

1. Can aptitude of social service be inculcated through training? Critically examine

Demand of the question:

It expects students to elaborate about the aptitude of social services. It also expects students to analyse both aspects of whether aptitude of social services be inculcated through training or not.

Introduction:

Global health workers, public servants, civil society groups and NGO's are toiling hard to tackle this unprecedented situation created by COVID-19. It's not just their academics & professional role but also the aptitude of social service which has played a prominent role to face this war like situation.

Body:

Aptitude of Social service:

- In general terms aptitude is a natural skill or talent and Social services include the benefits and facilities like education, food subsidies, health care, police, fire service, job training and subsidised housing, adoption, community management, policy research, and lobbying.
- For many of us having empathy, compassion for the fellow human beings, animals, and surrounding environment is a characteristic of having aptitude of social services.
- The quality of empathy, compassion, helping others are mostly natural qualities. e.g. Baba Amte started to help the leprosy infected people and established Anadvan organisation.
- A child's surrounding environment also plays a prominent role to inculcate the aptitude of social service in her/him. e.g. Prakash Amte, son of Baba Amte is a philanthropist who run the lok biradari prakalp.
- Educational institutions also play a prominent role in inculcating values of self less service to others.
- Various citizen led initiatives such as free meal to migrant workers, providing essential materials to the needy one's during the lockdown period etc. say that training is not the necessity to have the aptitude of social services.

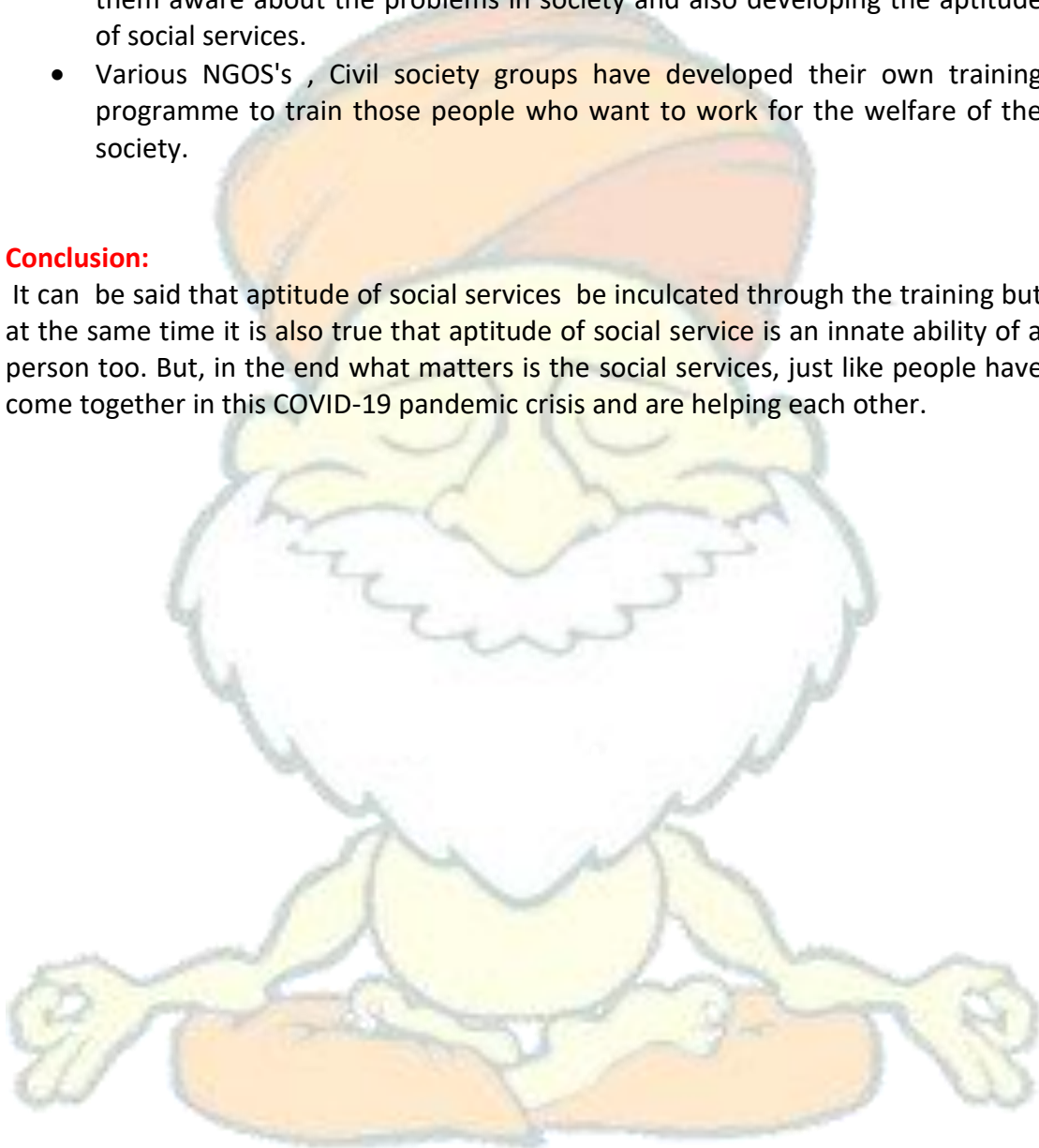
Here, we can observe that aptitude of social service is an innate ability of person. However, we can't deny the role played by the specialised training to develop the aptitude of social services.

