

TEST CODE: 32006

FIAS – MGP2020 – EASSY2

ForumIAS

ACADEMY

GENERAL STUDIES

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Time Allowed: Three Hours

Maximum Marks: 250

INDEX TABLE			INSTRUCTION
Q.No.	Max. Marks	Marks Obtained	<p>1. Do furnish the appropriate details in the answer sheet (viz. Name, Email, Roll No, Mobile).</p> <p>2. There are TWO Sections. Each Section has TWO topics printed in English and Hindi. You have to write on 1 topic from Each part.</p> <p>3. One question in each part is compulsory.</p> <p>4. The number of marks carried by a question/part is indicated against it.</p> <p>5. Answers must be written in the medium authorized in the admission Certificate, which must be stated clearly on the cover of this Question-Cum-Answer (QCA) Booklet in the space provided.</p> <p>6. Word limit in questions, if specified, should be adhered to.</p> <p>7. Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Question-Cum Answer Booklet must be clearly Struck off.</p>
Q.1			
Q.2			
Total Marks:			
Remarks:			
Start Time 5:50 AM		End Time 8:50 AM	
Mode Of Examination :		Online <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Offline <input type="checkbox"/>	
ECN CODE:		Evaluation Date:	

SECTION/भाग - A

1. PRIs: Securing economic development and social justice.

पंचायती राज संस्थान : आर्थिक विकास और सामाजिक न्याय को सुनिश्चित करते हैं।

2. In the Indian context, both economics and technology are crucial in combating agrarian distress.

भारतीय संदर्भ में, कृषि संकट से निपटने के लिए अर्थशास्त्र और प्रौद्योगिकी दोनों महत्वपूर्ण हैं।

Both economics and technology are crucial in combating agrarian distress

Oscar winning movie Interstellar begins with a scene which shows the world having been infected by blight. The agriculture is failing. Humanity is in distress because agriculture is in distress. That is the importance of agriculture. For if agriculture fails, everything else fails. When we see in the context of India, we hear stories of farmer suicides. The average farmer is shown to be helpless and in debt. A vicious cycle of poverty indeed! Agricultural growth has stagnated at 3% a year. Clearly there is deep distress in the

agriculture sector. But how did we end up here? A preliminary analysis shows that agriculture is susceptible to market forces as well as to climatic conditions, such as the periodicity of monsoon. When Brazil posts a record sugar production, it is farmers in India that suffer. When El Niño strikes Peru, it is again the poor farmer that suffers. Intervention is urgently needed to combat agrarian distress. Both humanitarian and economic reasons compel us to do so.

FAO's research has shown that any future intervention must be based on the two pillars of technology and economics. An intervention that solely relied on one, lacks the holistic completeness and may not be sustainable in the long term.

Technology is what initiates the revolution. Economy is what drives it!

Understanding the role of Technology

We live in an era of Industry 4.0, that seeks to simplify processes like never before. Our world is going through a technological revolution, and the gains must reach farmers. Potential of technology in agriculture is immense. Take the case of drones. Drones can undertake geospatial studies, spray pesticides or even irrigate the crops. What would have taken the farmer a lot of time and money in labour costs can now be done in few hours. Satellite data has been used to identify and assess crop yields. When this data is coupled with GIS, the farmer gets a complete picture of his standing crop. Biotechnology has led to improvements in seed technology and hence crop yield. GM crops are seen as

the "future of agriculture." One must not forget how adoption of GM Cotton made India, the world's largest producer of cotton. HYV seeds drove Green Revolution 1.0 in the 60s. They will do so in the 20s! With increasing water scarcity, drought resistant crops offer the necessary respite. A particular product called zeba became famous for its ability to hold moisture in soil. Clearly a case of "Small Innovations - Big Results!"

Talking about "small," one cannot miss the role of Nano Tech. Nanotubes have led to better fertilizer and nutrient delivery. Nano silver has been successful in fighting weeds.

Nanofibres and nanoparticles help tackle water contamination that may otherwise harm the crops.

A combination of nano & bio would mean a lot to the farmer.

