ForumIAS

ACADEMY

GENERAL STUDIES

Name Of Candidate	MAMTA YADAV		
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Mobile No.		Date:	28th Dec'2020

Time Allowed: Three Hours

INDEX TABLE		
Q. No.	Max. Marks	Marks Obtained
Q.1		
Q.2		
Total Marks:		

Remarks:

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Do furnish the appropriate details [illegible] answer sheet (viz. Name, Email, Roll No, Mobile).
2. There are TWO Sections. Each Section [illegible] TWO topics printed in English and Hindi. [illegible] topic from Each part.
3. One question in each part is compulsory.
4. The number of marks carried by [illegible]ion/part is indicated against it.
5. Answers must be written in [illegible] the admission Certificate, which [illegible] on the cover of this Question-Cum-Answer [illegible] in the space provided.
6. Word limit in questions, if specified, [illegible] adhered to.
7. Any page or portion of the page [illegible] Question-Cum Answer Booklet must be [illegible]

Start Time|	[illegible]
Mode Of Examination :	[illegible]
ECN CODE:	[illegible]

MARKING SCHEME

Parameter/Criteria	*Aspects Considered*	*Total Marks*	*Essay 1*	*Essay 2*
Basic Format	Introduction + Conclusion	10		
	Body	15		
Content	Data/Facts/Interpretation/ Analysis	25		
Organisation	Flow of ideas/ Absence of Deviation from the topic	25		
Language Skills	Punctuation/Grammar/ Sentence Formation/Spellings	25		
Examiner's Discretion	Perception/ Innovation/ Engaging	25		

Parameters	*Very Good*	*Good*	*Average*	*Poor*
Coherence				
Language				
Handwriting				
Pre-writing				

Very Good	*Good*	*Average*
120 and above	100-120	Below 100

SECTION – A

1. Changing dynamics of fiscal federalism in India.

2. The myth of local democracy – the Indian Experience with Panchayati Raj

THE MYTH OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY- THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE WITH PANCHAYTI RAJ

Ankush is a young IAS officer. Having completed his training, he had taken up his first district posting. As an assistant collector, interacting with the sarpanches of the various villages in his area was an important part of his job. However, when he reached for the Interaction Session, he was a bit surprised.

Even though many villages' sarpanch seat was reserved for women, there was not even a single women in the meeting. On inquiring, he found out that most women sarpanches are existing little more than in paper. It is their Husband, fathers, sons & ~~male m~~ in-laws that are the De-facto Sarpanches.

This culture of Pati / Pita sarpanch has shown how the 33% reservation provided for women in Panchayati raj institution has been a sham. Many other realities of local governance makes us wonder if the Indian experience with Panchayati Raj has been a failure.

In the essay, we will first trace the origins & evolution of Local Democracy in India. Then will discuss the failings of Panchayati Raj in various dimensions. In the end we will glance over some reforms that can strengthen grassroot & local democracy in India.

PANCHAYATI RAJ : ORIGIN

Panchayats have existed in India in one form or other since the times of great ancient & medieval rulers like Mauryes & Mughals. The vedas tell us that India has thriving sabhas & samitis during Rig Vedic

Period. However, it the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 that provided for Panchayats in the constitution itself.

The aim was to herald a new era of Local & Participative democracy at the grass-root level. The constitution provided for empowered grass sabhas and 3 tier structure. There was reservation of 33% for women & of SCs/STs according to the population. The 11th schedule enlisted the 29 subjects that should be gradually devolved to the Panchayats. State election commission was set up to provide for timely, regular, free & fair election. State finance commission were constituted to augment the capacities of Panchayati Raj & given them fiscal autonomy.

Unfortunately not many of these noble ideals and reforms have been implemented in letter & spirit.

