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# ForumIAS

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## ACADEMY

### GENERAL STUDIES

Name Of Candidate	SREEKUMAR RAVINDRAKUMAR		
Email Id.		Roll No.	1
Mobile No.		Date:	

Time Allowed: Three Hours

Maximum Marks: 250

INDEX TABLE			INSTRUCTION
Q.No.	Max. Marks	Marks Obtained	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Do furnish the appropriate details in the answer sheet (viz. Name, Email, Roll No, Mobile).</li><li>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.</li><li>3. One question in each part is compulsory.</li><li>4. The number of marks carried by a question/part is indicated against it.</li><li>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.</li><li>6. Word limit in questions, if specified, should be adhered to.</li><li>7. Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Question-Cum Answer Booklet must be clearly Struck off.</li></ol>
Q.1			
Q.2			
<b>Total Marks:</b>			
<b>Remarks:</b>			
Start Time   11:30 AM		End Time   2:30 PM	
Mode Of Examination :		Online <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Offline <input type="checkbox"/>	
ECN CODE:		Evaluation Date:	

2nd Floor, IAPL House, #19, Pusa Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110005

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

Parameters	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor
<i>Coherence</i>				
<i>Language</i>				
<i>Handwriting</i>				
<i>Pre-writing</i>				

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

**PDF Compressor Free Version** 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।

[ PRIS : SECURING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
AND  
SOCIAL JUSTICE ]

I was sitting on the balcony of my house in Kerala when I suddenly heard an announcement from a Jeep calling out people to come forward and vote for the upcoming local body elections in our panchayat. Representatives of various political parties came at various intervals to our homes campaigning for their respective candidates in each panchayat ward. Their election manifesto spoke volumes about the development milestones they have achieved and the plans they have in pipeline to be implemented soon.

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Having seen and read all these pamphlets and energetic campaigns, a few questions suddenly popped in my mind. It has been more than 40 years since Panchayati Raj Institutions has come into existence and now it is time for us to ponder over the fact that whether it has been effective or not? Has it truly become the harbinger of economic development and a champion of social justice? Has it really facilitated our villages to become a 'village republic' as envisioned by Gandhi? Let us try to find an answer to these questions here.

Panchayati Raj Institutions which was conferred its Constitutional status through 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional amendment had witnessed a significant evolution since Independence. The Constitution of India was not written during a

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time of harmony & peace but rather a period of fear & trepidation. Naturally the makers of our Constitution granted more powers to the central government and had a highly centralising influence. However the subsequent governments realised a large country like India with its stark contrasts from North to South, East to West cannot be ~~not~~ governed effectively without a decentralized governance system.

After years of experimentation with a leisurely led community ~~the~~ development programme failed to yield the desired results, the government decided to give the necessary recognition of local self governing institutions. The 73<sup>rd</sup> & 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional amendment therefore made compulsory ~~const~~ setting up of Panchayati Raj Institutions in rural areas, Urban governing bodies in urban areas - This had a huge impact on the development architecture of India.

PRIs: Propelling Economic Growth

The Panchayati Raj Institutions played a crucial role in kickstarting our economic boom especially the post liberalization years. It acted as a local level facilitator of economic empowerment providing the ample resources and avenues of growth. Government schemes like MGNREGA would not have been a huge success if it was not for the phenomenal execution of Panchayat Institutions.

India during this time period lifted more than 70 million people out of poverty and PRIs had a direct hand in this effort. Their local connect with problem, knowledge of their problems, geography etc helped them to act together to implement the development plans at local level and

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reach the people on time. This was especially witnessed during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic which forced millions of migrants to repatriate to their villages from cities had put <sup>significant</sup> pressure on these areas. However an effective networking & working of local bodies helped to find employment for these migrants under various government schemes such as AtPM Gaurab Kalyan Yojana and avoided a social disaster to a great extent.