- For instance, as we know about the The Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, which is a research and training institute on public policy and public administration in India has a specialised training curriculum which strives to train the all India service officers, some of the characteristics of Social services through village visits.
- Values of social services such as helping the marginalised and vulnerable section of people while abiding to the law is one such example.

- For the students of medical field, there is a mandatory curriculum of doing a one year's practise at the village level. It's a kind of special training which helps the medical graduates to understand the nature of needs of people and take decisions accordingly.
- For graduate students The National Service Scheme (NSS) The sole aim of the NSS is to provide hands on experience to young students in delivering community service. It's in turn a kind of training for the students to make them aware about the problems in society and also developing the aptitude of social services.
- Various NGOS's , Civil society groups have developed their own training programme to train those people who want to work for the welfare of the society.

Conclusion:

It can be said that aptitude of social services be inculcated through the training but at the same time it is also true that aptitude of social service is an innate ability of a person too. But, in the end what matters is the social services, just like people have come together in this COVID-19 pandemic crisis and are helping each other.



2. During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we have witnessed the exemplar services being rendered by public servants. What lessons have you learnt from their conduct?

Demand of the question:

It expects students to observe and analyse the exemplar services being rendered by public servants during this pandemic. It also expects students to write about the lessons learnt from their conduct.

Introduction:

Public servants work tirelessly to ensure the smooth functioning of the public administration. But, when it comes to crisis situation like COVID-19, public servants show exemplary courage in rendering services to people.

Body:

Following are such examples of public servants who showed exemplary services & lessons learnt from their conduct:

- **Hard Work & Commitment:** To accomplish and outclass in any task an IAS Officer should be a hard worker and committed to his/her duty. Which can be seen from the exemplary service shown by top Odisha cadre IAS officer and state health secretary, Nikunja Dhal who returned to duty within 24 hours of his father's death. It emphasise his commitment to duty,
- **Decisive and Resilient in Approach:** In this COVID-19 Pandemic situation where the administrative machineries and health infrastructure are overburdened by the work, District collectors and Health officers are showing their decisive & resilient approach.
- **Compassion:** As a civil servant, an administrative Officers show compassion & motivates the people with a desire to help the sufferings or misfortune instead of just feeling sympathetic.
- **For instance, Around 20 IRS officers in Bengaluru, Provided Meals to Migrant Workers.** It's a sign of compassion. It also emphasised the importance of unity among colleagues.
- **CARUNA Initiative:** CARUNA stands for 'Civil Services Association Reach to Support National Disasters, which is an association formed by the above-mentioned services. It is a unique collaborative platform that brings together civil servants, industry leaders, NGO professionals, and IT professionals, among others in the fight against corona virus pandemic.
- **This initiative give us a lesson that when it comes to crisis, administration doesn't works alone, it takes all the stakeholders together and work in harmony to tackle the situation.**
- **A major chunk of the population of the country is currently practising isolation and is working from home, or not working at all. During such a time, IAS officer and Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation Commissioner (GVMC) G Srijana, returned to work just 22 days after giving birth, cutting short her maternity break.**