PANCHAYATI RAJ : A MYTH

If one were to visit a panchayat office in a village, they would see the ideal of local democracy failing at every nook & corner. Most panchayats do not even have the basic infrastructure to fulfill the roles expected of them. They lack in terms of building infrastructure & regular supply of electricity. Rarely do they ~~do~~ have good internet connectivity which is necessary in the digital age.

The Panchayats are also found lacking the necessary human resources. The sarpanches elected are ~~from~~ often not equipped enough to deal with the nuances of ~~th~~ governance & administration. The matters are made worse by no efforts on the part of state governments to undertake regular training for capacity enhancement. The

skills & personnel of those working in the Panchayats are also nothing to show off.

We have already seen how the Reservation of Seats for women has been a sham. The reform was aimed as a tool for women empowerment to strengthen the position of women in the rural patriarchial setup. But the tool has itself fallen prey to patriarchy. Influential men field their wives, daughters, mothers, etc. for candidature when the reserved seat is allocated in their village. Even the bureaucratic administration has not challenged this practise to the extent needed as it has acceptance in the village society.

Even the reservation for SCs/STs has not yielded substantial reforms. Powerful political parties field SCs for their parties who toe the majoritarian discourse. Genuine leaders of the

backward community find themselves lacking in front of them due to lack of money & other resources needed to ~~win~~ ~~a~~ have successful election campaigns.

The 73rd amendment also provided for ~~provided~~ for strong institutions to ensure that Panchayats emerge as bulwarks of Local Democracy. State Election Commission was one of them. Even though SEC have been successful in holding regular elections every five years, the 'Free & Fair' aspect of elections is often questioned. This is ~~done~~ due to State Politics increasingly becoming competitive.

We have seen recently how ~~the~~ the Chief Election Commissioner of Andhra Pradesh SEC was removed from office by the State government in violation of Constitutional Provisioness. The election commissioner

had to be ultimately approach the Higher Judiciary to be reinstated.

Similarly, the State Finance Commission have also not able alele to strengthen the fiscal autonomy of PRIs. According to the Niti Aayog, the 5th generation of SFC should have submitted their reports by now. However, only few SFCs like Tamil Nadu have done this. Infact many states have ~~not~~ are still undertaking the 3rd generation SFC report. This is an open violation of constitution with impunity.

Further, State governments have not devolved substantial taxation powers to Panchayats as suggested by the 11th schedule. This results in most PRI being dependent on central & state governments for funds. Also, most funds PRIs

received are in the nature of tied allocations which have to be used for implementation of specific schemes. The fiscal autonomy achieved via them is questionable.

Having seen the weaknesses of Panchayati Raj in their ability to uphold Local democracy, we must think about the expedient reforms needed.

PANCHAYATI RAJ : FUTURE

State governments have to play the foremost role in strengthening PRIs. There is an urgent need to identify the subject heads in the 11th Schedule which should be devolved to the Panchayats for better social welfare for eg. Sanitation, Primary Healthcare.

This is also a need for devolving taxation powers. Further, often the Gram

Panchayats are themselves often reluctant to impose taxes. This needs to change. ~~But~~ Hand-holding by district administration can play a great role here.

The District administration can ~~also~~ also play an important role in other aspects as well. District Collectors and Magistrates should hold regular interactive sessions with sarpanches. They should ensure that elected persons participate in these meetings & not their nominees in form of pati / Pita sarpanch. This can be ~~an~~ an important step in strengthening the role of women. Also, Sarpanchs can be equipped better to fulfil their roles by regular interaction with administration.

Various commissions like 2nd ARC have also highlighted the need of undertaking mandatory training of the

representatives at the initial stage and at regular intervals during the term. Panchayats should also be enabled to recruit personnel themselves & regulate their service conditions.

The Corona Epidemic & Lockdown have shown how grassroot institutions are a better 'tool' ~~than~~ in creating awareness, providing welfare services in times of crisis, etc. Strengthening Panchayats can also enable India to tackle Malnutrition, perform better in Primary Healthcare & empowering women. They can also be a source of bridging the rural-urban gap. Gandhiji once said, 'India lives in its Villages. Gramrajya is Ramrajya.' Hence, Central, State governments and District administration should join hands in uplifting Panchayats

to ensure a thriving local democracy for social welfare.

