

1. Empathy is seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another and feeling with the heart of another. Elucidate.

Introduction

Empathy is the ability to be aware of, understand, and appreciate the feelings and thoughts of others. It is “tuning in” (being sensitive) to what, how, and why people feel and think the way they do. Being empathic means being able to “emotionally read” other people. The ability to empathize is directly dependent on one’s ability to feel one’s own feelings and identify them.

Body

- Empathy involves essentially putting yourself in someone else's position and feeling what they must be feeling. When you see another person suffering, you might be able to instantly envision yourself in the other person's place and feel sympathy for what they are going through.
- Empathetic people care about others and show interest in and concern for them. It is the ability to non-judgmentally put into words your understanding of the other person's perspective on the world, even if you do not agree with it, or even if you find that perspective ridiculous.
- Empathy facilitates prosocial or helping behaviors that come from within, rather than being forced, so that people behave in a more compassionate manner.
- Empathy stands in contrast to sympathy which is the ability to cognitively understand a person's point of view or experience, without the emotional overlay. It should also be distinguished from compassion, even though the terms are often used interchangeably. Compassion is an empathic understanding of a person's feelings plus a desire to act on that person's behalf.
- There are individual differences in empathy between individuals, and there are certain conditions in which empathy is blunted or altogether absent. Psychopaths are capable of empathic accuracy, or correctly inferring thoughts and feelings, but they have no experiential referent: a true psychopath does not feel empathy.
- There are also different types of empathy that a person may experience:
 1. Affective empathy involves the ability to understand another person's emotions and respond appropriately. Such emotional understanding may lead to someone feeling concerned for another person's well-being, or it may lead to feelings of personal distress.
 2. Somatic empathy involves having a sort of physical reaction in response to what someone else is experiencing. People sometimes physically experience what another person is feeling. When you see someone else feeling embarrassed, for example, you might start to blush or have an upset stomach.
 3. Cognitive empathy involves being able to understand another person's mental state and what they might be thinking in response to the situation.

There are a number of benefits of being able to experience empathy. Some of these include:

- Empathy allows people to build social connections with others. By understanding what people are thinking and feeling, people are able to respond appropriately in social situations.
- Empathizing with others helps you learn to regulate your own emotions. Emotional regulation is important in that it allows you to manage what you are feeling, even in times of great stress, without becoming overwhelmed.
- Empathy promotes helping behaviors. Not only are you more likely to engage in helpful behaviors when you feel empathy for other people; other people are also more likely to help you when they experience empathy.
- Despite claims that empathy comes naturally, it takes arduous mental effort to get into another person's mind and then to respond with compassion rather than indifference.

A few reasons why people sometimes lack empathy:

- They fall victim to cognitive biases.
- People tend to dehumanize victims.
- People tend to blame victims.

Conclusion

While empathy might fail sometimes, most people are able to empathize with others in a variety of situations. This ability to see things from another person's perspective and sympathize with another's emotions plays an important role in our social lives. Empathy allows us to understand others and, quite often, compels us to take action to relieve another person's suffering.

2. What do you understand by the concept of 'tolerance' in the context of a secular democratic country like India? Why is it an important virtue to have as a nation? Examine.

Introduction

"Diversity in India is not just tolerated but is celebrated". India being a country with all the major religions of the world, hundreds of tribes and languages, thousands of castes has to accommodate the views, beliefs of different religion to stay as a secular country. The supreme court securing the rights of LGBT community observed that the numbers of the community is immaterial for upholding basic human rights and tolerance is not only legal but also moral.

Body

Concept of tolerance:

Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication, and freedom of thought, conscience and belief.

Tolerance is harmony in difference. It is not only a moral duty, but is also a political and legal requirement. Tolerance, the virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace etc. The constitution through articles 25-30 upholds the secular principle entailed in the preamble accommodating diversity of different communities and religion

Tolerance in a democratic country like India means that the country belongs to minorities as much it belongs to majority community/religion. It ensures the minority rights and prevents Authoritarianism or Majoritarianism.

Tolerance is required to uphold equality of all religions. Tolerance is a necessity for India owing to its historical partition due to communal differences. The instances of various communal clashes including the Kashmiri Muslims and Pandits, Babri masjid demolition, Godhra and Muzzafarnagar riots bring in the consequences of intolerance.

Further, the secularism also entails tolerance within a religion. The instances of dalit lynching, discrimination, exploitation of women in the name of religion gives instances of intolerance threatening the secular fabric of the nation.

Furthermore, tolerance doesn't mean accepting all the practices of different community even when they are discriminatory. E.g. The practice of triple talaq was declared unconstitutional, women were allowed inside the temple of Sabarimala as they were discriminatory.

