



# 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**

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If liberty means anything at all, it means to tell people what they do not want to hear

'Richard Feynmann, the world famous physics laureate once said, "I'd rather have questions that cannot be answered, than having answers that can't be questioned".'

His words speak about the essence of liberty, in holding & asking tough questions, even when the answers are unavailable or avoided. Liberty thus in true sense, is the freedom to tell people what they do not want to hear.

In this essay, we'd discuss the meaning and origin of liberty, its present day significance, the issues arising with such form of liberty and ways to counter these issues.

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Meaning & origin of liberty

Liberty is often described as 'freedom from restraints'. But liberty holds a deeper meaning <sup>than</sup> speaking & acting in abstinence.

Preamble of our constitution speaks about liberty of thought, expression & belief. Thus liberty, in true sense, deals with the overall expression of a person's identity, even when society doesn't stand to understand his opinions..

'Liberty' originated during the French revolution in order to sow the very idea of a just & egalitarian society in the minds of French peasant class. This idea since then has evolved across time, and propagated to modern day societies. Today, 'liberty' is enshrined as a basic structure of our constitution & bedrock of our democracy.

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Aspects of Liberty

Liberty of common men in speaking what others might not be willing to hear finds space in all aspects & dimensions of our lives. It is necessary for all round development of a person and complete expansion of his mental horizon.

In our society, liberty is often sought by sections of societies. Historically, the new ideas have always been condemned, speaking of the even bigger need of the virtue.

Eg: In the early phase of renaissance & reformation, thinkers like Galileo & Copernicus were condemned for their expression of scientific ideas.

Throughout our history, we saw voices of leaders & reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Jyotiba Phule & Ambedkar seeking liberty of expression & acceptance by mainstream society for vulnerable

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sections.

Even in present day society, liberty frequently stands at cross roads for the oppressed. A woman still needs to gather courage to question, the oppressions against her. An SC/ST still needs a positive affirmation to find his rightful place in the society.

Liberty thus has been a virtue sought by many, but in the hands of few.

This has often resulted in movements to seek the voice which has been stolen from these sections. Examples include, Black lives Matter movement against racism, MeToo movement against sexual exploitation & the Pride Parade of LGBTQ against sexual polarity of male & female created in society.

We also come across various 'enlightened men & women who time after time, help seek this long lost liberty by people. Eg: Martin Luther

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King Jr, Malala Yusufzai etc

Even in politics, the liberty of speaking what others might not want to hear, is farfetched. Politics today is marred by people-pleasing promises, freebies & lack of tough but real decision making.

Frequently this too has resulted in rise of voices like Anna Hazare to let the ethics of politics remain in the vicinity of its leaders.

As far as, the liberty in economic domain stand, it is as important as any other virtue of the system. Liberty is essential to preserve rights of consumers, so that they can raise their voices to get the best they can. It is also necessary, to maintain ethics in corporate world and whistleblowers must be protected to ensure liberty is not overpowered by money & muscle.

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Our environment is the manifestation of our actions. Liberty thus is important to preserve our environment from further deterioration. Tribal Movements of Dongria Kondh of Nallamala Forests stand as a cornerstone of liberty in protection of environment. This liberty extends from the Sarpakanas of Kerala being protected as 'sacred' to the hugging of trees by women to save them from deforestation.

Technology also has provided us with better avenues for liberty of thought & expression. Not only the words, but the liberty of identity is also preserved today. This can be seen with growing numbers of social media influencers and rising expression of people on platforms like Twitter, Facebook etc.

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Right to information is yet another important aspect of citizen liberty, which not only raises questions which are tough, but provides answers to them as well. This has lent a hand to activists to express themselves with proofs against any wrongdoings. It has further created a sense of morality in administration.

Need of liberty

Along with being a constitutional right under Art 19(1), Freedom of expression is a human right as well, as defined by UNHRC. Thus liberty itself comprises of one of the basic necessities of a person as member of society.

Compromise of this liberty, thus results in inadequate growth of a person, who then proves to be an incomplete asset to his society. A

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Society full of such individuals would result in incumbent performance & destruction of its values.

As it is said, that a society without values is hollow, it would further lead to long term backwardness of its nation and more than that, dissatisfaction of its citizens. Thus to fulfill the goals of a 'welfare society' as wished by our constitution makers, liberty needs to be protected.

Further, liberty itself garners confidence & self-value to an individual. A child developing in a 'democratic & liberal household' knows his limits as well as rights. The chances of his delinquency are less & he further becomes an asset while bolstering the social control desired in a society.

