

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

(20)

In barely one generation, we've moved from exulting in the time-saving devices that have so expanded our lives, to trying to get away from them- often, in order to make more time. The more ways we have to connect, the more many of us seem desperate to unplug. Like a teenager, we appear to have gone from knowing nothing about the world to knowing too much, all but overnight.

The average person spends at least eight and a half hours a day in front of the screen. The average teenager spends or receives 75 text messages a day. Since luxury, as any economist will tell you, is a function of scarcity, the children of tomorrow will crave nothing more than freedom, if only for a short while, from all the blinking machines, streaming videos and scrolling headlines that leave them feeling empty, and too full all at once. The urgency of slowing down - to find the time and space to think - is nothing new, of course, and wiser souls have always reminded us that the more attention we pay to the moment, the less time and energy we have to place it in some larger context. Even half a century ago, Marshall McLuhan warned, "When things come at you very fast, naturally you lose touch with yourself."

Yet few of those voices can be heard these days, precisely because 'breaking news' is coming through perpetually on the news channels, and Meena is posting images of her summer vacation and the phone is ringing. We barely have enough time to see how little time we have. And the more that floods in on us, the less of ourselves we have to give to every snippet.

We have more and more ways to communicate, as Thoreau noted, but less and less to say. Partly because we are so busy communicating. And - as he might also have said - we are rushing to meet so many deadlines that we hardly register that what we need most are lifelines. So what to do? The central paradox of the machines that have made our lives so much brighter, quicker, longer and healthier is that they cannot teach us how to make the best use of them; the information revolution came without an instruction manual. All the data in the world cannot teach us how to sift through data; images don't show us how to process images. The only way to do justice to our onscreen lives is by summoning exactly the emotional and moral clarity that cannot be found on any screen.

Maybe that is why more and more people, even if they have no religious commitment, seem to be turning to yoga or meditation, or tai chi; these are not New Age fads so much as ways to connect with what could be called the wisdom of old age. A series of tests in recent years has shown that after spending time in a quiet rural setting, subjects "exhibit greater attentiveness, stronger memory and generally improved cognition. Their brains become both calmer and sharper." More than that, empathy, as well as deep thought, depends on neural processes that are "inherently slow". The very ones our high-speed lives have little time for.

Q1 What is likely to become a scarcity in the future according to author?

According to the author, the future is likely to face the scarcity of an opportunity to disconnect from all digital distractions and experience a simple and calm life. The constant presence of digital devices will make an undistracted time a highly valued and scarce commodity because fast-paced lives will not allow people to engage in thoughtful reflection of themselves and empathetic understanding with others.

Q2 What ability have people lost thanks to the constant inflow of data?

The constant inflow of data has led to the loss of cognitive abilities of individuals to introspect. The overwhelming amount of information has significantly diminished the ability of individuals to use this information effectively, leading to a feeling of being both empty and overloaded. As a result, the relentless barrage of data can leave individuals struggling to find meaningful connections with themselves and others.

Q3 Why does the author say, "We have more and more ways to communicate, but less and less to say"?

The author has said this statement to reflect a paradoxical consequence of technological advancement in communication. The author wants to highlight that the proliferation of digital channels has expanded means of interaction at the expense of deep and meaningful connections. This leads to interpersonal communication becoming more mediated and less personal, potentially reducing empathy among individuals.

Q4 Why are people taking an active interest in old-age fads?

People are taking an active interest in old-age fads because they want to stimulate their neural processes and ^{develop} deep thoughts which require time and space away from the fast-paced life of contemporary age. They are seeking an exemption from their dynamic lifestyle through old-age fads for getting rid of all entertainment options and luxuries which have left them feeling hollow internally.

Q5 Why is modern man unable to empathise with others?

Modern man is unable to empathise with others because empathy depends on neural processes that are intrinsically sluggish and require unhurried state of mind to function effectively. However, modern life is characterized by constant demands for quick responses, leaving little time for these slow neural processes to occur. That is why modern man is unable to develop empathy within himself as his brain is constantly being rushed by high demands of contemporary life.