Introduction → Panchayat

Body → Background → The 73rd Constitutional Amendment
- Gram Sabha
- Three tier
- Reservation for Women, SCs/STs
- Devolution of 29 Heads (11th Schedule)
- Regular elections → SEC
- SFC (15th)

Evaluation
- → No Infrastructure, lack of skills, knowledge
- → Sham of women panchayats
- → Reservation SC/STs not much
- → No Taxation
- → SFC
- → SEC = " andhra Pradesh example

Conclusion
- → what to do
- → Central Govt
  - → equipping gram panchayats
  - → Personnel recruitment
  - → Social audit
  - → Schemes
  - → SHGs

Benefits
- → Corona
- → PHC
- → Mid-day meal
- → MGNREGA

Mahatma Gandhi - Gram Rajya is Ram Rajya

Feedback

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

SECTION – B

1. The greatest minds are capable of the greatest vices as well as of the greatest virtues.

2. The whole world is more than the sum of its parts.

THE WHOLE WORLD IS MORE THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

In the 18th Century, on one hand various European companies were setting up factories on the Indian shore whereas on the other hand, the Great Mughal Empire was splintering in different directions after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. The various Indian rulers - Marathas, Rajputs, Punjab, Mysore, Bengal, etc. were not able to appreciate the threat posed by East India Company. They continued infighting. The Britishers used this diviseness to fity them against one another.

The result was that a handful of foreigners from a small island nation were able to ~~colonial~~ colonise the Indian Subcontinent.

Contrast this to the 13 Nascent Colonies established by Britishers in America. They opposed British oppression in one voice & achieved Independence in 1776.

This proves that 'the fist is always stronger than ~~the~~ 5 fingers'. In this essay we will first understand what is meant by 'The whole world is more than the sum of its parts'. Then we will see how events across time and ~~geog~~ space prove this age old adage. In the end we will dwell upon rising challenges which the world needs to tackle together & how the same can be achieved.

Every child would have once or more come across the words - 'United we stand, divided we fall.' The rules of Math like 2+2=4 seem not to hold true as individual components together present ~~a~~ strength and ability which is surpassed by those of

the individuals separately. A family is stronger when they face moments of crisis together. A society is stronger when it is not divided by caste, religion, language, race, etc. The world community is stronger when it looks beyond political & national boundaries at the entire human race as one.

Why we must ask ourselves. This is because when separated we find ourselves stronger in certain aspects & weaker in others. However, together we can complement each other. Take Indian States for instance. One State may have fertile land, another mineral resources & a third water resources, perhaps. Together, as a Nation, we certainly have all kinds of bounties.

The saying that 'the Whole World is ~~sto~~ more than the sum of its parts.' is proved by various events since time immemorial till today.

The American Civil War had almost caused the division of American Union. However, Abraham Lincoln rose the slogan of 'Save The Union'. Even though he lost his life he ensured the continuity of American federation. America would not have been even the shadow of World Power it is today had it been divided into Northern & Southern Parts.

Similarly, we see how during the World-War II, the Allied Powers were able to resist Nazism & fascism when ~~all th~~ Britain, France, Russia, America all came together. Germany could not handle the heat of a ~~two~~-front war with France on one end and Russia on the other. Hence, the sum yielded more than its parts.

Closer home, we realise that the limited success of the The Revolt of 1857

or the First War of Independence because of the divisiveness among us Indians. Zamindars acted as 'Break-Waters to the Storm'. The Gurkha & Sikh regiments, infact, enabled Britishers to ~~cur~~ suppress the revolt. Further, even the Leaders who participated had their own short sighted aim rather than the vision of National freedom.

