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FORUM IAS

SECTION - A

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1.

The ultimate renewable energy is human ingenuity

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The industrial and scientific revolution of that began in the 18th century gave mankind some of the best inventions. The printing press, mass production through spinning jenny revolutionised everything from the way we produced goods to the way we live. Then came the ~~2nd~~ second industrial revolution in the 19th century with the invention of the steam engine. Just when we believed that innovation had reached its peak, the 20th century brought the third industrial revolution by introducing the internet, revolutionising the way we live in making the world a "global village" (Marshall McLuhan). Now, the fourth

Industrial revolution is upon us with the introduction of Artificial Intelligence. The constant progress and innovation reveals that the human mind is a gift that keeps on giving, and there is no upper limit to human ingenuity. This essay will discuss the various instances of human ingenuity ^{and} why and how to promote ingenuity.

Human ingenuity through the pages of history

Joseph Murphy in his book 'The Power of the Subconscious Mind' talks about how the human mind has an infinite amount of knowledge and wisdom. The solution to every problem lies within us. ~~First~~ We need not look beyond our country to show

instances of this. The Golconda Fort has been designed in a way that ~~its~~ sound can travel for nearly one kilometre through the halls and passages within its walls. The acoustics were designed so in order to alert the army regarding enemy attacks. Displays of human ingenuity need not be so grand either. The simple bamboo pipes in North-East India to transport water from one place to another is an instance of simple creativity. Not only does it use locally available materials (bamboo) to do so, but it is also eco friendly and mindful of the difficult topography of Northeastern India.

Our minds are manufacturing machines.
Our most valuable assets are not machines

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or robots, but the human mind which has made such machines and robots possible.

At the beginning of human civilisation, when Denisovans and Neanderthals were at the middle of the food chain, life was short and insecure. Then we invented fire and rock cut tools to hunt and protect ourselves. The Mesolithic period gave rise to animal rearing and domestication of animals. The science of agriculture was discovered in the Neolithic period (12,000 years ago).

This settled economy gave rise to urban life (Harappan civilisation). The wheel was invented, ships were built and guilds were formed to facilitate trade and cultural exchange. Grand Empires rose all around the world (Magadha in Indian subcontinent, Aztecs in America, Greeks and Romans in Europe). The following progress made in science, art, architecture,

literature have birthed the modern civilisation that we know today. Thus, history is a testament to human ingenuity.

Humans are also problem solvers. The best of us have learned from the experiences of other nations and cultures to face our own challenges. One of the greatest examples of human ingenuity in the 20th century was Mahatma Gandhi's method of satyagraha. The spread of colonisation, disintegration of Bismarck's Germany, the violence of the First World War reinforced his belief that violent struggle will always lead to violent freedom. His peaceful methods of resistance gained widespread popularity, and his technique of satyagraha was further reproduced in South Africa by Nelson Mandela.

and during the Civil Rights Movement by Martin Luther King Jr. Another instance of human ingenuity is witnessed in the Indian rural scenario. Several problems plagued the rural scenario. Lack of women's empowerment, poor access to formal credit, poverty and inequality, lack of modernisation of agriculture were some problems. A simple yet creative solution was proposed to this — coming together in formal or informal groups, and pooling resources for greater access to finances. This gave rise to Self-Help Groups which ~~are~~ ^{have} now increased to 12 lakh SHGs in India, helping tens of lakhs of families. Similarly, Farmer Producer Organisations also assist farmers to gain better access to the market.

The success of the above notions is built

on the widely agreed upon notion the 'man is a social animal' (Aristotle). Human ingenuity and courage knows no limits when it comes to protecting each other. The example of German business tycoon Oskar Schindler is relevant here. Living in Nazi Germany, Schindler could have been a part of the 'Bystander Effect' and silently watched the persecution of Jews. Instead, he chose to take action, and ingeniously hired 1,200 Jewish workers in his factory, protecting them from being carried away to concentration camps. The unwavering belief in human ingenuity can be demonstrated through the words of one of the most ingenious persons in history - Thomas Alva Edison himself. He said, "just when you think you have run out of ideas, remember that you haven't".

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Letting human ingenuity thrive

From Vedic to Greek to Enlightenment wisdom— it is held that if there is anything that distinguishes humans from animals, it is the human intellect. The suppression of human intellect has ~~set~~ led to losses to human civilisation.

The execution of Socrates by the Athenian assembly, or the execution of Galileo by the Church in Medieval Europe are now widely condemned. This is because ingenuity often seeks to disturb the established order. Those who fear change, resist change. However, change is the law of nature.

