

Class: XI

Subject : English

Assignment No. 2

1. Read the passage given below and answer the questions:

1. Considering no country succeeded in its Mars mission in the first attempt, if Mangalyaan does reach the Red Planet's orbit late next year, it would be a spectacular achievement for India's scientists without any parallel in the world.

2. Space ventures are risky since no one can go up there and set things right in the wake of an unforeseen eventuality. Even though Indian scientists have factored in the experiences of previous Mars missions by other countries, there is an element of uncertainty around Mangalyaan. Having said that, let us all hope that every manoeuvre planned by our scientists does indeed go ahead without any hitch and the mission is a grand success.

3. Leave aside the probable success or possible failure. The debate over the righteousness of our investments in space ventures has reared up again. Yesterday, when thunderous applause rent the air, there were many ambivalent voices qualifying their full-throated appreciation for our scientists with loud skepticism of whether India as a nation should be proud of the Mars Mission at all. Their argument: only the few who have roof over their heads and food in their stomachs can feel elated; for the many poor and hungry Indians, the space exploration means next to nothing.

4. I think the argument is flawed.

5. True, India is one of the poorest countries in the world. Many human development indices are very bad. Our public infrastructure leaves a lot to be desired. Malnutrition is rampant and many lives are lost to diseases caused by poor hygiene. The standard of living for a huge majority of Indians is poor. We are short of food, housing, water, power, etc. Many of our cities lack even a few kilometers of good motorable roads. The list is endless.

6. But on the other side, India is a vast country with a huge number of people. We are among the most talented in the world -- best scientists, best engineers, best doctors, best teachers... Some of the best professionals in foreign countries are of Indian origin.

7. Why then the paradox? How did we put together the Mars Mission in 15 months when we take years to build a flyover? Why are some of the world's complicated problems easily solved by our professionals, but closer home, simpler problems remain unresolved? Why do we have excess food rotting in godowns when millions of people are hungry?

8. The reasons are well known.

9. To say that the Rs 450 crore spent on Mars Mission (comparatively a small amount) should have been spent on feeding the poor, is mixing up issues. If many Indians are hungry and homeless, if India has poor public infrastructure, it's not because Indian space scientists are doing their job.

10. If one has to list out public expenditures that yield no fruits at all -- tangible or intangible -- it's endless. On the contrary, our expenditure for space studies has raised the quality of human lives manifold. We have made stellar progress in telecommunications and understanding weather patterns. The knowledge our scientists have acquired has led to beneficial ripple effects. For example, the farming sector has gained from our better understanding of climate changes. During the recent Phailin cyclone, India didn't have to depend on the West, instead our scientists were able to save hundreds of thousands of lives. We are enjoying live telecasts and mobile communication thanks to the strides we have made in satellite technology.

11. The contribution of our scientists in other areas is no less. For example, advances in farming techniques have yielded better crops in quality and quantity. But in spite of that, if we have millions of hungry stomachs, then we all know where the problem is.

12. I don't wish to digress from the topic. But we will get a hint of where the problem lies if we see in which areas we are lagging and in which areas we are making progress. There is a clear inverse relationship between progress and partisan political involvement. We seem to make great strides in areas which are free of politicking.

13. That's why we have the best nutritionists and doctors, but our health indices are low. That is why we have impressive computer software parks housing the best of our engineers, but outside there are overflowing drains and potholed roads. That is why we could send a craft to Mars but we struggle to ensure power or water for our people.

1. (a) On the basis of your reading the passage answer the questions that follow it :
 - (i) Which achievement is the author talking about?
 - (ii) How does Indian space scientist contribute to our progress?
 - (iii) What Problem is the author talking about?
 - (iv) How are many lives lost?
 - (v) Why does the author say that the Indians are the most talented in the world?
 - (vi) What amount of money is spent on the mars mission?
1. (b) Find words from the passage which mean the same as the following:
 - (i) Having mixed feelings about something or someone (para3)
 - (ii) Spreading (para5)
 - (iii) Contradiction (para7)
 - (iv) Real (para10)
2. As Veer, the famous fitness expert, design a poster to make people aware about the health problem due to obesity in not more than 50 words.
3. You are the Art In-Charge of your school. Write a letter in about 120-150 words to Art and Craft Store, to supply some paints (oil and water colours), chart papers, brushes and crayon.

4. Edit the passage
- Millions of rupees has been spent on (a)
- childcare in the country, In India, according of (b)
- UNICEF statistics, 53% of most children are (c)
- malnourished. The reasons is not far. (d)
- Adequate mother or childcare in (e)
- terms of excess to health facilities, safe drinking (f)
- water, environmental sanitation or literacy (g)
- is neither adequate not in most cases available. (h)
5. Why does the author aver that the growth of world population is one of the strongest factors distorting the future of human society?
6. Give the character sketch of Crocker-Harris.
7. What is the poet's feeling towards childhood?
8. What do you understand of Einstein's nature from his conversations with his teachers?
9. Is drama a good medium of conveying a social message? Discuss in reference to the play 'Mother's Day'.

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