

Essay

Excellent!

Time Allowed: 3 hrs *Essay - 2*

Max. Marks: 250

65
125

Instruction to Candidates

Essay - 1
65
125

- Attempt any two essay.
- Each essay carries 125 marks.
- Write each essay in about 1000-1200 words.
- Any page left blank in the answer-book must be crossed out clearly.

see inside

Remarks

Shekhar

(Examiner will pay special attention to the candidate's grasp of his/her material, its relevance to the subject chosen, and to his/ her ability to think constructively and to present his/her ideas concisely, logically and effectively).

Name ISHAN PRATAP SINGH

Mobile No. _____

Date 24/10/2015

Signature *Shekhar*

1. Invigilator Signature _____

2. Invigilator Signature _____

1. The danger of the past was that men became slaves, the danger of future is that they may become robots.
2. A free and fair election is not possible without media.
3. Indian Democracy at Crossroads: Need of Good Governance.

John Keats the famed poet wrote about nature and its wonders and prophetically claimed that a thing of beauty is a joy forever. Beauty, he believed is not embedded in certain standards but emanated from the rational pursuits and art that human beings have been gifted with. But, to have a gift is one thing ^{and} but to chose it and use it is another. The biggest dimension of the beauty of humankind lay in its diversity and individual freedom is what makes it a great civilisation and species in collectivity. Dissent, Deniance and variety brought up great philosophers like Rousseau, Tocqueville and Locke who redefined how society thinks and tackles reality. But, as we move towards modernity, it seems to be a race to the bottom. Everybody is moving in a rat race towards some predefined goals causing fears that the future of humankind will be a summation of robots, without reason, creativity, difference and energy.

Human Race has evolved through centuries and learnt from its own mistakes. But in this process of self

Rather than a background, as intro, some direct reference to the theme in the beginning is a better practice.

Justification. It has left several dark streaks in the annals of history. Slavery is one of those eras.

Slavery meant appropriation of the very body and spirit of the slave by the owner. The basic right of life and liberty that John Locke so hold dear

was initially marauded by his own continent of Europe. Slaves were bought and sold, lived in apprehensible conditions and were objectified to be property of their masters. They were tortured and their dignity and life destroyed. It was not

only bad because it was violent but it was bad because it went against the very notion of freedom and equality. It was in the enlightenment

that these ideas came up from philosophers, novelists, novitars, poets and social thinkers. Political reforms and gradually era of free market, capitalism and enterprise grew. This was supposed to be era of free choice. Humans were free and not

bound by contracts. More options and competitions became buzzword of modern society. But was this really free choice?

Economically, ~~the~~ modern world is era of consumerist passion and quest for more materialistic wants.

Large Malls, markets, unlimited entertainment and mass media feed us with material they want us to

go after. World Bank has categorically stated that world is becoming more unequal day by day. This unreasoned, unreasonable and robotic quest for pleasure ~~and~~ has led to dependency on technology. Gone were the days when kids used to play together in backyards developing individual personalities. Today, phones, tabs, violence-filled video games have taken over them. Peas and cookies in backyard is replaced by likes of facebook. Internet bullying, exploitation and pornography has become a corollary of this compulsion of consumption.

But, it does not stop here. Marx stated that our social being is a mirror of economic being. Pursuit of more materialistic wants has always been character of human race but it should never become ends in itself. They are means to higher end of expanding freedoms, dignity and respect for all. The racist violence in United States, slashing of wrists of Dalite in India and ~~gangs~~ prostitution in Africa is a reflection of where this blind, mechanistic race has led to. When we start being self centric, we as humans have tendency to forget our organic linkage to others. Rich live in their gated communities, consumption becomes sign of compulsion and status and our society as collectivity takes a back seat.

Paragraph is containing some diverse strands of thought - may be separated intelligently

In the political sphere too the signs are visible. Gone are the days of peaceful revolution based on glorious ideas. Gone are the days when images of Germania and John of Arc installed a reasoning spirit in masses for quest of political freedom. Jefferson while writing American revolution emphatically claimed that each individual has right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. Today, his creation i.e. us has become global player of hegemonistic domination. Wars are fought on religion and sectarianism. Politics domestically has become a spoil system wherein money is fed to a largely consumerist electorate. The debates in Taverns and pubs no longer take place but has become a fashion statement. Voting on ^{the} basis of caste, race, religion, and creed has reduced the social contract which was once so held dear to mere "vote bank" where people don't vote for democracy but short personal ends.

