

U.P.S.C.

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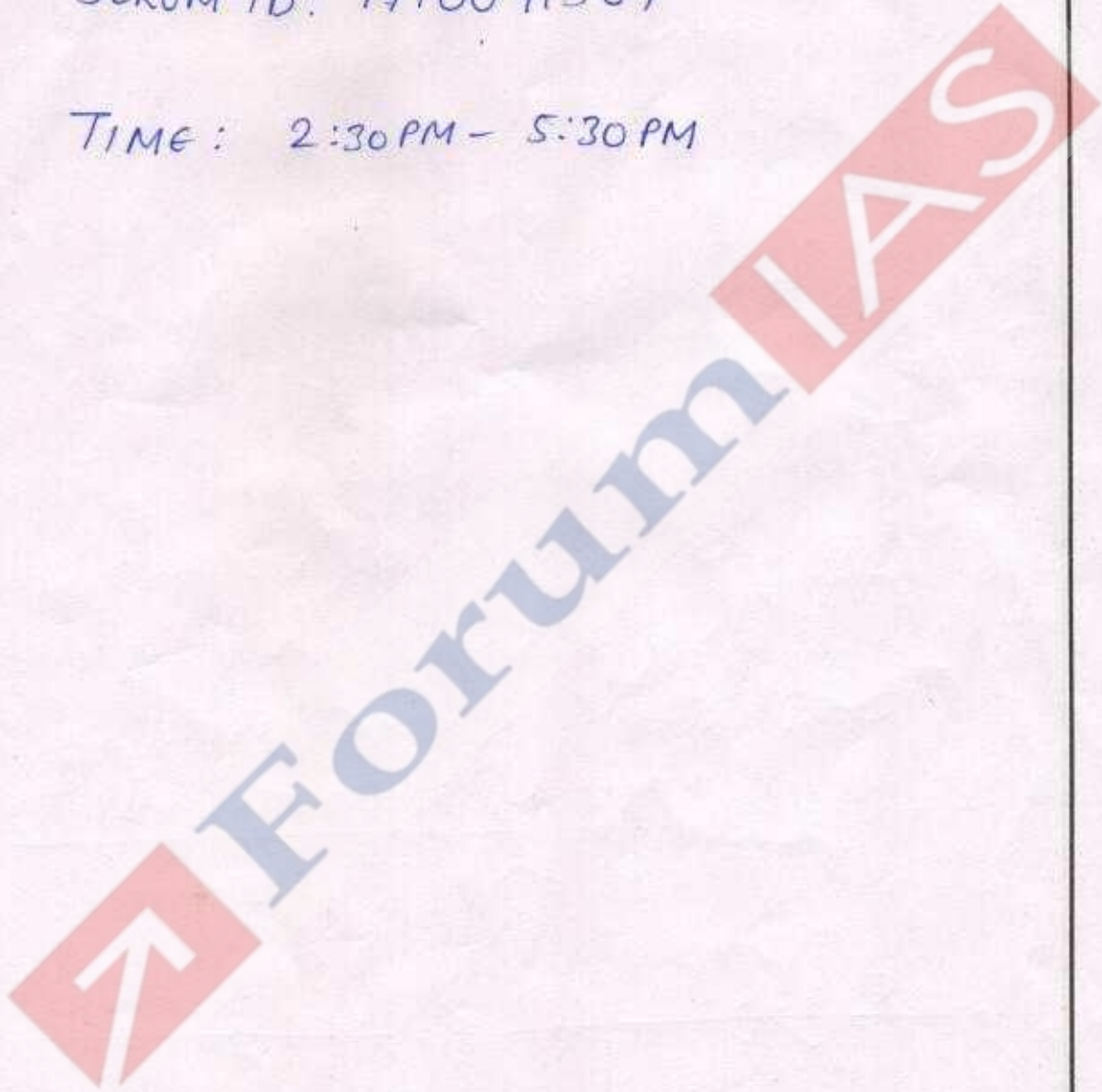
प्रश्न संख्या
(Question No.)

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Name: Anubhav Singh

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'One cannot change the world alone but can cast a stone across water to create many ripples'

When Ram Mohun Roy saw a young woman being forced to alight the pyre of his octagenarian deceased husband, his moral conscience was shocked. He frantically looked around for support and frustatedly wondered if he alone saw ~~through~~^{the} absurdity and the ghastliness of the act desmasquerading as an essential cultural tradition of the Hindus. He resolved to put an end to the practise of Sati. Not only did he not receive any support, he was vehemently criticized by the orthodox members of his family, including his mother. His firm resolve and appeal to reason and humanity resonated with some like minded individuals and their concerted efforts which eventually led to the abolition of Sati. Ram Mohun Roy alone could not ~~make~~^{change} the ^{way the} world ~~a~~^{better place for} viewed women, but he cast a stone which genuated ripples that are being felt to this day. The 2005

amendment to the Hindu Code Bill which makes women equal partners in paternal property is one such ripple.

History is replete with examples of people who have cast a stone across water to change the world. These examples can be found in different spheres. However, the ripples they generate go beyond the confines of a particular sphere or the boundaries of spatio-temporality.

