



An Institute for Civil Services

**IAS TOPPER'S**

**TEST COPY**

**TEGHBIR SINGH SANDHU**

**Rank - 183**

**Essay**



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Roll No. \_\_\_\_\_

**ESSAY****Time Allowed: 3 hrs.****Max. Marks: 250*****Instructions to Candidate***

- Both sections are compulsory.
- Attempt an essay from each section.
- Each essay carries 125 marks.
- Write each essay in about 1000-1200 words.
- After finishing the first essay, attempt the next on a fresh Page.
- Any page left blank in the answer-book must be crossed out clearly.

**(Examiner will pay special attention to the candidate's grasp of his/her material, its relevance to the subject chosen, and to his/ her ability to think constructively and to present his/her ideas concisely, logically and effectively).**

**Remarks**Name TEGHBIR SINGH SANDHU

Mobile No. \_\_\_\_\_

1. Invigilator Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

2. Invigilator Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Teghbir

**SECTION - A**

1. Health is not valued till sickness comes.
2. Everything is funny, as long as it is happening to somebody else.
3. Where words fail, music speaks.
4. Mistakes are always forgivable, if one has the courage to admit them.

**SECTION - B**

1. The question isn't who is going to let me; it's who is going to stop me.
2. Achieving life is not the equivalent of avoiding death.
3. The ladder of success is best climbed by stepping on the rungs of opportunity.
4. Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake.

**Remarks**

1. Health is not valued till sickness comes.

Humans and the institutions made out of them are often called reactionary. The design of our mental faculties have evolved in such a way, that we, as humans respond and grapple very well with the changes happening over a short period of time, e.g. seconds, hours, or even overnight, but spread this change over a large time frame, say months and years, not only are we unable to fathom what is happening, we also find grappling with this change, an unmountable challenge. One such aspect of human life is health. Health of a structure, can be understood as an indicator of this structure's well-being or its efficiency in doing its tasks. In common parlance, health is often used in individualistic sense, e.g. health of XYZ person, but the concept of health spans ~~other~~ roughly all constructs of human life e.g. the governance and administrative ~~health~~, political life, societal institutions, the environment in which we live, and so on. Not only is this vulnerable to

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constant attacks from external agents, but is also vulnerable from internal weaknesses, which ultimately decays this structure. And herein lies the concept of sickness. Since sickness takes time to set in, and rob us of our health, we put it on the back-burner, thus escaping our attention. This mechanism of not attaching importance to small changes in health, ultimately causes terminal sickness and hubris.

One of the constant themes and recurrent patterns while studying history is the upheavals caused by invaders on empires. The Greek and Roman empires were dismantled by forces within and outside, Alexander invaded the whole world taking advantage of the fact that empires and its rulers are susceptible to ignoring the health of its military, administrative structures and societal institutions, and hence prone to weaknesses. Closer home, Indian history too provide numerous such examples. But its not as if the realization of that not valuing health until sickness strikes will eventually lead to doom. Let us contrast the effect of invading colonial forces on two great Asian empires: Mughals & Japanese empire.

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While both ignored the internal health of their empires, the fact that Japanese put themselves on course-correction through Meiji restoration, while the Mughals fell to ruins, presents us with the best possible motivation of valuing the health of our societal structures. Japan to this day, presents a shining example of modern nation state, while India still recovers from its colonial hangover.

Not only history, but our present day to day political ~~fact~~ happenings act as a stark reminder to ~~not~~ ignoring the health of our societal structures. Every 5 years, we hear the word : anti-incumbency factor repeated over and over again. Ruling political class find it very tough to hold on to their government, and this is a direct outcome of not paying heed to the decay of the health of administration, policies and governance structures. Those who realise this and make amends are ultimately able to win back their seats while others lose. Case in point is the health of our farm sector in 2004-09 UPA-1 regime. With back to back droughts in 2005 & 2006, causing farm distress and suicides. The government of the day only realised their faults during

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the election year of 2008-09. With proper implementation of schemes such as MGNREGA, farm loan waiver, and modernisation policies, the ruling political class was able to fix their base electorate, which played a huge role in their 2009 winning bid. Hence, this goes to ~~improve~~ that valuing the health of our societal structures is very important, and by doing it, a lot of welfare can be done.

