

EVALUATION INDICATORS

1. Alignment Competence
2. Context Competence
3. Content Competence
4. Language Competence
5. Introduction Competence
6. Structure - Presentation Competence
7. Conclusion Competence

Overall Macro Comments / feedback / suggestions on Answer Booklet:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

All the Best

Rough:

Indian Ocean Region as a pivot for India's Growth.

Intro

- Imp of IOR



- enviable position at the head of IOR.
- close to West Asia & S. Asia - multiple pol, eco & soc consequences.
- Harnessing since times immemorial only fair to continue.

Political - China encircling

Social - Polymetallic.

Eco (SLOCs - Fishing, Oil etc. - seaweed.

Net security

Ancient & medieval period

→ Imp ports

Korhai
Muziris
Puhar
Tamilakam
Bharigukachcha

Trade w/
- Roman Empire,
- SE Asia,
- China.

→ Eco & cultural power - Chola Naval power.

Why is it unknown?

What to do to make use of it?

Buddhism

Disaster Mgmt

INDIAN OCEAN REGION AS A PIVOT FOR INDIA'S GROWTH

India lies at the head of the Indian Ocean. This position is extremely enviable, considering it provides geographical proximity to not only West Asia but also South East Asia. This opens up numerous political, social and economic opportunities for our growth, which can be harnessed to secure our position as a world power. So, how do we go forward in this direction so as to ensure economic progress as well as sustainable development? My essay shall aim to delineate the opportunities for growth and a course of action for the same.

India has always been a leading power in the region since ancient times. The ports of Bharukachcha

Muziris, Korkai, Puhar and Samealipiti allow various kingdoms to establish trade relation with the Roman empire, Byzantine empire, Persia and Suvarnashripa (ancient South East Asia), Ratnadripa (Sri Lanka) and China. This vibrant trade network brought great prosperity to India and its merchants. In the words of the Roman scholar, Pliny, "India is the sink of world's gold"

Besides economic growth, Indian Ocean also allowed the transfer of Indian culture in the early medieval period under the Cholas. The Cholan Navy under Sri Vijaya conquered parts of Sri Lanka and Indonesia. This increased India's political power as well as soft power.

Therefore, one sees that Indian

Ocean has always been a pivot to India's growth. Yet, today an ocean of new opportunities and challenges have been created due to globalisation and its backlash, rise of China and a desire on part of India to engage with ASEAN countries.

Politically, India finds itself encircled by China's string of pearls. Today, it has a base in every nation in the Indian Ocean, posing a threat to Indian security. These nations in the Indian Ocean such as Maldives, Sri Lanka, Myanmar amongst others are indebted to China due to the huge loans given by the latter for the development of ports.

So, how do we deal with ^{this} Challenge?
As a believer in the equality of sovereign nations, India does not

seek to create dependencies. Rather, it seeks cultivation of relations on the basis of mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity. Therefore, we must engage in collaborative development with nations of the IOR. A prime example of this is the Chabahar port, which though built by India will remain under Iranian control. Seeing this attitude of India, many other nations have given India control over its port such as Oman (Dugm port), Indonesia (Sabang) amongst others. Others such as Mauritius & Seychelles have not been so forthcoming yet we must do everything in our power to assure them of their sovereignty while pushing for access to the ports.

These ports can be a springboard for India's role as a net security provider in the region. With U.S.A. adopting an inward looking strategy, India must rise to the occasion to combat the threats of ~~the~~ piracy and terrorism in the Indian Ocean.

Such a move will have great economic significance for India as 80% of our oil imports come from West Asia through the Indian Ocean. This will also ensure the freedom of movement through the sea lines of communication many of which pass through the Indian Ocean such as the Malacca strait.

Speaking of economics, the Indian ocean provides opportunities for increase the share of marine

sources in the fisheries sector. Today, about 68% of the share belongs to inland sources. Considering fisheries contributes about 6.3% to the global trade, 5.15% to India's agricultural GDP and 1.1% to India's overall GDP, there's a need to scale up our production to make full use of our potential.

With the use of satellite technology, registration of fishermen's vessels as well as better travellers, we can ensure ~~fishermen's~~ fishermen's safety, environmental protection and an increase in marine fishing.