~~When~~ ^{When} Dr. B.R. Ambedkar decided to fight the demon of caste based discrimination and untouchability, ~~and~~ his fight was not confined to the social sphere. It was intrinsically linked to the economic and political emancipation of Dalits. Its ripples ensured constitutional rights and ~~a~~ ^{are} life of dignity for the Dalits. They ^{are} still continuing to be felt in the form of modern day movements like the one led by Bhim army.

In the 18th century, when a local Maharaja sent his army to clear a patch

of land for a construction, Armita Devi mobilized the Bishnoi community and offered resistance. They hugged the Khajri trees and even laid down their lives for the protection of their ecosystem. This selfless act of protecting the environment has had ripples over the years. Indigenous communities and environmental activists like Sunderlal Bahuguna and Mudha Patkar have agitated for protecting the environment. They have asserted for their right to choose their own version of development which is more sustainable and inclusive. It has shaped India's environmental consciousness and established it as a votary of sustainable development in the comity of nations.

Kadambini Ganguly became the first woman graduate of Calcutta University in 1899. She wanted women to have equal access to education similar to their men counterparts. She couldn't, however,

change the society alone. What she did instead was that she cast a stone across water by facing all odds and challenges and finishing her university education. It led to ripples that subsequently started a movement that led to more access to women's education. With ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~the~~ first ^{three} ranks of this year's civil services exam being occupied by women, one can say that the ripple is turning into a wave.

In the realm of science, it was T.G. Norton's discovery of anaesthesia which revolutionized the world of surgery. Countless lives could be saved because painlessly operating the patient became possible. It was that man's efforts that created ripples in all the departments of medical sciences. ~~Society~~ Immanuel Kant, a person who never set foot outside Prussia, gave the idea for a 'League of Nations' that would help with perpetual peace.

The Modern day United Nations is a manifestation of his ideas. ~~There~~ Similarly, Karl Marx gave the grand theory of his communism. He was disturbed by the inhumane condition of workers under the capitalistic structure of society. He wanted to provide a road map for the alleviation of their physical and psychological deprivation. ^{Although,} ^{his} theory suffered from limitations it led to the introduction of welfarism in modern societies. It created ripples in the form of humane labour laws, social security and the development of state as an agency for socio-economic welfare of its citizens. Thus, the act of changing the world through casting a stone can also be an ideational process. It is the strength of these ideas that have created ripples.

The act of changing the world can also happen at different levels.

For example, at the international level, India has taken on the mantle of sustainable development through initiatives like International Solar Alliance. The urgency of acting towards limiting anthropogenic induced climate change has never been more severe. India is also leading the way by achieving its Nationally Determined Goals in a time bound manner that it had pledged at the COP-15 in Paris. At the ^{sub-}institutional level, a similar act is being done by NGOs like 'green peace' who are playing a pivotal role in helping countries address climate change and its associated vulnerabilities. At the individual level, the example of Greta Thunberg comes to mind who is agitating for the rights of posterity. All these people and institutions are working to change the world by casting their stories, the size of the ripples may

vary but they'll eventually move towards the shore of a more green, inclusive world where the rights of posterity are not jeopardised for the greed of the current generation.

The examples of people trying to change the world are plenty and from diverse backgrounds, however there are few unifying characteristics. ~~These~~ they have a strong moral core and see themselves as embedded in the society who have a moral obligation towards its betterment. The act of casting a stone is not an easy road and involves huge, personal and professional sacrifices. The people who have cast a stone have shown great strength of character. They have shown that anything worth having does not come easy by leading from the front. Madam Curie laid down her life for the sake of scientific solution. They show immense courage

in the face of adversity ~~and~~ Plato has ^{rightly} remarked 'courage is knowing what not to fear'. Socrates chose to drink Hemlock and die than question the reality around him.

The act of casting a stone becomes important as it is through this dialectical act that society progresses. It is through the ripples and churning of the world that truth comes out.

When Mahatma Gandhi entered the freedom movement, it was disintegrated. He united the people and launched the struggle for independence. It was during the struggle that the various ripples were created, the issue of Hindu-Muslim unity, dalit marginalization, women disempowerment, widespread poverty and rural backwardness came to the fore.

'leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality'. The people who set out to change the world

had a vision. They did their bit by casting a stone which created many ripples. One must believe in ~~act~~ acting on what one thinks is right for the world. If Martin Luther King had been afraid to cast the stone for the blacks of America, their rightful place in the society might still be a distant dream. As a society, we have the obligation to put our weight behind right causes as -

'Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much' - ~~Keller~~ Helen Keller.

'Patriarchy arises out of the same constellation that engenders casteism, racism and communalism'

It was raining heavily, on a summer evening, in a small hamlet outside Muzaffarnagar district when Ankit woke up abruptly. It was the sound he had dreaded the most since childhood. His father had come back home drunk and was beating his mother mercilessly. Earlier in the day his father had gotten into a vitriolic discussion about the superiority of his religion and the need to execute people belonging to all other religions. He had also fought with a lower caste man for considering him his equal and sitting next to him. At night, it was his wife's turn. Ankit crushed his head in his pillow and cried himself to sleep. This, not so rare phenomenon, proves that 'patriarchy arises out of the same constellation that engenders casteism, racism and communalism'.

