

**PRECIS**  
**Central Superior Services Examination (CSS) 1993**

**Passage.**

The best aid to give is intellectual aid, a gift of useful knowledge. A gift of knowledge is infinitely preferable to a gift of material things. There are many reasons for this. Nothing becomes truly one's own except on the basis of some genuine effort or sacrifice. Gift of material goods can be appropriated by the recipient without effort or sacrifice; it therefore rarely becomes his own and is all too frequently and easily treated as a mere windfall. A gift of intellectual goods, a gift of knowledge, is a very different matter. Without a genuine effort of appropriation on the part of the recipient there is no gift. To appropriate the gift and to make it one's own is the same thing, and 'neither moth nor rust doth corrupt'. The gift of material goods makes people dependent, but the gift of knowledge makes them free. The gift of knowledge also has far more lasting effects and is far more closely relevant to the concept of 'development.' Give a man a fish, as the saying goes, and you are helping him a little bit for a very short time, teach him the art of fishing, and he can help himself all his life. Further, if you teach him to make his own fishing net, you have helped him to become not only self-supporting, but also self-reliant and independent, man and businessman. This then should become the ever-increasing preoccupation of aid-programmes to make men self-reliant and independent by the generous supply of the appropriate intellectual gifts, gifts of relevant knowledge on the methods of self-help. This approach, incidentally, has also the advantage of being relatively cheap, of making money go a long way. For POUNDS 100/- you may be able to equip one man with certain means of production, but for the same money you may well be able to teach and equip hundred men to equip themselves. Perhaps a little 'pump priming' by way of material goods will in some cases, be helpful to speed the process of development.

(E. F. Schumacher)

## The Gift of knowledge versus material possessions

The sharing of knowledge is more valuable than material possessions. Effort is necessary for the anything to be worthwhile. Materialistic things only provide contemporary advantages. The gift of knowledge has long-lasting benefits, and it makes people independent. Knowledge fosters development, enabling individuals to achieve their goals and become self sufficient. Through knowledge, people learn the means of production and can utilize their skills to earn money and meet their financial needs. Therefore, the gift of knowledge has many advantages over material possessions.

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