

Q. 2. Write a précis of the following passage and suggest a suitable title: (20)

In the heart of bustling cities, urban green spaces stand as oases of tranquility, providing respite from the hustle and bustle. Parks, adorned with vibrant flora, become havens for relaxation and recreation. The greenery offers a sanctuary for diverse wildlife, creating a delicate balance between urban development and environmental preservation. Beyond their aesthetic appeal, city parks play a crucial role in fostering community bonds. Families gather for picnics, friends engage in sports, and individuals find solace amidst nature's embrace. These communal spaces serve as venues for cultural events, open-air concerts, and art installations, enriching the urban experience. The benefits of urban green spaces extend beyond leisure. They contribute to improved air quality, mitigate the urban heat island effect, and promote overall well-being. Access to nature within city limits becomes a vital aspect of mental health, offering a refuge for introspection and rejuvenation. However, the challenge lies in balancing the increasing urbanization with the preservation of green spaces. Sustainable urban planning becomes imperative to ensure the coexistence of concrete jungles and natural havens. Efforts to create and maintain parks, tree-lined avenues, and green rooftops become integral components of shaping cities that prioritize both human and environmental health. As cities evolve, the preservation and enhancement of urban green spaces become a shared responsibility. The vision is to cultivate urban landscapes that seamlessly integrate nature into the tapestry of city life, fostering a sustainable and harmonious cohabitation between human progress and the environment.

Sustainable Urban Development

Harmonising increased urbanization ^{with} ~~and~~ preserving urban green spaces has become a challenge. Green spaces provide relaxation, sanctuary to wildlife, and are places of socialization. They mitigate urban heat island effect, improve air quality, and are vital for overall well-being, especially mental health in urban concrete jungles.

The preservation and enhancement of urban green spaces has become a shared responsibility. As cities evolve, the aim is sustainable urban development, integrating nature into city's life, prioritizing both human development and environment.

Words in Paragraph: 240 approx.

Words in Precis: 79.

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 lack 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 without 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 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 future 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.

Questions:

(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?

2023:

The majority of people... more fulfillment in life.

Ques 1: How important is happiness to most people, and what is the relationship between material wealth and happiness?

Answer:

Happiness is the most important aspect of human life. All the strenuous activities done by man are for achieving happiness and a peaceful life. Although it is perceived by most people that happiness is directly linked to material wealth, but this is totally wrong. According to 2012 Happy Planet Index (HPI) Northern American and European countries are not the happiest nations on Earth, although they are the richest. It ^{clearly} shows that material wealth can be linked to comfort, but it has no relation with happiness.

Ques 02: How does the author characterise the concept of 'Voluntary Simplicity' as a moment and as a philosophy?

Answer:

The author characterises the concept of "Voluntary Simplicity" as a moment and as a philosophy by describing it beautifully with similar characters a moment and a philosophy have. As a moment, the author describes its emergence as an experimental lifestyle, and then its spread ~~the~~ through literature and media in a revolution type manner. As a philosophy, Voluntary Simplicity spreads awareness regarding

environmental consequences of ^{excessive} consumerism and sustainable development for the betterment of future generations.

Qno:03: What impact is feared by the growing consumerism of modern society?

Answer:

The most feared impact of the growing consumerism by modern society is the unsustainable use of resources. This unsustainable usage of resources not only depletes the available resources at ^{an} unprecedented rate leaving very little for the future generation, but also destroys the environment through pollution. Hence, it is the most feared impact of growing consumerism.

Qno:04: What influences make it difficult for people to reduce their consumption patterns?

Answer:

People in a ^{excessive} consumer society are influenced by the patterns of ^{their} society. In these societies, living a simple life is equated with poverty and social inferiority; unnecessary advertisements of ^{non-important} products influence ~~their~~ people's psychologies and appeal them to buy products that are of no use; and the consumer milieu of society increase the greed for more within people. Under this duress, it becomes difficult for people to reduce their consumption patterns.

Qno: 05: What are the challenges and rewards of voluntary simplicity?

Answer:

Voluntary simplicity has its own rewards and challenges. The rewards of voluntary simplicity are: spiritual growth by reducing consumerism; decrease impact on environment and sustainable development due to decrease in resource usage; increase of bondage within society through product sharing within community, and more happy and fulfilled life. While its challenges are decrease in economic growth because of decreased consumerism and decline in technological advancement due to less resource extraction and ~~more~~ more inclination towards old product usage.

For Remarks & Improvements: