

## खण्ड-A / Section-A

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इस भाग में  
लिखना पना है।  
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- 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. X  
महान सिद्धांत, महान आदर्श किसी एक राष्ट्र से संबंधित नहीं है।
- Q.4 In struggling with misfortune lies the true proof of virtue. X  
दुर्भाग्य से संघर्ष करने में ही नैतिकता का सच्चा प्रमाण निहित है।

LITTLE STROKES FELL GREAT OAKS

The magnificent Kailasnath temple at Ellora, <sup>in Maharashtra</sup> a UNESCO world heritage site, is a sight to behold. What makes it even more captivating is the fact that it is a rock-cut structure. The intricate carvings, the pillars, the entrances and everything else came into existence one stroke at a time!

This structure is quite aptly a living embodiment of how little strokes fell great oaks. Where once ~~stood~~ <sup>was</sup> one large monolithic rock, now stands a testament to what sustained human efforts and creativity can yield. Even after more than a thousand years, its charm has not faded.

ACHIEVING THE SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE : HOW ?

Such examples are ~~aga~~ omnipresent in every realm. A marathon runner doesn't run 42 kms on her first day, <sup>but</sup> rather builds up the capacity progressively over weeks. She only runs a few kilometers on her first day of training, but a systematic approach gradually makes her capable of ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> marathon on the event's day.

However, to ~~accomplish~~ achieve such targets, certain factors are essential. There needs to be a defined goal. ~~Only~~

~~purpose is to set the target of all~~

~~that~~ Sustained efforts need guidance, and a purpose to yield meaningful results.

Secondly, we need discipline. Setting the aim only tells us what we want to achieve, but discipline ensures that we make those little strokes continuously.

Thirdly, we need patience and planning. <sup>Often</sup> Our great oak is firmly rooted, and making sustained strokes at it

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will eventually succeed, but we need to remain patient and trust the process.

What happens in such endeavors ~~is that~~ is a 'magic' in the form of results which people see. The marathon runner's event day performance is visible to all, but not his everyday running at 5 am in the morning for the past 2 months. This was made clearer when the famous footballer Messi remarked that it took him <sup>more than</sup> a decade to become an overnight success!

Thus, there is no magic, but only a combination of clarity of purpose backed by discipline, patience and planning. Any setback too is part of the process. It may rain for a while, but the strokes at the oak should continue after a short break. Now, let us look at some examples of impressive feats achieved.

### GREAT OAKS ALREADY FALLEN

India's freedom struggle was a humongous task, but sustained efforts over the decades

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made even the mighty British Empire yield. Gandhiji didn't have arms or money, but a clarity of purpose and an unflinching belief in himself and his country.

Other countries too have similar historical episodes, from South Africa's apartheid to ~~thats~~ blacks' struggle for civil rights in America.

In the realm of economies, many humble investors build a portfolio of millions by investing regularly in the markets. SIPs or systematic investment plans are these little strokes which fell the oak of wealth creation.

Another embodiment of this philosophy is the trillion rupees company Infosys. Narayan Murthy famously took a loan of Rs 10,000 from his wife for that first little stroke, and sustained efforts over the years has now created a behemoth in the IT sector of India and the world.

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Social changes too are not very different, and sustained efforts are required to achieve ~~hard~~ tough aims. The abolishment of Sati in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is one such example. From Raja Rammohan Roy to Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, ~~constant~~ many can be credited for this reform.

The story of India's space journey is no less deserving. If today ISRO is launching rovers on moon and humans in space, it is on the back of work of visionaries like Vikram Sarabhai and APJ Abdul Kalam. The parts of India's first rocket launcher were transported on a bullock cart, substantiating the power of humble beginnings in achieving greatness.

Further, in the realm of legal reforms, the landscape is no different. The passing of Right-To Information Act 2005 was the culmination of the little strokes of various stakeholders, from the judiciary to civil society organisations to media.

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The decriminalisation of article 377 or homosexuality was another oak fell with ~~states~~ years of strokes by activists and intellectuals. The fight is ongoing for a more healthy acceptance by society of the LGBTQ community, but the legal decriminalisation was a major victory after many hurdles.

To cite an ongoing fight of global importance, reversing climate change takes centre stage. Every body has to contribute to fell this oak, from individuals, who needs to adopt a sustainable attitude to national governments, who need to redefine development. It cannot be achieved in one day or with one action.

### A NEUTRAL FORCE : THE POWER OF SUSTAINED ACTION

All the varied examples of the previous section are progressive by nature. However, the power of sustained action can as easily be harnessed to achieve nefarious ends. It is an amoral tool,

which needs human intelligence to be guided by desirable values.