Tolerance as an important virtue for a nation:

- Without tolerance and harmony, the lasting peace of societies cannot be maintained, and loyalty for each other cannot be established. Lack of tolerance leads to fighting, violence, and finally it destroys the peace and security of society. E.g. Kashmir underdevelopment, Infightings between communities in Assam or between tribes in North eastern states, Mass shootings in USA/UK.
- Intolerance takes away the attention of the society away from development. E.g. communal environment in Eastern UP is one of the main reasons for the lack of industrialization, the state of Afghanistan suffering from intolerance.
- Human development: Where everyone is treated equally and given equal opportunity, everyone is able to effectively utilize their talents and resources to improve their living standard. This helps in achieving social and economical goals like ending poverty, health, education etc., Best example is Japan or South Korea which saw exponential development over a few decades.

- Human creative freedom: Any country which is intolerant has suffered from suppression of human creativity. Whether it is Albert leaving Berlin or even MF Hussain leaving India or writer Perumal Murugan (who said he is dead inside after his book was forced to ban due to intolerance), all shows intolerance is counter productive for creativity.
- International credibility: In the age of globalization, all the countries are interdependent. Tolerance as a virtue builds credibility of the nation which also helps in international diplomacy. E.g. India being a secular country upholding tolerance is respected in international community. Whereas, countries like Bangladesh (atrocities on Rohingya muslims), Iran or Syria or North Korea etc., have seen erosion of trust and also at times saw international sanctions, foreign interventions etc.,
- Even economically, tolerance helps a nation where the investors are willing to come up with new projects which can be seen in countries like India whereas the countries like Pakistan where intolerance is a norm is seen as unworthy of any investment.
- Absence of tolerance always led to holocaust historically be it be the persecution of Jews by Hitler or the latest Rohingya persecution in Bangladesh. Intolerance has led to civil wars and created crisis situations like the Yemen crisis or Syrian civil war.

Conclusion

“Tolerance isn't about not having beliefs. It's about how your beliefs lead you to treat people who disagree with you.”

Tolerance means recognizing diversity as a strength. Secular values and not religion or caste or community that makes us a tolerant society. Secularism thrives in tolerance, but also suffers when there is tolerance towards intolerance. Thus, tolerance upholding the human values and individual freedom is the need of the hour to achieve the goal of secularism eventually developing the nation. As it is said “A house divided cannot stand”.

NOTE: Understand the concept of Tolerance, secularism and remember any 4-5 diverse arguments (as you can only write that much in the exam). Make list of quotes and examples.

3. The virtue of having compassion towards the weaker sections is best formulated in Gandhi's Talisman. Discuss.

Introduction

Compassion is understanding or empathy for the suffering of others.

Compassion is an action oriented empathy that helps to alleviate suffering of a person.

Body

Gandhiji's talisman— I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man [woman] whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him [her]. Will he [she] gain anything by it? Will it restore him [her] to a control over his [her] own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj [freedom] for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?

Then you will find your doubts and your self melt away."

One of the last notes left behind by Gandhi in 1948, expressing his deepest social thought.

provides an ethical test to judge everyday actions.

- This talisman of Gandhiji champions the cause of 'sarvodaya through antyodaya' implying the welfare of all through the weakest of the society which lies at the core of Indian Constitution.
- This talisman is a clarion call to the citizens to develop emotional intelligence so that they are in a better position to assess the needs of fellow (vulnerable) citizens, and work towards their upliftment through individual actions.
- India of the 21st century is witnessing sectoral violence, socio-economic inequality, low tolerance threshold and increasing consumerism. Global politics is witnessing xenophobia, armed conflicts and multiple refugee crises. Gandhiji's talisman can hence be an effective tool to evaluate the relevance of government policies, business priorities and our daily actions with the society. All these entities can assess their actions in public as well as private life against the Gandhi's talisman to ameliorate ethical dilemmas.

Applying the talisman to our daily lives invariably suggest the following:

- Government policies must necessarily focus on the vulnerable and marginalized sections of the society even if it requires making special provision for such classes.
- At personal level, self-serving acts like tax evasion, littering in public places etc. must be shunned.
- Derogatory practices in society like manual scavenging, caste-based discrimination, exploitation of women and the poor, dowry, nepotism etc. must be condemned in practice.
- At societal level, it encourages altruism, compassion and communal harmony towards fellow human beings when encountered with negative vibes of hatred and violence.
- Businesses and Industries should strive to reduce polluting activities, ensure optimal working conditions and must honestly comply with social security legislations. Further, it encourages business houses to go for Corporate Social Responsibility for achieving greater inclusiveness in the society.

