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ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE-27

B.A./ /B.S.W./B.Com/B.B.A. - III SEMESTER

SEMESTER EXAMINATION: NOVEMBER 2020

GE 318-GENERAL ENGLISH (REGULAR)

Time- 2 1/2 hrs

Max. Marks-70

This paper contains four printed pages and three sections.

Instructions:

- 1. Do not exceed the word count.**
- 2. Please mention REGULAR on the front page of your answer script.**
- 3. You are allowed to use a dictionary during the examination.**

SECTION-A

- 1. Read the following extract from the article titled *Covid turns tide on India's Ganesh festival traditions* by Gautam Doshi from The Guardian.**

In the quiet housing estate of Angrewadi in the heart of Girgaon in south Mumbai, people are celebrating the 100th consecutive year of the Ganesh Chaturthi, the Hindu festival of the elephant-headed god of new beginnings. Statues of Lord Ganesh are brought into homes and put on display for offerings and prayers. On the 11th and final day of the festival, the ritual of Ganesh Visarjan takes place. The statues, normally made of soluble plaster of paris, are traditionally carried in a public procession with music and chanting, and are then immersed in either a river or the sea. Here, they slowly dissolve in a ceremony that dramatises the Hindu view of the ephemeral nature of life – but also causes widespread pollution. In Mumbai alone, around 150,000 statues are immersed each year. Angrewadi residents normally head to Girgaon Chowpatty beach, just over a mile away. Most statues from south Mumbai are submerged in these waters, including one particularly revered idol, Lalbaugcha Raja, which stands over six metres tall. But not this year. In Mumbai – one of the Indian

cities most affected by coronavirus – devotees are not heading for the beach this year. Instead, Mumbai's governing body, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), has installed more than 200 artificial ponds across the city so that the tradition may be upheld while preventing large crowds gathering. Environmentalists hope these ponds, which will reduce pollution, will become a permanent fixture. "We will be immersing our eco-friendly idol in a small aluminium tub this year," says DV Kulkarni, head of Angrewadi's event-organising committee. Devotees will not be allowed to go near the new ponds, but will instead hand over their statues to workers who will immerse them as the owners watch from a distance. The BMC – which has limited the size of the religious statues to a maximum of 1.2 metres this year – has also arranged for pick-up trucks to collect statues from people who do not want to leave their homes. Those who still want to use the sea will need to seek approval online and book a time slot. The same regulations will apply to some of the new ponds.

Traditionally, most statues are dropped into the Arabian Sea, leaking chemicals into the marine ecosystem along Mumbai's coast. Varying in size, from just a few centimetres to up to 20 metres, most of the idols are made of non-biodegradable plaster, which can take years to dissolve. Paints and materials containing lead, mercury, chromium and other harmful substances are used to colour and decorate the statues, and thousands of garlands of plastic flowers are thrown into the sea with them. Indranil Sengupta and Rabia Tewari launched the Mahim Beach Clean Up campaign in Mumbai in 2017. They say the ritual causes great marine damage. After last year's festival, says Tewari, the impact on marine life was immediate. "The tide was low, and several idols were still on the beach. We could also see plenty of dead fish around. We were so disappointed to see it.

"This year, due to the lockdown, life had already been hard, but with barely any of my [plaster of paris] idols being bought, I've suffered losses of over 60% of my total business," says 42-year-old Sanjay Waikar, who owns the Shree Samarth Art store in Parel. Using clay to make the statues is much more time-consuming and expensive, taking up to six days to complete, whereas a plaster idol, made in a cast, takes less than a day to produce. "Only 10% of our idols made of [plaster] have been sold, while the eco-friendly [clay] idols, which are less in number, are being bought quickly. The festival is extremely popular in Mumbai and throughout the state of Maharashtra." Apart from immersing our idol, we mainly go to the beach to just soak in the electric atmosphere of the processions, crowds, and the views of other majestic idols. It's a wonderful feeling and is one of our main festivals," says Kulkarni. But the pandemic has stopped religious processions across India this year and prompted questions about whether the use of eco-friendly idols and artificial ponds will continue. Last year, 32 artificial ponds were installed, in which, according to the BMC, more than 3,700 idols were immersed, accounting for around 10% of the total across Mumbai. "People have been very receptive and welcoming of the idea of artificial ponds since last year, as there is a lot of awareness of the real damage to the sea after Visarjan," says Kiran Dighavkar, assistant commissioner of Dadar-Mahim area in Mumbai.

"Last year, we collected and recycled around 9,000 idols made of plaster of paris, where they were put in cement silos. But there are still religious concerns with this, and we have to work to find out a sustainable solution. Our main aim this year is to avoid large gatherings. Going forward, we are moving towards utilising environment-friendly solutions such as artificial ponds." The processions, celebrations, and rituals may resume post-Covid-19, but both authorities and citizens are edging slowly towards lessening the impact on fragile marine ecosystems in the Mumbai area.

I.A. Answer the following questions in about 200 words each: (2x15=30)

1. Traditions and rituals have been modified to a great extent during the Covid-19 pandemic. What are the major changes that have been incorporated to the Ganesh festival in Maharashtra during the Covid lockdown? Do you think it would be useful to keep some of these modifications even after the pandemic has passed? Explain.
2. Human activities have been criticized for causing irrevocable damage to the environment. Think of an activity from your daily life that is detrimental to the environment but is unavoidable in your circumstances. Suggest a few measures to minimize the impact of your action.

SECTION-B

II. Read the following poem *Migrating/Covid-19* – //by the eminent Hindi poet Gulzar.

I had seen similar caravans in '47 too
They are fleeing to their villages in their own country
We had fled from our village setting out for our country
Calling us refugees, our country had kept us
Given us refuge
They are stopped at the borders of their states
There is danger in giving them refuge
Then, too, there was a murderous Death around us
It asked us our religion
Now, too, there is a murderous Death around us
But it doesn't ask us our religion or caste or name
It simply kills!
God knows if this Partition is great
Or that one was greater.

II. Answer the following questions in about 150 words each: (2x10 =20)

3. The poet compares the migrant exodus during the Covid pandemic to the great Partition of 1947. Why do you think the author makes this comparison? 'But it doesn't ask us our religion or caste or name...' What is the significance of this line in this poem?

4. Narrate an incident from your life during the Covid-19 lockdown which made you understand the importance of your pre-Covid freedom and mobility.

SECTION-C

III. Examine the following cartoon.



III.A. Answer the following questions in about five sentences each based on your reading of the picture: (4X5=20)

5. a. Explain the above picture in your own words.
- b. Caption this picture and give reasons for the caption.
- c. What are the problems that are represented in this picture?
- d. How do you think the covid-19 pandemic has complicated the global refugee crisis?