Closely linked with the health of our political structure, is the health of our societal institutions. Indian renaissance produced leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, I C Vidyasagar etc who spearheaded the movement against the decay of our society. Without proper attention, society has a tendency to get influenced by internal, external factors, which produce outcomes that ultimately break the society into various chinks and halves. evils like sati, child marriage, untouchability remained in our society for so long, simply because they went unchallenged and unnoticed by the society. In present context too, society is facing a lot of challenges from the prevalent economic and global system, which

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has led to members of society becoming more individualistic, selfish, greedy and the society overall becoming more prone to inequality. The sickness is setting in, slowly but strongly, and it would require collaborative efforts to contain it. First step in countering is making people aware of the decaying health of our institutions, and ultimately making them value it.

Closely Apart from society, many other aspects of human life are vulnerable to the problem of not valuing their health. Under the influence of western traditions, our cultural health is worsening. Men and women today barely understand their folk traditions, folk language and barely go through their folk literature. An individual's spiritual health is also worsening, particularly due to time shortages, work pressures and probably no motivation to explore this side of human life. But what is appalling is the no regard given in which we pollute our environment in day to day life. We sleep under ACs, work in front of computers, travel in diesel guzzling transport and so on, all activities which are detrimental to the health of our environment.

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World leaders unite on annual basis to understand the magnitude of this problem, and probably to make people aware of our degrading environment. At home, our PM has spearheaded efforts like SWACH BHARAT, UJALA LED scheme and so on, mainly with the aim of making people value our env. health. Average temperatures have already risen  $2^{\circ}\text{C}$  above pre-industrial revolution temperature and going forward, the limit on this increase will be directly proportional to the value we attach to our environment's health.

The above given dimensions of vis-a-vis the health of human structures are all important and pertinent, but are secondary to an individual's own personal health. A relevant indicator which clearly shows how much Indians value their own health is the penetration of health insurance. Even after well structured schemes such as RSBY, insurance penetration stands at 11% of the population, and that too dominantly in urban areas. The idea of having a family doctor and going for biannual checkups (prevalent in developed countries like US etc) is a

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fiction in India. We like to go to one doctor, only when we experience symptoms of some sickness. Added to this is the shambolic state of our preventive health care system. Making people value their health requires much more than spending money on XYZ schemes, framing policies. It requires a behavioural change. People will not stop open defecation unless they are informed, educated and communicated the benefits of not defecating in the open. In other words, making them value health is as important as ~~making~~ getting them skilled and providing a job.

