

TEST CODE : 5 2 0 2 2

FIAS - MGP 2022 (C-5) - Essay Test #2

ForumIAS

GENERAL STUDIES

Name Of Candidate	AVINASH KUMAR		
Roll No.	1910082947	Date:	20/12/2021

Time Allowed: Three Hours

Maximum Marks: 250

INDEX TABLE			INSTRUCTION
Q. No.	Max. Marks	Marks Obtained	<p>1. Please do furnish Name, Email, Roll No and Mobile in the answer sheet.</p> <p>2. There are TWO Sections. Each Section has MULTIPLE topics printed in English & Hindi . You have to write on 1 topic from Each part</p> <p>3. One question in each part is compulsory.</p> <p>4. The number of marks carried by a question/part is indicated against it.</p> <p>5. Answers must be written in the medium authorized in the admission Certificate, which must be stated clearly on the cover of this Question-Cum-Answer (QCA) Booklet in the space provided.</p> <p>6. Word limit in questions, if specified, should be adhered to.</p> <p>7. Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Question-Cum Answer Booklet must be clearly Struck off.</p> <p><i>Any specific messages for ForumIAS Mentors/ Evaluators with respect to your copy? Write it here.</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>
Q.1			
Q.2			
Total Marks:			
Remarks:			
For Student Only			
Start Time 09:00 pm		End Time 12:00 am	
Mode Of Examination:		Online <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Offline <input type="checkbox"/>
For Office Use Only			
ECN CODE:		EG:	Evaluation Date:

MARKING SCHEME

<i>Parameter/Criteria</i>	<i>Aspects Considered</i>	<i>Total Marks</i>	<i>Essay 1</i>	<i>Essay 2</i>
Basic Format	Introduction + Conclusion	10		
	Body	15		
Content	Data/Facts/Interpretation/ Analysis	25		
Organisation	Flow of ideas/ Absence of Deviation from the topic	25		
Language Skills	Punctuation/Grammar/ Sentence Formation/Spellings	25		
Examiner's Discretion	Perception/ Innovation/ Engaging	25		

<i>Parameters</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Coherence				
Language				
Handwriting				
Pre-writing				

Very Good	Good	Average
120 and above	100-120	Below 100

SECTION - A

1. Social media – a tool for engineering consent.

सोशल मीडिया- सहमति को निर्मित करने का एक उपकरण।

2. Are Big Tech undermining state sovereignty?

क्या बिग टेक राज्य की संप्रभुता को कम कर रही है?

Social Media – A tool for engineering
Consent

Human beings, by their very nature are social beings. During the pre-historic times, social gatherings were required not just for swaying away the miseries of life through companionship; but also for protecting life itself from the predator animals.

So, it is but natural that when the humanity was taking another advanced step due to technological revolution in the fields of Information Technology (IT), something of the nature of Social Media was to

ForumIAS

be created and utilized for further connectivity and socialisation.

In simple words, Social Media is the name given to such IT platforms which provide a means to their users to socialise among ~~them~~ and with their fellows. Few examples would include Facebook (Meta), Whatsapp, twitter, Linked IN, Telegram, Instagram, Snapchat etc.

These companies often originated in the western countries, particularly United States (US). But today they are not limited within the borders of their origin country, rather they have managed to reach every continent, every country and every region. Thus, they are rightly called as Trans-national Companies (TNC).

None of us could imagine in the 1990s or even 2000s, that social media will penetrate so deeply in our lives. Today, as per the reports, whatsapp has more than 50 crore of users in India. Similar numbers are given for Facebook and Youtube also. What does this mean?

It literally means that more than one-third of the country's population is a member of some social media or other and this number is continuously growing. There are several reasons for this growth, including a feeling of getting included or inclusiveness.

If getting an electricity connection was a sign of elevation in the past, today villagers often see "being a user of social media" as a sign of their elevation.

ForumIAS

While in many ways, Social media platforms have empowered people and given them a voice to express themselves, there are some challenges too.

These challenges, with respect to social media are multi-pronged. They range from data privacy issues to identity theft and ^{to} engineered consent.

Social media, as the experts argue, is increasingly becoming a tool for engineering consent among the masses. Even this issue has several dimension.

One of the fields, where consent is being taken without an informed choice is related to domain of social media itself. Recently, there was a

huge uproar from the civil society when whatsapp started sending a consent approval to its users. It was argued that many users gave the consent, related to their data, even without properly understanding the impacts.

Whatsapp was supposedly ~~common~~ having plans to commercialize the generated user data on their platform which could later be used to target consumers by showing them advertisements related to their chats and interactions.

