

**1. Empathy is about finding echoes of another person in yourself. Elucidate.**

**Approach:**

Question is straight forward in its approach students are expected to explain the above quote in a detailed manner, also use of examples is important which helps in explaining points properly.

**Introduction:**

Empathy is the ability to emotionally understand what other people feel, see things from their point of view, and imagine yourself in their place. Essentially, it is putting yourself in someone else's position and feeling what they must be feeling. While people are generally pretty well-attuned to their own feelings and emotions, getting into someone else's head can be a bit more difficult. The ability to feel empathy allows people to "walk a mile in another's shoes".

**Body:**

The above quote explains empathy as If we are able to understand each other by stepping in the other person's bubble, by diving into their beliefs, values, by being more welcoming and trying to find echoes of the other person in ourselves, we will be able to create a better understanding between each other which will help us make a better world. This helps in understanding each other's problems and issues according to their own way of life.

- It 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. Not only people are more likely to engage in helpful behaviours when they feel empathy for other people, but other people are also more likely to help you when they experience empathy.
- 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.
- 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.
- Mahatma Gandhi lived a simple life because he was empathetic and sensitive. He renounced a luxurious life because he could listen the unheard voices in India which were suffering under the exploitative British rule. On empathy, his advice to anyone who was in doubt if an action was good or not, was to put oneself in the situation of the poorest of the poor in the country and see how a particular policy and programme will impact him or her.

- Empathizing with others helps us learn to regulate our own emotions. Emotional regulation is important in that it allows us to manage what we are feeling, even in times of great stress, without becoming overwhelmed. e.g., Children playing with Animals.
- Empathy ensures helping behaviours that come from within, rather than being forced, so that people behave in a more compassionate manner. e.g., the way animals are treated by the family strongly influences whether or not children learn to treat other living beings with kindness and respect.
- Empathetic people care about others and show interest in and concern for them. e.g., Many people understand the situation when an animal goes through pain of labour.
- Daily wagers, footpath vendors, migrant labourers have all had their only source of income snuffed out by the lockdown. To help them stay afloat, the city's army of volunteers has stepped in, doing their bit in multiple ways. e.g., Many of organisations have come together and are helping the people by distributing food packets and other essentials.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the world to test its empathetic attributes by posing a question of survival in front of humanity. Amidst this crisis many people around the world have come together to help people besides practising attributes of empathy.

**Conclusion:**

Empathy, a term often used for a kind of concern for others is one of the most important virtues and must be developed in all of us. It has greater implications because when empathetic people see someone in pain, they feel it with them instead of feeling it for them. The matter of empathy becomes important in developing countries like India where civil servants are particularly not that empathetic towards the common people and have the sense of superiority which alienates them and severely destroys the bond of belongingness. 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. The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others. Do you agree? Comment.**

**Approach**

The candidate needs to comment on the aspect of purpose of human life and show his/her views regarding the purpose being to serve, to show compassion and the will to help others. You can illustrate this with the help of multiple examples. You can also put points contrary to the above argument but with proper substantiation.

**Introduction**

Ever since humans have evolved, the fundamental question that has troubled them has been the quest to understand purpose of human life where many philosophers across various cultures have given different interpretations of their understanding, where the common aspect seems to be the inner urge to help others, which comes across as an important part of the question to what is the purpose of human life.

**Body**

- Since human beings have developed the ability to think rationally and analyse the surroundings, we have been curious about why things are the way that they are. This holds true on both a relative level, such as when we want to know how organisms have evolved, and an absolute level, such as about purpose of life, god, and the nature of the universe.
- What is to be achieved through living differs from individual to individual. Personal responses to situations and the thought processes involved in handling issues and problem-solving capabilities differ from person to person.
- For many people, serving others helps in attaining their purpose of life which is exemplified through the multiple religious teaching which promote serving others. E.g. - People in India have been following the principle of “Paropkar param dharma” – selfless service is the greatest religion – for thousands of years.
- However, while helping others, one should not expect something in return; one’s intention should be to lessen other people’s misery. “Service to others should be sincere and done from the heart; only then it is fruitful.”
- Generally, one’s constant inner intent should be towards helping others. If you are unable to do so for any reason, you can also make sure that you do not hurt anyone. This is an indirect way to help those around you.
- Life can be made beautiful or can be simply led. The success ratio and personal response to challenging situations are deciding factors. Here, the

purpose of life for many can be serving others compassionately, clearly displayed by Mother Theresa, who has often been referred to as an embodiment of compassion. Her selfless work for the poor and destitute till date is inspiring and spoken of.

- Ethics and moral values imbibed into life by the individual act as indicators. One's judgmental capacity of good from bad, right from wrong, legal from illegal, ethical and unethical all act as guidelines to one's life and help him/her in leading a good purposeful or bad life depending on the choices he makes. These help in generating the will to help others. E.g. – Gautama Buddha had the will to help others attain enlightenment after gaining the knowledge himself through struggles.
- Further, the purpose of life is to live and let live. The societal living is possible when there are communal harmony and feeling of brotherhood among its members. Peaceful coexistence is the key to a successful life.
- For someone like his holiness Dalai Lama, the purpose of life is to be happy. He considers that from the moment of birth, every human being wants happiness and does not want suffering. Neither social conditioning nor education nor ideology affect this. From the very core of our being, we simply desire contentment.
- Moreover, the pandemic has unleashed an internal churning about the purpose and meaning of life as we all pressed a pause button. It dawned on us that life cannot be on the highway all the time. Philosophical reflection was forced on us. This has also helped many in realising their own purpose of life.

### Conclusion

Thus, it can be said that though the purpose of life can vary from individual to individual, being happy through ethical and correct means which eventually helps in serving others and society in a rightful way can be considered as a worthy purpose of life for vast sections of humanity.



**3. The highest result of education is tolerance. Do you agree? Substantiate your views.**

**Approach**

Candidates are expected to write about correlation between education and tolerance in introduction and then write about how education results into tolerance with proper substantiation.

**Introduction**

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 education system where knowledge, openness, communication, and freedom of thought, conscience and belief are generated.

**Body**

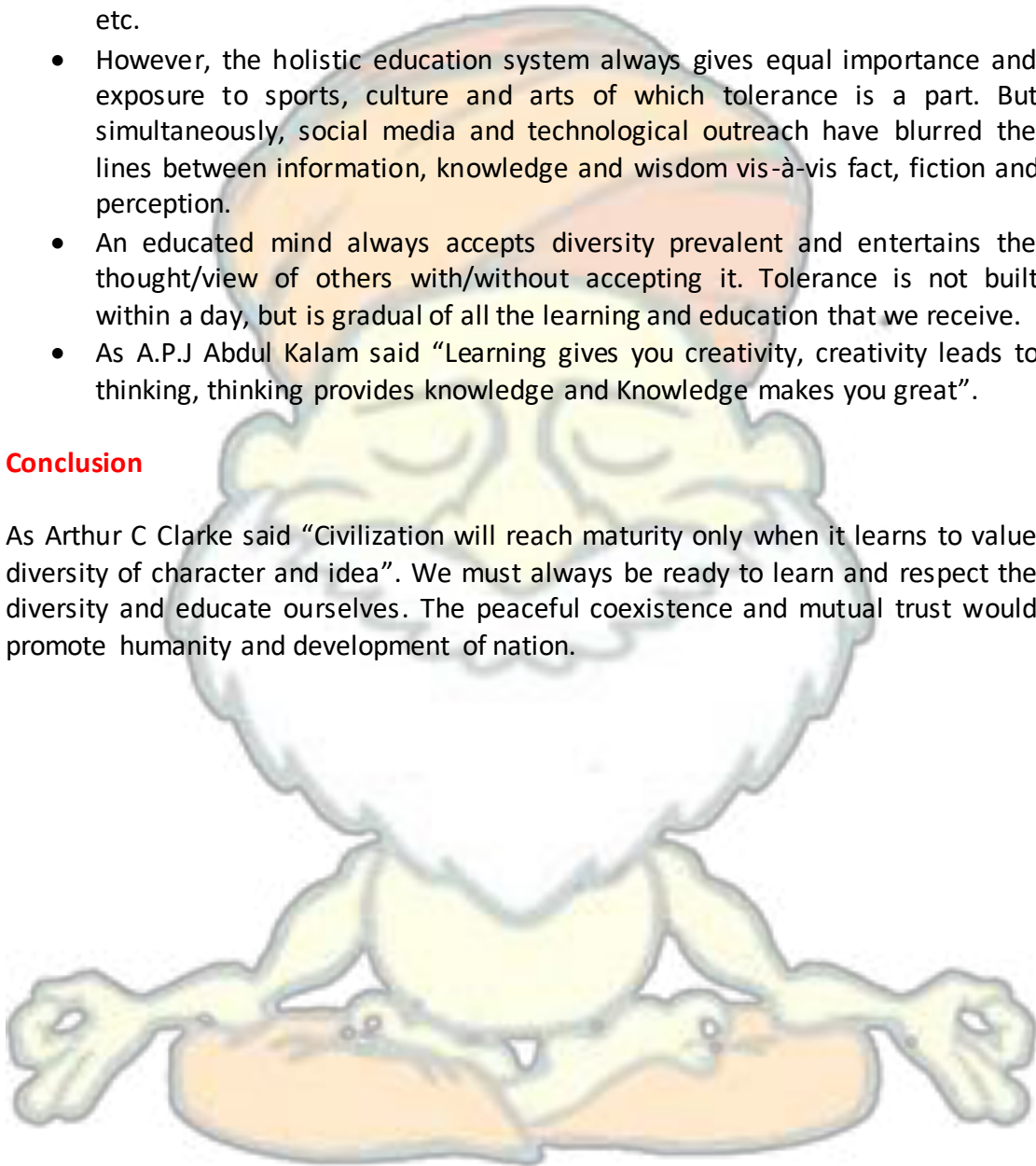
Education results into the tolerance:

- Swami Vivekananda believed education to be the manifestation of perfection residing in the hearts of human beings and that this perfection intrinsically held tolerance.
- Education is said to make people more tolerant by enhancing their knowledge and reasoning skills. This helps people to see through prejudiced claims and dismiss irrational fears about those who are culturally different.
- It's often said that a person's tolerance rises with their education level. So on this basis, the higher a person's educational attainment is, the more likely they are to accept racial or ethnic minorities.
- Schools and universities also enhance tolerance by emphasising it as a virtue. The longer individuals stay in the education system, the more they are exposed to tolerance as a "core value" – and the more likely they are to internalise it.
- The education that a person receives in his lifetime is not just from school, but also from his family, friends, society etc. The one who really takes pages of his experience and learning will develop knowledge. We learn to respect elders, opposite gender from our parents, our friends teach us how trust is build, and our society teaches us how to stay in harmony among diversity.
- Studies often show that young people are also more welcoming in their attitudes to outsiders. This is thought to be largely because they have higher levels of education than older age groups.

- Education has only one role for any society, and that is to keep the generations moving in the ascending order of knowledge and information. If education by default can enable the character of tolerance, then education transposes to the highest level of seeking the truth.
- Uneducated are generally intolerant of others because they live “self-centered” lives. They simply do not possess to give them perspective of the actual facts. This can be seen in recent cases of mob lynching, honour killing etc.
- However, the holistic education system always gives equal importance and exposure to sports, culture and arts of which tolerance is a part. But simultaneously, social media and technological outreach have blurred the lines between information, knowledge and wisdom vis-à-vis fact, fiction and perception.
- An educated mind always accepts diversity prevalent and entertains the thought/view of others with/without accepting it. Tolerance is not built within a day, but is gradual of all the learning and education that we receive.
- As A.P.J Abdul Kalam said “Learning gives you creativity, creativity leads to thinking, thinking provides knowledge and Knowledge makes you great”.

### Conclusion

As Arthur C Clarke said “Civilization will reach maturity only when it learns to value diversity of character and idea”. We must always be ready to learn and respect the diversity and educate ourselves. The peaceful coexistence and mutual trust would promote humanity and development of nation.



**4. “Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness”. What do you understand by this quote by Martin Luther King?**

**Approach-** Candidate can deconstruct the above quote and bring out the relevance in current situation. With the help of examples answer can be concluded with an anecdote.

**Introduction**

Martin Luther king was a champion of basic human rights and we all know his long legacy in fight for justice. He was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and pursued a life inspired by values. In the above quote he calls out for character building.