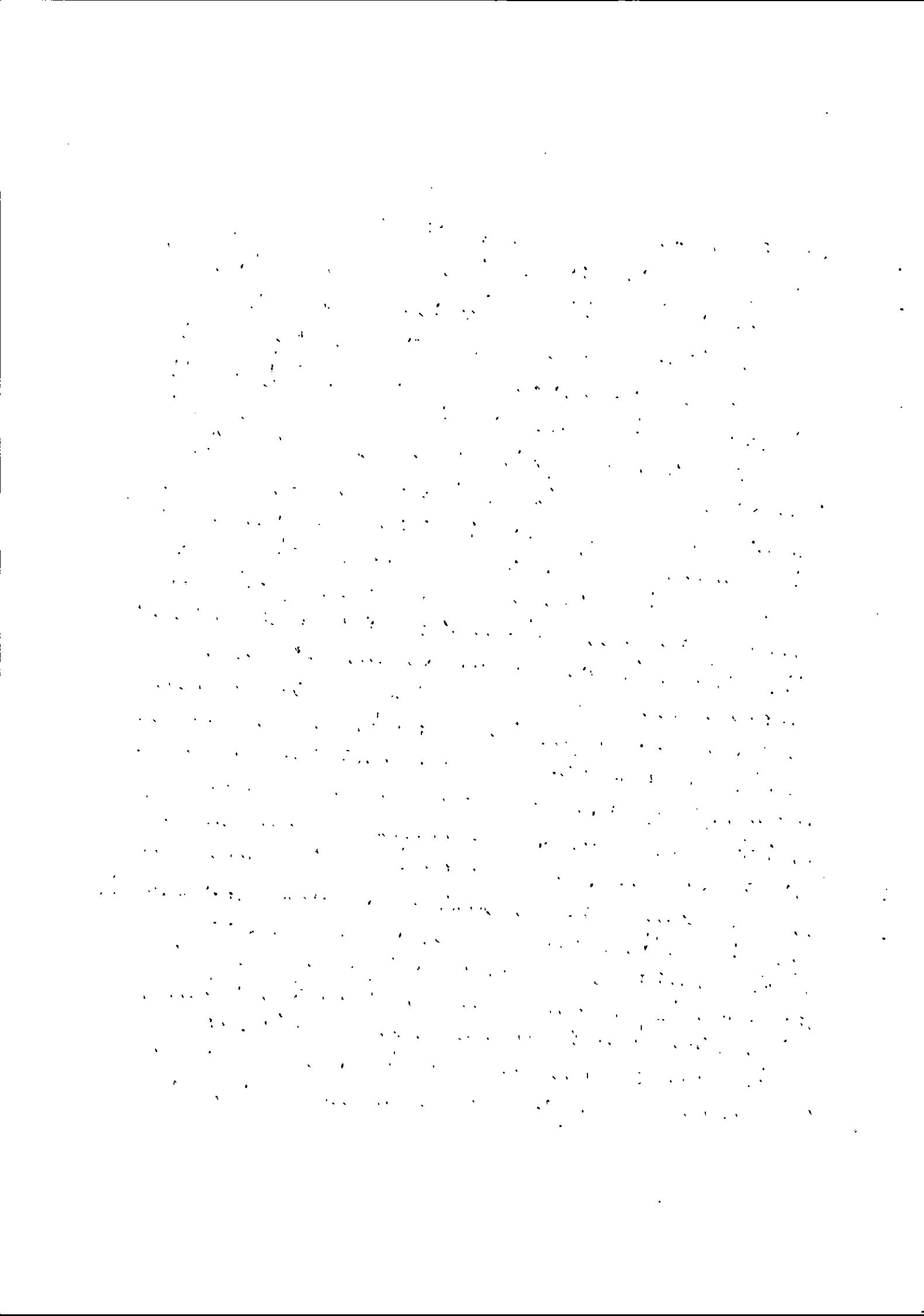
All these above written examples constantly bring home the point that not valuing health leads to disastrous consequences, and from time immemorial humans are culpable of neglecting their own personal health as well as the health of their societal constructs. The health of our political discourse is as important as the health of our societal institutions and environment. We, as humans constantly need to guard against sickness afflicting the above mentioned structures, and this is only possible if we value their health.

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2. Ladder of success is best climbed by stepping on rungs of opportunity.

The philosophy of 'Carpe Diem', meaning seize the day, as espoused by the late Robin Williams in the critically acclaimed movie 'Dead Poets Society' resonates deeply with Ayn Rand's philosophy, as mentioned in the title of this essay. The river of life in ~~per~~ its natural flow, presents us with umpteen moments of opportunity, and those who seize upon such moments scale the ladder of success, while the rest sink in the abyss of regret. This essay while carefully reviewing examples across the time scale and social spectrum emphatically reinforces Ms. Rand's words on success and the path to it. Success, while meaningless as an abstract construct, acquires meaning when tied to an objective or a goal. Measures of success can be as small as completing one daily task to as huge as colonizing Mars. Opportunities on the other hand are moments of risk wrapped with a silver lining. Opportunities require us to identify them, act on them while taking a leap of faith. Amidst all this, is the concept of a mentor, who/which enables us to

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identify such moments and motivates us to act on them. Such a mentor was Ramakant Achrekar for Sachin Tendulkar, and inner conscience for Gautam Buddha.