The partition of India in 1947 is a case-in-point. The 1940s saw sustained action by communal forces, and the great oak of Indian unity fell. Millions were killed, and even more were uprooted from their soil.

Shifting the lens to contemporary times, India has been grappling with left-wing extremism for decades. They too are working in the hope of overturning the Indian government, a misguided objective undoubtedly. Thankfully, the problem has been contained, thus showcasing that success is not always guaranteed. The righteousness of purpose and external factors also play an important role.

Thus, little strokes may fell great-oaks, but a bigger question is preserving those oaks which should be nurtured and not axed. Every society has such oaks, and <sup>many</sup> enlightened individuals protecting them.

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A THOUSAND MILES JOURNEY, AND A SINGLE STEP

To conclude, nothing is impossible if attempted with clarity, discipline and planning. It is one of the defining trait of humans to be able to set goals and then work to achieve it. Improving and achieving a little everyday works wonders by the power of compounding.

Just like how Manjhi, the 'mountain man' built a road of several kilometers <sup>through the mountains</sup> ~~to just~~ only by using a hammer and chisel, we too can do the same, metaphorically, with our dreams.

Of course success isn't guaranteed, and we are bound to fail. Even the Kailasnath temple at Ellora is incomplete in its execution, but its magnificence is complete!

X ——— X

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## खण्ड-B / Section-B

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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 idéas.  
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।

The whole Purpose Of Education Is To Turn  
Mirrors Into Windows

What is that one thing common across societies which have progressed? Is it natural resource? No, because Africa has suffered from its curse. Is it winning wars? No, for history has time and again shown what happens to <sup>the</sup> Hitlers and Mussolinis of the world. Military prowess for self-defence is necessary, but has a limited role in a nation's progress beyond it.

What then is the answer? It is education. No society has progressed without it,

## NEXT IAS

and no educated society has digressed regressively. There may be blips, but the relation between education and progress is a well established concept.

Israel, a young country ~~to dense~~ devoid of any natural resource is among the richest and most innovative primarily because of education, for education alone has the power to turn mirrors into windows.

### THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF EDUCATION

Let us consider two stories.

Ritu's <sup>father</sup> ~~daughter~~ was a regular consumer of alcohol. Ever since she had gained consciousness, she had seen her father sit down with a drink after dinner.

Neha's father too had a ~~similar~~ similar routine. Yet, as an adult, Ritu abstained from alcohol, while Neha emulated her father. What explains the difference?

Education - Ritu's schooling and wonderful teachers developed in her a capability to think and reason, along

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with teaching her values like the importance of health. Unfortunately, Neha was left out of the schooling process, and ended up emulating her father.

These stories bring into sharp focus the transformative power of education.

Education's true purpose is to develop our capabilities, to equip us to deal with the uncertainties of life. From the 'hidden curriculum' of schools like learning to communicate and forming relationships with fellow humans, to the input of knowledge, education encompasses a lot.

#### BROADENING PERSPECTIVES: MIRRORS TO WINDOWS

What is the true purpose of education? Is it to get a degree to secure a respectable employment, or is it to get knowledge on a plethora of topics? Education has such multidimensional benefits that defining one true purpose is very difficult. Still, turning

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mirrors to windows is a succinct description of education's purpose. But what does it mean?

A mirror reflects what is in front of it. It has a limited field of vision, and merely duplicates the scene.

On the other hand, a window is a gateway to what lays beyond. A window can open to majestic mountains or to a forest or to a desert! It is not bound by what is present in the room. It lets sunshine and wind into the room, illuminating everything.

Thus, an uneducated person, like Neha, often behaves like a mirror. They have a limited understanding of the world, and also lack the ability to critically engage with the information being presented. As a result, they often end up imitating their surroundings.

But an educated person, like Ritu, behaves like a window. Their understanding of the world is anything but limited

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by their surrounding. Their knowledge, learning, debates, reading, interaction with like-minded teachers and peers <sup>—everything</sup> opens up various windows to the world. They may be sitting in a room, but can view the world in its complexity through these windows of knowledge.

### EDUCATION: A LIFELONG PROCESS

In the discourse till now, education has been synonymous with schooling. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, institutionalised mass education has indeed been the norm. However, education is too broad a concept to be limited by formal schooling.

As Mark Twain famously said, that he never ~~let~~ let his schooling get in the way of his education, <sup>indeed</sup> life itself is the greatest teacher. History is replete with examples of those who weren't formally schooled, but highly educated.