**Body**

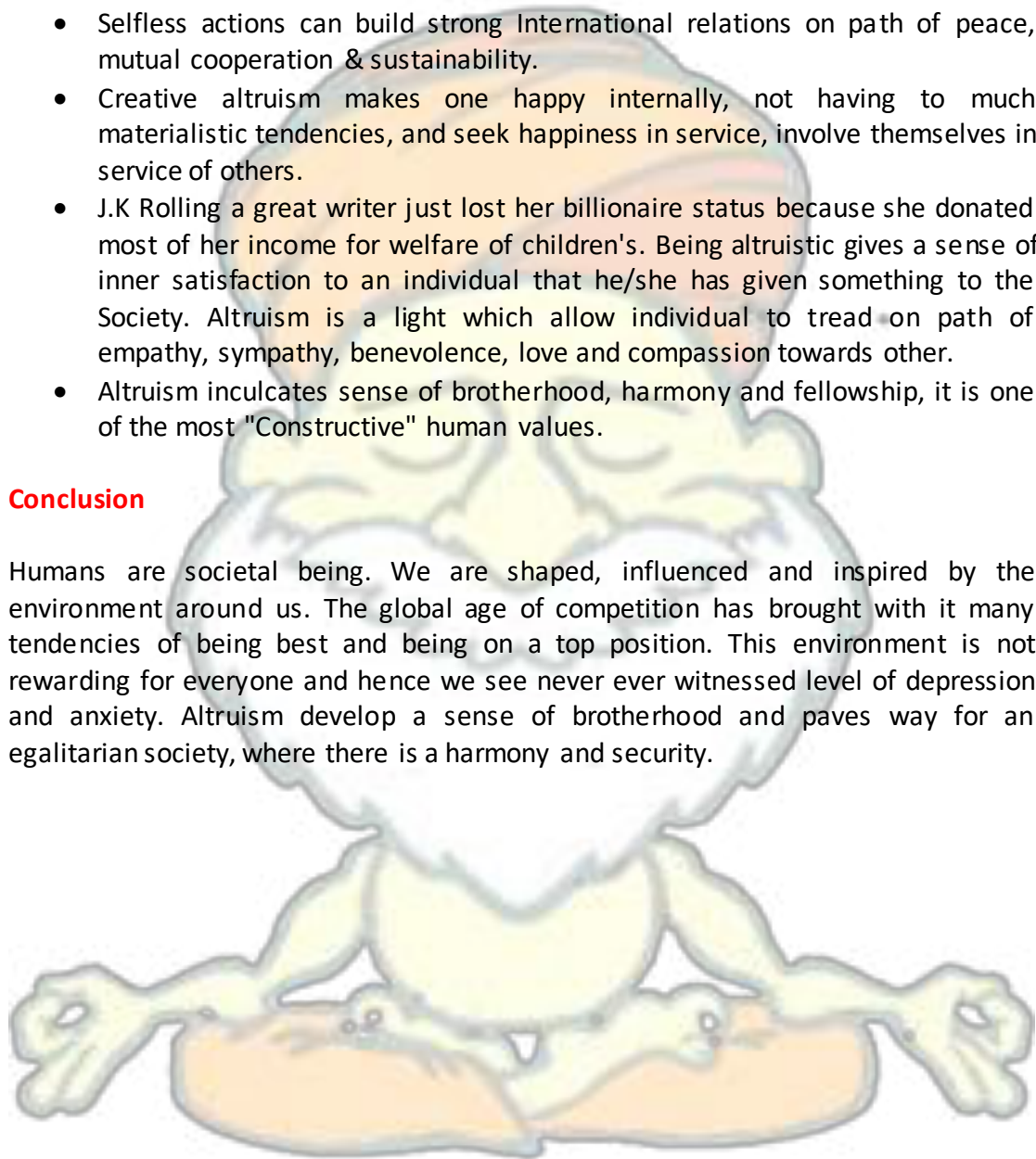
- In this, King calls us to actively seek ways to elevate the needs of others within our society. He embodied these ideals in a life devoted to justice, and his actions as a leader reflected this creative altruism.
- According to Adam Grant, a management analyst, "there's reason to believe that in the long run, the greatest success -- and the richest meaning -- will come to those who, instead of cutting other people down, pursue their personal ambitions in ways that lift others up."
- Creative altruism comes in many different forms. But it stems from a mindset of helping others whenever you can even when there is no direct benefit to you.
- MLK shares his epiphanies on the bliss and magnanimity of selfless creativity against the toxicity of selfish actions. He feels the onus lies on us to choose between a life of altruism that cultivates an ambience of positivity or to lead a gloomy lifestyle painted by self-interest at the cost of fraternity.
- Human endeavours are limitless, provided they are charted for the welfare of others. A person driven by selfishness is bound to undermine the selfishness of other individual. Thus, there cannot be peace, prosperity and stability in the world.
- Every nation driven by its self interest, somehow erode the self interest of some other country. e.g., Germany strides in second world war.
- Talking about creative altruism, Gandhiji idea of Sarvodaya through antyodaya is prominent. Such venture ensure welfare for all with focus on most underprivileged and marginalized sections of the society. Thus, collectivism and cooperation get precedent over individualism and competition.

