3. Whoever controls the media, controls the mind.

Vaishali, a student in Delhi, starts her day with newspaper. She came across a news of a tribal girl Budini's arrest from malkangiri and wonders why anyone would become a naxal when we have all the facilities like good education, Health, employment opportunities and freedom in life choices.

"Budhini" a santhal is illiterate. She and her community's source of information is from carefully selected left leaning literature. It is read and narrated to them by higher ups in naxal commands till it becomes only reality of outside world.

In above two instances there is subjective interpretation of objective reality

Scanned with CamScanner

of world by media. Vaishali and Budhini both are right and both are wrong as their perception of reality is filtered through the lens of media reports. Their cognition and thereby worldview is shaped by the media.

Media is called 4th pillar of democracy for its role in bringing out citizen's opinion, help them make an informed choice and giving critical feedback to government. But at the same time it has failed to deliver at high ethical standard demanded ~~from~~ from pillar of democracy. media conglomerates by capturing the flow of information shaped the public mind to serve their ends.

Scanned with CamScanner

Question No.
प्रश्न संख्या

UPSC

For Practice Use Only
सिर्फ अभ्यास के लिए

Control over media has emerged as a competetive industry. Recent history shaping events like USA election (2016), climate change debate, Russia-Ukraine war are some examples where media through control over peoples mind favoured a particular narrative.

the outcome is allegation of subversion of democracy in USA, emergence of climate change deniers like Mr Trump and information warfare among Russia-Ukraine.

George orwell in his book 1984 presents a scenario where authoritarian government controls media, devices mechanism to control the free speech (Newspeak) and

Scanned with CamScanner

persecution of dissenters. Thereby it control the minds of citizen to believe that the government is infallible and supreme.

It is not hard to find similarities in non-fictional world. Absolute control over media in North Korea and Iran ensures citizens do not revolt. Jasmine revolution of Arab world gave these countries even more reasons to tighten their grip.

Based on philosophy of control of mind through media new methods of world domination have been devised. External Affair minister S. Jaishankar elaborated concept of cognitive warfare

Scanned with CamScanner

which is the use of media to spread misinformation and propaganda to break the morale of adversarial country. It is a component of 4th generation warfare. It is considered future of warfare by NSA Ajit Doval.

the competetion to control media for influence over people's thought have led to emergence of competing houses. Left (Herald) vs Right (Swarajya), Nationalistic (Dawn, Global times), Republican (Fox News) vs Democrat (Reuters). It has also allowed to influence public behaviour voting behaviour (Cambridge analytica care), buying behaviour, and everyday choices such as which school

Scanned with CamScanner

to study and what food to eat.

In this way, our lives course is being shaped by the media. And this phenomena of our mental strings being pulled by media houses is going to be even more significant with emergence of new technological tools such as AI, block-chain and big data. It will allow to not only passively transmit thought altering information but also guage the impact it had and devise personalised information for every group.

Yuval Noah Harari in his book "Homo Deus" reflect on the future of mankind. He present a world where our bodies are permanently connected to biosensors like wearable

Scanned with CamScanner

devices. It will allow social media giants to monitor our thought process by detecting our blood pressure, heartbeat etc in response to an event or person. It will further reduce autonomy of a person.

further the control of mind is not limited to citizen. media trials influence judiciary, pressure groups through media pressurize government and business rival outcompete their competition. It is also used by countries to build popular perception in other countries eg. Maldivian population opposing Indian investment being instigated by chinese media houses.

the question is what is the extent of such control and what can be done

Scanned with CamScanner

UPSC

For Practice Use Only
सिर्फ अभ्यास के लिए

to ensure freedom of mind? As media in country like India is not a singular entity is not a homogenous body, the information flow is diverse. thereby unless a person is limited to exposure of singular version she is bound to have balanced thought.

further on one hand media is given freedom of expression as fundamental right (Article 19) but that freedom is not absolute. It is subjected to public morality and accuracy. Additional safeguard like censor board for movies, IT Act during violent situation provide for accuracy of news.

Scanned with CamScanner

At the same time it is citizen's responsibility also to not allow their minds to be controlled. fundamental duty (Article 51A) asks everyone to have scientific temper and a spirit of enquiry. we need to question the information, its source as credibility and not consume everything passively.

New provisions such as social media and intermediary guidelines 2021, fact checking websites such as webqoof and underprocess Personal Data bill, 2021 further ensure freedom of thought for citizen.

Scanned with CamScanner

As a way ahead media houses, citizen and government shall collaborate to devise measures for adherance to media ethics. for government it is pertinent that it facts not revealed then fictions would be written (eg. COVID data). for citizen to not get swayed ~~for~~ by sensationalism (eg. mob lynching) and open dialogue channels by media houses (eg. Ethics column in hindu where readers can praise question) would be a good start.

Lastly our mind is not that passive that it allows to be controlled by media. media only exploits the existing ~~fear~~ fears and prejudices to fulfill its

Scanned with CamScanner

objective. therefore before blaming media we need to introspect and reform ourselves. In the post truth era, Anekantavada (Jainism) and madhyama marg (Buddha) would pave the way for developing a rational mind.