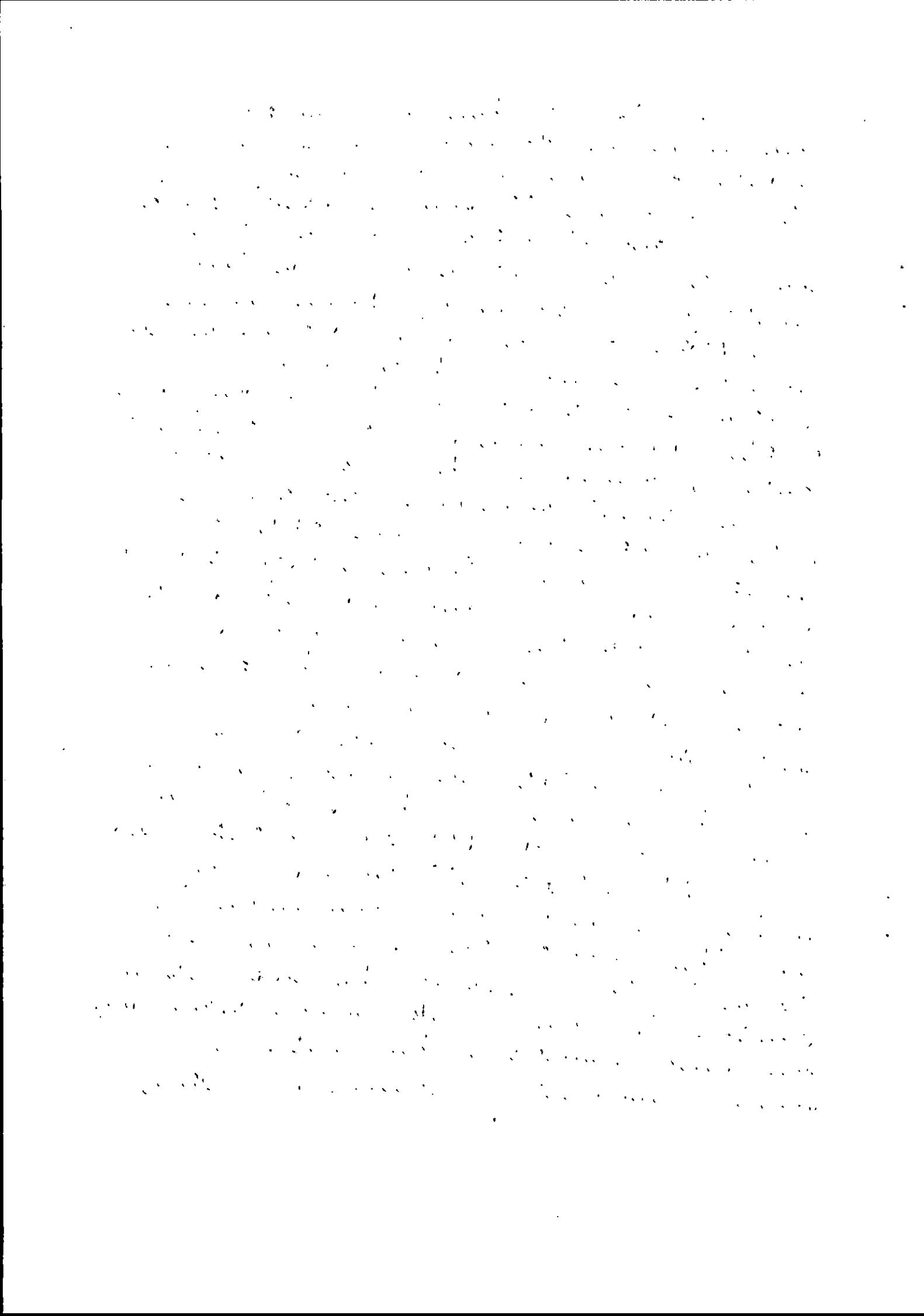
Indian History is replete with examples wherein a certain individual identified an opportunity and made use of it, to achieve his desired goal. The founder of Mauryan Empire: Chandragupta Maurya, was one such individual. Mentored by Chanakya, Chandragupta took advantage of the repressive taxation system of Nandas, instigated people against Dhana Nanda, and destroyed his empire. When misery was looking in his face in the form of Alexander, he pushed for all Indian kingdoms to unite under a single banner, and hence established a pan-Indian empire called the Mauryan empire. It is often said that luck favors the brave, and it certainly did favor Chandragupta, as Alexander got sick and retreated. The above example shows how successful people identify moments, which are filled with inherent risks, and which if taken advantage of, become moments of opportunity. Chandragupta Maurya didn't become emperor in one day, but he got incremental success, akin to climbing a ladder, where each rung are milestones, signifying opportunities.

