

**Q.3. Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow:**

The majority of people have always lived simply, and most of humanity still struggles on a daily basis to eke out a meager existence under dire circumstances. Only in affluent industrialized countries do people have the luxury of more goods and services than they need to survive. On the basis of material wealth, North Americans and Europeans should be the happiest people on earth, but according to the 2012 Happy Planet Index (HPI), they are not. Surprisingly, what had begun as an experimental lifestyle evolved into a quiet revolution that spread the word through books such as Duane Elgin's best-selling *Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life that is Outwardly Simple Inwardly Rich* (1981), as well as numerous magazines, alternative communities of the like-minded, and later, Internet websites. Combined with a growing awareness of the environmental consequences of consumerism, the voluntary simplicity movement sought to reduce the consumption of goods and energy and to minimize one's personal impact on the environment. "Voluntary" denotes a free and conscious choice to make appropriate changes that will enrich life in a deeper, spiritual sense. "Simplicity" refers to the hick of clutter, that is, eliminating all those things, patterns habits, and ideas that take control of our lives and distract us from our inner selves. However, this is not to be confused with poverty, which is involuntary, degrading and debilitating. Neither does it mean that people must live on a farm or reject progress or technology, or do ye/about what is necessary for their comfort and welfare. To practice voluntary simplicity, one must differentiate between what one wants (psychological desires) and what one needs (basic requirements of life), and seek a healthy balance that is compatible with both. In a consumer society where advertising bombards us with the message that without this, that, and the other product, we are unsuccessful, undesirable, and unimportant, being clear on what you really need and resisting what you-

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**English (Precis & Composition)**

don't can be an ongoing struggle. The beauty of voluntary simplicity is that it is a philosophy, and not a dogma. How one goes about it depends on individual character, cultural background and climate. For this three Rs (i.e., Reduce, Recycle & Reuse) represent the best way to get a handle on rampant consumerism. In economies driven by the quest for ever more, living with less is erroneously equated with poverty and social inferiority. By conserving energy, for instance, you are actually ensuring that more resources are available for future use. By making a frugal budget and sticking to it you can eliminate unnecessary expenses. Recycling paper, metal, plastic, and glass and reusing building materials and old clothing keep materials in the loop and out of Landfills. Pooling skills and resources through barter networks not only saves money, but sharing with others establishes bonds and fosters a sense of community. With the glut of cheap goods that are usually designed for obsolescence, quality Products that last are becoming progressively harder to find. In the long run, a more expensive but durable and repairable item or even an older used item that is still in good condition is a better investment than a brand new piece of junk that will only break down and end up in the trash. Thus, at the heart of voluntary simplicity is the conscious realization that less is really more. Less consumption means more resources for nature generations. Less activity that brings little satisfaction or reward is more time for yourself and your loved ones. Less stuff is more space to move around in. Less stress means more relaxation and better health. Less worry provides more enjoyment and more fulfillment in life.

**Question:**

**(4 marks each)**

1. How important is happiness to most people, and what is the relationship between material wealth and happiness?
2. How does the author characterize the concept of "Voluntary Simplicity" as a movement and as a philosophy?
3. What impact is feared by the growing consumerism of modern society?
4. What influences make it difficult for people to reduce their consumption patterns?
5. What are the challenges and rewards of voluntary simplicity?

**Q.4 Correct only FIVE of the following:**

**(10)**

- (i) His knowledge of languages and international relations aid him in his work.
- (ii) The ambassador, with his family and staff, invite you to a reception at the embassy on Tuesday afternoon.
- (iii) This year, he will sit in the CSS examination.
- (iv) The chief Executive will let us know whether or not he can attend the meeting.



# Comprehension 2023

## Solution

### Question 1

Happiness is very important to all the people on the planet Earth. Majority of the people strive for their survival under dire situations. It is believed that those possessing material wealth like North Americans and Europeans should be the happiest people, but according to the 2012 Happy Planet Index (HPI), they are not. It shows that material wealth is not conditional for happiness.

Question 2. The author characterizes the concept of "voluntary simplicity" as a movement and as a philosophy. Being a movement, it seeks to lessen the consumption of goods and energy and to minimize personal impact on the ~~society~~ environment. The philosophy of voluntary simplicity depends upon individual character, cultural background and climate. At the heart of this philosophy lies the conscious realization that less is really more.

Question 3 The growing consumerism of modern society is feared to have environmental consequences. The advertisements in a consumer society persuade



the masses about the usages and importance of various products which are actually undesirable and unimportant. Thus, it negatively impacts the environment, resources and happiness.

**Question 4.** Advertisements make it difficult for people to reduce their consumption patterns. Advertisements manipulate people with the impression that without these products, they are unsuccessful, undesirable, and unnecessary. Thus, making it difficult for them to differentiate between their needs and wants.

**Question 5.** The challenges of voluntary simplicity are advertisements, and the misconception of equating less consumption with poverty and social inferiority. These challenges make it difficult for people in establishing a healthy balance between their needs and wants. On the other hand, the rewards of voluntary simplicity include, conserving resources, satisfaction, less stress, fostering a sense of community, health and enjoyment, leading to a better quality of life.