We have also witnessed how such local governing institutions can play a role of skilling partner in training the residents of a panchayat for various vocational roles. The Kerala based ~~was~~ Kudumbashree Self help group work on a panchayat based hub & spoke model where they train women for various jobs keeping a particular

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 as a nodal hub and connecting these programmes with other panchayats. Thus they act as a catalyst for bringing social justice.

### IPRIS for an Equitable Society

India being a land of diversity is also known for its stark inequalities. It is a land where BMWs jostle for space alongside Autorickshaws & Cart-pulleys, where Skyscrapers neighbour thickly populated slums. These inequalities not just in economic sense but in social perspective is an impediment to social progress. IPRIS aims at being an equalizer and reducing these inequalities to a great extent.

<sup>10a</sup>  
 Due to large gender gap between women & men in India, women are particularly underrepresented in public sphere. Only 12% of the parliamentarians are women and ~~even~~



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as a starting step to reduce these gaps, the act provides for a compulsory 33% reservation of seats for women in all posts. This has had a huge liberating effect on women and ensured they play a greater role in public sphere and not just restrict themselves to the four walls of their house.

Along with ~~no~~ women, Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes are another sections of society which are marginalized significantly. To resolve this act provides for a similar reservation of seats to ensure a proper & equitable representation of this section as well. This will ensure a more harmonious society devoid of caste and gender bias and make sure every voice is heard loud & clear. However all these does not mean all is hunky-dory with PRIS. A series of pitfalls have prevented it.

from reaching its fullest potential.

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## Development of Underdevelopment

The Mani Shankar Iyer Committee on reviewing the progress of PRIs in India commented that decentralized planning is a non-starter in India. Though the Constitution has provided for the setting up of PRIs, it has left a lot of responsibilities of implementation on the State Governments. This has made PRIs at the mercy of the political will of State Governments to carry out economic planning.

Only a few States like Kerala have devolved the subjects in the Schedule of Indian Constitution which provides the PRIs to carry out planning in these fields. The failure of

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These devolution have led to PRIs becoming a half baked cake. State Government's due to its inherent fear of losing revenue & powers and being sceptical about the rise of a prominent grassroots leadership have restricted the devolution of subjects.

The Institutions are also in dire need of adequate finances to conduct its development programmes. The Centre-state tussle over sharing of revenues and delay from states in setting up state finance commissions have impacted the efficacy of financial devolution and left the PRIs struggling for money. This situation coupled with the corruption nexus have made the situation worse.

Gramsabhas which are supposed to be the soul of PRIs do not have a clear demarcation of its responsibilities and thus do not

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 forums effectively ~~are~~ and more often than not  
 have become platforms for discussing unnecessary  
 things and exchanging pleasantries. The situation is  
 not different from a social justice perspective as well.

### Social Justice: A Mirage?

B.R. Ambedkar once  
 famously commented villages are dens of ignorance  
 and sinks of localism. The situation unfortunately  
 remains very similar even today. Regressive concepts  
 like Patriarchy, Caste based differentiation, gender bias,  
social taboos continues to plague PRIs even in this  
 era of technological & social revolution.

The Culture of  
'Pradhan Pati' where women candidates are just kept  
 as a front for meeting reservation guidelines whereas

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in reality, their husbands conduct the administration is prevalent in many parts of India. A recently released web series 'Panchayat' had beautifully portrayed this regressive practice which hinders our progress towards an equitable society.

Many Panchayats continue to treat members from Dalit & SC/ST community as inferior and socially ostracize them, thereby resulting in the breakdown of this constitutional machinery. Many of them conduct bogus meetings with no proper attendance records and audits, thereby making the entire process haphazard. However, this does not mean we should entirely banish the idea of PRIs but strive to make PRIs work.

Setting things Right

Various Committees & Commissions

have ~~recommended~~ a <sup>plethora</sup> ~~plethora~~ of solutions to revive our PRIs and ensure its efficient functioning. Panchai Commission report suggests a proper 'Activity Mapping' on the lines of World Bank report which clearly outlines the functions of PRIs. This will help us avoid jurisdictional overlap and administrative limbo.

