

Section-A

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

The Kalinga war during the reign of Ashoka witnessed thousands of deaths, thousands of women became widowed, children became orphans. There was pain & sufferings everywhere.

Watching the blood-red Daya river, King Ashoka stood shaken. Ashoka, in his mind was trying to understand the necessity of such large scale violence. He realised that the motive of kingdom expansion didn't really require to go through all this. Learning from this tragic incident, he decided to abandon 'Bherigoshā' - policy of war & annexation.

Instead, he adopted 'Dhammaghosha' policy of peace & love. which eventually witnessed ^{led to} peace in his kingdom.

The above story incident shows that a better future requires one to understand and learn from past experiences and use that experience to lead a better life afterwards.

Life is about different events and experiences which we witness on a daily basis. There are numerous things which we learn from our life and also from experiences of others. Our future is shaped by such events. Thus, it is important to that life must be understood backward. But it must be lived forward at the same time. We should not be just estrangled into thoughts of the

past and affect our future in a negative way.

In this essay, we will see instances where we learnt from our past & shaped future in a better way whereas we will also see cases where we still need to learn from past experiences else the consequences can be negative.

Understanding life Backwards. and
Living it Forward

* History of colonialisation

The period of renaissance in Europe around 15th century witnessed developments in science & technology which created curiosity in them regarding sea exploration leading to better art of ship making and discovery invention of other equipments. At the same time, in India, science and technology was neglected and thus indigenous rulers

lacked to their European counterpart and thus couldn't stand a chance against Europeans and other invaders in war and eventually leading to colonised India. We remain colonised to Europeans for around 200 years. and when we became independent, we were in misery, despair with poverty, hunger, unemployment widespread like anything.

Thus, it is important for any country to be updated with modern advancement in every field so that its vulnerabilities can't be played with by any other country. Having learnt from this, India today is one of the very few countries which doesn't only have a rich civilisation but is very much technologically developed in every field be it space, defence, nuclear technology, nanotechnology, robotics, bioengineering, etc.

* Social discrimination

The practice of discrimination in Indian society dates back to the period of 'later Vedic age' from where ^{occupational} class distinctions began & in due course of time changed into its worse form of caste distinction. This evil of Indian society has prevented true integration of Indians and history has seen many uprisings, movements to eradicate this evil. eg → Temple Entry movement in South India, wings of lower caste peasants, workers in East India, etc. Europeans took undue advantage of such discrimination. For instance, Round Table Conferences couldn't give desired output vis-a-vis India's independence when caste issues were unnecessarily used by Britishers.

Learning from them, after Independence, our Constitution saw many changes. eg → Article 17 completely abolishes Untouchability, legislations such as

Prevention of Atrocities against SC & ST Act, etc. Positive discrimination in the form of 'Reservation' has helped marginal people to gain better position and is on the path to reduce discrimination to its minimum.

Still there are incidents of discrimination prevalent which we need to prevent to remain immune from unwanted struggles amongst Indians.

★ Economic Outlook

After independence, during 1st 5 yr plan, our focus was investing on consumer goods. Although, circumstances of the time demanded so but we soon realised that this is not going to improve our economic condition.

Learning from this, during 2nd 5 yr plan we followed Mahalanobis model & increased capital goods expenditure which fostered our economic growth.

Also, Red Tapism, excessive protection to domestic goods, inward looking approach, high import tariffs led to economic crisis in 1993. ^{and dearth of forex.} Learning from which we brought LPG reforms & ^{since} ~~tilt~~ then, India didn't look back. We are today one of the largest forex holders of the world.

* Political crisis

The emergency of 1975 is ^{arguably} a blot on India's democracy. The voices of Indians were suppressed in a way which was unprecedented in Independent India. Questions regarding effective safeguarded of people's rights and Constitutional deadlocks rose during emergency and is even discussed today.

Many changes were brought. eg → proclamation of emergency now require assent of Council of Ministers. President didn't require to ^{compulsorily} follow advice

of Prime Minister in 1st go.