Such targeted advertisements take away the right to choose. We are manipulated to act and behave and further choose in a particular way. All these are moved by commercial interests. So, practically

ForumIAS

the user is being reduced to a status of manipulated and programmed "Being". This is a silent attack on the moral rights of individuals.

Secondly, this "consent engineering" thing is observed in the fields of elections and democracy also. A couple of years back, there was a report that "Cambridge Analytica" a private company was hired to influence United States (US) elections in a big way. The company used social media platforms, especially Facebook to influence the minds of the voters and made them vote in the favour of a particular contesting party.

As a result, several people cried about "rigging of the elections".

It is a perfect example of how such powerful tools like social media could be used to undermine the democratic institutions itself. In some way, they are causing a damage to the very foundations of the state.

Thirdly, they are potent enough to undermine the judicial apparatus as well. It is often being seen that many high-profile cases are increasing being discussed and on the social media platforms, even when they are sub-judice. The public gets divided on "for" and "against" the accused person. This sets a chain reaction. The newspapers and TV channels also start discussing and

ForumIAS

in turn further fuelling the public opinion on the issue. This creates huge pressure on the judges and the counsel members. After all, they are also the part of the same society.

It becomes hard for ^{the} judges to not getting influenced by the public opinion and act in an objective and impartial manner, treating the case purely on its merit basis.

Thus, we can say that social media are challenging the judiciary as well.

Fourthly, they also influence the executive. Social media make them act and decide, according to the uninformed opinion of the masses. Political executives, are but naturally

bound to do so as they have to seek public votes. However, the bureaucracy is also seen to be influenced by the same.

Fifthly, social media influence our strategic and military decisions also. Whenever the tension grows at the borders, social media polls are created with headings such as "Should India go to war with Pakistan/China?"

Such decisions are purely tactical and strategic in nature and should always be best left to the experts.

Sixthly, it is also argued that social media and ~~such~~ similar Big-Tech Companies are becoming more and more trans-national in nature and are undermining state sovereignty,

ForumIAS

in multiple ways, the least of which is tax-evasion, base-erosion & profit-shifting.

But, how are these social media platforms becoming so powerful to do so many things?

If we deeply analyse this question, we would observe that this is because of the huge data that they have with them. This data has the characteristic of velocity (fastly moving and fastly being generated), Volume (huge because of large user base), Variety (different kinds of data ranging from personal photos to location history), and Veracity (issue of fake and manipulated data).

With these 4 Vs (velocity, volume, variety and veracity), data has become a potent tool. Anybody who controls data, controls Billions of its generators i.e us.

A good chunk of this data is being generated on these social media platforms and they know it quite well. Many-a-times, commercial interests of the owners of these Big-Techs are getting in way.

It is rightly said that 'the same kitchen knife can be used for cutting vegetables and at the same time slitting throats'. Similar is the case of social media. When used positively and in a rightful manner, social media could be used to change the lives of millions of people through better service delivery and uplifting contents. But when used in an

exploitative manner, it could harm the interests of the very users that it seeks to entertain.

So, what is the way forward regarding this?

There could be multiple approaches regarding this. A good start would be by regulating the social media without undermining the freedom of speech & expression, and other democratic rights of people.

Further, sensitisation and awareness efforts should be taken by NGOs, civil society, Government agencies etc.

This is required so that people carefully scrutinise the contents and then decide according to their rational self and not give away their consent so easily.

Government must also make efforts regarding curbing inflammatory and ill-intended contents. This is especially required in context of cyber warfare and fourth-generation warfare as mentioned by NSA Ajit Doval in recent few months.

All this is well and good. But at the end it ultimately comes back to the people themselves. We are the one who need to be aware of our own choices and value of acting independently without getting influenced.

If we value our own cognitive, rational mind, we shall but naturally value our consent. And once we value our consent, we ~~can~~ would not allow anyone including social media giants to manipulate us in any way and engineer our consent. Thus, an "informed citizen" is what we all need to become.

Feedback

Feedback to be provided in terms of (1) Introduction (2) Sentence Constructions (3) Paragraph Formation (4) Legibility (5) Deviation from Topic (6) Coverage of dimensions (7) Simplicity / ease of reading

SECTION - B

1. It's not what we profess but what we practice that gives us integrity.

यह वह नहीं है जो हम दावा करते हैं बल्कि हम जो अभ्यास करते हैं वह हमें सत्यनिष्ठता प्रदान करता है।

2. Wars are poor chisels for carving out peaceful tomorrow.

शांतिपूर्ण कल को बनाने के लिए युद्ध एक कमजोर उपकरण है।

It's not what we profess but what we practice that gives us integrity

"A saintly figure, highly revered, having millions of followers — both local and global, who preaches about moral values, chastity and celebracy is arrested and convicted of charges of sexual harassment in the state of Haryana."