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Perils of Liberty

Though liberty has been established as a much needed virtue, the constraints on personal liberty are often violated. Since, liberty is universal, a single person's liberty must not hamper the other person's liberty. This has been also enshrined in Article 19(2) of constitution as 'reasonable restrictions'

Often the misuse & violation of liberty results in perils & dangers to the harmony of society. It may take diverse forms & also cause loss of lives of people.

Recent incidents of media trials against certain celebrities has been an example of these misuse. It has resulted in demeaning of modesty & destruction of goodwill of people along with causing social ostracisation & ridicule.

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The rise of fundamentalism has also been a result of misuse of this liberty. Often this has caused events like mob lynchings, communal riots and disharmony among social groups eg: recent events of ostracisation of North Eastern people in Delhi. During coronavirus, this has also led to Bengaluru riots recently.

Further, such incidents can take even bigger forms like in France, where Islamic terrorism has been in talks post the firings due to a cartoon of Prophet.

This, in the end, generates a sense of anarchy & loss of public trust due to low social & political control on miscreants. Further such incidents lead to loss of genuine liberty due to Government action many times. This in turn results in weakening of democracy.

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ways to bolster liberty

Liberty thus needs to be understood by every member of a society as a noble virtue & not an ascribed right. The respect towards everyone's liberty is necessary in order to achieve the true goals of humanity.

Being liberal, should not be taken as not standing against wrong or propagating the wrong. Liberty must be handled responsibly in order to continue with its positives in society.

The famous poem 'Invictus' conveys,

"No matter how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishment  
the scroll,

I am the master of my fate,

I am the captain of my soul"

Thus liberty, as expressed by these words must lead to emancipation &

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control over one's own life. Only  
this way, a person can truly achieve  
what he can and what he desires  
to be.

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Digital Infrastructure is key for  
future ready governance

'An elderly couple were anxiously waiting for their compensation under the government pension scheme. It took them years, and various rounds to offices, in order to get access to the benefit, yet it couldn't happen. But today their son, who knew how to use internet, completed the documentation and got them the pension.'

The above story rightfully comprises of the power of digital infrastructure towards achieving good governance.

In this essay we shall understand, what comprises of digital infrastructure, how it can revolutionise governance, what issues India faces in achieving it and what more can be done.

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## Digital Infrastructure & its meaning

Digital Infrastructure basically comprises of all the opportunities, platforms and methods that are linked to the Technology Revolution of 21<sup>st</sup> century. It includes Internet services, Broadband Facilities, IOT, Use of GPS, Interlinking of services, Mobile communication, and much more.

This revolution began in India, under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi and his policy advisor Sam Pitroda.

The vision of Gandhi didn't want India to be left out of the technological boom going on in the world and hence, he boosted India into the new age services. Computers slowly crept Indian offices and technology went on to find its new & innovative uses.

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## Digital Infrastructure in Governance

Governance means the delivery of best policies and services to the citizens by the government it has various dimensions & holds immense opportunities of improvement-

Digital Infrastructure in present times has become integrated to the demands & needs of governance. With the country being driven towards 'Digital India' the government seeks to integrate services, facilities and support to citizens via a digital platform

It would not only improve the standard of living of people, but also result in easier & facilitated ~~so~~ access to resources. It would also result in reduction of corruption, red tapism & social divide through enabling a common platform.

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Society today deals with challenges across the spectrum like never before. In the clutches of a pandemic, faltering of public health, education, service delivery & grievance redressal has become difficult.

Digital services in health, can open new channels to solve issues of low numbers of doctors & poor penetration in rural areas. Services such as digital health ID, e-health services, telemedicine, online support of personnels have proven helpful.

There has been a rising trend of fitness apps such as HealthifyMe, to monitor daily health & self contribute towards personal health. There have been platforms for online yoga classes, physiotherapy, meditation & mental counselling proliferating during the pandemic to provide easier access to health services.

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In the field of education, ~~health~~ digital infrastructure can prove extremely helpful in matching the urban-rural inconsistency, improving literacy & raising skill development.

Schemes like PMGDISHA, have begun training rurals to access internet services to reach educational platforms. Govt. platform like SWAYAM, provides platform of self education from renowned professors in order to grow skills.

Government has also started schemes like PRIME & STRIVE to increase skills in professionals to improve their employability. Further use of digital services in rural, primary & secondary education through SMART classes, Educomp, Augmented & Virtual Reality has been promoted.