Similarly, we have learned from political crisis in the past to reform our institutions. Concept of 'Basic Structure Doctrine' emerged during Kesavananda Bharati case to preserve essence of Constitution. Likewise many reforms took place which had made life easier today.

Environmental Outlook

The problem of ozone hole depletion was once very big concern during 90s and early 2000s. Many assessment reports talked of grave dangers in 21st century looking at deplorable condition of ozone hole case.

Understanding the problems, we brought Vienna Convention, Montreal protocol & also Kigali Agreement to counter this problem ~~of~~ by eliminating ozone depleting substances like CFC, HFC

Now this problem has almost been rectified. We can learn the power of collective responsibility and action by all the countries in this case and use this to counter present problem of global warming, deforestation, environmental degradation, etc.

Administrative View

DPS of our Constitution envisages a Welfare State (A38). Through ups and downs of India's history, we have seen and faced problems in delivering welfare schemes to the people. Administration has been criticised of being ineffective, lackadaisical, following top-down approach, insensitive, etc.

These criticism has shown us a path to improve our working which has resulted in revolutionary steps like 'Citizen Charter', more transparency in working, enactment of

'Right to Information Act' in 2002 and so on. Methods like 'Direct Benefit Transfer' has eliminated problems arising due to middle men. Thus, we have consistently learned and improved our working efficiency.

Internal Security →

2008 Mumbai Terror Attack shocked the entire country. As a response we formed 'National Investigation Agency', strengthened our intelligence department & after that India has not witnessed such terror attack again. Presently, we are working on establishing a National Grid for faster dissemination of intelligence information.

Disaster Management →

After devastating tsunami of 2004, we established NDMA and SDMA, thus learning from past & till today, NDMA has saved lakhs of lives.

Science and Technology

There was a time when ISRO didn't had finances & technology. The great A.P.J. Abdul Kalam delivered rocket on a bicycle. India couldn't launch satellites due to once because it didn't had cryogenic technology. Many of our rocket launches failed & the world laughed upon.

But, India learning from these mistakes improved every day & night and today we are a formidable power in space sector. We launched 104 satellites in one go and the world was astonished. Today, we have brought out ^{small} launch vehicles for commercial uses to help other countries. We are 3rd country to go to space, to land on moon and the world's eye is on our projects - Mangla Gaganyaan, Chandrayan-3, etc.

However, there are cases
where India still dwelling in past?

There are cases where we still
over rely on our past and ~~don't~~ ^{haven't} learnt
proper lessons. In the garb of having
a rich civilisation, some section of
people criticise modern advancements
and insist on moving backwards in
terms of living styles. While we
need to understand that culture and
traditions are backbone of any
society, but going back to older
traditions with full guns blazing
is neither feasible nor required.

Our life has to be moved and
to be lived forward.

Instances of casteism, regionalism has
even increased in some places and
supra-nationalism is going to harm
national integrity of our nation.

Communalism -

The votebank politics ~~an~~ has once again fuelled communal disharmony among people in recent times and social media has aggravated this form of hate. Hindus have started to trace India's history to ancient time when Hindu rulers ruled and Muslims have started to associate them with Medieval times of Islamic rule. This has resulted in tensions in the society and social fabric of the country is in some danger if not broken. People are forgetting the part that be whoever's rule, their motive was power capture in what-so-ever way be it through peace or aggression.

Thus, it is essential to maintain harmony in the society or else we know from our experiences in the past that hate benefits none. It is rightly said that "In a war/fight, there is no winner. There are ^{whichever side wins} only losers".

We saw many instances where we were surrounded with problems. And in the time of crisis, we realised our mistakes from the past and rectified them. The rectification led us to lead a better life for the future. And this is the philosophy of life which has been discussed since ages. - Learn from your past experiences. Implement good/positive things in your future action and ^{leave} forget unnecessary pondering over what bad happened to us. That is how the wheels of life should keep on moving.

If a great warrior like Ashoka could completely abandon war and lead a life of love and peace, everyone with little introspection of his/her life can abandon bad habits, bad memories and be on a better path which will lead to a better world for everyone.