

Headoffice:
H.No-108 1st Floor, Opp Meghna's,
near Barowari Bus Stop,
Uzanbaazar Guwahati-01, Assam



Contact No: 88118 77068 91016 86625
93651 35375
csapasssam@gmail.com

CIVIL SERVICES ACHIEVERS' POINT

A ONE STOP SOLUTION FOR UPSC/APSC/SSC & BANKING

THE ASSAM TRIBUNE ANALYSIS

DATE - 27th 2021

For Preliminary and Mains examination

As per new Pattern of APSC

(Also useful for UPSC and other State level government examinations)

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Leadership through knowledge...

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EDITORIALS

1. Education under pandemic threat (GS 3 – Education related)
2. Can Assamese, indigenous tribes restore ties? (GS 5 – Society related)



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Education under pandemic threat

- The year 2020 will remain on record as the deadliest year for the entire world. Covid-19 with its new variants has stepped into our life with new threats. Almost all the countries, except a few, have received a mortal punch from the deadly virus.
- India is no exception. Despite our pride in the areas of science and technology, health care and agriculture, bioinformatics and space research, our stark poverty as regards curative medicines against the novel coronavirus has proved to be quite unmanageable.
- Vaccine for combating the virus has brought in some smiles in our faces. But for insufficient supply of oxygen, many patients have died across the country. Countries taking pride in sending space missions have proved to be helpless in front of the onslaught of the new pandemic.
- One positive point of the pandemic is that the world has become united in the fight against a common enemy.
- All countries have also adopted similar preventive measures like social distancing, sanitization, use of masks and other such measures.
- The Government of India has also acted quite alacritously to save its citizens from the deadly jaws of the pandemic. "A stitch in time saves nine" — this adage was fully put to action by the Government of India, despite many odds and failures. The lockdown that started from March 25, 2020 is still continuing in a different garb.

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- Millions of people have lost their employment. Exodus from one State to another on foot, walking thousands of kilometres, and cruel deaths on the way, will remain in history as one of the darkest of our lives.
- The general administration has started working within the advisory preventive norms, and the corporate sector has also started functioning for the larger interest of the country. But our academic institutions are practically in a state of torpor, with uncertainty all around.
- Such temporary conversions will have to be accepted for larger social interests. But the academic interest of the student community cannot be sidelined at any cost. In the aged. Many institutions have started online teaching in the form of one- way traffic.
- What is being done is quite unavoidable. But the head count of the deprived ones will make us sit up. If we take the population pattern of the country, 70 per cent people are from the rural and agricultural background. The same figure relates to our student population too.
- A large number of our students are from rural areas. Most of them are without a smartphone. Some of them cannot have a mobile phone for lack of electricity in their villages. The same situation largely prevails in city areas too.
- The population of the poorest sections of cities is also equally deplorable.
- The students of non-government schools have got some benefit from online teaching initiated by the secondary authorities. Students of non- government schools, run by some individuals or trusts, by and large, come from the well-to-do sections of the society.
- They can afford smart- phones and other gadgets for smooth internet connectivity. But most of the students from the government schools, having mid-day meal facilities, are deprived of similar facilities. Only 20 per cent of them may have smartphones and internet connectivity.
- Under the situation, we are prone to think, what western countries, classes in universities and colleges are being held online. Not a single student has been deprived of the academic need in any level. In our country also, the same method has been adopted.
- But if we take a head count of the beneficiaries in India, we are sure to get only 20 out of 100. The education sector, the most important part of people's all-pervasive social life, is one of the worst sufferers.
- Since March 25, The education sector is one of the worst sufferers. Regular classes are suspended, almost sine die. In most cases, classes are being held in a slipshod manner, and

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the same is still continuing, leading to colossal academic loss to the students ever is done is praise-worthy, but whatever is yet to be done is enormously fearful.

- To get out of the situation, we will have to start normal classes within the advisory parameters. Even by honouring the latest SOP of the Government of Assam, we can address the academic stand-off by redesigning our class routines, all for a new systemic shift.
- This redesigning will have to be subject-specific and purpose specific. – 2
- In 2020 regular classes in the educational institutions are suspended, almost sine die. In most cases, classes are being held in a slipshod manner, and the same is still continuing, leading to colossal academic loss to the students.
- For fear of the pandemic, academic institutions are being kept isolated from the students. However, online delivery of classroom teaching is being encouraged in a city is also equally deplorable. Their living conditions are pitiable.
- The parents work as daily or monthly workers; and their children are sent to Government schools. Have these students received the benefit of online education? It is a matter to be discussed in detail. Even if we look at the urban education scenario, we will have two broad pictures — Government schools and non government schools.
- Normally we teach all subjects, covering the whole day, from morning to evening. redesigning, we will have to concentrate on specific subjects, without neglecting any subject whatsoever. For example, on Monday, let us teach only two subjects say Mathematics and Economics; on Tuesday, two subjects like Chemistry and Political Science, and on Wednesday, Physics and languages and so on.
- Every subject will have to have at least three classes from 9 am till and three classes in the evening from 1 pm to 4 pm. In colleges, every core subject has at least three teachers. Some colleges have 4-5 teachers; while some colleges have even more. So, at least 3-4 classes in each subject can be very easily held.
- Examinations ought to be held within the SOP norms with some permissible relaxations. Apart from the online mode, we should go offline as well to cover every section of the student community. Digitalization of our academic life has already started, and we have no other alternative but to walk hand in hand with the transition to keep ourselves relevant.