- Public servants should ensure transparency and integrity in implementation of welfare provisions like PDS, MGNREGA, Old Age Pension Scheme etc. so that their steps lead to swaraj in true sense.

Conclusion

Thus, Gandhiji's talisman empowers us to judge our actions and is a timeless beacon of inspiration for generations to come. Being compassionate is one of the most vital attributes of Talisman which helps in bringing efficiency in work culture and aid to the welfare of the weaker section.

4. Compassion will cure more sins than condemnation. Comment.

Introduction

Compassion literally means "to suffer together." Among emotion researchers, it is defined as the feeling that arises when one gets confronted with another's suffering and feels motivated to relieve that suffering. Hence it is also said to be empathy in action.

Condemnation is the expression of very strong disapproval or censure. It also involves sentencing and punishment.

Curing sins can refer to changing one's thoughts, beliefs, values and attitude, to bring behaviour in accordance with some ethical standard.

Body

For curing sins compassion can be more effective than condemnation. There are various Psycho-emotional reasons for this –

- Cure requires removal of root cause of doing sins – which can be anger, frustration, and depression among others. Compassion removes these negative emotions and increases level of socialization. This enhances feeling of fraternity and empathy towards others, thus reducing or curing the sins. For example –
 - Ungali Maal became disciple of Lord Buddha not due to threat, sentencing or punishment. But due to compassion shown by Buddha towards such a sinner.
- Sins can happen in absence of developed conscience and absence of ethical ecosystem; for instance juvenile crime. However in such cases more love and compassion is required to give opportunity to the sinner to understand the consequence of one's action and bring change in attitude.
- Compassion gives recognition to the fact that sinner can also become sages. This gives more motivation to the sinner to get bring his behaviour back to

the accepted social standard. This allows prisoners, after completing their work, to get involved in social activities. This in real sense cures the sin.

- Restorative justice, which is based on compassion, said to be more successful than retributive justice.
- Sometimes sins happen due to socio-economic conditions. Hence compassion is required to understand the problems and come up with appropriate solutions.
 - Crop burning for instance creates environmental hazard in Delhi-NCR region. It can be considered as environmental sin. But however to solve the problem, issues faced by the farmers must be understood and adequate technology and financial help must be given, rather than just fine and penalty.

To use compassion to cure sins there is a need to develop emotional intelligence, values of tolerance and techniques of persuasion in the society.

Conclusion

Gandhiji has said, "Hate the sin, not the sinner". Hence compassionate approach must be taken while dealing with the sinner to cure the sin.

5. The whole idea of a welfare state is based on the premise of compassion towards the weaker sections. Do you agree? Substantiate.

Introduction

A welfare state is one where the state undertakes to protect the health and well-being of its citizens, especially those in financial or social need, by means of grants, pensions, and other benefits.

The idea of welfare states arises from the philosophy of compassion towards the weaker sections.

Body

Government needs to intervene in health, education, infrastructure like housing etc because all citizens do not have access to them at affordable prices.

Under social contract theory government is obliged to serve the interest of people. The state is the custodian of rights of weak and vulnerable. People have given the authority to the state to rule. However the rule has to be as per the law and with values of empathy and compassion. It cannot be despotic or authoritarian.

Also democracy is said to be the form of government to give expression to the will of people. This entails fulfilling the basic need of people with compassion.

Provisions in Indian constitution for weaker sections

- Article 15 (3) allows the State to make unique enactment to secure Women and Children
- Article 15(4) and Article 16(4) enable the state to make unique arrangement for the reservation of arrangement of posts for any Backward Class of residents of the State
- Article 38 – It authorizes the state to secure a social order for the promotion of the welfare of people.
- Article 39A – Equal justice and free legal aid.
- Article 40 – Organization of village panchayats.
- Article 41 – Right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases.
- Article 42 – Provision for just and humane conditions of work and maternity leaves.
- Article 43 – Living wage etc. for workers.
- Article 43-A - Participation of workers in management of industries.
- Article 43-B – Promotion of cooperative societies.
- Article 45 – Provision for early childhood care and education to children below the age of six years.
- Article 46 – Promotion of education and economic interests of SC, ST, and other weaker sections.
- Article 47 – Duty of the state to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health.
- Article 48 – Organization of agriculture and animal husbandry.

Conclusion

Welfare state is also guided by the philosophy of Gandhiji like “Sarvodaya through Antyodaya” (welfare of all, through welfare of the weakest); Gandhiji’s Talisman; Trusteeship principle etc. Welfare state and compassion towards the weaker section is necessary for development of human and social capital; for “Sab Ka Saath Aur Sab Ka Vikas”; for one united and robust India. The aim of governance cannot be met without having the concept of welfare state and developing compassion towards the weaker sections.