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Even for those formally schooled, the process of education never ends. In fact, it is the mark of an educated person to continuously pursue newer horizons. Gandhiji's ~~views~~ views on various subjects evolved with time, apparently in line with newer windows which opened with experience. Most famously, he acknowledged his flawed thinking of accepting racism later in life.

Thus, education is anything which challenges our beliefs and biases. It can be ~~by~~ through travelling which exposes us to the diversity of ~~at~~ cultures and races, or it can equally be through reading a travel account within the confines of four walls!

### EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

That education is of paramount importance has been established. Let us ~~to~~ now look at some of the challenges and how to deal with them.

Firstly, education doesn't exist in vacuum, but is guided by societal norms and values. The coverage of colonialism is very different in European countries versus in Asian and African countries. Even Nazi Germany captured the collective imagination of Germans by hijacking the curriculum and teaching things like the racial supremacy of Aryans while promoting anti-Semitism.

Solving this is tricky, but institutional measures are required. Progressive policies like India's National Education Policy 2020 can lead the way. International bodies like UNICEF can also play an important role.

Second challenge is the emergence of internet. Information is available round the clock now. While this has democratised knowledge, problems of misleading information, fake news, and digital divide need solving. The covid pandemic has greatly accelerated this digital adoption <sup>the process of</sup> of education, and a hybrid model

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is the likely solution to the offline-online debate.

Some long standing ~~issues~~ issues, especially in India, like infrastructure, teacher absenteeism, teacher training, social barriers, exam-centric learning and more can be solved by smart use of technology. A tribal girl can now access classes of world renowned teachers via youtube or MOOC portals like SWAYAM. That's the potential of technology.

To sum up, we are all born into a room with mirrors. Upon closer inspection, these mirrors ~~in fact~~ in fact turn out to be windows. Education is that entity which makes this possible. These not-lucky ~~enough~~ enough <sup>to be educated</sup> spend their entire life thinking that <sup>this</sup> is all there is to life, mirrors all around. To others, the room is full of windows offering varied landscapes of the world beyond. And it is when every individual in the society ~~can~~ is similarly educated, that the country progresses leaps and bounds!

1h each writing

## Space for Rough Work

15 min

10 each revision  
20 for drafting

(A) Little strokes fell great oaks.

intro

1. spend majority of time axe sharpening?
2. chiseling to create sculptures: Kailash at Ellora ✓
3. marathon runners: from 11km to 42km.
4. India's independence

main: "impossible" task with consistent efforts

PESTEL

political: india's independence  
apartheid

body

economic → market returns, SIPs  
Infosys didn't start with grand objective  
10k loan

main:

Analysis

1. discipline
2. defining goal, clarity, objective
3. directed little strokes can't run in opp. direction
4. fast patience, persistence. Need motivation.

Visible progress.

5. one moment of success, but background hardwork (Messi, overnight success)

Conclusion

Counter dimensions

\* opp focus too: partition 1947, eyes

secessionist focus

\* see some just like  
too some oaks  
shouldn't be cut

\* B. Colonizing India.

social → sati abolished  
racial discrimination  
child labour

tech → India's space mission  
current C-3

envt → reversing CC

Conclusions

resilience,

determination

→ not necessary  
may not always succeed  
as  
→ but idea is to try

Just like Kailashnath

legal

RTI Act

→ 377 X

ongoing: marital rape, VCC

14:58 - 17:58

② The Whole Purpose Of Education  
is to Turn Mirrors Into Windows

## Space for Rough Work

intro One thing common among main theme  
societies which has developed  
Israel & even w/o. any natural  
resource.

Enlightenment via  
Edu

or transformative  
power of edu

\* Gandhi: lifelong learner (eg: racism)

\* edu: not formal, but life, experiences  
etc

\* mirror ~~reflects~~ simply <sup>reflects</sup> ~~shows~~ the object-  
in front, window is gateway to what  
lays beyond. Enlightening.

\* Broadens perspective. Don't emulate but  
think. Critical thinking. Eg: Daughter  
of an alcoholic ~~father~~ <sup>father</sup> will abstain.

\* NEP 2020 with its interdisciplinary approach  
etc

Conclusion:

why/how  
is edu  
transformative

→ critical thinking  
→ real edu is debate and  
challenge  
→ facts, info  
→ tolerance

Counter dimensions

\* edu guided by societal norms. eg: propaganda edu in  
China, Nazi Germany, North Korea.

\* even then arc of history has bent towards  
universal values like self-determination, love,  
compassion, innovation

Conclusion Stand apart, seems mirror. Closer walk reveals the  
windows. Edu enables that walk. Q/w confined in  
room.