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The use of digital infrastructure in Public service Delivery has innumerable applications in present times. The platforms extend from Financial services like Payment of Taxes, Filing of GST, Registration for loans to Marketing services like product delivery, promotion & quality control

To begin with, digital infrastructure has been integrated with schemes like MGRREGA, to ensure e-registration of rural labour. It has also resulted in Geo Tagging of infrastructure & online payment of incentives through DBT in Jan Dhan Accounts

Public Distribution System, known to be marred with corruption, in earlier times has found new life through DBT and Aadhar linking. Soon, Universal Ration cards, would facilitate the

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service delivery even more.

Schemes like TRIBAL INDIA under TRIFED have created markets for local handicrafts produced by tribals like shawls, artefacts etc. These platforms have enable access & benefit sharing to tribals

Furthermore, Digital Infrastructure has boosted sectors like banking, tourism, transport and fashion. Proliferation of apps for banking & insurance support, hotel booking, OLA cabs and shopping from home is a clear example. This has resulted in large employment in Gig-economy eg: Swiggy, Tomato delivery ~~guy~~, men, OLA drivers etc. It has also led to platforms for selling products by small enterprises

The most important aspect of Governance stands in Grievance Redressal. Social Media, government websites like IRCTC. etc have proved to be useful in this

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Context

eg: Twitter was used to contact stranded NRIs during COVID.

In fact, Digital Infrastructure can even play important role in policy framing & implementation. Use of video conferencing for understanding local conditions & conducting Participatory Rural Appraisals can be effective.

NGOs, civil society & other stakeholders can be made important part of the process through use of social media service & digital platforms. EIA could be conducted with use of services like GPS, satellite data to better understand situation.

Digital services can even form important part of justice delivery &

The recent pandemic saw, video-legislations, and LIMBS like platforms could be produced for public legislations as well

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RTI and election procedures could be linked with digital services to improve transparency & accountability. Such steps could ensure availability & accessibility of information to all

Issues with Digital Infrastructure

Though the scope of Digital Infrastructure is well-proven & immense, it garners a good amount of ethical, logistical & infrastructural issues.

Digital services have been lagging due to various divides in Indian society such as urban & local, literacy & proficiency for digital platforms, and systemic shortcomings.

eg: Patriarchy forces women to stay away from growing services causing poor penetration.

The poor population of about 40 crore people of India, is still faced by basic

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problems of food, clothing & shelter.  
Digital services to them still is a far  
cry.

Despite the spread of digital services, their  
use and implementation falters due to  
infrastructural shortcomings like electricity,  
digital connectivity, lack of communication  
& absence of trained personnels.

In such conditions, local variations  
persist and where on one hand  
cities like Mumbai have about 150%  
penetration of cell phones, states of  
North East show dismal numbers.

The bulk of data generated through  
such services is also a problem. It  
has created new issues of Data  
Protection & Localisation. Data

being the 'new fuel', needs to be protected  
from wrong hands to avoid <sup>dubious</sup> incidences  
of phishing, stealing, spamming, Online

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crimes & denial of services .

India tops in the spamming count in the world & it raises concerns, since it houses the world's biggest ~~online~~ Digital biometric ID system AADHAR . Right to privacy needs to be ensured in this regards .

The new platforms have generated concerns to internal security , fake news & misuse through cyber terrorism eg: Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant data being leaked .

This also has opened channels of new warfare & global competition for hegemony. Digital Infrastructure, favours the developed & thus has scope for new forms of 'Data-colonialism' eg: Facebook misusing data to manipulate US elections .

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Digital Infrastructure for best use

Thus, digital services need cautious, judicious & monitored use, without hampering the privacy of individuals. In this regards, Under Puttaswamy judgement, reasonable restrictions are needed on grounds of necessity, proportionality & legality.

The issue of digital divide needs to be checked. It can only happen through digital education of masses & information dissemination. Focussed programmes must include sections which have poor access. Digitisation of Villages under Broadband Mission should be taken as a priority.

The need is to improve the services and enlarge the spectrum of Digital Governance. More and more schemes must be linked with Digital India programme for best results.

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To attain the maximum benefits, India must work towards improving scope of its electronics industry to solve the issue of infrastructure. Industries must be promoted for manufacturing & skill development needs to be pursued.

The integration of civil society to the Digital mission can reap better results for the country. Extension of services to sectors like agriculture through more schemes like PM-KISAN & KISAN credit Card can lead to more population coverage.

Technology is the brainchild of human necessity. Thus, to get the optimum solution, necessities should be explored, More R&D, technology sharing can lead to upcoming 5G revolution & exploration of fields like robotics for health, Drones for service delivery etc.

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Through these channelised efforts, India can become a provider of services to its people and bring joy to lives of its citizens through world class governance.