

The Hindu EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

28th December 2024

**PREPARE FOR BANK (PO/ CLERK), SSC, UPSC,
State PSC, CAT, CTET, RAILWAY EXAMS, CDS,
TET, NDA/AIRFORCE, NET and all Govt.
Exams**

VOCABULARY

1. Benign (सौम्य)

Meaning: Gentle and kind; not harmful in effect.

Synonyms: Kind, gentle, benevolent

Antonyms: Harsh, cruel, malevolent

Example: The teacher's benign attitude made the students feel comfortable in class.

2. Permeate (व्याप्त होना)

Meaning: To spread throughout something.

Synonyms: Penetrate, saturate, diffuse

Antonyms: Contain, limit, restrict

Example: The smell of freshly baked bread permeated the entire house.

VOCABULARY

3. Exorbitant (अत्यधिक)

Meaning: Unreasonably high in price or cost.

Synonyms: Excessive, outrageous, overpriced

Antonyms: Reasonable, moderate, affordable

Example: The restaurant was criticized for its exorbitant prices.

4. Discrete (अलग)

Meaning: Individually separate and distinct.

Synonyms: Distinct, separate, independent

Antonyms: Connected, continuous, unified

Example: The report divided the data into discrete categories for easier analysis.

VOCABULARY

5. Efficacy (प्रभावकारिता)

Meaning: The ability to produce a desired or intended result.

Synonyms: Effectiveness, efficiency, capability

Antonyms: Ineffectiveness, failure, inadequacy

Example: The efficacy of the new vaccine has been proven through clinical trials.

6. Obsolete (अप्रचलित)

Meaning: No longer in use; out of date.

Synonyms: Outdated, archaic, antiquated

Antonyms: Modern, current, updated

Example: Many technological devices from the 1990s are now considered obsolete.

VOCABULARY

7. Intrusion (अतिक्रमण)

Meaning: The act of entering a place or situation where one is unwelcome or uninvited.

Synonyms: Encroachment, invasion, interference

Antonyms: Withdrawal, retreat, exclusion

Example: The journalist apologized for the intrusion into the celebrity's personal life.

8. Impediment (अवरोध)

Meaning: A hindrance or obstruction in doing something.

Synonyms: Obstacle, barrier, limitation

Antonyms: Aid, assistance, support

Example: Poor internet connectivity was a major impediment to remote learning.

VOCABULARY

9. Coerce (दबाव डालना)

Meaning: To persuade someone to do something by using force or threats.

Synonyms: Compel, force, intimidate

Antonyms: Persuade, encourage, convince

Example: The kidnappers tried to coerce the victim into signing over his property.

10. Plummet (गिरावट)

Meaning: To fall or drop straight down at high speed.

Synonyms: Decline, fall, tumble

Antonyms: Rise, ascend, increase

Example: The company's stock price plummeted after the scandal was exposed.

VOCABULARY

Phrasal Verbs:

1. Zone out

Meaning - to lose concentration, usually because of boredom.

2. Wind up

Meaning - to end or finish something; to arrive at a situation.

3. Act up

Meaning - to misbehave or not function properly.

4. Bank on

Meaning - to rely on something or someone.

VOCABULARY

Idioms & Phrases

1. Sell ice to Eskimos

Meaning: to persuade people to go against their best interests

2. Put a spanner in the works

Meaning: to do something that prevents a plan or activity from succeeding

3. Full of beans

Meaning: a lot of energy and enthusiasm

VOCABULARY

4. Keep an ear to the ground

Meaning: staying informed about everything

5. Run around in circles

Meaning: putting efforts into something that is not a worthwhile result

Article for Reading

**Letter and spirit: on the
Ministry of Education
notification**

Among the key school education reforms instituted by the UPA government as part of the Right to Education were Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) and a ‘no detention’ policy up to Class 8. Both sought to create a benign environment in school so that there was no pressure of final examinations and “standards” on the child. The CCE was to be executed from Class 6, in discrete steps throughout the year, which meant no scary final test of just academic achievement based on a year-long curriculum. Whether those reforms contributed to the current situation or not, the reality is that a significant number of students passing out of primary school do not have foundational numeracy and literacy. And they do not seem to catch up by the time they leave middle school. Recognising the gap in achieving learning outcomes, the NDA government sought to do away with the no detention policy, in 2019, leaving it to the appropriate State governments. The CCE was given up too.