If we are like a free-flowing river, adapting to changes in terrain and modifying our course accordingly, we will successfully reach the ocean. But, if we choose to be like a stagnant pond

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that freezes in winters and dries up in the summer, we will be of no good to anyone.

There are lessons for modern policymakers in realising the importance of human ingenuity as well. If we compare the different paths taken by North and South Korea after their creation, this lesson will become abundantly clear. North Korea decided to go the dictatorial way, suppressing any expression of ingenuity, shutting off the physical and digital world to its citizens. ~~North Korea~~ South Korea, on the other hand, adopted democracy and let human ingenuity thrive by spending on research and development (currently 4.9% of GDP). Today, it is a thriving and advanced economy, and has birthed technological giants like Samsung. North Korea, on the other hand, ^{has come to} symbolise the stagnant past.

CONCLUSION

The world faces many global and local challenges today. For instance, we collectively face the threat of climate change. However, its local impacts differ. These challenges ~~that~~ can only be met by capitalising on human resources and unleashing the potential of human ingenuity. This has significant implications for India which is today the ~~largest~~ most populous nation in the world. Thus, we must invest in research, promote scientific thinking and combine it with local intelligence in order to progress.

SECTION B

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3.

The Rise of Populism in democratic societies is a threat to rule of law and constitutionalism

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The word "populism" has emerged as a buzzword to describe the recent trends of national politics across the globe. Simply put, populism is when a government comes to power claiming to represent the "common man". The rule of law was a concept put forward by AV Dicey, which indicates a rule of law and not a rule of man. Constitutionalism is closely related to rule of law, as it limits the power of the Government by laying down certain principles (eg. Right to life and liberty in Article 21 of Indian Constitution). As all laws directly flow from the Constitution, the rule of law is also the rule of Constitution. In this essay, the concept of populism will be

explained first. Its linkages with rule of law and constitutionalism will then be explored to determine whether populism poses any threat to them.

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UNDERSTANDING POPULISM - RULE OF THE PEOPLE OR RULE OF THE MAJORITY ?

Populism, as explained, is when a government comes in power seeking to represent the common man or the middle class. Its campaigns are focused on the day-to-day issues faced by a citizen. This includes inflation, unemployment, rising oil prices, poor law and order and so on. The word populism itself is derived from the word 'popular', thus indicating widespread support for an elected leader.

Despite its good intentions to relieve the woes of a common man, the term and phenomenon

have come under scrutiny. The fear is that populism will lead to the imposition of the whims of the majority in the name of the "people" or "common man". The most widely cited examples of populism are the USA under Former President Donald Trump and Brazil under former President Jair Bolsonaro. It is alleged that these governments, along with other populist governments, are generally unrepresentative of the diverse sections in a democracy. Therefore, there is an apprehension that populism may threaten the rule of law and constitutionalism.

POPULISM - A THREAT TO RULE OF LAW AND CONSTITUTIONALISM?

Why does a constitution enjoy legitimacy in any democratic society? It is because it is

a product of debates and discussions, negotiations and compromises, and represents the diverse sections of society. Take the Indian Constitution for instance. It is the product of 2 years, 11 months and 18 days of democratic discussion. It incorporates suggestions given by the public (the first draft of Constitution was circulated among the public). It takes the best practices from various constitutions of different democracies, and modifies them to suit the Indian context. Constitutional experts describe it as a transformative and revolutionary document. The principles of any Constitution (not just the Indian Constitution) give rise to what we call "constitutional morality".

Populism is seen as a threat to constitutional morality when it seeks to override it with public morality. For instance, the cardinal principles of the American Constitution and its Declaration of

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Independence is the right to life, liberty and happiness of every citizens. Furthermore, it is based on the Western model of secularism which advocates mutual exclusion between state and church. However, the present debates around abortion laws in the USA are viewed as a populist attempt to subvert rule of law and constitutionalism. It is viewed as an attempt to mix religion with politics, and ~~to~~ override constitutional principles in the name of the common man. Furthermore, the attacks by supporters of populist leaders on national symbols (eg. Capitol Hill attack in the USA) after the defeat of such leaders in elections adds to fears of democide i.e. death of democracy.

Furthermore, stricter curbs on immigration by many European nations is viewed as another act in populism. The rule of law as propounded

by Dicey holds that every individual is equal in the eyes of law, and no ruler is above the

law. Yet, by targetting immigrants, seeking to homogenise their culture and language, violates this principle. The recent riots in France against the death of an African youth at the hands of the police, shows the discontentment against populism.

