in the woods,
Let us join hands
To reclaim their Golden Childhood!

ASEAN-INDIA : Emerging Challenges to Shared Values and Common Destiny

The Republic Day of 2018 for India on 26th January was a historic day in itself. But what made it more special was the guests of that day. It felt as if our entire neighbourhood arrived when leaders from Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Brunei and Philippines made their presence.

The different colours of their dresses represented the cultural diversity we share and the bonhomie reflected our friendships.

Indeed, a new chapter to the ASEAN-India relations has already commenced. Our relations with our South East Asian neighbours is built on strong historical foundation.

Long back in 10-11th century, Imperial Cholas made their mark in Malaya. The ancient trade route led to exchanges of spices, rice, etc. Many Indians also settled there, even before 'India' was formed. Such is the depth of our past ties.

In order to properly lay out the charter for our common destiny, one must evaluate the set of challenges our relations face. Not only between us, but also what both India-ASEAN have to tackle.

The political and strategic perspective takes the first seal. In the backdrop of Asian Century, China has been in the tussle to rival US as the world power. This has led to acquisition of islands in the South China sea. Many of these fall in the Exclusive Economic zones of Indonesia, Vietnam and Philippines. It has harmed their sovereignty but also raised threats on free movement and rules based order.

But its not that China is just a "common challenge", rather its the white Elephant in our relations with ASEAN countries. The Belt and Road Initiative will rejuvenate old trade sea links, which India is not

a part of. Also, the hefty investments which China makes, for eg in Laos' railway or Vietnam's Infrastructure creates a huge burden of reciprocity on ASEAN countries. India's low investment capacity and poor record of project delivery has often roadblocked our projects.

On the Commerce front, ASEAN countries like Vietnam and Indonesia are emerging as our top rivals in export sector. The low-value space which China is withdrawing from, has opened up opportunities in textile, apparel, footwear sector etc. Labour Intensive production and concession from European-American markets, put our neighbours at an advantage.

The recent slowdown in RCEP negotiation which includes ASEAN+6 countries is reflective in itself.

Indian economy itself faces a challenge to establish a sustained manufacturing base. Premature De-industrialisation, in the face of Anti-globalisation headwinds is a challenge for us.

Over this, opening market for ASEAN can take a toll on our industries.

Besides, entry to skilled labour from India has become a serious contention. These issues are keeping from exploiting our trade potential.

Besides the Economic and Commerce front, the Security and Social aspects also pose challenges.

Recent seige of Island city in Philippines, by ISIS supported faction,

has raised alarm bells on 'Terrorism' threat. With majority countries with poor low capita incomes, fighting terror can become a challenge. Being prone to radicalisation, it can cause destabilisation of the entire region.

It is worth noting that the dubious golden triangle of drugs and narcotics is situated in this region. Many insurgent violent groups in North East India find refuge in Myanmar and nearby. This ~~offer~~ poses sizeable threats to our Internal Security as well.

Moving forward, on the Environment front, the developing economies face common challenges.

Due to global warming and rising sea levels, the majority island or sea opening nations of ASEAN face a huge challenge. The biodiversity faces immense threat as also the fishing industry. The wide extremities of climate, pose Disaster threats like floods, tsunamis etc. Even the geographical location is such that ASEAN countries border the pacific Ring of fire, vulnerable to volcanoes.

“ But what makes a desert beautiful
Is that somewhere it hides a well...”

Despite all these challenges that plague ASEAN- India relations and what we face in common, they offer Wide Windows of Opportunity also.

India must build on the deep roots of our shared values and cultural traditions. Thanks to the efforts of Mauryan Kings, the principles of Buddhism have spread far and wide. The recent ritual of purification by Buddhist monks for children rescued from Thailand's cave, makes one ~~proud~~ proud of Indian culture. The Tourist Buddhist circuit can open way for people-to-people ties. More so, our Islamic connect with Indonesia can yield rich dividends in diplomacy.

Developing on these strong foundations, trade ties can be deepened. A give and take attitude, as well as strategic imperative must pave way for free-trade zone.

Singapore already finds a place in India's top 5 Investment source. This reflects the relations' potential upon greater ease of doing business in India. Many students are choosing the Singapore University for education and internships. India has also opened doors for shared research in multiple fields.

The collaboration of Vietnam with Atomic Energy Institute of India and new centre of International Rice Research Institute (Philippines) in Varanasi are apt examples. These shared paths must be bolstered with adequate Physical & Digital Connectivity between the regions.

India-Myanmar are working on Imphal-Moreh road and also India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) tri lateral can increase trade. This Asian highway can help us reach the South East Asian Markets. On the maritime front, our proximity to Strait of Malacca is of considerable importance. Our freight-container capacity of ships must be enhanced for fully utilising the opportunity.

A mention of maritime trade, inevitably shifts attention to the upholding of International rules based order. ASEAN countries today, see India as a chief player in Regional Security Architecture. Maritime exercises and access to Chang'e port of Singapore is a testimony to this.

ASEAN-India can and must collaborate on Indian ocean regions' security.

On the front of Renewable Energy, Malaysia recently signed an MOU to replicate the success of LED - UJALA scheme. International Solar Alliance can become the active site for such technology development.

India must leverage its Space technology advancements to monitor Monsoon movements and disaster forecast, monitoring and capacity generation must supplement our humanitarian efforts to deal with impending disasters.

Above analysis, has been a bird's eye view of immense opportunities that our relations hold.

Already, our geographical proximity and regional order binds us to a common destiny. In order to forge deeper understanding and a brighter future, our countries must collaborate.

ASEAN is the keystone of India's Act East policy and India represents a democratic, peaceful and emerging economy. Our strengths and assets must be directed to ~~create~~ overcome all the challenges that we face. On the robust base of our shared values of peace and mutual coexistence, India-ASEAN must tread the path for a common destiny. This can help realize our vision for Sustainable, Inclusive & Pan Asian Development.