The ocean also provides us with seaweeds and seagrasses such as agar-agar. With the rise of veganism and health conscious attitudes across the globe,

India needs to make full use of this opportunity to secure economic progress for its farming community.

India was also one of the first nations allowed to explore the Indian Ocean bed, which is known for its polymetallic nodules. These polymetallic nodules can be a major boost to our automotive, I.T. & infrastructure industries. However, the exploration of the ocean bed comes with its own set of environmental challenges. The impact of extracting minerals ~~may~~ on the lives of underwater flora & fauna has not been fully explored.

In this regard, as an environmentally conscious nation, India has launched the Deep Ocean Mission to research &

understand the full impact of deep sea mining. Similarly, the ocean can also be used for carbon sequestration, allowing us to fulfill our commitments under the Paris summit.

In the socio-cultural sphere, Indian ocean is of great significance as well. The Andaman and Nicobar islands, though a great source of tourism revenue, need to be culturally protected from the onslaught of tourists. In this regard, the "eyes on, hands off" policy of the government needs to be reinforced.

India's soft power can also be reinvigorated by leveraging the ancient links established by Cholas. The countries of Cambodia and Indonesia

are home to some of the largest Hindu temples, prominent among them, the Angkor Wat. The Archaeological Survey is involved in their restoration and make them popular among tourists.

Similarly, countries of Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar & Cambodia have large Buddhist populations. They can be an incredible source of tourist revenue, if we showcase the beauty of Buddhist stupas and sculptures present in India.

A renovation and regular upkeep of Buddhist monuments will allow us to attract pilgrims from these nations.

We can also leverage our ancient medieval links with West Asia to not just boost trade but also tourism. Considering India

has the largest population of Muslims in a non-Muslim nation along with some of the most aesthetically pleasing mosque, we can seek to establish strong relations with West Asian countries, especially through Project Mausam.

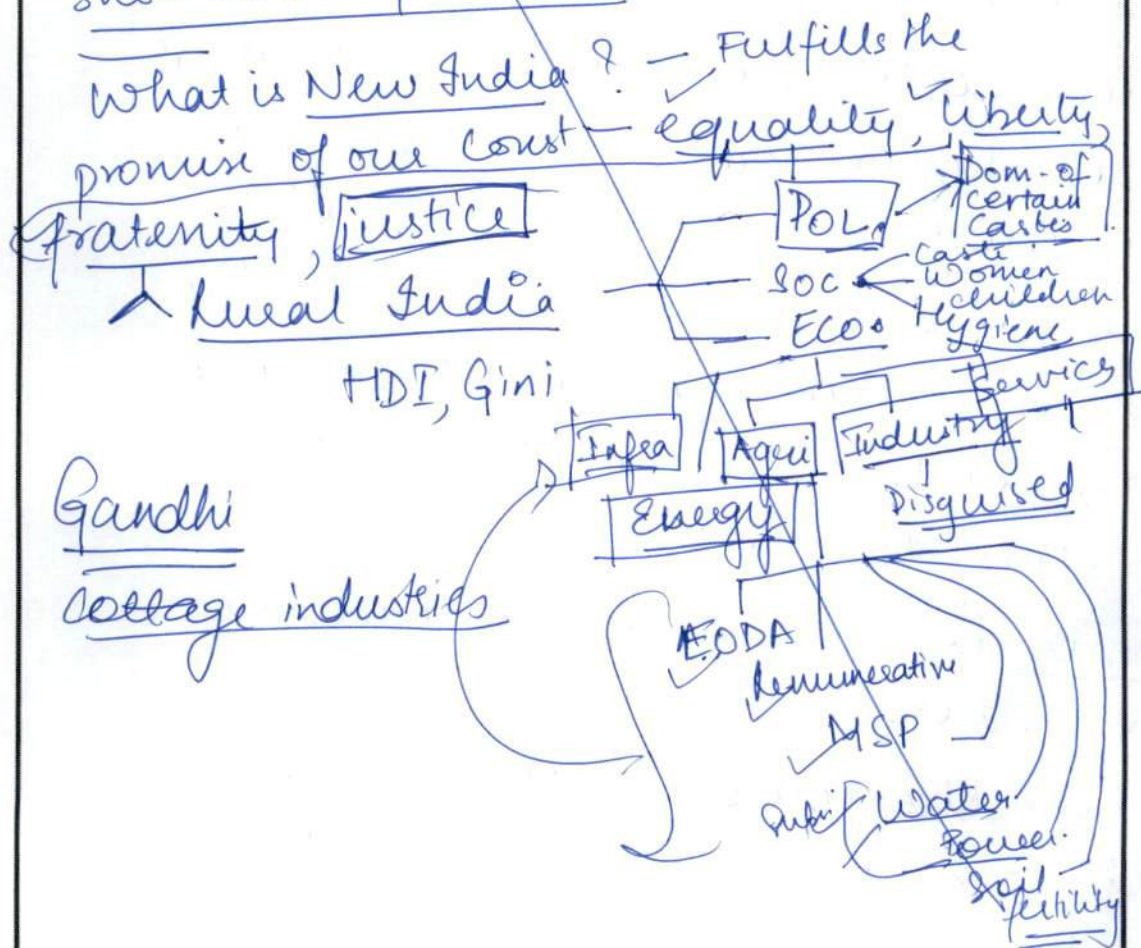
The Indian Ocean, while providing us with immense gains, throws up the challenge of disasters such as tsunamis and cyclones. For this, ISRO has launched several meteorological as well as remote sensing satellites. We have also begun collaborations with other nations through Indian Ocean Wave (IO wave) and Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) to effectively combat natural disasters.