How altruism helps us?

- Altruism helps us in taking ethical judgements. eg: Officer not supporting nepotism.
- Selflessness will help us in developing sensitivity towards other eg: Pain of Vulnerable section, bring tolerance & peace in society
- Helps in charity and donations.
- Selfless actions can build strong International relations on path of peace, mutual cooperation & sustainability.
- Creative altruism makes one happy internally, not having to much materialistic tendencies, and seek happiness in service, involve themselves in service of others.
- J.K Rowling a great writer just lost her billionaire status because she donated most of her income for welfare of children's. Being altruistic gives a sense of inner satisfaction to an individual that he/she has given something to the Society. Altruism is a light which allow individual to tread on path of empathy, sympathy, benevolence, love and compassion towards other.
- Altruism inculcates sense of brotherhood, harmony and fellowship, it is one of the most "Constructive" human values.

### Conclusion

Humans are societal being. We are shaped, influenced and inspired by the environment around us. The global age of competition has brought with it many tendencies of being best and being on a top position. This environment is not rewarding for everyone and hence we see never ever witnessed level of depression and anxiety. Altruism develop a sense of brotherhood and paves way for an egalitarian society, where there is a harmony and security.





**5. No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted. Comment.**

**Approach:**

Directive is comment which demand expressing an opinion or reaction. It is important to pick out the main points/core and give one's opinion based on the information or the arguments originated from the reading. One should take a neutral ground and write facts and viewpoints.

**Introduction:**

“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted”, the classic quote is so true. It doesn't matter if you do a small act of kindness or a big act of kindness – the important thing is that you do an act of kindness and it is never a waste of time. Being kind to someone else can change their life. Many people believe that nobody cares about them and that their life is not important. Just something as simple as a friendly smile or a kind word can literally 'make their day'.

**Body:**

- “No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted” quote is from the famous story, the lion and the mouse wherein a small Mouse, caught by the Lion, is released rather than eaten, as a kindness.
- Later, the Mouse comes across the Lion, trapped in a net. The Mouse remembers the kindness done for him by the Lion, and chews through the ropes, freeing the Lion, and returning the kindness.
- The moral of the story is held that there is no one so lowly that they cannot be of some use, and that none should be scorned for their lowly position or life.
- That, in my opinion, still is true today. While most societies still have some forms of stratification, most people understand that kindness costs themselves little, and can be of great benefit to them when returned.
- Kindness can be contagious! Try smiling at someone who looks unhappy or upset and see what happens. It is simple and yet incredibly potent. A word in the right place. A smile at the right time. A simple selfless act can instantly change the dynamic of a situation and make someone else's day a better one.
- When you do something nice for someone who you could not ever imagine having the ability to help you, the feeling is quite liberating. You aren't thinking about how much to help, or what to do, weighing it against what they could do in return. You simply do what you can, and walk away.

- Whether it's putting enough change in the toll booth for the next few cars, or telling your server at the restaurant that you want to pay for someone else's bill, it's simply being kind. Those examples centred around money, but there are plenty of other ways to be kind to others.
- Imagine a world where a chain reaction of kindness was ongoing. Will it be better or worse than where we are today? Can you think of a single good reason not to help someone, some way, today? Even if it's just a smile or a nod, acknowledging another person is a kindness too often lacking today.

**Conclusion:**

As Leo Buscaglia said "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around." Hence Every day everyone should reach out and touch someone. People love a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back.