Next we shift our focus to ICT. ICT is seen as a key tool for good governance and efficiency. For instance, the soil health card has been able to identify micro and macro nutrients deficiency. This helps the farmer save on unnecessary and improper fertilizer usage. Fertilizer data has also been analyzed by companies using big data. This has helped arrive at the correct N:P:K balance.

ICT has helped correct the lopsided cropping patterns. Our agriculture suffers from cobweb phenomenon ~ a fluctuation driven seed sowing. Case of CNAM and ERAKAM shows how technology can help end information asymmetry for the farmer.

Similar possible interventions can be made in irrigation technologies. For instance, Israel adopted

Kibbutzim technology to increase yields. Coupling this with micro irrigation can help the farmer who faces water scarcity. Notably the use of solar pumps is also being considered. This will have the added advantage of "de-debiling" agriculture. PM KUSUM is a good start in this direction.

Unfortunately technology itself is not a panacea. Any intervention that lacks focus on the economic aspect, is bound to be self defeating.

Economics: Engine of Growth

The economic aspect of any agriculture policy must focus on the core problem. The average farmer faces trouble at multiple stages. He lacks access to formal sources of credit.

His reliance on the informal money lender increases his distress. The farmer is unable to realize decent

profits on sale of his crop. This is a consequence of layers of middlemen, that artificially inflate prices for the final consumer. Financial inclusion is another problem that the farmer faces.

What then is the solution? The first possible intervention would be to promote Self Help Groups (SHGs), Farmer Produce Organisations (FPOs) and Cooperatives. When farmers come together they can bargain better. They can escape the clutches of the middleman. Further, FPOs and SHGs promote a "small savings culture". The farmer benefits from this increased capital. Some SHGs also provide skill training with regards to using e-technology or accessing basic agriculture facilities.

Next intervention must be focused on the issue of land.

Agricultural census shows that average landholding has come down to 1.08 ha per farmer. With division due to inheritance, this will go down further. Small landholdings make farming unproductive. The farmer cannot access "economies of scale". He is limited to sustenance agriculture then. Here economics would argue for land pooling and creation of a viable land rental market. Both would allow the small and marginal farmers to benefit from increased production. Russian example shows that land consolidation can indeed benefit agriculture.

Thirdly, focus must be on marketing reforms. The Aatmanirbhar Bharat and APMC reforms are a good start in this direction. However, farmer still cannot get more than 40% of final sale price as determined by Dr Ashok Dalwai. Dr Dalwai

recommends certain anti-cartelization measures and liberalization steps that can help. The idea of One Nation, One Market can be a relief for both the customer and the farmer.

Finally there is a need to work on logistics and infrastructure. Our agri-exports suffer because we do not have basic phyto sanitary facilities. Absence of cold storage results in rotting of crop.

An efficient transportation system would have 2-fold benefit: it would reduce costs and time taken for produce to reach Mandis.

Agriculture sector also suffers from the issue of underemployment or disguised unemployment. In USA for instance, an average farmer manages more than 10 ha. This means any further economic policy must focus on the issue of productivity.

per labour.

One is inclined to see Dr Guntak's suggestions in this regard. He recommends promoting FPOs while also opening up future trading in agriculture. Further he emphasises on the need to revisit the MSP policy. This could lead to a change in cropping patterns that lead to a more equitable distribution of profits.

Having established the importance of technology and economics, we now look at the challenges before us.

Challenges: What lies in the way

When we talk about technology, there are 2 major issues. One is the lab to land disconnect. What a scientist discovers in his lab, rarely reaches the farmer in time. Further the farmer's awareness in the scientific domain is low.

When this is coupled with a general mistrust towards technology in the rural areas - the result is a stagnated agriculture sector.

Secondly access to finance and low R&D mean lesser technological initiatives. Unlike China, India only spends 0.6% of GDP on R&D. Very little of this goes to agriculture.

There are social reasons too.

Land is seen as an emotional and personal asset linked to a farmer's self respect in the society. Due to this land pooling often fails.

Farmer SHGs and FPOs have their own problems. The complexity of legislations create their compliance costs. They are dependent on obsolete levels of technology. The government machinery is usually insensitive to this and also engaged in rent seeking behaviour sometimes.

Way Forward: Towards Doubling Farmer's Income

The urgent need is to build political consensus. Only a strong political will can drive synergistic policies forward. Policy formulation must be based on evidence and data.

The opinions of the key stakeholders must be taken into account as far as possible.

We must learn from successful international examples such as Myanmar's Rice bioparks or Germany's Kurzweil. Netherlands' Room for the river seeks to mitigate a water crisis and can prove crucial.

Promoting FPOs and SHGs is not only about highlighting benefits. It would involve policy changes and sustained campaigns.

Increased funding to the agriculture sector would foster an age of prosperity.

India dreams to be a superpower, but no country can be a superpower without achieving food security. An agriculture sector that is healthy and prospering is crucial for the economy. Timely intervention can thus help realize the vision of New India.

Feedback

Feedback to be provided in terms of (1) Introduction (2) Sentence Constructions (3) Paragraph Formation (4) Legibility
(5) Deviation from Topic (6) Coverage of dimensions (7) Simplicity / ease of reading

SECTION/भाग - B

1. It is the power of the mind to be unconquerable.

यह मन की शक्ति ही है जो अजेय है।

2. Truth never damages a cause that is just.

सत्य कभी भी ऐसे कारण को क्षति नहीं पहुंचता जो उचित हो

Truth never damages a
cause that is just

The Indian emblem contains the phrase Satyameva Jayate. This translates to "truth always wins". The 3-word phrase is more powerful than we can imagine. Each word has its significance. To begin with, what is truth? Why does it "always win"? And finally what does it win from? It is these questions that need to be answered.

Travelling down the history lane, we come across stories of lies, hatred and greed. Stories of oppression. These make us a sad. In these moments of sadness, stories of truth appear as a shining light. Like a drop of

Water in the desert!

But what is truth? Thousands of years of civilizations have come to accept some basic virtues. Truth is one of them. No major religion in the world denies the importance of truth. The essence of truth lies in its simplicity. For example, one uses the phrase "web of lies" but never the phrase "web of truths". This is because truth is self contained. It has intrinsic value and does not derive its legitimacy from anything external.

This same simple tool has been used to oppression all throughout history. It is this oppression, that the truth mis from. The fight against such an oppression is meritarily seen as a just cause, and truth the main weapon in that fight.

However we delve into the role truth plays, we must differentiate and understand the causes that truth fights for. Not every cause is just. Some battles need to be lost for the war to be won. Similarly not all causes need to be fought for.

A just cause is grounded in its ends to be achieved. For instance ending trafficking of women is a just cause. On the other hand, when a forward caste demands reservation, the cause may not be just. Having established what a just cause is, we look at how truth is utilized in such a cause.

A Historical Perspective

If we go back 2600 years, we see religions such as Buddhism and Jainism emerged based on truth.

Buddha talked about truth and its role in fighting evil.

Jainism emphasizes on satya which means truth. Interestingly Jainism also talks about anekantavada, which means many sided reality. Anekantavada teaches us that different versions of a truth can be true at the same time and hence perspective matters. Today these teachings may be used to fight hatred and build mutual tolerance.

Both Jainism and Buddhism fought for just causes - upliftment of downtrodden. This work was carried on by the Bhakti and Sufi movements. Even Akbar in his Din-i-Ilahi emphasized on truth as a virtue.

A more modern context can be observed in America's fight for equality, against slavery in the 1850s. Here the anti-slavery argument rested on a simple truth: that slavery goes

against the notion of equality. It threatens human dignity and hence must be ended. With this simple yet powerful line of reasoning, Abraham Lincoln was able to unify an entire nation. The same was repeated by Nelson Mandela, a century later, in his fight against apartheid.

When we look at the Indian independence movement, we are reminded of Gandhiji. His fight for independence was based on the two pillars of truth and non-violence.

Going back we see, it was Raja Ram Mohan Roy who ended sati by relying on truth and basic reason. Following in this direction, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was able to get Widow Remarriage Act passed in 1856.