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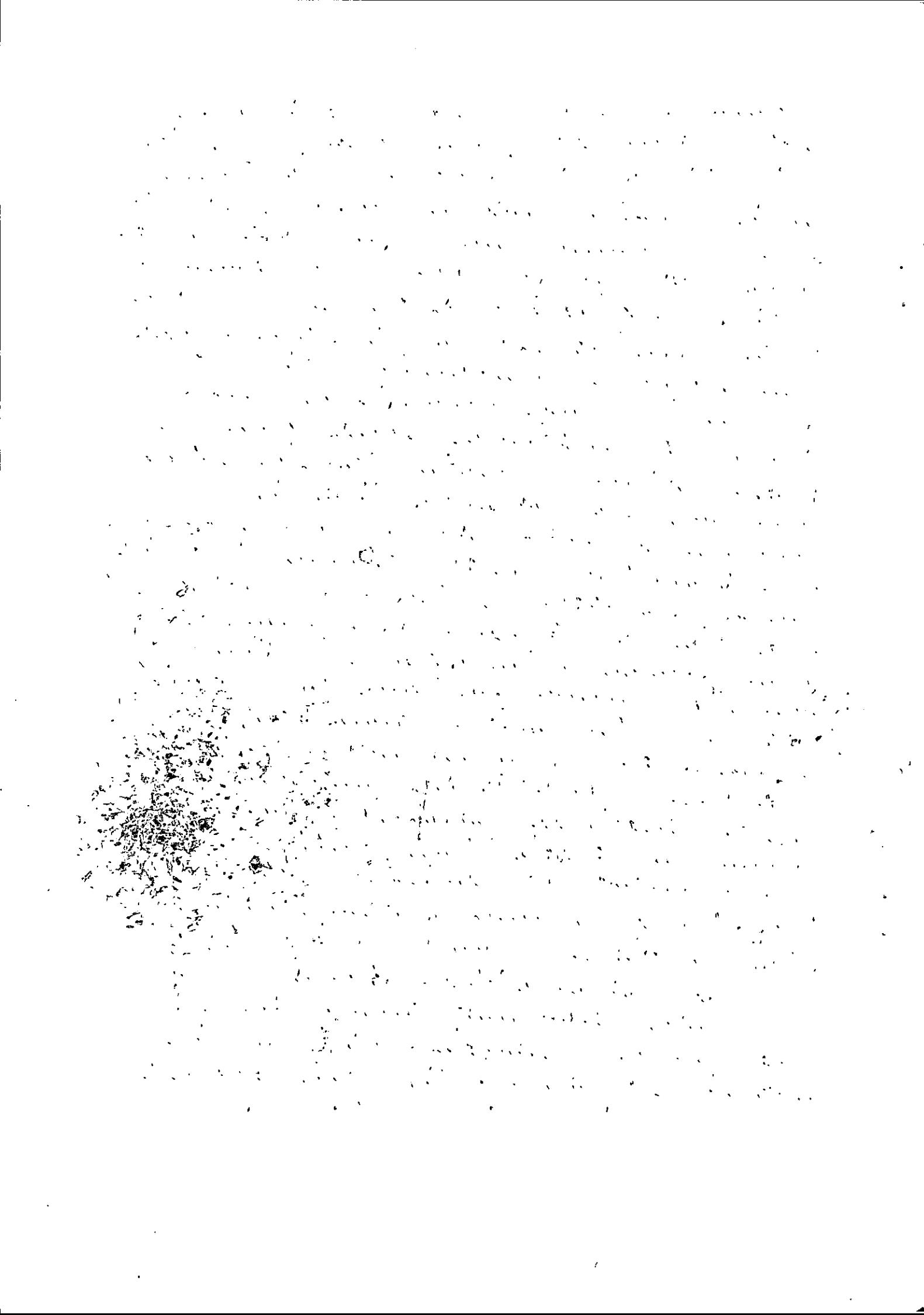
But it's not that the examples are only historical, at current times<sup>too</sup> have lots of examples to offer. The success of Arvind Kejriwal in Indian political sphere is one such example. Presently Delhi Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal took advantage of electorate's anger towards corruption in the Indian political class, and Arvind ~~was~~ with his message of simplicity and straight forwardness, won people's heart and votes. It's pertinent here to mention the role of Anna Hazare, who ~~had~~ mentored Mr. Kejriwal and developed his personal philosophy of transparency and simplicity. Being of exams such as 2G, Commonwealth games etc. presented Mr. Kejriwal with an opportunity, and he took the political plunge to establish himself as the chief Minister of Delhi. The success was incremental, one rung at a time, but the underlying theme is of taking advantage of the opportunity presented.