We also require a strong Bureaucratic Cooperation without which any decentralization plan is doomed to fail. We saw a phenomenal instance Bureaucracy-PRIs Cooperation in the Bhilwara model in Rajasthan where the District Magistrate along with the local bodies implemented an effective plan to contain the spread of COVID-19.

None of these plans will move forward without the inflow of funds

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State & Central Government's should ensure there is a larger devolution of funds to PRIs and a proper audit by CAG to ensure the financial propriety. Regular social audits by community can also bring in the much needed accountability & transparency.

To make the entire process equitable, we must ensure there are regular elections conducted to these institutions and the presence of women & Dalits are to be compulsory for all its meetings. They should be videotaped for documentation and <sup>for</sup> future reference. To ensure the compliance, a model Code of Conduct & Panchayat Ombudsman as seen in Kerala can be brought in to make the system more robust & effective.

It is often said that a bad panchayati raj is worse than no

70372\_32006\_1910047417\_(2020-12-15 00:42:58)

panchayat Raj and it is the responsibility of each and every Indian citizen to ensure the panchayats in our PRIs are resolved and work together in unison to make Mahatma Gandhi's dream of Swarajya a reality and villages the true soul of 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



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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

IT IS THE POWER OF MIND TO BE  
UNCONQUERABLE

Recently the Indian Cricket team had a debutant playing in the ongoing India - Australia Series. The story of this new player was phenomenal. Born in a suburban area of Tamil Nadu into a poor family, his only dream was Cricket. However his poor economic situation made it extremely difficult for him to realise this goal. How can ~~be~~ a family struggling to make enough money to afford three meals a day send him for coaching and buy all the accessories.

However the boy never lost his dream, kept playing, worked as a coolie for his

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family and always kept the fire burning inside him.  
 From a Coolie, to an IPL Substitute bowler to India's  
 most promising future <sup>Cricketers</sup> stars, we now have a new star -  
T. Natarajan!

What makes Natarajan  
Special? What is so phenomenal about his rise to  
 fame,? What set him apart from other of his generation?  
 The simple answer to these question would be nothing  
 but his indomitable sprint, perseverance and guts.  
 Was it his physical strength that helped him overcome  
 his ~~challenges~~ poverty & sorrows? Absolutely Not! It was  
 the power of his mind that made him truly unquenchable.

One might  
 wonder what ~~made~~ do you mean by power of mind?  
 How does one achieve it? Let us try finding an answer  
 to these questions here. Power of the mind is simply

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the inner strength in someone to keep working towards your goal in spite of all challenges life throws at you. It is the relentless pursuit of one's values, and ambitions without being bogged down by the worldly pleasures around you. In short it is your 'Never-say-Die' attitude to life. Now the bigger question in front of us is how to achieve this.

### The 'Yes I can' way

It is always easy to say 'i can't' ~~to~~ something in life. However this attitude of running away from challenges in life is a symptom of a weak mind. After all the real greatness lies in taking a hit, falling down & then getting up back again with a smile on the face and move on ~~to~~ with a 'Yes I can' attitude. When Mr. Ratan Tata was

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ridiculed by Ford & other car makers for his  
 "Experience in car industry, Ratan Tata did not  
 harkdown on sell off his automobile business. He  
 worked it, perfected it and now he owns those very  
 companies which were once owned by Ford. This the key for a  
 powerful mind is to keep going.

It is a well known

Adage that says "When the going gets tough, the tough  
 gets going". The difficult experiences in life are not to be  
 frowned upon but to be taken as an experience which  
 makes your mind tougher. This involves taking failures  
 on your chin & moving on. The Irish playwright  
Samuel Beckett famously said "Ever tried Ever Failed ....  
 No matter. Try Harder Fail Harder. Fail Better".

India's legendary actor

Amalambh Bachchan was once ridiculed for his voice  
 and declined a chance at the All India Radio. Had

he lost his position and moved on to a different career India would have lost a phenomenal actor. The sheer perseverance and love for his passion made him truly great. Thus one can easily conclude that all of it is a mindgame. The stronger you make it, the faster you reach towards your goal. But in this journey it is important that you stay away from negativity.