- This act of dedication by IAS officer G Srijana gives a lesson by showing the importance of handling such huge responsibility.
- Out-of-the-Box Thinking for Excellence in Work: Public servants in some of the districts have come up with new ideas to bring back the daily life of citizens such as odd even scheme to start the market, creating innovative advertisements etc.
- Leadership: Many of the public servants gave a lesson of how a leader should act in this unprecedented situation. e.g. Nagpur Municipal Commissioner Mr. Tukaram Mundhe initiated the door to door testing of the people to contain the spread of COVID-19.
- The exemplary services by the public servant not just have given us the lessons of what to do but it also gave us the lessons of what not to do, such as not taking hasty decisions, not thinking about particular strata of the society while rendering service etc.
- However, some public servants were also transferred, to handle other responsibilities, due to their failure to contain the spread of COVID-19.
- These failure should need to be carefully assessed and lessons from them should be learnt to understand what not to do.

While applauding these acts of exemplary service our President said that, "In the present times too, the steel frame of our country, the civil service, has shown its strength and resolve in handling COVID-19 situation, with sensitivity and professionalism."

Conclusion:

At this time, India is going through extreme crises because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The country has been in lockdown for more than 3 months, giving rise to a plethora of problems. The work burden has increased manifold on the administrative system of the country. But, India's efforts of fighting against the corona virus disease have been applauded globally and the undeniably credit for this goes to the bureaucrats of the country.

3. Should merit lists be scrapped from school examinations? Substantiate your views.

Demand of the question:

It expects students to express their view on whether the merit list be scrapped from school examinations or not. It also expects students to substantiate their views with examples.

Introduction:

The CBSE and CISCE boards declared the Class 10 and Class 12 results this year without a merit list due to the exceptional circumstances created by the corona virus pandemic. This move is seen as progressive by some people and regressive by some other hence, it becomes necessary to assess whether the merit list be scrapped from school examinations or not.

Body:

A progressive move:

- Merit list gives students warped ideas of what achievement means and external validation.
- It promote unhealthy competition among students.
- These lists, which rank students on the basis of their exam marks seems futile exercise. As we grow up, we realise how redundant these merit lists are, for that matter even exam marks are. e.g. Overall success can't be determined from how many marks a student has gained.
- Such lists have over the years put unnecessary pressure on students and intensified the rat race in our flawed education system.
- Stigma attached to low marks: The undue importance given to merit lists is actually a symptom of how India is obsessed with good grades in exams, and the stigma attached to low scores.
- Employers look for talent, not toppers: Now a days the employers recruitment criteria's are changed, they look for someone with talent, determination, ability to work with others, the right set of skills, and a hard-worker.
- These skills are unfortunately not what our education system builds in students. Instead of breaking their head over memorising history chapters or chemistry formulae, and obsessing over marks, students must strive to achieve skills and knowledge.
- In the process to train the student to follow rat race, school curriculum deprives students of vital cognitive life skills.
- Right after the CBSE results were declared, several people on social media platforms shared their old board exam marks to underline the fact that marks are not the be-all and end-all in life. IAS officer Nitin Sangwan wrote on Twitter that he barely managed to pass his chemistry exam in Class 12, but that didn't hinder him.

However, some academicians and rank holders emphasised the importance of merit list as follows:

- Once the merit list is scrapped, students might not take the board exams seriously.
- The thought to make it to the merit list instils a sense of competition among students.
- The token of appreciation received after securing a rank on the merit list gave them satisfaction.

Though merit list encourages students to do better, their overall effect has clear implications that a progressive approach needs to be adopted. Innovative Ideas for Better education outcomes can be applied to overcome the drawbacks of merit based system.

- **Cooperative Learning:** Working together on project teams and guided by trained teachers, students learn the skills of collaborating, managing emotions, and resolving conflicts in groups.
- **Comprehensive Assessment:** Assessment should be expanded beyond simple test scores to instead provide a detailed, continuous profile of student strengths and weaknesses. Teachers, parents, and individual students can closely monitor academic progress and use the assessment to focus on areas that need improvement.

Conclusion:

Hence, scrapping a merit list is a progressive approach as it reduces unnecessary burden of performing well from students mind. But, at the same time some other method should be devised so that a student's overall development can take place.

