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SUBJECT:	ESSAY	Test Code:	1	4	5	6
Name of Candidate	SARTHAK AGRAWAL					
Medium Hindi/Eng.	ENGLISH	Registration Number	9	3	7	2
Center	ONLINE	Date	2	6	1	1

INDEX TABLE				INSTRUCTIONS
Q. No.	Page No.	Maximum Marks	Marks Obtained	1. Do furnish the appropriate details in the answer sheet (viz. Name, Registration Number and Test Code). उत्तर पुस्तिका में सूचनाएं भरना आवश्यक है (नाम, प्रश्न-पत्र कोड, विद्यार्थी क्रमांक आदि)। 2. All questions are compulsory. सभी प्रश्न अनिवार्य हैं। 3. The number of marks carried by a question/part is indicated against it. प्रत्येक प्रश्न/भाग के अंक उसके सामने दिए गए हैं। 4. 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. No marks will be given for answers written in medium other than the authorized one. प्रश्नों के उत्तर उसी माध्यम में लिखे जाने चाहिए जिसका उल्लेख आपके प्रवेश पत्र में किया गया है और उस माध्यम का स्पष्ट उल्लेख प्रश्न-सह-उत्तर (क्यूसीए) पुस्तिका के मुख्य पृष्ठ पर अंकित निर्दिष्ट स्थान पर किया जाना चाहिए। उल्लिखित माध्यम के अतिरिक्त अन्य किसी माध्यम में लिए गए उत्तर पर कोई अंक नहीं मिलेंगे। 5. Word limit in questions, if specified, should be adhered to. प्रश्नों में शब्द सीमा, जहाँ विनिर्दिष्ट है, का अनुसरण किया जाना चाहिए। 6. Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Question-Cum-Answer Booklet must be clearly struck off. उत्तर पुस्तिका में खाली छोड़ा हुआ पृष्ठ या उसके अंश को स्पष्ट रूप से काटा जाना चाहिए।
Total Marks Obtained:				
Remarks :				

EVALUATION INDICATORS

1. Contextual Competence
2. Content Competence
3. Language Competence
4. Introduction Competence
5. Structure - Presentation Competence
6. Conclusion Competence

Overall Macro Comments / feedback / suggestions on Answer Booklet:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

3. Time to revisit population policy in India

"Sleepy Joe, you are of no match to Xi Jinping!" "The President is in the pocket of the Chinese premier." "The rise and dominance of the Middle Kingdom is our biggest national security threat. What do you two gentlemen plan to do about it?"

Above are some quotes from the recently concluded US Presidential Election. The candidates differed and disagreed on everything, except on how strong they will be against the Chinese. What is it about that country, whose average resident is still five times poorer than the typical American, that inspires such heightened insecurity among the normally user-confident United States? The answer is much simpler than anyone can think of. It is the population {stupid}.

From catastrophe to cooperation through cooperation

China's 1.4 billion strong population might be its biggest asset today but Indian planners weren't as salubrious seventy years ago. ^{There} ~~we~~ were 350 million ~~strong~~ ^{we were} in 1947 & in the midst of a ^{of this in} population boom. Although spurred by falling death rates due to the wonders of modern medicine, Malthusian-style worries of food shortages made us regret the outcome. Indeed, per capita food output had fallen during the past four decades. However, it is to the credit of our democratic leaders that they didn't opt for coercive measures to control population. For the first three decades there was great emphasis on reducing population growth through mass awareness programmes. 'Hum do, humare do' became the catchphrase.

But India wasn't as lucky come the mid-1970s and the excesses of Emergency. Forced sterilisation programmes were launched to reduce fertility rates. Targets were set for local officials, failing which they were held accountable. Our fragile democracy and respect for individual rights were tested like never before.

Despite those horrors, the dark clouds of Emergency soon disappeared and brought forth a new approach on population.

In line with international agreements, we abandoned coercion as a means to control our burgeoning population. By collaborating with international agencies, contraceptives were widely distributed and publicised.

People were apprised of the benefits of small families. Filmstars and celebrities were also roped in to spread the message. However, the underlying scare among policymakers and large sections of the public has remained unchallenged. The recent introduction

of a private members bill in Rajya Sabha, demanding withdrawal of benefits to parents of more than two children, attests to this.

Fears of population growth

Clearly the fears are deep-rooted. The biggest concern still remains food security. But urbanisation, political upheaval and environmental consciousness have added new items to this list. India has 1.3 billion people in 3.2 million Sq. km of land - leading to a high population density. Despite having a sixth of the world population, we have much ^{fewer} ~~less in terms of~~ water resources. Urbanisation, 30 percent in 2011 but over 50 percent now by some estimates, means greater congestion in our already cramped cities. Environmentalists agree that deforestation and agriculture emissions from having to support rising

Pop. trends spells doom for limiting temperature rise to 2° above pre-industrial levels. Demographic dividend can turn into a disaster if jobs are not available for the 10 million youth leaving school every year. And finally, regional disparity in population growth ~~has~~ ^{that} angers Southern States ~~who~~ are increasingly reluctant to cede scarce tax revenue and even scarcer parliamentary seats to their counterparts north of the Vindhyas.

