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खण्ड–A / Section-A

Q.1 Little strokes fell great oaks.
छोटे – छोटे प्रयासों से बड़ी सफलता मिलती है।

Q.2 Judge a man by his questions rather than his answers.
किसी व्यक्ति का मूल्यांकन उसके उत्तरों के स्थान पर उसके प्रश्नों से करें।

Q.3 Great principles, great ideals know no nationality.
महान सिद्धांत, महान आदर्श किसी एक राष्ट्र से संबंधित नहीं है।

Q.4 In struggling with misfortune lies the true proof of virtue.
दुर्भाग्य से संघर्ष करने में ही नैतिकता का सच्चा प्रमाण निहित है।

Q1.- Little strokes fell great oaks.

The story of human evolution is one of great fascination and astounding success. From walking barefoot in search of hunt and forage to flying in space-ships to uncover uncharted terri-tories outside earth, we have came a long way!

Crucial thing to know, however, is that this transform-

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ation from hunter-gatherers to modern 21st Century humans was not a quantum jump in, neither in time nor in space. It occured through continuous and gradual process of incremental gains and successes. Discovery of fire, cognitive revolution 7,000 years ago, agriculture revolution, scientific revolution 500 years ago, etc are few major achievements and are a result of incremental gains.

The history of human evolution clearly depicts the potential small-small attempts and strokes holds. In the drive to enhance ease of living, food security and fuel curiosity, humans have been in a constant process of making a try/attempt and achieving success or failure.

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This essay is an humble attempt to understand the importance of consistent small-small attempts and trials to achieve any kind of success. Why and how small achievements transforms into something big and what can be done to make this transformation.

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The importance of small strokes

The metaphor depicted in the essay topic stems from the fact that cutting a huge (large numbers of) oak tree requires continuous strokes. Similarly, to achieve something great and wonderful in life, we need to make repetitive attempts leading to repetitive successes.

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The Indian freedom struggle movement is filled with stories of such repetitive successes. The enemy in form of oppressive and obscurant British power was seemed too strong to defeat. But enyriad efforts of freedom-fighters, starting from Mangal Pandey to Rani Gaidinlui, across time & space have transformed the freedom dream to reality.

Parallel to India's freedom story, another success story was unravelling - the story of women emancipation and empowerment. & What is common in both these stories is the continuous efforts turning into small victories and small victories transforming into marvelous & huge success.

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The culmination of the success story of women can be clearly seen in UPSC ~~CSE~~ CSE 2022 results where AIR 1 & AIR 2 are both women. Interestingly, the ~~ardous~~ success of getting into civil services through UPSC CSE is itself a tale of ardous journey involving continuous efforts and small victories.

Another perspective to look at the essay topic is with a metaphor of clock. Just as the clock ticks second per second and for a minute to pass by, we ~~would~~ must need 60 ticks; to achieve any success numerous ticks of small victories is a must!

The example of evolution of comprehensive and sacred basic structure doctrine in Indian

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democracy is result of numerous Supreme Court interpretations and judgements. The small ticks of multiple cases have transformed and established the basic doctrine we know it today.

Why are small strokes effective?

"Boond boond se samandar bharta hai", is an old Hindi saying. It implies that for any task (samandar) to achieve, small efforts and contributions are quintessential. While looking at rain through window sitting on top floor of building, the drops felt so small and tiny. It is only when they were able to

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fell • the pond beside our building within minutes, I realized the magnificent contribution each tiny drop ~~had~~ made.

The incremental approach, which is inherent in making small strokes, makes this method highly effective. The incident of Mountain Man Dashrath Manjhi, carving out a pathway by nearly huge mountain day-by-day using primitive tools aptly exemplifies its effectiveness.

Moreover, this approach of making repetitive efforts allows one to make multiple mistakes and learn from it. Failures and mistakes are first step towards

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success: In the Australian elite Commando selection program, one of the mandatory criterion is the experience of failure mentioned in bio-data of candidates.

Another example of one of the greatest scientist, Thomas Edison, showcases the importance of repetitive failures transforming into huge success. When asked about what he felt of the 1000 times of failures before inventing the bulb; he said 'I have not failed a 1000 times but just have learnt of 1000 ways it wont work.' Hence, the small and 'micro' failures we encounter in our journey to success are not necessarily failures but ~~successes~~

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'micro-successes'.