Racial profiling has emerged as another issue. The worries that the majority community will be reduced to a minority has been made a populist issue. This has bred fear and suspicion among citizens themselves.

The violation of constitutionalism due to violation of principles like ~~rule~~ of equality, fraternity, freedom of religion have all led to suspicion against populism.

POPULISM - A RAY OF HOPE

The worries of 'democide' or death of democracy in

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recent years may be unwarranted. The attacks on constitutionalism and rule of law cannot be made by merely attacking state symbols such as the Capitol Hill in the US. Democracy can be safeguarded from a perverted ~~for~~ form of populism as long as democratic values are alive among the citizens. The comprehensive investigations and trials against the Capitol Hill attackers indicate that democracy is indeed alive. The popular criticisms ^{made} against racial profiling indicates that the spirit of rule of law is alive. The discontentment against perverted populism in Brazil and the peaceful democratic regime (election of Lula de Silva) shows that constitutionalism is alive.

Populism ~~is~~ is portrayed in a negative light today. However, it is not populism that is the problem. It is politics without morality which is one of Gandhiji's seven sins. The

positive aspects of populism can be seen in the Indian government after independence. The success of free and fair elections by the Election Commission of India was an achievement. The popular support enjoyed by all the national leaders represented populism. The focus on development through Five Year Plans by focusing on agriculture and industry were truly populist schemes as they sought to help the common man. The focus on democracy, inclusion of opposition leaders in cabinet, and dignified debates in the Parliament show that populism does not translate into subversion of rule of law and Constitutionalism every time.

WHAT PERVERTS POPULISM?

The answer to this question is contained in Hannah Arendt's books 'On Totalitarianism', 'On Human Action' and 'Eichmann in Jerusalem'.

A Jewish political philosopher herself, Arendt sought to investigate the rise of the Nazi party in Germany. Adolf Hitler enjoyed popular support, and his Third Reich completely subverted rule of law and democracy. According to Arendt, this was made possible due to declining political participation by people. When there is ignorance about important political matters, it is easier to misguide masses. In the present time, we witness a declining voter turnout in several democratic countries. The focus on work, career, and jobs has reduced time our participation in democratic deliberations. Holidays meant for voting are used for recreation by the middle class. As Alexis de Tocqueville put it, an apathetic citizenry in a democracy can cause more harm than an authoritarian prince.

The solution to modern day populism is,

Therefore, political participation. No political party or government can misguide an enlightened citizenry.

Exercises in democratic decentralisation such as the constitutional status to local governance institutions (73rd and 74th amendments) is one such way to combat perverted populism. Electoral studies by institutes like CSDS and Lokniti show that India's voter turnout is higher than most democracies. This is coupled by another trend - the shift from identity politics to developmental politics. Pro-incumbency trends, i.e. re-electing a government due to its performance, indicates this. Rejecting a party at State level but giving it an astounding victory at the national level (eg. seen in Delhi, Karnataka) shows the educated nature of Indian voters.

CONCLUSION

Populism emerges as a threat to rule of law and

~~the rule of law and constitutionalism~~ when
the citizens are apathetic and unaware of democratic
processes. Populism is not what threatens immigrants,
minorities ~~and~~ ultimately democracies. It is the end of educated
dissent, debates and discussions that threatens it.

As the mother of democracy, where debate, tolerance,
and acceptance form core civilisational values, India
must emerge as the Vishwaguru and put an end to
~~divise~~ divisive politics.

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The rise of populism in democ soc is a threat to rule of law & const it.

Populism refers to the phenomena - elected govt. rep interests of the majority "common man".

Rule of law & const

Understanding populism

Role of pol parties

Threat to rule of law

→ invig minority
→ threat to envt - Bolsonaro forest fires, Trump pull out of Paris Accord
→ capitol attack
→ Tehreek-e-Insaf

Iron law of olig - Rob Michels - 'Pol Parties'

Hannah Arendt - 'on Human Action' - human discussions & debates

Democ - not in Parl, but debates & discussions in coffee shops

worry - name of common man - lead to majority view imposed - Trump's America, Bolsonaro's Brazil. Homogeneous view, govt not rep of all sections.

const morality Capital

How is populism corrupted?

Hannah

✓ Apathetic citizen → authority privilege - De Tocqueville

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Populism - Army of hope

• Lula da Silva in Brazil

• Arab Spring

• India @ indep

• Democide happens step by step.

• SVP → Majority to make minor feel safe.

FORUMIAS