

GOA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION FOR THE POST OF
MAMLATDAR/JT. MAMLATDAR/ASSTT. DIRECTOR
OF CIVIL SUPPLIES.DATE : 01-04-2000 TIME : 3 HOURS (9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.)
MARKS : 100

P A P E R - I

ENGLISH

MARKS

- Q.1 Write an essay of about 400 words on ONE of the following topics :-

Describe the process of electioneering/campaigning and election to the State Legislative Assembly.

O R

Describe the process of making an amendment to the Constitution of India.

(Your description should assume that the reader has no knowledge of the above processes). 20

- Q.2 Write an essay of about 400 words on ONE of the following topics :-

The tyranny of time

O R

Empowering communities

30

- Q.3 You are Mr. Makarand G. Kashyap. Write a letter to the Postmaster Head Post Office (Goa) regarding a letter sent by you by Speed Post which has been lost. Make the complaint and give details necessary for corrective action to be taken. 20

- Q.4a) Read the passage given, then answer the following questions :- 15

1. What is your opinion regarding the need to teach thinking in educational institutions?
2. Do you agree that thinking makes matters more complex? Explain.

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P A S S A G E

There was a time when society was comparatively stable and, since things did not change much, repetition was a good substitute for thinking. The political systems tended to be elitist and a few people did the thinking for the rest. To make personal decisions and problem-solving easier, there were the guidelines laid down by religious doctrine and moral codes. Much as we may like to revert to the good aspects of those more stable times, we must acknowledge that society is no longer so stable because the rate of change, fuelled by technology and social aspirations, has accelerated. In such a complex society the need for thinking is greater than ever. We have more freedom and freedom represents a tyranny of opportunity, since each opportunity is a potential decision. Yet the powerful substitutes for thinking (habit, doctrine, dogma, someone else doing the thinking) have been much weakened. In their place there has emerged only one aid to thinking - 'thinking by slogan'. A slogan is not part of a general system of attitudes, but just an encapsulated attitude to a particular circumstance that has not emerged because of its intrinsic merit or even its general acceptability, but because it has those characteristics which suit the media. Just as an attractive television personality is more use to a politician than economic understanding, so a media-powerful slogan is more effective than a wise one. It is not the fault of the media or of anyone else - it is simply due to the structure of the system.

On a personal level, people have to do more thinking and make more decisions than ever before. There are more opportunities and more pressures. There is more social mobility, there are more career opportunities; there is more money to be spent; divorce is easier and emotional expectations are higher; authoritarian control systems are weaker and so much that used to be ordered in society or taken for granted has now become a matter for individual thinking.

On a political level many countries enjoy or seem to enjoy a democratic system. It doesn't really matter whether the party machines allow those elected to be truly representative of the electorate. What does matter is that, once they are in power, the politicians do have to pay heed to the opi-

extreme of the political spectrum we have elitism in which a self-designated elite class determines the thinking of the rest, who cannot be trusted to think for themselves. A left-wing teacher once said that he did not approve of a programme to teach everyone to think because in a 'diversified' society some people were going to do the thinking and the rest would follow. There is some point in this. Some people will undoubtedly do more thinking than others (provided it is thinking and not just party doctrine), but it is desirable that the rest should at least do enough thinking to decide for themselves whether the special thinkers make sense or not.

In a complex society political decisions and pressures depend very much on individual thinking. If that thinking can see only narrow self-interest, or only an immediate future, then society becomes a power struggle for self-interest. To some extent, it always has been so and perhaps it is only the location of power that has changed. Nevertheless society is much more complex than it has ever been and perhaps the old power games are no longer the best way to run things. For instance it requires quite a lot of individual thinking to change from the concept of growth and greed to one of restraint and stability.

It may seem, and it is often argued, that thinking makes matters more complex and that gut reaction is a more direct prelude to action. This attitude arises from the notion that thinking is about 'puzzling things out' rather than 'seeing things more clearly'. Far from confusing matters thinking should serve to simplify them. To make a decision when you can see only one course of action is easier than having to choose between two possible courses, but is such blindness really helpful? To remove the fear of thinking we need to make it very matter-of-fact and routine. That is exactly what teaching thinking is all about.

There are a few people who believe that teaching thinking is dangerous, much as 'a little learning is a dangerous thing'. It is felt that if people start thinking for themselves they may ask awkward questions and refuse to take for granted those things which need to be taken for granted. But sooner or

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of emotional discontent. On a recent visit to Australia I was asked by someone concerned with a social studies programme why it was assumed that children would be against something as soon as they started to think about it. In his experience, and in mine, the opposite seemed to be the case: when children did think about some aspect of society they often came to appreciate why things had to be done in a certain way. For instance when children think about school rules they often suggest even tougher rules.

A headmaster once told me that it was unfair to teach people how to think. He said that most of the pupils from his school were going to spend their lives at factory benches and that thinking would only make them dissatisfied. I can see his point but I do not agree. If he really believed what he said then education would set out to create zombies perfectly fitted to the task society demanded of them. Quite apart from the likelihood that electronic robots will continue to take over more and more of the routine factory tasks, there is no conflict between simple tasks and thinking. In the days of the monasteries the most abstruse and elite theological thinkers used to spend their days in everyday farming or gardening or craftwork. To be sure these activities were more pleasant than factory tasks, but they were just as routine. It has even been argued that a routine task (like Churchill's famous bricklaying) actually frees the mind to do some thinking. This is a poor excuse for keeping jobs boring, but it does indicate that the level of mechanical activity need not limit the level of mental activity. I think few people would accept the deliberate anaesthetizing or zombification of people as one of the tasks of education.

Thinking should not be a replacement for gut feeling, religious belief, political identity or commitment. All these have their place and their value in the rich fabric of humanity. Emotion is what matters in the end, since it is the final arbiter of human value. But true emotion can just as easily follow clear perception as precede it. Emotion that precedes perception leads to prejudice and the tyranny of temperament.

Many people argue that thinking can never be neutral, that it must always be moral or political and that to teach thinking

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microscope is not of itself a political activity. A microscope is a device to enlarge our vision. Thinking is a device to enlarge our perception. Thinking is as neutral as a pair of spectacles. To deny someone spectacles because with clearer vision they might find you out is a political decision. It is just as possible that with the spectacles they would see a wider context and come to understand and appreciate what is being done. It is only deception that fears clear vision.

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