Scanned with CamScanner

Question No.
प्रश्न संख्या

UPSC

For Practice Use Only
सिर्फ अभ्यास के लिए

A chain is no stronger than its weakest link

A week back chess Olympiad concluded in chennai. India B team got bronze medal in that. this team having average age of 20 years and devoid of star players had low expectations. In contrast USA was considered favourite as it had four players in top ten. yet, USA came fourth and gone medalless and young team of Uzbekistan won gold followed by Armenia and India. the common factor among all there was exploited the weak links of star studded teams and emerged victorious.

the above example shows that one chain with lesser weak link is stronger than another which has considerably stronger

Scanned with CamScanner

some links but also considerably weaker links present.

John Donne has said man is not an island in itself but rather part of a continent. By that argument humans in every sphere are linked to others in order to survive, fulfill their needs and achieve their objectives. this figurative chain could be a family, society, organisation, country or whole Earth.

In this context the link refers to interpersonal relations, trust, harmony and social solidarity among others. the strength of such chain would depend on strength of individual constituent's strength.

Scanned with CamScanner

for example family as chain can not be strong unless ~~it~~ n two wheels (mother & father) have equality, future engines (son & daughter) are nourished equally and forward and backward integration (Grand parent - Parent - children) is organic

Gandhi ji had seen the connection when his quest for national freedom differed from past by including the masses. His measures of public service were nothing but an exercise of strengthening of weakest link ~~but~~ be it taking stand for peasant in Kheda & Champaran or Harijan Sevak Sangh for untouchables. the resultant chain was so strong that British chain of opression could not withstand and

Scanned with CamScanner

disintegrated.

Independent India imbibed the philosophy of strengthening the weakest link in the form of Antyodaya (work for last man standing) and Sarvodaya (development for everyone) which took the present form of Sabka Saath, Sabka vikas and Sabka Prayaas, Highlighting the chain gets strong when each link has been invested upon and contributes for the integrity of overall structure.

If any link of chain is left undernourished it weakens the collective chain. for example our investment and attention is on higher courts and subordinate courts getting less funding and attention. It resulted into pendency of 4.5 crore cases out of which 3.9 crore in subordinate courts.

Scanned with CamScanner

Similarly in Education and health sectors major investment goes to primary Education and primary healthcare which resulted into:

	Enrollment ratio
Primary Education	100 %
Higher Education	25 %

and COVID impact exposed our lack of preparedness in secondary and tertiary care. further these weak links have been exploited by profit oriented private institutions making these unaffordable for masses.

A similar pattern is visible at the economic front. Agriculture among these sectors has become the weak link

Scanned with CamScanner

that even after massive subsidies and employing almost 50% workforce it's growing at hindu rate of growth. It threatens the integrity of developmental chain of country.

for manufacturing sector their weak link was exposed during covid lockdowns when there dependence for raw materials like critical minerals and Key starting Materials became a threat for their survival.

Taking a cue from this philosophy the private organisation follow approach of keeping the chain short but each link strengthened. this brings efficiency and higher productivity and thereby profit maximisation.

Scanned with CamScanner

At the international relations it was key element of **Domino effect** proposed in Truman doctrine. It recognised that if communism got hold in economically distressed countries then whole world would fall like pack of cards. Therefore, they started economic aid for these countries.

We are instinctively able to recognise the weak links in chains. **Darwin's** theory of evolution displayed the weak organism would perish and stronger would survive. **food chain** survival is also depends on most sensitive and delicate organism in it. A **pathogen** able to find the most

Scanned with CamScanner

vulnerable part of body to attack and infect.

The pertinent question is then how to strengthen our chains be it our body, family, society, country and global chain. The first step would be shifting focus from our strengths to going to the weakness.

for a family it would be to stop boasting about their son's achievement and provide equal facilities for girl. for when both contribute family prosper (SDG 5).

for a society it has to guise above the polarising forces and look for the needs of vulnerables. Unity and concern

Scanned with CamScanner

shown by everyone without concern of caste, religion or ideology during covid can be a templati.

At economic front the Atmanirbhar plan can be tilted towards MSMEs, informal sector and Agriculture. Self reliant large bare would provide stability to above structures of manufacturing and industry. A counter cyclical policy can be initiated for supply chain resilience.

At international front it is said by Martin Luther King that threat to peace anywhere is threat to peace everywhere. In that vein we need to follow common good approach where small Island nations should get support to fight climate change

Scanned with CamScanner

and militarily weak countries be given internation support to maintain their autonomy & territorial integrity.

To conclude, as a country of 1.35 billion we have sufficient links to build a long chain. It is time to find the chinks and strengthen them. And it is not only responsibility of government rather we as individual links are also responsible to look after ourselves and around us. Like munnabhai MBBS transformed the hospital by starting with giving Jadu ki Jhappi to floor sweeper, we can also give, as 1.35 billion links, a Jadu ki Jhappi that transforms our chain India.

Scanned with CamScanner