### Surrounding with Positivity

There will be hundreds of people around you who will be at the forefront to discourage you and tell that it's better for you to do something else. It is usual that we ignore these and tell your mind that I am ready for this. It is said that Never hang around with turkeys if you want to soar high like an eagle. Right friendships, networks,

Connections that motivates you should be your companions in this journey.

Choosing the battles, but winning the war,

Keeping your mind regularly motivated is a way to make it sharp & focused. One can resort to multiple tactics to do this. The most practised one is periodic goal setting. You may loose out on few, however the end goal should always be clear and we should never loose sight of it. Setting of daily, monthly, yearly targets and vision for yourself can help your mind be focused.

However we must be careful we never underestimate ourselves. Our goals should always be a bit difficult to achieve, so that our efforts are always 100%. Aristotle in this regard famously

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remarked - The problem of humanity is not about ~~to~~ aiming high & missing but aiming low and hitting'. Everyday should be an effort to be a better version of yourself. However the real power does not lie in being victorious but also is about handling your victories.

Napoleon Bonaparte

One said "Glory is fleeting, but obscurity is forever".

It is easy to get bogged down in the push & pomp of your victory. However many forget that this is short lived, but what matters is the strength not to get fade away in glory, but in being humble & grounded.

The most famous

example in this regard would be about Sachin Tendulkar and Vinod Kambli. While both started debut for Indian <sup>opposition</sup> cricket at the same ~~age~~ time, only one is remembered till

now. While Karim had better figures than Sachin, he allowed external pleasures to conquer his mind & slowly fade away into obscurity. Sachin on the other hand stood firm in <sup>his</sup> goal, worked hard towards attaining his ultimate vision. This truly shows how handling your victories is a sign of a powerful mind.

However the power of your mind is not just about yourself but is also about your attitude towards society. Even ~~at~~ while reaching the highest echelons you must, if you are ~~ignorant~~ <sup>ignore</sup> to your society & external environment, it does not make one unconquerable.

What makes A.P.J Abdul Kalam, <sup>one of</sup> the greatest scientists in India was not just his scientific acumen, but his care for humanity, society and the ultimate vision that ~~the~~ the benefits



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of his work should reach the poorest of the poorest Indians. He travelled across the length & breadth of the country motivating school children to think big, he ensured that he was making other a part of his success too. Finally when he passed away with zero personal savings and no assets, India remembers him as a great soul. Thus a powerful mind is also a selfless mind.

One should also be careful that he/she does not hurt someone else's dream in the process of achieving your goal. Being unconquerable is not about crushing others dreams and aspirations but being a catalyst in their success too. This is what made Akbar a great ruler. He could have easily ruled by subjugating other religious beliefs and hurting the sentiments of his subjects. Instead

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 he chose to neutralise their belief systems, encouraged their traditions, and he became a people's king. His policy of religious neutrality is one reason why he did not face many revolts and facilitated a peaceful rule for several years.

### Listening to your Inner Voice

Finally what matters the most is your ~~conscience~~ conscience. It is that inner voice that should lead you from ~~stagnation~~ <sup>stagnation</sup> to success. Keeping your conscience clear, trusting what it tells you is a sign that you place <sup>the</sup> highest belief in your mind and move on. This ensures no challenge big or small, no obstacle however difficult might be comes in your way.