Therefore, one sees that the Indian Ocean allows us to be a regional leader, providing security to our neighbours while also allowing landlocked ones (Nepal and Bhutan) access to the sea. It gives us an opportunity to diversify our economic interests and increase our soft power by looking beyond simply yoga. A collaborative with other nations will also help in preventing and mitigating the threats of the Indian Ocean while further research through ISRO & DRDO will enable us to better understand the ocean and prove us to be the true leaders in environmental protection. So sum up, it is time to harness the potential of Indian Ocean Region to ensure security and growth for all in the Region.

Rough

Foundation of 'New India' lies in rural upliftment.

India has often been described a land of great diversity & inequality. ~~While~~ Travellers such as Batuttal Bennin — vibrant towns — poor countryside living off. Thus, rural India has always been short end of the stick.



FOUNDATION OF 'NEW INDIA' LIES IN RURAL UPLIFTMENT .

India has often been described as the land of great diversity and inequality. Travellers through time such as Ibn Batutta and Francois Bernier have contrasted the vibrance of urban centres with the quiet desolation of the countryside. In other words, from time immemorial, rural India has always been at the short end of the stick. It is definitely one of the reasons why despite sustaining growth for long years, India has not been able to close the social, political & economic inequality & injustice in our nation.

In the course of this essay, I shall seek to understand what the term 'New India' means and how rural growth is a fair means

to achieve this goal. In my opinion, a 'New India' is one which fulfills the promise of our constitution - equality, liberty, justice and fraternity to all the citizens of our nation. While India's urban centres are at fault for our failure to achieve the above goals, one notices that the germination of these problems is in rural India. As a result, rural India needs to be a target of our policymaking.

The Indian countryside is mired in a multiplicity of ^{economic} ~~social~~ problems, agriculture being the foremost. While India has secured the 77th rank in ease of doing business index, if there were one for agriculture, it would lag far behind. An irrational subsidy regime has allowed no benefits

to accrue to the farmers while at the same time, it has ensured environmental degradation. For instance, the Minimum Support Price regime has allowed big farmers to get richer as smaller ones remain unaware or out of reach. At the same time, it has incentivized the cultivation of crops for which the soil may not be particularly suitable. In the arid regions of Punjab, paddy continues to be a popular crop, leading to a decline in groundwater.

Similarly, power subsidies have promoted excessive pumping of groundwater, leading to soil and water degradation. In unscientific use of fertilizers & pesticides has further promoted the same. All this has not

just led to inequality between farmers and regions but also intergenerational inequality as the farmers of future will have to spend more to cultivate the same quantity of crops.

An overdependence on agriculture has not allowed the level of entrepreneurship to blossom. Most youngsters remained disguised employed and manufacturing & services in rural India have failed to take off.