In Education, which is the basis of society's morals, quest for life has been replaced by set patterns and standardized tests. In India for example, mushrooming of engineering colleges which are substandard and demand huge ~~capital~~ donations have made education as a consumptive material. Innovative spirit and quest for excellence is systematically crushed and

✓ sense instead of personality robots as produced. Immanuel Kant, the great German philosopher regarded the power of human reason & rationality as core of ethics and morality. Success is subjective but when the reason is crushed in infancy and success is fed to open mouths, it creates a mechanical society which cannot renew itself and cannot innovate in perpetuity.

✓ It is often said that future is mirrored by what is happening today and signs of crisis are visible. Student suicides are example of humans who could not fit into the small little box their society created. Quest for company and linkage carries people to Godmen, cults and babas whose donations increase day by day. Spirituality itself becomes a robotic exercise and source of consumption. Gandhiji in his seminal work 'Hind Swaraj' pointed to the problems of this consumption. Environment degradation is quite visible today but mechanical pursuit to earn and consume continues.

✓ But, it is the writing in stone. No. In fact far from it our visions promote a society of diversity and compassion. Indian constitution goes for individual dignity and fraternity in preamble not for mechanistic tolerance. These goals that we cherish whether its French Revolution or Indian Nationalism are a

product of modernity. ~~the~~ Poors are lifted out from poverty and World Bank recently declared that poverty worldwide is in single digits. These uplifted being can surely exercise their choices. It has given us comfort, better healthcare and holistic education free from the influence of religion, thus giving opportunity to encourage reasoning and live a fulfilled life. Modernity has also abolished social barriers in several aspects. Spring revolution was an example of how social media can create an organic uprising in staunchest of regimes. LGBT right activism is a quest for recognition of a choice which was unimaginable earlier.

Thus, modernity is a dichotomous entity. On one hand it enhances choices but takes it back from the other. So what will determine our future? Is that to be a world of freedom and choices or will it be a pseudo slavery robotic world of blind race? The answer lies in question itself. It will be choices we make today. Should we reform our schooling to a more diversity oriented ethical exercise and remember it were shoparts like Thomas Alva Edison and Steve Jobs which recreated history. Should Media be responsible and promote free thinking. A culture of sport, drama

and art be not only developed but appreciated. Awareness, respect and Acknowledgement of Alternative Opinion should be encouraged moving away from standardised decisions of life.

Ultimately, the final solution lies in the words of great Abraham Lincoln who rid America of its Slavery. He said that unless each individual is free and liberated, we are all bound in chains. It gives us both motivation and the reason for respecting human choice, liberty and diversity. If a robotic society is developed and all reason muddled we will lose as a society but the human history has time and again proved whenever a society is bound in chains, visible or invisible, human ingenuity takes form of Gandhiji, Mandela or Ho Chi Minh and reforms thinking and saves itself from being destroyed.

A Free And Fair Election is not possible without Media

It was in the second Presidential debate in US Presidential Election. The election was neck (to) and neck between incumbent George W. Bush Sr. and democratic governor Bill Clinton. Both the

Candidates were taking questions from neutral voters in this highly publicised event. Tensions were running high as after the gulf war, USA was in a mini crisis of sorts. A woman stood up and ~~started~~ started asking questions to President Bush, But to everybody's surprise, President Bush flinched and looked at his watch. The event was widely covered by media and was seen as insensitive. His ratings plummeted, never to recover again and lost the election. Such is the power of media in modern democracy and their manifestations i.e. elections. They mould viewpoint of public and act as a bridge between electorate and contenders in this great democratic exercise.

But, this bridging power is nothing new. In pre democratic era the rulers kept in touch with masses through Paimans, directions and 'Munadi' i.e. using a beating drum to propagate information. Legend has it that Akbar himself joined his spies and went as a regular person to gauge the opinion of masses. The great Ashoka sent emissaries and through his pillars propagated his message of 'Dhamma'. But, it was the era of revolutions after french revolution which gave the idea of

Freedom of speech and expression and USA Constitution which mentioned it explicitly in letter and in spirit.