In pursuit of success

Clearly, making small strokes are key to attaining success. But to make these small attempts and tries on consistent basis requires one to posses certain qualities.

'Ganishyati Yatidapi', the ancient Sanskrit shlok emphasises on persistence being the key. Persistence of Neeraj Chopra was key in him a bagging gold medal in Olympics for India.

Another important qualities to have knowledge, wisdom, aptitude and emotional intelligence to maintain the consistency in making attempts. These qualities result into ability to work hard and show courage in times of loss in the journey to success.

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Moreover, it is equally important to know 'where to strike to make the tree (oak) fell.' The answer can be found by accumulating experience, knowledge, understanding and rationality. Pragmatic and feasible approach with time & cost saving is essential to enhance the speed to achieving success.

Along with knowing 'where to strike' one must also know 'where not to strike'! The omni-potent and grave issue of global warming & climate change threatens whole of humanity & earth itself. The leading cause is anthropogenic degradation of environment. Felling trees world over have eliminated the lungs of earth extensively.

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Our continuous and conspicious efforts of maximizing industrial profits to achieve economic success for the country have left many poor & marginalized highly vulnerable. According to World Hunger Index 2022. India ranked 107/121, lower than in 2021.

Moreover our tiny and small efforts of ~~Humans~~ plastic day-per-day has cumulative effect with negative externality. Today, ~~MOL~~ plastic contributes to 80% of marine debris, becoming a major threat to marine ecology & species making them to their extinction.

Way ahead

Therefore, it is important to inculcate ethics, morality, scientific temper and rationality in individuals.

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Since children are easiest to mould, we can start from modifying our education system to build youth with strong character and integrity.

The importance of hardwork, consistency and perseverance must be made aware to students. Role models and success story of individuals will help them understand even better.

Moreover, society based on just principles will help in defining right way of success.

To conclude, perseverence, consistency and hardwork is key to make continuous ~~self~~ efforts, resulting in small victories & ultimately transforming into large success.

Abraham Lincoln says:

"If you can't fly, run,
If you can't run, walk,
If you can't walk, crawl,
but at all cost, keep moving!"

must be guiding beam.

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खण्ड–B / Section–B

उम्मीदवारों को इस भाग में लिखना मना है। Candidates must not write on this margin

Q.5 The whole purpose of Education is to turn mirrors into windows.
शिक्षा का सम्पूर्ण उद्देश्य दर्पण को खिड़कियों में बदलना है।

Q.6 To dwell is to garden.
निवास करना बगीचे के सामान है।

Q.7 Reality is the shadow of ideas.
सच्चाई विचारों की छाया मात्र है।

Q.8 We can not despair of humanity, since we ourselves are human beings.
हम मानवता से निराश नहीं हो सकते, क्योंकि हम स्वयं भी मनुष्य हैं।

Q5. The whole purpose of Education is to turn mirrors into windows?

It was the year 1952, most of United states of America was suffering from epidemic of disease causing 'infant paralysis'. Around 3000 died and more that 50,000 people were infected.. Then, one fine day, the world woke with one of greatest scientific breakthrough - the vaccine against ~~leg~~ lethal poliomyletus, polio as known today.

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Peculiar fact about the vaccine inventor was that he did not benefitted, moneywise, and chose to not patent for his invention! When asked in an interview in 1953, about why had he not accumulated personal gains from his invention, when he had every right to do so, he replied, "One cannot patent the 'Sun' can he?"

This story of Jonas Salk, the inventor of polio vaccine, truely exemplifies the moral and altruistic use of knowledge. When humanity was indulged in profit making, self-obsession and blinkered viewpoint of morality, Dr Salk rose above from it & turned into self-less and ethical being. It was the

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education he received in his life that allowed him to free himself from clutches of ~~greed~~ mirror-like greed and selfishness and transform into window-like transparent and selfless person.

This essay tries to understand meaning of turning mirrors into windows & how education helps in it. We will also ponder upon whether mirrors have any utility or not.

उम्मीदवारों को इस भाग में लिखना मना है। Candidates must not write on this margin

Turning mirrors into windows

In this essay topic title, mirrors and windows are metaphors. They have varied set of interpretations and hence it is important to deciphes their meanings and necessity to make the transition from mirrors to windows.