What does this news item, of a few years ago, suggest us? It suggests that "Integrity" is not what we profess but what we practice.

This man was so respected by

ForumIAS

his followers that many considered him God-like and accordingly put their faith and trust in him. This trust would have mainly come from his preachings. However when he breached that trust, it was clear to all that he was not what he preached and thus he lacked the character of Integrity.

To elaborate more on the meaning of integrity, it can be seen as a coherence in thought, speech and action. But, this coherence is not achievable at an instant. It has to be cultivated over the years and thus it takes time to become the part of our character. Does this mean that all of us lack integrity in some measure or atleast lacked it in the past?

The answer truly is "Yes". Human beings always have this dichotomy in their character. There are two part of self — 'a higher self' and 'a lower self'.

The 'higher self' is inspired by an ideal and always looks forward for becoming something. While the 'lower self' is what we are at this instance. We might be totally satisfied with our own situation from outside; but deep within we know that we are not living an authentic life. This is so because the "higher self" always tries to pull us towards that ideal but the inertia of our "lower self" doesn't let us do so.

To elucidate the above point, remind yourself of your 'new year resolution or your pledge to wake

Up at 4 am in the morning and practice Yoga. The "higher self" convinced you of the benefits and you made your resolution but your "lower self" did not allow you to do so because of its sheer inertia.

Anyway, the point is that integrity is not an absolute index. Rather, it's of relative measure. One can never be classified into "not having integrity" and/or "having integrity". The correct way to approach it is — "having high degree of integrity" and "having low degree of integrity". The whole effort should be directed towards increasing the degree of integrity in us.

But why is integrity so important that we need to strive

towards increasing it ?

Let us see through examples. A civil servant preaches about honesty and corruption-free society, but later gets caught on camera asking for bribes or favours.

A politician preaches about eradicating election malpractices but later found to be himself involved in vote rigging and booth capturing.

A social reformer preaches about annihilating caste-based discrimination, but maintains two sets of utensils at home — one for "high-borne" and another for "low-born".

A democrat preaches about importance of individual liberty and equality of all, but maintains

ForumIAS

a patriarchal, domination-based setup at home, violating all principles of democracy.

A teacher teaches about "welfare state" and maintains that education should be free; but never admits any poor student into his private coaching.

What is wrong in all ^{the} above cases?

All of them preach something but practice differently. What is wrong in it? If civil servants, politicians, social reformers, democrats, teachers etc. — as a class, become low on the scale of integrity, it would be difficult for the society to survive. If it survives anyway, then it will certainly not be that society where we would like to live.

Thus, integrity is fundamental for the existence of everything. If the planets stop following the law of gravitation, if the sun stops lighting the world, if the plants stop acting as primary producers, if the rivers stop flowing — In short, if the nature slides down ^{on} the scale of integrity, everything will be shattered.

One can argue that nature is material and not conscious, hence it is easier for the nature to act in a mechanical manner and follow the natural law; But, it is not so for the humans. Human beings are conscious beings and we have the freedom of will, we are more tempted to act ~~in~~ according to whims and fancies of our mind.

This is precisely why, it is imperative for us to cultivate integrity.

Society values certain actions as higher / moral actions. Human beings, by virtue of being a social animal wants to be valued by society.

Thus we preach in a certain way and even publicly act in a certain way, which is in conformity with the social parameters. But, since we lack a high degree of integrity and neither do we make efforts to acquire that, we act in a different manner in our private lives.

This duality either needs to be suppressed with sheer hypocrisy or helplessness, or it requires effort to be eliminated by cultivating the value of integrity.

At the end of the life, we are answerable to our own selves. Saints or sinners, high or low, intellectual or unintellectual, clever or stupid, cunning or simple-minded, elite or subaltern, respected or despised — all of us need to face our own selves. All of us need to evaluate ~~if~~ ^{whether} we lived an authentic life or not. To judge the authenticity of our lives, integrity is an important parameter.

The Religious texts and the philosophers would scream at the top of their voice about the importance of cultivating integrity in our lives. Ethical and moral texts shall force us again and again to rethink about the authenticity of

our existence. Even the most unethical person who always lacked integrity shall never teach a child, to be devoid of integrity.

Even we know that integrity is a higher virtue and thus must be cultivated. But, we always give in to our petty temptations.

The greatest men of our times, but have one thing in common — they all possess higher degree of integrity.

Integrity is required even to achieve success in this world. To plan to do something and then execute the plan successfully — is an example of integrity in professional sense. So, integrity is inevitable.

To combat the global problem of climate change, we need leaders of integrity. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of "Zero Poverty" and "Hunger free world", we need a society which has high degree of integrity.