But the COVID-19 pandemic intruded and made it impossible for schools to even consider detaining students. The recent notification of the Ministry of Education has removed the discretion given to State governments. It has mandated a final examination at the end of Class 5 and Class 8, which will assess a child's competence. If he or she is not found to be competent, the child will be re-examined after two months after additional instruction. If the child fails again, he or she will be detained. The rules say no child should be expelled before completing elementary education. Practical necessity is driving this change in norms. Steps do need to be taken to address the gap in the learning outcomes achievement. An educated, capable and skilled population is needed to reap the demographic dividend. It takes an entire neighbourhood to educate a child, not just the school and parents. The dismal situation in learning outcomes is a collective failure of society that needs to be addressed. But it would take a lot more than this particular change in policy to trigger a turnaround.

CBSE-affiliated and other private schools can easily implement the new policy. However, for some States, it will be a political hot potato. Private schools should not use this as an excuse to expel poor performing students — safeguards would be needed. A sad consequence of the policy is that it brings back a single final examination as an arbiter of a child's promotion or detention. While NEET or the JEE may be taken as special cases applying to extremely competitive professions, to bring back one final test at the school level is a regression. The National Education Policy 2020, for instance, wants to replace summative assessment with formative, and promote self and peer assessments. It promises a “holistic, 360-degree, multidimensional progress report card” detailing the “progress and the uniqueness of each student”. The new detention policy does not reflect the NEP's spirit.

Summary

The passage discusses reforms in school education, focusing on the evolution and impact of policies like Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) and the no-detention policy. Initially introduced by the UPA government to reduce exam pressure and foster a supportive environment, these reforms faced criticism for not improving foundational literacy and numeracy skills. The NDA government reversed the no-detention policy in 2019, and a recent notification mandates final examinations for Class 5 and Class 8 students, with the possibility of detention for those failing the tests. While practical necessity drives these changes, the policy's reliance on single final exams contradicts the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which advocates formative assessments and holistic student progress. The passage highlights the need for collective efforts to improve learning outcomes while cautioning against potential pitfalls of the new policy, such as increased student expulsions and undermining NEP's objectives.

The tone of the passage is analytical and cautiously critical. It objectively evaluates the policies' rationale and outcomes while expressing concerns about their alignment with broader educational goals.

Reading Comprehension

Based on the above passage, answer the following questions:

Question 1:

How does the new detention policy conflict with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020?

- a) It disregards the NEP's focus on holistic and multidimensional progress reports.**
- b) It eliminates all forms of formative assessments in schools.**
- c) It mandates the expulsion of underperforming students.**
- d) It shifts focus from foundational literacy to competitive exam preparation.**
- e) None of the above**

Question 2:

What does the passage suggest about the societal role in addressing poor learning outcomes?

- a) It is primarily the responsibility of schools and teachers.**
- b) Parents and schools should collaborate more closely.**
- c) Society as a whole shares the responsibility for improving learning outcomes.**
- d) Governments alone should enforce stricter educational policies.**
- e) None of the above**

Question 3:

What potential issue does the passage raise regarding private schools under the new policy?

- a) They may reject implementing the policy due to political challenges.**
- b) They could use the policy to expel poor-performing students.**
- c) They might face logistical difficulties in conducting re-examinations.**
- d) They lack the resources to implement the policy effectively.**
- e) None of the above**

Article for Skimming

**Pandemic
preparedness:
Learning from
COVID-19 and Nipah
to build a resilient
future**

As we observe International Epidemic Preparedness Day on December 27, India stands at a crucial juncture in its journey towards building robust health security systems. The COVID-19 pandemic and recurring Nipah outbreaks in Kerala have provided valuable insights that can shape our approach to future health emergencies. Kerala's successful management of Nipah outbreaks since 2018 offers a compelling blueprint for handling emerging infectious diseases. The State's response demonstrates how local healthcare systems can effectively contain potential pandemic threats through rapid detection, systematic contact tracing, and coordinated public health measures. The Kerala model emphasises three critical elements: early detection through surveillance, swift response via established protocols, and proactive community engagement. The State's experience with the Nipah virus underscores that successful containment requires a multi-pronged approach. This includes strengthening healthcare infrastructure, establishing clear communication channels, and maintaining robust surveillance systems.