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In simplest perspective, mirror represents the ideals of self-interest, self-indulgance and self-obsession. On the other hand, window denotes selflessness and ability to think about welfare of others. The philanthropic efforts of JRD Tata and Bill & Melinda Gates, among others, were successful in taming their horses of self-interest & work for others welfare.

As contrary to mirror, windows are 'lens'. They allow us to observe different perspectives in life, as opposed to narrow and restricted access to view from a mirror. Imagine if all the train coach windows are to replaced by mirrors. The small children would never insist on sitting

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on a window seat! As there is no fun, no views of vast plains, mountains, rivers, trees, birds and animals.

Only upon making an observation can the life skills like investigation, interrogation, asking questions (curiosity) & rationality be fueled. Had Gandhiji, sat & travelled in such a train of mirrors, he would never had acquired the societal & cultural understanding of true India.

Apart from skilling an individuals, windows also teaches one to be accomodative and tolerant towards criticism. Our mind itself

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must become window for contrasting and critical opinion to let inside our mind as opposed to being mirror which would just reflect & scatter those opinions leading to stagnant and conservative mind. Had 'Ratnakara' not being receptive of wise-words of Narad Muni, he never would have turned into Rishi Valmiki.

True goal of Education

Having understood the necessity to make transition from mirrors to windows, we must ask ourself 'how to make it?'

The answer lies in 'educating oneself'. "Education is the most powerful tool, with which you can change the world' claims, one

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of the greatest ideals - Nelson Mandela. Certainly, changing mirrors into windows is a small task than changing world! Thus education is most effective & efficient tool to make this transformation. Lets see how!

First of all, education provides us the requisite ingredients for this transformation. Ingredients in form of developing critical thinking, rationality, objective analytical ability and evidence-based decision making. The success story of Israel, which though devoid of water has proficient agriculture produce providing it self sufficiency. The innovative irrigation techniques along

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with modern water harvesting methods are practised worldwide.

Secondly, education provides exposure to oneself of myriad ideas and perspectives - few aligning & few contradicting ones. It broadens ones horizon and scope, enabling to think beyond oneself. It is only when the frog stuck in the well of mirror walls comes out of it & observes world through the lens of window, can he reach his true potential.

Thirdly, education teaches us tolerance and acceptance. Nicholas Taleb, in his book 'Black Swan', proposes the need of 'intellectual humility' for achieving success. As life is full of victories & failures,

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it becomes important to not let oneself drown in fame of success.

Only when we realize 'how small are we', can we become capable to make the transition from mirror to window.

From window to mirror

Although it seems to be important to favour windows over mirror, in our journey to success, mirrors do have utility. Mirrors reflect light on oneself. It helps in self-realization & self-awareness. Just as a mirror at our home shows a black stain on our shirt, ~~mirror~~ self-reflection helps in identifying

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the lacunaes and shortcomings of oneself. As without knowing one's limitations, he cant learn from own's mistakes. Thomas Edison failed 10,000 times before discovering modern bulb, showcases his ability to learn from mistakes and treating these failures as mirrors.

Moreover, windows act as source of external influence, sometimes. Negative influence and motivations alter ones actions. Youth committing suicides due to cyber bullying and negative social media reinforcement highlights such concerns. Here, is need to place mirror instead of window. Social media education and strengthening inner self through motivation & meditation will go long way. Inculcation of yoga and meditation in school education

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curriculum is a welcoming step.

Way forward :- Towards a brighter future

Be it mirror or window, the main source of visibility is the underlying quanta, 'photon'. It is the photon that gets reflected from mirror and refracted from a window. Photon can be thought of as a 'knowledge'. Right is the correct application of knowledge that makes one wise. Hence, wisdom plays quintessential role in using mirrors and windows to achieve success.

As absence of photon would make whole world blind, so does the absence of knowledge. Hence, knowledge along with its correct application is right path.

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Value based education system is need of hour to ~~ed~~ enculcate character, humility and impart knowledge in young minds. NEP 2020 is therefore a stepping stone towards India's success in every sphere.

Just as every happy and healthy house, which has both ~~&~~ mirrors and windows in it, our life should also have both. Mirrors to reflect upon oneself & ones mistakes and windows to think beyond myself! And education is crucial for both. The true purpose of education is best reflected in the saying by Aristotle:

"Educating the mind,
without educating the heart,
is no education at all."

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