These problems have been further exacerbated by a lack of rural infrastructure. Poor conditions of roads has led to a lack of connectivity with urban areas and markets for agricultural products. There is also a lack of

storage and warehousing, causing
wastage of agricultural commodities
and aggravating rural pain.

When B.R. Ambedkar called
rural India the den of social ills,
he was not completely wrong.

Even today, numerous social
problems pervade rural India. The

first among them is casteism.

Casteist attitudes and beliefs are
still sampant, untouchability
prevalent and any effort to
change the status quo met with
resistance.

Similarly, the position of women
is any better. Villages run by
khap panchayats dictate their
choice of outfit, marriage, freedom
amongst other life events. Honour
killings are the standard response
to those who dare to go against

the social norms.

Besides this, the level of health, education and sanitation has remained at an abysmal level, ~~allowing~~ providing social evils a fertile ground to breed. Today, 60% of expenditure on health is out of pocket while even after the enactment of the Manual Scavenger Act, 2013, dry latrines and manual scavenging is common. Surveys of ASER and Pratham have revealed that a Class VII student still cannot read at a Class III level.

Politically, while rural India constitutes one of the largest vote banks, their grievances remain unheard. Their naïveté is exploited by politicians to ensure votes for money or alcohol. Casteist

attitudes have allowed vote bank politics to spread leading to a situation where people "do not cast their vote but vote their Caste"

All of these problems combined have led to a situation of inequality, injustice, a lack of freedom and feeling of brotherhood amongst rural Indians. The solution to our conundrum lies in effecting change one by one in the economic, social & political sphere.

Economically, the government needs to rationalize subsidies and provide for investment in agriculture. This will allow farmers to become free agents who buy seeds of a crop of their choice, which will in all likelihood be more suited to the soil.

Agricultural education must be focused upon which will allow farmers to ~~apply~~ ^{apply} business principles as well as environmental concerns to the field of agriculture. This will not only make agriculture more productive & remunerative but also ensure intergenerational parity.

The youth must be incentivised to take up entrepreneurship as has been done through PM MODRA Yojana. They must be encouraged to set up firms for value addition to agricultural products. Not only will it increase the value of the product, it will also enhance its shelf life, allaying the fears of wastage. This will also ensure reduced migrations to urban areas which often led to urban sprawl and social inequalities.

This is because jobs will be available in the countryside itself.

The problem of infrastructure is solved in part by the government to Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana but efforts need to be made for warehousing and storage by the Food Council of India. Similarly, digital infrastructure has benefitted in part by Common Service Centres and Bharat Net but we still have a long road ahead in assuring full digital connectivity. Similarly, rural electrification has increased in the past decade particularly due to the Saubhagya scheme yet its coverage needs to be enhanced.

In the social sphere, the focus on quantity should be shifted to quality. This means

that besides increasing enrolment ratio, the quality of teachers also needs to be improved through standardized testing and increased remuneration. The same needs to be done in the health sector. While rural health infrastructure definitely needs to be revamped, doctors need to be incentivized for their service in rural areas. The out of pocket expenditure has significantly dropped due to the Ayushman Bharat scheme yet the coverage and the amount of ₹ 5 Lakh need to be increased.

Sanitation has received a serious boost due to the Swachh Bharat Mission with nearly 97% of rural Indians using a toilet,

according to a QCI survey. Such a behavioural change should be extended to the practice of manual scavenging as well.

Education will also open the minds of villagers allowing them to understand Socrates' maxim "An unexamined life is not worth living".

This may lead them to question the age old casteist and sexist practices. Combined with the feminisation of labour evidenced through the Agricultural Census, women's social & economic role will finally be recognised.

It will also allow rural India to finally take their politicians to task about their failed promises. An inculcation of values through a moral education

will encourage to disregard the lure of money, alcohol etc.

All of these changes in our economic, social & political life will ensure equality, justice, liberty and fraternity. It will also enable the fulfillment of certain Gandhian Directive Principles such as organising agriculture on scientific lines and promoting growth of cottage industries. As a result, rural India will rise up in every sphere, laying the foundation of "New India" and vindicating Gandhiji's claim "The future of India lies in its villages".