To stop human rights abuse across the world, we need ^{such} organisations which showcase their integrity by actually practising the UN human rights charter, in letter and spirit.

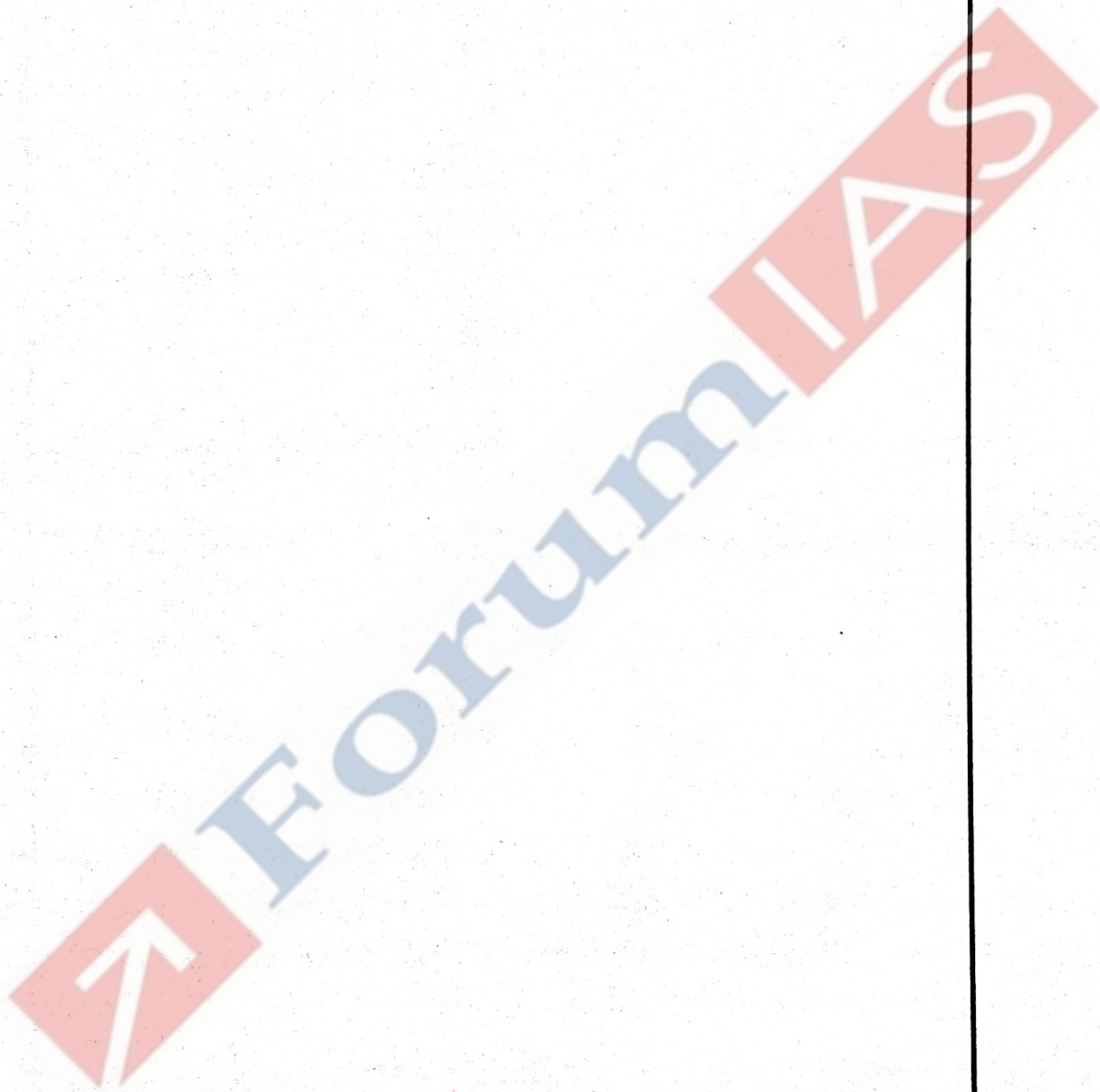
Similar arguments can be given for almost any issue that the humanity is facing today.

But, before all of this happens, we need to accept the fact that we do not possess a high degree of integrity. This acceptance is

ForumIAS

required as the first step towards
our goal. In fact, ~~this~~ the very
fact that we are able to accept
ourselves the way we are, and
then strive to become better — is
in itself a sign of integrity .

The End



Feedback

Feedback to be provided in terms of (1) Introduction (2) Sentence Constructions (3) Paragraph Formation (4) Legibility (5) Deviation from Topic (6) Coverage of dimensions (7) Simplicity / ease of reading