Patriarchy literally translates to 'rule of the father'. It is the ideology that has been used for the subjugation

of women. It treats men as being superior—physically, morally, intellectually to women. Similarly, casteism, racism and communalism are based on the idea of superiority of one caste, race or religion. They believe that all individuals of that social grouping have common secular interests which are antagonistic to the interests of others and their claims must thus be annihilated. In essence, all these ideologies are ideologies of exclusion which fail to envision an inclusive and egalitarian social structure and are rendered poorer for the same. It is this common thread of exclusion and hate that links them and anybody belonging to this constellation of ideological belief would be patriarchal, casteist, racist and communal.

This constellation of exclusivist ideologies like casteism, racism, communalism, patriarchy has ramifications

dominant idea is that of exclusion and hate, it can lead to the building of Atom bombs whereas an inclusive and peaceful use of technology can be using remote sensing data to help climate vulnerable nation and people.

In the cultural sphere, there will be a stranglehold on exchange rather than free movement and intermingling of cultures as was epitomized by the Berlin wall. In the sphere of environment,

one would notice the reckless destruction of natural resources and ecosystems, deprivation of rights of indigenous communities and crony capitalism.

Whereas in an inclusivist setup, every developmental initiative would be tried to made sustainable. Thus, the constellation which engenders casteism, racism, communalism, patriarchy also spills over to other dimensions of the society.

in other spheres too. Almost a 1000 years back, Al-Beruni in his book 'Kitab-i-hind', highlighted the weakness of the Indian society that was divided along the lines of caste, race etc. It made plundering India easier. ^{Eight hundred} ~~900~~ years later, the society was divided on communal lines too and gave the British and other European colonisers an even more fertile ground for colonial subjugation and exploitation. The position of women had worsened too. Thus, ~~the~~ this constellation of mutual exhaustion ended up with the partition of country along communal lines with women being the worst sufferers of the ravages of partition. Thus, this constellation of castism, racism, communalism, patriarchy has ramifications in political sphere too.

The dominant ideas find reflection in all walks of life. If the

It is ~~the~~ because of the inter-related nature of the exclusivist ideologies, that the battle mounted against them has also been conjoined. While leading the Indian national movement, Mahatma Gandhi paid immense emphasis on value development through his constructive work programme. He aimed at holistically tackling the ideology of hate through his stress on hindu-muslim unity, empowerment of dalits whom he called harijans, political empowerment of women etc. Similarly, Ambedkar rededicated his life for the upliftment of Dalits, however he simultaneously addressed issue of minority and women empowerment. He resigned from the cabinet over the issue of Hindu Code Bill. Globally, the 1960s and 70s were ~~events~~ years that saw most agitation for an end to policies of hate and intolerance. Protests were organised on issues

of women empowerment, black rights, gay rights, anti-vietnam war as they realised that it is the constellation that engenders ideologies like racism and communalism and patriarchy that needs to be targeted.

In the modern context, the constellation has undergone significant shift owing to the forces of urbanisation and globalisation. While it has been challenged, it has also metamorphosed and found new ways to survive. The recent judgement in Roe vs Wade in USA where abortion was removed as a constitutional right is a case in point. While women have been asserting themselves, moves like these are an attempt to stifle their liberty and expression. The essence of institutions should be democratic and tolerant. It is for this reason that Indian proam-

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-bular values are the guiding light for our policy makers. Recent examples have shown that women empowerment plays an important role in breaking the constellation of hate. They should be given a central place in policy making. Women leaders led countries suffered less during the COVID-19 Pandemic Women led demand for prohibition of liquor in Bihar has led to less instances of violence and declining crime rate. Empowerment of women is pivotal for breaking the constellations that engender ideologies like racialism, casteism, communalism etc. ~~giggle level~~ Increasing crimes against women and abysmal political representation and participation shows the need to mount a scaled effort in this direction.

This constellation of ideologies is reactionary and operates out of immense lack. It operates out of

lack as it perceives the world as a zero-sum game where only one group can win and thus acts up and becomes reactionary when it perceives that its power is slipping away. It is oblivious to the power and magic that can unfold when a society acts together in an organistic way. Coretta Scott Kings aptly says that,
'The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate action of its members.'

Countries which have addressed the limitations of exclusivist, hateful ideologies are doing well in all spectrums of welfare and happiness and are setting the template for our social evolution (eg- Sweden, Denmark).

While growing up, Ankit was exposed to the constellation of values that engender casteism,

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racism ~~etc~~, communalism and patriarchy. He could have either been co-opted into the system or broken the inter-generation cycle of violence and hate. Ankit chose the latter. He now stays in his village, is married to a working wife and is friends with people from all castes and religions. It ~~highly~~ shows our ability as humans to reinvent our social consciousness and make a conscious choice of living with tolerance, harmony and love which will usher in abundance.

'Tolerance is the real test of civilization'
- Arthur Helps

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