

## Fundamentals of Main examination: Analytical ability-4

In my last issue I discussed in detail on two main topics regarding how to gain analytical ability. The first was which subjects should be studied to gain this ability and why to gain this ability. Secondly, I tried explaining how to work out an interdisciplinary approach among the subjects after studying them individually.

Now here we talk about two other main points associated with developing analytical ability. These two points are in no way less important than studies. In fact the history of knowledge is a witness that these two points are stronger and more useful than studying.

It has been seen that only studying sometimes renders a person's analytical ability dry, unilateral and somewhat impractical. When study is mixed with observation and interaction, then the results we get after an analysis are not just logical and impactful but also very practical. Yes, the two elements we are talking about are observation and interaction.

Our education system, where most of Asia and the world's developing countries are included, still gives more importance to bookish knowledge acquired while sitting in a class. A student's intelligence is determined by his mark sheet. The student's syllabus and day to day timetable is such that he cannot be expected to take part in any other activity than studying.

The syllabus, books (except NCERT books) and the questions in examinations are in a manner that a student does not feel that his education leaves something to be desired. After student life is over, then he realizes that in spite of having a mark sheet that boasts incredible knowledge, he has zero idea about the practical side of this knowledge. He remembers the constitution but doesn't understand politics. Geography is on his finger tips, but he is not able to explain the geographical features around him. He is an engineer, but doesn't know much about engineering. The chairman of Infosys Narayan Murthy has openly discussed this as a problem in India.

One should think why such problem arises? One should also think that when we are not able to use our knowledge, even if it is on the level of thinking, then what is the use of that knowledge? History tells us that the first Industrial Revolution happened in England. So does it mean that most of the scientific innovations took place in England? No. In the same era other countries like Germany, Holland, Italy and France etc also saw some scientific innovations on their part, much more than England. But the only difference was that where these countries were not able to use the innovations commercially. England did so and thus won. And this in turn made it the world's biggest strength by the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Can't this be the case with today's America?

The education system in western countries differs from ours. They give less importance to bookish knowledge and much more importance to practical knowledge. They praise the fact that many college students work part time even if they are working at a restaurant. Children from rich families also do so and it is considered a matter of pride. The importance of practical knowledge can be understood by the fact that if you want to pursue MBA (Masters of Business Administration) in Oxford, Cambridge, London school of Economics and other world level universities, then you need to have a work experience of at least three to five years. It's obvious that when you will read books after acquiring practical experience, then not only will you perceive the meaning of the text in the books differently but you will also understand everything deeply.

I can make you believe from my own experience. You won't believe that I have received all my practical knowledge of economics from my professional life only. While working with the Vice president and president Sankardayal Sharma I got directly in touch with the practical side of the political landscape and the constitution.

Then for me the constitution became very easy and grand. The administrative experience I got from my work gave me a new and practical insight into the topic of Public Administration.

Why am I discussing this in detail? Just to make you believe, to make you believe that when we engage with the practically side of a subject, the quality of the subject increases for us. In India people consider working while studying as insulting, unfortunate or the result of a sin committed in previous birth unless it is absolutely necessary for a person's existence. I wish we could have regarded this as a learning, as an experience, and as practical. I believe that you will trust me and try this once. Then if you don't like it, you are free to discontinue. So, let's discuss the two elements I mentioned above.

## **Observation**

The meaning of observation is to see what you have read in the books happening in the society, and to find what you have seen in your life in books. Actually this observation is not the basic observation. This is not the kind of observation in which you stand beside a river and look at the water flowing. In reality this is an active observation. This is an analysis done with great alertness. You look at the events. You see people talking to each other, giving and taking, and developing relations. There is not a single topic which does not touch our lives. You yourself will not be untouched, you can't be. So are you observing? Here you need to read carefully. You need to understand it and put it into practice.

While observing you need to command your mind to be alert about this. Whatever takes place here should be carefully and with great vigilance recorded in the mind. You need to direct your mind not to miss an important point. Here the mind should set aside its interest and dislikes and imprint the things in front of him. It should not crop anything. This is the first step of observation.

The second step is basically your thinking process. You need to do two things. First, you should think about whether you have read about the events and facts filed in your mind in your books. And if yes then what did you read? Then compare what you have read and what's filed in your mind. See whether the events were same, as discussed in the books. If no, then you need to think about the reason as to why it didn't happen.