Importantly, Kerala's ability to detect and contain single-case spillovers demonstrates the necessity of vigilance, even during non-outbreak periods. The Nipah virus outbreaks in Kerala have highlighted the critical importance of engaging with communities, particularly those living in close proximity to animals, in health surveillance and preventive measures. One key lesson is the necessity of proactive education about zoonotic diseases. Communities must be informed not only about the risks associated with animal-to-human transmission but also about practical steps they can take to reduce these risks. This involves teaching them about the signs of illnesses in animals, the importance of proper sanitation, and safe practices related to handling animals and their products. Open lines of communication ensure that community members feel empowered and motivated to participate in health initiatives, thus fostering a collaborative approach to outbreak prevention. Another vital lesson is the importance of building trust through consistent engagement and involvement.

Establishing strong relationships with community leaders and local organisations can bridge gaps between health authorities and the public. These trusted figures can act as conduits to disseminate information and mobilise community action during health crises. Additionally, incorporating local knowledge, such as cultural practices and environmental connections to wildlife, can enhance disease prevention strategies. When communities feel their voices are heard and their input is valued, they are more likely to adhere to public health recommendations and cooperate with health authorities during outbreak responses, ultimately leading to more effective containment measures. The emergence of zoonotic diseases like Nipah and COVID-19 highlights the critical importance of the 'One Health' approach. This framework recognizes the interconnectedness of human health, animal health, and environmental factors. Kerala's establishment of the One Health Centre for Nipah Research and Resilience (KOH CNRR) represents a significant step toward implementing this approach.

Question 4:

What role does trust-building play in Kerala's public health strategy for managing outbreaks?

- a) It discourages local cultural practices to prevent zoonotic diseases.**
- b) It involves establishing relationships with community leaders for effective communication.**
- c) It focuses on health authorities taking unilateral decisions during outbreaks.**
- d) It minimizes the role of community input in health strategies.**
- e) None of the above**

Question 5:

What key factor contributes to Kerala's ability to detect and contain single-case spillovers of Nipah virus?

- a) Advanced medical research without public involvement.**
- b) Dependence on centralized health protocols.**
- c) Vigilance during both outbreak and non-outbreak periods.**
- d) Exclusive reliance on surveillance technologies.**
- e) None of the above**

Today's Descriptive Question:

- **Write an essay of 200 words about to ban on Smartphones in Schools.**

The ban on smartphones in schools is a contentious topic, with strong arguments on both sides. Proponents argue that banning smartphones minimizes distractions, allowing students to concentrate better on their studies. Smartphones can disrupt the learning environment, as notifications, social media, and games are tempting distractions that pull students' focus away from class activities. Additionally, excessive screen time can lead to mental health issues, reduced attention spans, and poorer academic performance. Limiting access to smartphones in schools encourages face-to-face interactions, helping students build communication and social skills.

On the other hand, opponents of the ban contend that smartphones can be valuable educational tools when used appropriately. They provide instant access to educational

resources, such as online research tools, language-learning apps, and interactive educational platforms. Furthermore, smartphones allow parents to stay connected with their children, ensuring their safety, especially in emergencies.

While smartphones offer undeniable educational benefits, the challenges they pose in terms of distraction and mental health are significant. A middle ground, such as regulated smartphone use or access only during designated times, may be an effective solution. This approach allows schools to harness the benefits of technology while minimizing its potential drawbacks, creating a balanced environment for learning and personal development.

- **Write a letter to the newspaper editor on how to stop crime in city.**

[Your Address]

[City, ZIP Code]

[Date]

The Editor,

[Newspaper's Name],

[Newspaper's Address],

[City, ZIP Code]

Subject: Urgent Measures to Combat Crime in Our City

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my concern over the alarming rise in crime across our city and to suggest proactive measures to help curb this issue. The recent surge in theft, vandalism, and violent offenses has not only created an atmosphere of fear but has also affected the daily lives and mental well-being of residents.

