

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 1 Indian Society – Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.

Shaping National Character – Nurturing Bharat’s Collective Identity

Understanding "National Character"

"National character" refers to the enduring personality traits, shared beliefs, and unique lifestyles that define the populations of nation-states. It encompasses a collective set of values, sensibilities, self-perceptions, conduct, and lifestyles specific to a particular nation.

Issues with the National Character of India:

1. Lack of Respect for Rule of Law:

- The prevalent attitude that "rules are meant to be broken," especially among the affluent and powerful.

2. Corruption in Public Life:

- Absence of respect for the law leading to widespread corruption in various facets of public life.

3. Non-Performance of Duties:

- Failure to embrace the fundamental duties prescribed in the Constitution.

4. Status of Women in Society:

- Persistent challenges for women, including unsafe streets, unequal employment conditions, and gender-based discrimination, reflecting societal shortcomings.

Factors to Transform National Character:

1. Education:

- **Sainik Schools:** Institutions renowned for excellence in both academics and character-building.
- **NCC (National Cadet Corps):** With a well-established record of shaping the personality and character of students.
- **Military Service:** Returning individuals after serving in the armed forces carry a deep sense of patriotism and discipline, influencing the surrounding community.

2. Gratitude:

- Cultivating a sense of gratitude towards those who contribute to society, exemplified by appreciation for healthcare workers during crises.

3. Strong Sense of Self-worth and Confidence:

- Knowing and appreciating past achievements, heritage, culture, and values fosters a sense of identity and pride.

- Removal of signs of British colonialism contributes to shaping a positive national identity.

By focusing on these transformative factors, India can work towards reshaping its national character, fostering values of respect for the rule of law, integrity, and a commitment to social progress and equality.

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