In the Post-Independence era, the emergency of 1970s under the Prime-Ministership of Indira Gandhi was a dark period for India. In the elections of 1977, the various opposition parties presented a united front as the Janata Party. There was no division of votes due to the coalition to enabled the opposition the win over the government. Had the opposition not come together, they would have probably not won given the greater resources & penetration of Congress party ~~at grass~~

In the environmental sphere, we see the strength of unity in People's struggle during Chipko Movement. The simple act of hugging a tree undertaken by women in unison forced the mighty government and corporate sector to take a backfoot. The right of people over land & forest resources was upheld.

In a similar vein, we are aware of how reckless activities of humans led to the destruction of the Ozone Layer, which protects us from harmful UV rays. The International Community came together in the Vienna Convention & formulated the Montreal Protocol to reduce emission of Chlorofluorocarbon. Various scientific studies in the recent times have revealed that Ozone Layer has substantially healed. No steps in countries, individually, no matter how strong could have yielded

this result.

Having seen the wonders people, societies & nations have achieved together, it is unfortunate that ~~the~~ diviseness is increasing today across the globe. Sadly the lessons of history have not been imbibed well.

In India, polarisation along the lines of caste, religion, language, etc. is increasing. This has been reflected most recently in the North-east delhi clashes in February 2020. Similarly, instances of Language chauvinism is also on the rise. A person from South India is discriminated in the North & vice-versa. Instances of oppression against those of Backward Communities is also increasing. The culture of Mob-Lynching seems to be growing unabated.

In the International Sphere, there is rising Xenophobia & Protectionism. United States & China are embroiled in a Trade & Currency War. European Union, one of the oldest & largest Custom Union has started splintering with the exit of Britain - BREXIT. The talk of a GREXIT (germany exit) is often heard.

In 2020, we saw how the global response of the Corona epidemic was marred with Politics. Unscientific statements were made by various Heads of States - Even the development of Vaccines was taken up countries separately as part of a superficial race to come up with it first. This shocks Common sense as a Collective response would have saved precious resources which could be used to rebuild economies & lifes impacted by lockdowns.

The response to transnational problems like Climate Change, Terrorism, Drug & Human trafficking, Money Laundering, etc. ~~also~~ has been caught in Political Rivalries & Selfish National Aspirations. The result is that these menaces continue to wreak havoc on the lives of people, unchecked.

Therefore, how must we proceed further. The need of the hour is creating strong institutions of global governance & strengthening the existing one. This will ensure that a democratic, consensus based approach is followed towards global scenarios. The concerns of smaller nations will be heard better as well. Stronger governance institutions with probity are also important for nations to better tackle rising hate culture for eg. Judicial response to Mob-Lynching in India as seen in the Tehseen

Poonawalla case.

There is also a need of focus ~~of~~ on education and awareness generation. Amartya Sen once said, 'Human Ordeals thrive on Ignorance. Understanding the problem with clarity is half way towards solving it.' If people know with clarity the impact of climate change, political leaders will not be able to evade responsibility with impunity.

In the end I would like to quote the Maha Upanishad's principle of 'VASUDEVA KUTUMBAKAM', ie, the whole world is one & our home. ~~United th~~ The whole world when united is capable enough to surpass any challenge, no matter how unsurmountable as it has since time immerial. Therefore, let us all join hands to the better ~~and~~ brighter future of humanity.

Intro: The whole world is more than the sum of its parts

1776 - American independence

Body → Evaluation

→ India = Revolt of 1857 → 1st leadership → India Colonialism

History → American Union → WW-II = Fascism, Nazism

Social → Chipko Movement

Economical → 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis - G20 was formed.

Political → India Gandhi emergency → no division of votes

Envi → Montreal Protocol

Legal, admin., ethical, scientific, IR

Conclusion: United we stand, Divided we fall.

→ Climate Change
→ Corona
→ Rising Xenophobia, Protectionism
→ Cross Border Trafficking, Terrorism, Money Laundering

Feedback

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

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