To effectively address crime, I propose a combination of increased police presence, community engagement, and technological improvements. By deploying additional patrols in high-risk areas, we can create a visible deterrent to criminal activities. Furthermore, engaging local communities to form neighborhood watch groups can enhance cooperation with law enforcement, creating a safer environment and empowering residents to take an active role in crime prevention.

Additionally, investing in security technology such as CCTV cameras and street lighting in poorly lit areas can significantly reduce the occurrence of crime. Programs that educate the youth about the consequences of crime and provide opportunities for employment and skill development can also address some of the root causes.

I hope the city administration, police force, and community leaders consider these steps to restore safety and harmony in our beloved city.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Name]

Match the column

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Sell ice to Eskimos | A. a lot of energy and enthusiasm |
| 2. Put a spanner in the works | B. staying informed about everything |
| 3. Full of beans | C. to persuade people to go against their best interests |
| 4. Keep an ear to the ground | D. putting efforts into something that is not worthwhile |
| 5. Run around in circles | E. to do something that prevents a plan from succeeding |

Answer:

1-c

2-e

3-a

4-b

5-d

Vocabulary

1. Benign:a
2. Permeate:
3. Exorbitant:
4. Discrete:
5. Efficacy:
6. Obsolete:
7. Intrusion:
8. Impediment:
9. Coerce:
10. Plummet:

Rc ans

1.

Answer: a) It disregards the NEP's focus on holistic and multidimensional progress reports.

Explanation:

Reference: "The new detention policy does not reflect the NEP's spirit... holistic, 360-degree, multidimensional progress report card."

The NEP 2020 emphasizes formative assessments, self and peer evaluations, and holistic progress reports, which are contradicted by the new detention policy's reliance on a single final exam.

b) Incorrect: Formative assessments are not explicitly eliminated but are overshadowed.

c) Incorrect: The rules specifically state that no child should be expelled before completing elementary education.

d) Incorrect: The policy does not explicitly shift focus to competitive exams.

2.

Answer: c) Society as a whole shares the responsibility for improving learning outcomes.

Explanation:

Reference: “The dismal situation in learning outcomes is a collective failure of society that needs to be addressed.”

The passage emphasizes that the dismal learning outcomes are a collective failure of society, requiring a joint effort from all stakeholders, not just schools and parents.

- a) Incorrect: Responsibility is not limited to schools and teachers.
- b) Incorrect: While collaboration is important, the passage highlights broader societal involvement.
- d) Incorrect: Government enforcement alone is insufficient to address systemic issues.

3.

Answer: b) They could use the policy to expel poor-performing students.

Explanation:

Reference: "Private schools should not use this as an excuse to expel poor-performing students — safeguards would be needed."

The passage warns against private schools using the new detention policy as an excuse to expel underperforming students, necessitating safeguards to prevent such practices.

a) Incorrect: Political challenges are more relevant for State governments, not private schools.

c) Incorrect: Logistical difficulties are not mentioned as a concern for private schools.

d) Incorrect: Private schools are well-equipped to implement the policy.

4.

Answer: b) It involves establishing relationships with community leaders for effective communication.

Explanation:

Reference: “Establishing strong relationships with community leaders... can bridge gaps between health authorities and the public.”

Building trust through engagement with community leaders helps bridge gaps between health authorities and the public, ensuring better cooperation during health crises.

a) Incorrect: Trust-building respects local practices while promoting safe health measures.

c) Incorrect: The strategy emphasizes collaboration, not unilateral decision-making.

d) Incorrect: Community input is essential in health strategies.

5.

Answer: c) Vigilance during both outbreak and non-outbreak periods.

Explanation:

Reference: “Kerala’s ability to detect and contain single-case spillovers demonstrates the necessity of vigilance, even during non-outbreak periods.”

The passage highlights Kerala’s continuous vigilance and robust surveillance systems as crucial in detecting and containing single-case spillovers, even in non-outbreak times.

a) Incorrect: The success relies on a multi-pronged approach, including public involvement.

b) Incorrect: Kerala’s strategy includes local systems, not just centralized protocols.

d) Incorrect: Technology is part of the solution but not the sole factor.

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