In God We Trust ; rest bring data

How far are these fears justified? Is India still facing a population explosion? Do we need a more restrictive population policy urgently? The naysayers may find comfort in the following statistic: from 1971 to 2016, fertility rate declined from 5.4 to 2.3. Much of it came from rising income levels and development after the 1980s. And we see the same

pattern across castes, religious groups and states: fertility rates fell everywhere. 24 of our states are already below replacement levels of fertility - meaning with each successive generation, their population will decline, not increase.

An international agency predicts that India's population will peak by 2050. Half a century later, it will be just 1 billion - 300 million less than even today's figure. These estimates are criticised as too extreme but the fact remains that India's population growth is slowing and slowing fast.

Come one, come all: benefits of population

But is this necessarily a good thing? A large population has several benefits that escape public attention. As we see with China, global heft is directly proportional to population. This is why our two countries were at the centre of the

economic system five centuries ago.

India's GDP growth rate was until recently the fastest in the world, implying quick catch up with the richer nations.

A bigger population, properly trained and educated, generates that many new ideas and technologies. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought the importance of scientists and innovators to the forefront.

Moreover, large population also means lower wages, which translates into export potential for the most traded goods around the world - foodstuffs, apparel and footwear.

Those concerned about the ill-effects of population growth are not prophets of doom. However, their better technology and innovations have resolved many of their concerns. Farms in USA or New Zealand are many times more productive than those in low-income countries. If India can meet this productivity

differential, the same amount of land in India can support twice as many people. This is also good news for those concerned about climate emissions.

Soil Health Card Scheme; rationalising use of fertilisers through nutrient based subsidy scheme; and investing in agri. research universities - all these steps by the Govt. will expedite our catch-up.

Furthermore, Make in India, production-linked incentives, port-led development through Sagarmala and investment in infrastructure will help boost our labour-intensive exports. Many schemes launched for urban areas will help manage rural-urban migration - the Smart Cities Mission is also helping in checking crime among other things. India has addressed its regional imbalance problem smartly. Delimitation

of constituencies is frozen till 2026 - the current seats in Parliament reflect 1971 census levels. This has helped assuage states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

The Finance Commission in its latest avatar struck a fine balance between development needs of populous states like UP and the need for landing population control efforts of the Southern states.

It is clear that instead of worrying about rising population growths and explosion - a trend not borne by data - we must use our human resource

smarter. Better education, health and skill development will help us here.

Furthermore, while rich countries are only now ~~for~~ coming to terms with their falling populations (like Japan), India must pre-empt its ageing problems by investing more in that direction. In the 24 states where population is projected to decline long term, artificial

Restrictions on fertility must be scaled back.

The Great Reversal

What China is today, India could be by the end of this century. Even if our economic growth slows in the coming decades, it is likely to slow even more in some of the high and middle income countries. It won't be an exaggeration to say that by the ²¹⁰⁰ ~~end of this century~~, India and China will retake their positions from five centuries ago. The dominance of the West will come to an end. And in addition to economic development, much of it will ^{just} come from the ^{innocent} ~~fact~~ that we are so many.

8. Grandhiji's Talisman: a compass for good Governance

When Donald Trump visited India in February, an extremely disconcerting news item started doing the rounds a few days prior. It seems that on the way from the ^{Grandhinegar} airport to the stadium where he would address a large gathering, there were a few slums adjoining the road. The district administration panicked and took steps so as to not spoil the President's impression of India: they built a wall to hide the slum-dwellers from public gaze. Although this reason for constructing the wall was disputed by the authorities, it nevertheless serves as a good pointed ethical question on the nature of good governance. Is it morally justified to treat our poorest citizens with such

contempt and indignity? Surely not. But what if Trump's impression of India ~~had been~~ ^{were ~~less~~ ~~less~~} spoiled to ~~the~~ by seeing the condition of those people to an extent that might even influence his policy decisions? Could exposing the slum-dwellers to the American President have counter-intuitively harmed the poor through dampened enthusiasm among US businesses to invest in India? What would the State's greatest son, had he been alive today, think of this situation?

Gandhi's Tolstojan: As ~~now~~ relevant now as then

Mahatma Gandhi gave a mantra to resolve any ethical conundrum faced by man. He asked us to contemplate the image of the ^{weakest} poorest, and the least fortunate individual one had ever come

across and ask one's own self - 'will my action here improve that (wo)man's condition? Will this lead to Swaraj for that individual? Gandhi believed that, ^{on thinking so,} our moral dilemma will immediately vanish and we would be led to the right decision.