We must realise that-

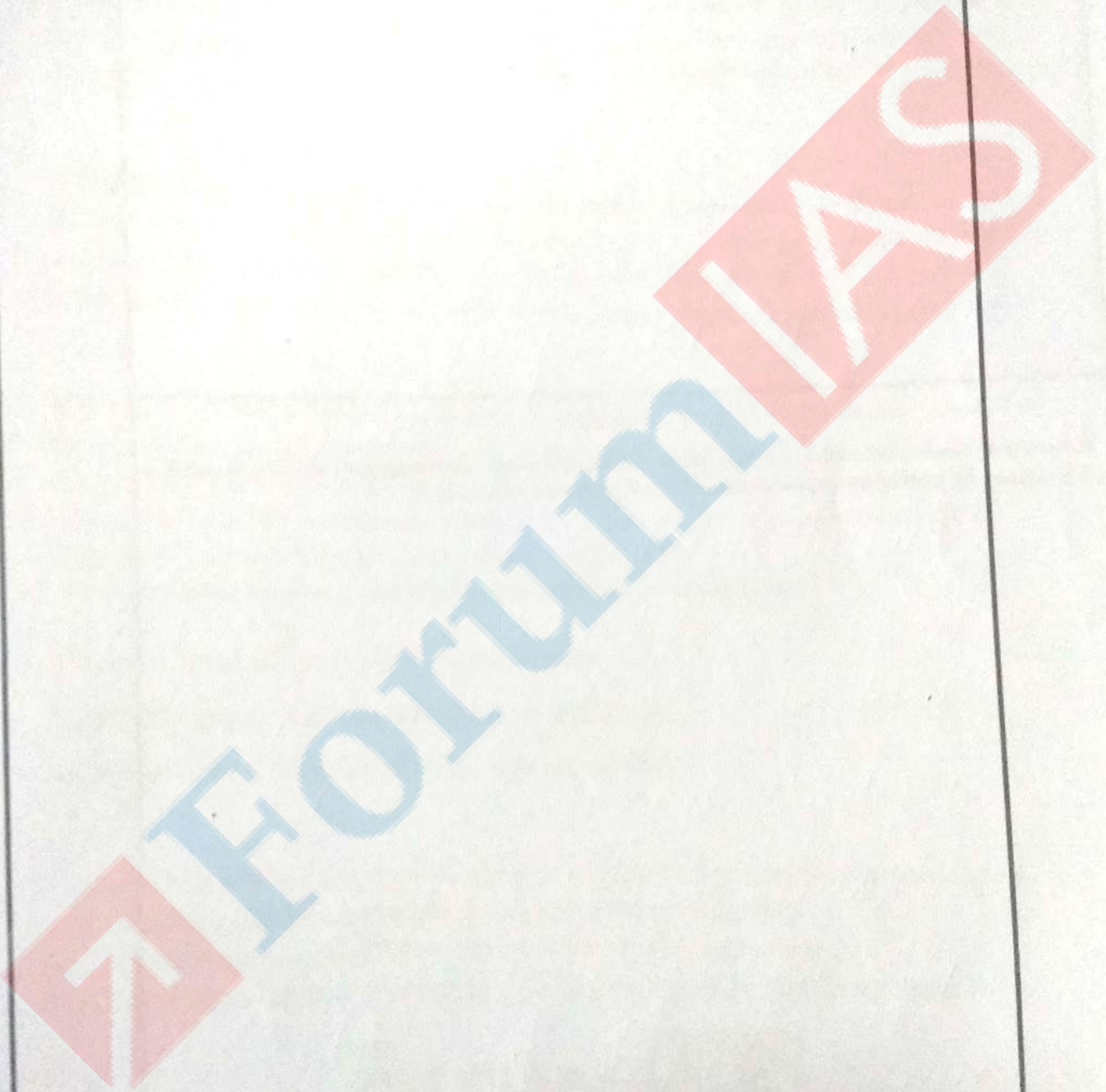
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This journey holds a lot of surprises for you. Whether you find the light at the end of the tunnel or not depends on the paths you choose. Here we have two options, either tread the well worn path and be an ordinary person or to take the 'road not taken', be a true trailblazer and a leader. This requires a powerful mind ~~and~~ <sup>that</sup> makes you truly unshakable.

Vikram Sarabhai

Once said "One who can listen to the music amidst all the noise" holds the keys to success". Therefore let us aim to hear that music which is our ultimate goal, ignore the voices around you, trust your instincts, conscience, muster up the courage to face the failures and keep moving on with a smile. This power of your mind will lead you to the gates of success

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**Feedback**

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