Though media plays a significant part in every facet of democracy, it is in the grand exercise of elections that it plays the major part. The basis of democracy lies on the fact that there must be some mechanism through which public can periodically convey their mandates on the rulers. Moreover, in a democracy, opposition not only exists but is acknowledged and institutionalised, and plays the opposition during elections. It emerges as a festival of democracy. Not only conveying public voice but also providing democratic training and keeping people interested in workings of government.

But, this interest is facile without two way flow of information. And what is this information called? It is known as public opinion. Since, not everybody can participate in elections, it is in effect public opinion that effectively rules the masses. Public opinion is not majority opinion but opinion of

who may be called as Spectators of political action. Thus, media carries public opinion to political ~~was~~ leaders and parties on whose basis they emerge, get destroyed or form their agenda. In fact views in election mirror public opinion as can be seen in recent tilt towards left in Europe with election of Corbyn as labour leader and Syriza in Greece. Feeling under Austerity and EU domination, this shift in mood is reflected in election and rise of political parties.

Not only this ~~election~~ ~~is~~ relation organic, but it is also reflexive. The Public opinion is not only conveyed but is actively moulded by media.

Newspapers, television and now social media conveys policies, plans and strategies of various parties.

This information is highly important and in fact inevitable in making a free and fair decision during the process of election. Parties put forward a "package deal" in front of public, who collectively express their opinion to them through exercise of ballot box.

But, elections being free and fair is not only about flow of information. Media plays irreplaceable role

in several other senses as well. It Energises public and makes them aware about the process. Election Commission uses ~~to~~ media to convey importance

of votes to general public and makes it a social event. In fact, rational choice thinkers have always wondered about how an individual among

hundreds of millions finds that his vote makes a difference and goes out. It is the media

mobilization which imbues this spirit. Moreover, media also conveys any malfunctioning in the working and acts as eyes and ears of administration.

It is due to this function, that international media is an observer in all major elections.

Last but not the least, media holds the government accountable after elections but repeatedly

conveying public opinions to the government.

And in modern times, media has come out with a new vigour. Internet as a mass and equitable

medium has lead to use of social media, making individual opinions important and available.

The rise in voting percentage of young is an indication of this renewed enthusiasm.

Media is also becoming a keen observer and

an activist. Protected by sometimes constitutional provisions as in USA or by judicial pronouncements

as in India wherein Apex Court declared freedom of media under freedom of speech and expression.

of Article 19(a) elevating it to position of fundamental rights. The assets and criminal cases against the contenders are widely publicised and made available to general public to make enhanced decision.

✓ ~~But~~ Thus, it is certain that media is an inevitable part of election. Maybe that is why despots and authoritarian regimes have used it as a tool in their hands. Government control of media and indirect or direct use of money to influence media through paid news is a reality accepted by both supreme court and election commission. This in fact suppresses the free and fair elections as a medium to exercise an independent opinion. When information itself becomes corrupt, electorate feels blinded and loses faith in the system. Sometimes, the media influenced by foreign strategic interests destroys the very basis of democracy which gives it own freedom. Use of media in Latin America to topple regime and big media Magnets like Murdoch taking active part in political spheres create unhealthy overlap in these spheres.

But, media can and in fact needs to be reformed and answer lies in self regulation. Government control of media is not only harmful but in long term dangerous to democracy. Gandhiji writing in Young India stated that power of pen is like of free flowing water. If it controls itself, it gives life but when it overruns its banks, the same media becomes a tool of destruction. Only through an ethical code of conduct and recognition of public responsibility with limited but effective external regulation without hampering freedom of its functioning can serve as deterrent to misuses.

Though external or internal regulation is not a silver bullet. The answer to proper use of media lies in the forces that created it i.e 'public opinion' itself. When citizens become vigilant and choose the information they want to consume with a critical attitude, media or in fact any democratic institution is forced to reform itself. There are several inevitable pieces in the chessboard of democratic politics and quest of ~~with~~ power like Elections, media, political parties and institutions. and no doubt they are important

and necessary. But, whenever the story of democratic game of thrones will be written either in success or in defeat, the most powerful piece will always be the ~~open~~ opinion of the masses and rest though inevitable and necessary will be forced to act in its assistance.

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