Gandhi's thoughts above have also been echoed in the thoughts and writings of several philosophers, reformers, ^{economists} politicians and reformers. John Rawls' veil of ignorance - where he permits only those inequalities that improve the status of the poorest - is a restatement ^{Vivekananda} of Gandhi's telisman. Swami Vivekananda implored his countrymen to not rest until the most unfortunate have been ^{served} ~~served~~. Of late, former World Bank Chief Economist Kaushik Basu has advocated that countries should

target economic growth but for the bottom 20 percent when formulating policy.

Benefits of Talisman for good governance

Even if governments haven't formally adopted Besu's suggestions, it is clear that they agree ^{with} it. India still has over 377 million citizens being classified as multi-dimensionally poor by the United Nations. Keeping the interest of these poorest citizens of the country in mind while designing schemes is not only in accordance with the talisman but also good politics. India has universal adult franchise with impressive voter turnout; it is imperative that ^{their} politics help improve poor people's lives if politicians are to be re-elected. Furthermore, intend

even the Preamble of the Indian Constitution and the directives contained in Part IV urge the state to formulate compassionate policies towards the poor.

Even in economic terms, following the talisman is highly prudent. Unless the condition of the impoverished masses is improved through focused interventions, there will be insufficient demand in the economy for products produced by businesses. Moreover, the challenge of Naxalism in the 'Red Corridor' comes largely from the fact that the fruits of public services have not reached the tribal population. Naxalism and left-wing extremism continues to claim many innocent lives. Thus clearly, following the talisman while governing the country makes ethical, political, economic and social sense.

E-Governance

Recently there has been a push towards digital governance due to a revolution in IT that has connected over 500m Indians to the internet. Schemes like One Nation, One Ration Card and MGNREGA effectively leverage the digital infrastructure to curb corruption and improve public service delivery. Many State governments too have innovated using the latest technology. For instance, the Rajasthan Govt. has launched the Jan Soodhve Portal. This helps beneficiaries of schemes like PDS and MGNREGA to access complete information about the ^{functioning of these schemes} ~~various govt. programmes~~ online. It is expected that this step will make the delivery of these services highly efficient.

However, we must also beware of over-reliance on e-technology if the interests of the poorest and the weakest are ^{to be} kept in mind. Aadhaar seeding and linkage in PDS has not been a success in all areas. Jean Dreze and Reetika Khera find that millions of needy citizens have been deprived of their rations because the system ^{didn't} ~~wouldn't~~ work.

MGNREGA workers in Jharkhand have to spend upto 10 percent of their wages to travel to the nearest bank branch.

Clearly, the much touted JAM trinity has made things worse for ^{some} ~~these~~ poor people. This brings us to an important point: often politicians and policymakers have ~~no~~ an inadequate understanding of what the poorest and weakest man looks like - a ^{crisis} ~~crisis~~ condition for Gandhi's ^{to work.} ~~to work.~~ ^{unaware} ~~unaware~~ of the challenges faced by the least fortunate beneficiaries and this leads

to the kind of ^{adverse} ~~program~~ outcomes outlined above.

Revisiting Challenges to the Taliban

Some have argued that an inordinate amount of focus on the weakest is not always beneficial. For instance, a bullet train project might bring few benefits to the weakest. However, it is essential to realise that the taxpaying public too gains and witnesses the benefits ^{emanating} flowing from their taxes. The Economic Survey has advocated this approach too.

If India needs to raise more resources for redistribution, as we must given our low tax-GDP ratio, then the rich and the middle classes too must be catered to as well. However, the policymaker can comfort themselves by realising that, indirectly, they are ^{also} helping the poorest through these actions over the long term.

This brings us to the ethical dilemma raised at the beginning. Must we necessarily take such a narrow view of Gandhi's vision? Certain policies that ^{may} do not directly improve the well-being of the poor ^{might} do so over the long term. While the 'Garibi Hatao' decade of the 1970s saw no reduction in poverty, the pro-business reforms of 1991 helped slash poverty rates by half. As Dr. Manmohan Singh remarked in 2005, our over-enthusiasm to protect worker rights has led to a system that hurts them through inadequate development of labour-intensive industries. Finally, an all encompassing focus on the poor and the weakest in rhetoric, so much so that other sections do not feel valued members of the country, can hurt the taxpaying culture, ultimately hurting the

poor.

Grandhiji, unlike several other freedom fighters, ~~believed in capitalism~~ ^{accepted profit-making} but of a trusteeship kind. He didn't oppose wealth creation if it ultimately flows back to the poorest. In the ethical dilemma highlighted in the beginning, Grandhiji would have been appalled and highly reluctant to support the invisibilisation of the poor. However, he would have given a patient hearing to those arguing as to how the benefits from a successful visit might ultimately flow to the poor ^{as well}. It does not mean he would condone this step but he would certainly be willing to take a more holistic view of the Telangana. This is indeed what we must do too as a society - good government must uphold the interests of the

weakest and promote their well-being,
~~even~~ there should be an attempt to
do so at every juncture but even if the
process involves some delays, it must be
nevertheless
adopted if the ultimate ideal of
'Dandya Naregon' is ^{to be} kept in mind.

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