Modern Day Perspective

Today our society faces various divisive problems such as communalism, racism, sexism. Add to this the menace of bad governance and corruption.

All of these are just causes worth fighting for. One can better understand this by seeing how these issues are grounded in lies.

For instance, communalism is based on an idea that two religions cannot exist. Lies and rumours are spread that often lead to enots. The only way to fight this?

Truth! Truth over time builds mutual understanding. It builds social capital. It is thought to be similar to "bridges of understanding".

Humans have an inherent tendency to like truth. Hence truth is

unpleasantly appreciated even if it is bitter to swallow.

Problems like racism and sexism are best tackled in the same way. The recent #Black Lives Matter (BLM) and #MeToo are manifestations of the same.

BLM raised a simple question - why must blacks be discriminated against? MeToo raised the similar question, but in context of women.

A simple question, which demanded a truthful answer. It was a case of truth against a false narrative. The truth focused on equality as an inherent right.

The cause of transparency and fight against corruption is the same. Globally protests have been seen against corrupt regimes.

Recent instances of 2013 Arab Spring or 2011 Lokpal agitation highlight the same. In all of these there was a battle of truth and lie. And everytime truth emerged as the winner. This does tell us that truth never damages a cause that is just. But one must refrain from making hurried conclusions. For there are cases where truth may have caused monetary damage.

Take the case of Me Too.

Post a plethora of allegations and calling out, there was a general perception that employing women is "risky for women companies". This stemmed from the idea that open complaints tended to over sensationalise and reduce a company's image. Thus truth led to contrasting result when seen from the equality perspective.

Another example is the RTI Act. The act is based on the notion of "truth in governance" to achieve efficiency and inclusivity. Yet frequent recourse to RTIs has created a paralyzing environment for many officers. This has "damaged" the cause for efficiency.

What about white lies, one may ask? If our cause is as personal as a healthy relationship, should we always be truthful? Bitter truths may at times be more unpleasant than simple white lies. These raise a simple question: How sustainable is truth?

Sustainability: An internal conflict

At times, whether in business or in personal relations, truth can be damaging. Our cause may

be just, yet our results damaged by our truths! Businesses have a set of corporate ethics which they tend to abide by. Yet at times, simple lies yield greater returns for the company.

Fortunately, there is a key reason, why we must still stick to truth.

The answer lies in a simple word: SUSTAINABILITY. Unlike the web of lies, a truth is ever lasting.

With time the value of truth is understood. While the lies fall flat, truth prevails. Even when it is thought that truth may have caused damage - the damage is often momentary. In the long run, this damage is easily offset by the gains from truthfulness.

Power of Truth

The power of truth must not be underestimated. It forms a crucial component of social capital. It adds to the trust element in society.

Lies may help you win in the short term, but they are hardly ever sustainable.

When the cause is right, truth eventually leads to a convergence.
A convergence of different values.

As they say, birds of the same feather flock together. Similarly truth is surrounded by values of love, compassion, integrity and humility among others. They make truth a "virtue to be desired."

Justness and fairness are attributes associated with truth.

Ground Zero: Summing it up

As Swami Vivekananda said, the world is like a dog's tail. The well represents the imperfections in the form of injustice and oppression.

Many have tried to straighten this, only to see it getting back.

This highlights that the fight for causes that are just will go on as long as there is humanity.

It will continuously evolve. The methods of demanding and protesting may change. What will remain constant will be the grounding principles and the guiding values.

This is where truth would come in. It may not give immediate results, but it will ensure that

the cause is won. It may have
momentary lackings and weakness,
but in the long run, it will
cause no damage. In the end,
Satyameva Jayate!

Note to self:

Essay 1: vision needle
pg 10: VN 0.5
Essay 2: pg 20: Porito
3rd para Tman

Feedback

Feedback to be provided in terms of (1) Introduction (2) Sentence Constructions (3) Paragraph Formation (4) Legibility (5) Deviation from Topic (6) Coverage of dimensions (7) Simplicity / ease of reading