The examples we have seen until now have been individualistic, but the concept mentioned by Ms. Rand in the title of the essay, easily stretches to new and unique dimensions. One such example is the success of Indian democracy. Indian mainland,



has only ever seen prior to our colonial independence, a crude form of democracy as prevalent in the Nilly Kingdoms during Rig Vedic period. For thousands of years after that, India ~~had~~ only witnessed Monarchy and hence we can forgive the mutineers of 1857 swat of wanting to establish Mughal raj again. But within a span of 100 years after 1857, the feeling of being governed by a democratic government grew among people. Championed or mentored by Gandhiji's words, our freedom leaders took advantage of these moments, and in 1947 established India as a democratic republic. Leaders such as Nehru, Patel, Ambedkar etc. knew that the path to success for the Indian nation depended upon acting on this moment, which might be risky, as India had never experienced democracy, but was surely in the Indian people's best interests. The past 70 years and the success of Indian democracy have proved our freedom leaders right. While there are still more ~~ladd~~ surges to climb, but India has surely stepped on its ladder of success. The workings of Indian democracy also throws up unique moments, which

require a certain leap of faith to be taken advantage of. The Green revolution 1966-1967 is one such example. Faced with back to back droughts in '64 & '65, Indian agriculture was in its worst slump, leading to food shortages in the country. Further accentuating the problem was the PL-480 food imports from US, which had led to severe weakening of the rupee & BOP crisis. Such moments of crisis throw up exceptional leaders, and for India it was Agriculture Minister C. Subramaniam. He identified that this moment of crisis can be turned around, and India can be put towards the path of success. He appointed M.S. Swaminathan and Norman Borlaug as his advisors and started a turnaround in Indian agriculture, which has come to be known as Green Revolution. Today India is a food surplus & world leader in wheat and rice, and it has all been possible due to exceptional leadership of above mentioned people. Face ~~taken~~ in the face of widespread criticism, they identified the way towards success, leading India to plant a ~~firm~~ <sup>firm</sup> footing on it. The International sphere is also one such ~~exam~~ area, which throws up unique examples. 2015 was the watershed year of the fight against



climate change <sup>and their people</sup> begged on by their inner conscience, world leaders united against the common enemy of climate change and produced a successful summit known as the Paris summit.

World leaders identified that the moment to act against climate change decisively is upon them, much like Chandragupta decided against Dhana Xanda. Intense discussions have produced an outstanding climate deal, which will go a long way in making our planet sustainable. If implemented earnestly by member nations, future generation would look back at 2015 Paris summit as the moment when the rungs of opportunity were successfully identified and climbed.

Successful examples, although teach us a lot, but many valuable lessons can also be learnt from the unsuccessful ones. Historically the reign of Ranjit Singh is one such example. Punjab or the Khalsa empire was the last Indian empire to be annexed and assimilated by the Britishers in their colonial empire, and major reason of this is the formidable leadership of Ranjit Singh. But, he was constrained to keep his empire only towards the western side of Satluj, and he

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overlooked various opportunities to tackle the British head on and break the Satluj barrier. Although the moments of opportunity were successfully identified by him and his generals, but the failure of to act on it and the lack of mentorship proved fatal to for the Khalsa empire. Within 10 years of Ranjit Singh's death, his wife was exiled to Myanmar, children sent to England and Khalsa empire vanished. Curiously not only historically our society also suffers from the similar malaise of lack of leadership and failing to act on moments of opportunity to reform itself. Over the years, many bad customs and practices get assimilated into our society such as triple talag, child marriage, Sati etc. Our society today is vigorously calling for reform, and the moment is opportune for us to act on it, and set the basis of our society towards a successful path.

Hence, we see from a multitude of examples across the temporal and sectional dimensions, that the moments of opportunity present themselves in various forms, and a successful person, guided by an able mentor, will identify such moments and climb the ladder of success.

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