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- In the colleges, having two or three streams, redesigning of their class routines within the same SOP can also be done. Each academic stream will have its redesigned class routines. Our teacher friends are sitting idle at home, while our and college-going children are fed up with inertia, resulting in colossal loss and devastation to our academic and Social lives.
- Any departure from our normal working style must be appreciated in view of the changed context brought in by the deadly pandemic. The style of holding examinations, now in a transitional phase, may be instituted within Covid-related mandatories.
- We have had enough dances in our election campaigns. Now we are not ready to dance to the tune of Covid. We are passing through a transitional shift in our education spectrum, and we must welcome new values in the sector.

Can Assamese, indigenous tribes restore ties?

- Dimbadhar Sarma, the late father of this writer, had strong connections with and lived in close association with a number of indigenous tribes of the North-east. He was from the Sivasagar district in upper Assam, specifically Meleng Kotoky Gaon.
- The 'Kotoky' forefathers served as intermediaries between various tribal communities and the Ahom administration.
- The author's father served from a very young age in places like Pasighat, Along and Tezu, when the British ruled India. Both parents communicated fluently in the Gallong and Minyong languages.
- As children, this writer learned those languages too, but was never anywhere near as proficient.

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- Yours truly's father learned much from his tribal associates and maintained a lifestyle influenced by their knowledge and ways. He would often be seen with his trusty double-barrelled shotgun slung across his back, hiking through the hills.
- As children, this too grew up with a zeal for hunting and fishing around the Daupani forest reserves, just north of Sadiya. Historical associations between the Assamese and indigenous tribes were cordial, and community relationships were strong.
- Through centuries, a strong and prosperous Assam served as a buffer for all indigenous people of the North-east. By protecting them from foreign aggression, the Assamese and indigenous tribes cooperated to preserve their culture, traditions, identity and values throughout the region.
- But, ultimately this buffer broke down. If one were to try to pinpoint when exactly in history, it was likely the Yandaboo Treaty of 1826, under which Assam lost its independence.
- Deteriorating relations and sporadic violent engagements with the British throughout the region in the following decades erupted in the first open conflict between the Angami Nagas and the British in 1872. Other violent anti-British actions followed.
- The fact that the Assamese buffer stood for centuries was due to the cooperation between the Assamese and indigenous tribes.
- The protection of Assam and the surrounding lands began with initiatives taken by Ahom king Hso-Pem-Hpa, who ruled during the middle of the 15th century.
- After ascending the throne, the king extended his friendship to Khunbao, a visiting Naga chief. During that visit, the king noticed that his youngest queen liked the Naga chief.
- To strengthen relations between the Assamese and Khunbao's people, king Hso-Pem-Hpa presented his young queen to the Naga chief, who took her back to his village in the hills.
- Subsequently, the couple had a son they named Kan-Seng. Life in the hills was hard, and the Naga chief eventually sent the queen back to live in the Ahom kingdom along with their son.
- On the death of Hso-Pem-Hpa, his son ascended the throne as the new Ahom king. Kan-Seng, mean while, had grown into a strapping young man with a great physique and fighting skills.
- Until this time, here were two ministries in the Ahom administration, one known as Buragohain and the other Bargohain.
- To maintain and strengthen relations that his father built between the Assamese and indigenous tribes, the new king sought to elevate Kanseng to a high position within the Ahom

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administration. Accordingly, he created a third ministry called Barpatra Gohain and appointed Kanseng, the son of the Naga chief, as the first Barpatra Gohain.

- All three ministries were equal in status, but in later years, the office of the Barpatra Gohain became more powerful and influential. Like Kan-Seng, many other indigenous tribe governors and generals worked with the Assamese to protect Assam and the Northeastern region from outside aggressors.
- Among them was a Naga Barbaruah, the commander of an Ahom army that escorted Raja Joy Singh of Manipur back to his country, which had been occupied by the Burmese. Cowed by the size of the Ahom army, the Burmese withdrew from Manipur and Raja Joy Singh was reinstated as ruler of his country.
- Another such indigenous leader was Chora Konwar, son of Ao Gohain. He was appointed as Barbaruah to fight against the Muslims. He also fought against the Doflas.
- In 1837, the Khamti and Singpho tribes rose in revolt alongside the Assamese, under the leadership of Ranua Gohain, against the British occupation of Sadiya.
- The combined forces attacked the British military post and killed 80 people, including a Colonel White who was in charge of the British force. Given Assam's fertile land and immense natural resources, the British doubled down on their efforts to cement their occupancy in the region.
- To prevent further joint revolts by the Assamese and indigenous tribes, and disruption to the flow of resources from Assam to the United Kingdom, the British resorted to their familiar playbook of divide and conquer. In this, they largely succeeded, as they did throughout India.
- The rifts created then endure to this day. After Independence, the Government of India largely continued the British policy in the North-east.
- These policies were largely focused on exploiting the region's resources rather than the progress of the Assamese and indigenous tribes, and encouraging demographic change an influx of non-indigenous into the region.
- From the experiences of small independent Mohawk nations in North America, it is proven that the creation of political units is not enough to ensure financial and cultural success for the people. Instead, the empowerment of finance and culture are market driven in today's world.

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- Given this, there may be opportunities for Northeastern indigenous tribes and the Assamese to restore historical relations and open up the Brahmaputra valley market to empower all people culturally and ultimately financially.
- This writer recently watched a music video by Surekha Chhetri, a Nepali artiste. The video, featuring Nepali culture, lifestyle, music, and costumes is named Nepali Jodio Axomiya Moi, in an unapologetic assertion of the strong historical association between the Nepalese and Assamese people.
- This empowers and enriches both sides culturally. Could endeavours not only cultural, but also in education, business, technology, etc. that bridge the Assamese and indigenous tribes not open avenues to business and financial success in the Brahmaputra valley market for all?

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