From here starts your third phase of observation and from here only the line of observing starts. You will see that whatever happened was not exactly as per the books but also did not go against it. During the process many more factors come into play and alter the course of things. So now you have to search for the factors. When you are able to identify the factors, then you need to find what and to which extent these factors played a role.

When you complete this, then the same event will come in a new disguise in front of you. It is even possible that you won't be able to recognize it, but it will be the same. But your vigilant observation has caused it to change. This whole mental process will generate an acute and deep insight about the principles given in your book related to the events and its application in practical life. This will be amazing and enjoyable too. It is possible that you will face some difficulties initially as your mind needs to work hard but later on it will become your habit and it will be difficult to live without it. Honestly it will change your life's taste.

## **Interaction**

Despite being a lot similar both observation and interaction have a huge difference. The similarity is that in both the topics you see the surface of the events happening in front of you and you watch them with great alarm. Because you just observe them that's why you have no control over them. You can't do anything about it, it continues and your mind records them. That's it. But this is not any less important. Without involving in the events you give them permission to occur naturally. Through this you get to know that when you don't control

an event what form does it take. For example when you see a small child creating nuisance in your house and you don't say anything to him. During this observation you can learn that if not stopped, then in future what will this child do, what he becomes and what is the result of this.

In Interaction you become a part of the incident. You intervene in it. You interfere in your own way so that it takes up the desired form. The specialty of events is that they change with every small interference, even when this effect is not clearly visible at the surface. This is the first step of interaction that you get involved in the events.

To be included in the event is a personal experience stemming from sharing your own thoughts, interest and practicality. That's why each person's involvement in the event is different. The way you think, the way you want to do something, and how you do it is not exactly how the other person will want, think and do. The important point is that it is not necessary that whatever interference you are doing today in one event, you will repeat it when a similar incident happens again. Here you can say that when are interacting, you become a chess player. Like a chess board with each step the situation in the game changes, it's almost the same situation after getting involved in the event.

Can you imagine this prosperity? Just think that the moment you interact with the observer you get so much content to think over. Definitely all the content would have come from the books; some would have come from observation and much would be from your experience. It means that in the stage of interaction all the three are present together- study, observation and interaction. This is interaction's biggest specialty and its biggest strength. This was the second step.

Its third step is automatic and is very amazing and this is its biggest strength. It's obvious that you are included in the event which could affect you or when you include yourself in an event without thinking, so whether you want it or not, it will affect you. Because the interactive events are related to your life it will happen that after the event take place you will think about it and your mind will not be able to stay peaceful. You will think why did this happen? You will think that if you would have done this, such and such could have happened. Then why didn't I do it? You will think in many ways about what you did, that whether you should have done it or not, and many more things.

At last your mind will be at peace when it gets a result be it small or big. If your mind will not be able to get to a conclusion it will take help from others, you will talk to them and ask them. This is its biggest strength and this won't let you sit quietly. This happens with everyone.

Now the question arises that how can you become a specialist in this matter? The knowledge you receive in school and college will help you in specialize. Pick up a book related to the event, and read the chapter and you will find that you are able to see the event and if you want you will be able to see whatever is in the book playing out in real life. Remember the books contain only principles. It's not necessary that in practical life things will be exactly the way they are in book. Here the focus should be on analyzing the part you took in interaction. It would be beneficial that you think about the options you had while interacting. "I could have done this too" – that is how you should think. Won't it be better that after getting the options you think about what could have happened if you had opted for the other one? You will see that a new scenario will play in front of your eyes just as new layers keep emerging while you peel an onion. You can't imagine that during this process what an in-depth analyses you will be able to do. This is the last step of interaction and it is a powerful phase filled with blessings and power of chants which will transform you and distinguish you from the millions of glittering diamonds. Believe me, what we call 'treasure of experience' is achieved by interaction and not by observation. You get actual experience when instead of being a mute spectator of an event we become a part of

it. Even the biggest cricket fan, who has spent a lifetime watching a match, is not necessarily a cricketer. Experience comes with action not observation. However, it is true that vigilant observation brings maturity.

**NOTE: This article by Dr. Vijay Agrawal was first published in 'Civil Services Chronicle'.**

