

MGP 2023



OPEN TEST-ESSAY

CONTENT BUILDER (FODDER POINTS)

This is a supplementary study material for ForumIAS Essay 2023

Section – A

Topic #1: Shelving hard decisions is the least ethical course.

कठोर निर्णयों को टालना सबसे कम नैतिक मार्ग है।

Approach: The present essay topic requires ethical assessment of timeliness of action and how delaying hard decisions for future is not only unethical but also creates more problems. To write a well-rounded essay we must consider three arguments. One is the main argument that shelving hard decisions is the least ethical course. Second is that it is not always unethical but can be a wiser and more ethical choice to postpone big decisions for the right time and circumstances. To balance those, one needs a third and more balanced approach where the best of both arguments is put in sync for most ethical decision making.

Introduction

#1 Quotation based

- "In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing. The worst thing you can do is nothing." - **Theodore Roosevelt**
- "Indecision and delays are the parents of failure." - **George Canning**
- "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." - **Edmund Burke**
- "The time is always right to do what is right." - **Martin Luther King Jr.**
- "Decide promptly, but never give any reasons. Your decisions may be right, but your reasons are sure to be wrong." - **Lord Acton**
- "Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do." - **Potter Stewart**
- "It is better to be approximately right than precisely wrong." - **Warren Buffett**

#2 Through Anecdote or story

In the realm of literature, **Shakespeare's immortal tragedy, "Hamlet,"** stands as a haunting testament to the **perils of procrastination and the ethical ramifications of shelving hard decisions.** From the beginning of the play, Prince Hamlet grapples with the weight of his choices amidst a backdrop of deceit, revenge, and moral quandaries. Shakespeare sets the stage for a dramatic exploration of the human psyche, exploring the ethical imperatives of timely action and the devastating consequences that arise from the delay of difficult decisions. A journey through the world of Hamlet makes us visualize this question for our own selves that is - **What happens when the hands of the clock continue to turn, and the choices we must make cannot be deferred any longer?**

2019 began as a usual year. The whole world was running its usual course and opportunities seemed infinite. The worries also were of usual nature too, political turmoil, climate change, social inequality, etc. However, all this took a sudden dramatic change as the **December of 2019** rolled in. A new threat has emerged from wet market of Wuhan, China, in the form of a deadly virus. By the time 2020 arrived things have started to change across the world- new worries. have replaced the old, freedoms were being restricted, climate change became secondary, and economies started showing signs of grave distress. The world of abundance was suddenly becoming a world of scarcity where people were left scrounging for the bare necessities of life first and later for life itself. At this point, whole of global leadership was faced with moral quandaries and ethical dilemmas, as they had to take the hardest and unpopular decisions and that too very swiftly without losing any time, as losing time meant losing lives at an unprecedented level.

Body Content

The **virtue of acting in time or timeliness of an action** is revered in all societies. **Punctuality and having dedicated time for actions** are one of the first things that are taught to a child. Many of our quotes tell us to act in time, be it **time and tide wait for none**, or **early bird catches the worm**, they all are aimed to inculcate the respect for timely actions. One of the primary focus of education is to teach these values to students who in future will be part of the society. For any society to have structure and being functional, the importance of acting well in time, howsoever difficult it may seem, is of utmost importance.

The **ethical dimension of timely decision-making** becomes important because it can have far-reaching consequences. **By deferring hard decisions, we risk perpetuating injustice, allowing opportunities for growth and positive change to slip through our fingers, and eroding the trust and faith others have placed in us.** Furthermore, the ethical imperative of timely action extends beyond our own individual spheres. In a broader sense, it impacts the well-being of communities, the stability of institutions, and the overall fabric of society.

The main idea behind acting promptly in certain situations is to **prevent harm and promote well-being.** Ethical considerations often prioritize the **preservation of human life and the alleviation of suffering**, making timely action ethically justified. For example, in cases of emergencies or crises, immediate action may be necessary to save lives or mitigate further damage. Had the governments not acted promptly in the event of **COVID-19 pandemic** with severe and harsh measures like lockdowns and quarantines, the results could have been disastrous for society.

To act in time is also to show respect **for others' time, resources, and commitments.** It helps in maintaining effective communication, collaboration, and cooperation. For example, when it comes to service delivery, private sector entities have more trust from people as compared to public service delivery. Every time reforms for **good governance** are suggested, this aspect of improving upon the time of delivering a service is a crucial aspect of it. Acting timely and responsibly not only fosters trust and ethical relationships, but it also demonstrates a commitment **to fulfilling obligations and being accountable.** Overall, it helps **boost productivity** for both the services provider and the consumer, by cutting any negative outcome from wasting unnecessary time.

While addressing injustices and preventing their perpetuation, making decisions in a timely manner becomes vital. In cases of social injustice, delaying action can result in prolonged harm and perpetuation of inequalities. Mortality suggests that addressing injustices promptly is necessary to restore fairness, protect vulnerable populations, and promote equality. Such is case in India, where we are looking at an unprecedented **demographic transition** in coming decades which can both be a boon or bane depending upon how we choose to act. If we invest in education, skilling, health, and resilient economic models now that we have time, we are going to be the leaders for the coming centuries. However, if we delay taking hard decisions now, it is very probable that this opportunity may turn into a **demographic disaster.**

When it comes to **relationships**, be it personal or professional, acting in a timely manner helps **maintain trust and integrity there as well.** When individuals or organizations fail to act promptly on commitments or obligations, it can **erode trust and credibility.** Acting responsibly and within the time limit helps in fulfilling promises and shows one's dedication towards the task at hand. The **surgical strikes carried out by the Indian Army in 2016 and 2019** can be seen as timely hard decisions to address **cross-border terrorism.** These strikes were aimed at deterring further terrorist activities and sending a strong message of India's resolve to safeguard its national security. The professionalism and commitment shown by Indian army cemented the trust Indians have in our security forces.

Thus, it can be argued that in many situations, acting in a timely manner is **crucial to seize opportunities for positive change**. Timing can be critical in effecting meaningful transformations. Not shelving the hard decisions thus becomes a desirable ethical course. A case in point is the **environmental changes** happening around us. The urgency of addressing **climate change and preserving biodiversity** underscores the need for timely action. The ethical imperative to protect the environment demands timely efforts to mitigate carbon emissions, conserve natural resources, and protect endangered species. Delaying action on these fronts can have irreversible consequences, such as exacerbating climate impacts or driving species to extinction.

Shelving hard decisions is, thus, a clear violation of ethical principles, as it **neglects moral accountability, undermines the humanitarian imperative, impedes societal progress, and erodes trust**. By contrast, timely decision-making in the face of difficult choices is essential for **fostering justice, promoting well-being, and upholding ethical standards**. It is incumbent upon individuals, leaders, and institutions to recognize the ethical imperative of addressing hard decisions in a timely manner. By embracing this responsibility, we contribute to a more compassionate, just, and sustainable society, where the well-being and rights of all individuals are upheld and protected.

However, there can be another side to this coin. **As Hippocrates once said- “To do nothing is also a good remedy.”** In some situations, it becomes important to take time before acting, as **patience is as important a virtue as is the punctuality**. In complex or high-stakes scenarios, it may be important to **allow sufficient time for careful deliberation and analysis**. Rushing into difficult decisions without adequate information or deliberation can lead to hasty or ill-informed choices that may have negative consequences. In such cases, temporarily shelving the decision can be ethical if it allows for a more thorough examination of the available options. Had such patience been shown during the **territorial bifurcation of Indian Subcontinent**, things would have been remarkably different. The haste shown by **British authorities and the Radcliffe Commission** not only resulted in a partition marred with great bloodbath and biggest mass exodus of modern history, but also made the **region unstable and a nuclear flashpoint**, a situation that refuses to die out even after more than 70 years of partition.

Not just time, but **emotions** can significantly influence decision-making processes too. When faced with challenging choices, individuals may experience heightened emotions such as stress, fear, or anxiety, which can cloud judgment. **Taking the time to manage and regulate emotions can be important for making more rational and ethical decisions**. Two great Indian epics stand testament to this situation which aims to guide society to balance emotions and be patient. In **Mahabharata**, an epic tale of the clan of **Chandravamsi's rules by emotions**, who are known to act driven by emotions, the haste with which characters acted resulted in a never-ending war between good and evil. At the same time, in epic tale of **Ramayana, the story of Suryavamsi clan ruled by logic and rationality**, the characters act with patience and ethical conduct to win a war of good over evil.

As we live and breathe in an **age of information overload, some restraint is necessary in acting based on available information**. In certain situations, difficult decisions may be postponed due to a **lack of critical information** or data necessary for making an informed choice. To be ethical when making decisions often requires a comprehensive understanding of the situation, including potential risks, benefits, and alternatives. In such cases, temporarily shelving the decision until additional information becomes available can be a responsible course of action. When seen **in context of rise of social media** as medium for sharing information, this becomes even more crucial to maintain peace and stability in society. **Globally, loss of life, property, safety, privacy, and more importantly moral and ethical values** is on the rise as people are acting out of false information and continue to fall prey to the destabilizing elements of society.

Thus, while it is generally important to address difficult decisions in a timely manner, it is not always accurate to categorically state that shelving harder decisions is the least ethical approach. The **ethical assessment of such actions depends on the particular circumstances, the reasons behind the delay, and whether the delay is reasonable and justifiable in light of the potential consequences and stakeholder interests.** Taking the time to consider the potential impact on vulnerable populations, involve relevant stakeholders, and gather comprehensive information can help mitigate the risk of wrongdoing and ensure more ethical and equitable outcomes in social decision making.

Conclusion

In navigating the complexities of decision-making, **finding a balanced approach is crucial.** While it is important to recognize the ethical imperative of addressing hard decisions in a timely manner, we must also acknowledge that the concept of **balance extends beyond simply acting swiftly.** A balanced approach considers multiple perspectives, weighs various factors, and aims to find a middle ground or compromise. To embrace a balanced stance, it is important to foster a culture that encourages open dialogue, rigorous analysis, and careful consideration of alternative viewpoints. By doing so, we create an environment where hard decisions can be addressed with thoughtful urgency, without sacrificing thoroughness or disregarding the values that underpin ethical decision-making. It is in this **delicate equilibrium that we can strive to make ethical decisions that have a positive impact on individuals, communities, and society as a whole.**

It is also important to understand that **time itself is a healer and the meaning of many things change with time and context.** There might be a situation where one might feel at a loss because one's bad habit of procrastination or not acting when time was right. But even in those times, it is **important to not lose hope and faith in oneself. It is much wiser to try and make a change,** howsoever small it may be, rather than becoming completely hopeless and giving up altogether. As **Jojoba Mansell** says-

*Choices never easy to make,
Fog seems to cloud your way.
You fear making a mistake,
Of gambling and losing the day.*

*But life is full of Hard Choices,
And risk is part of the game.
Be brave, ignore doubting voices,
Make the choice, life won't be the same.*

Topic #2: All things come into being by conflict of opposites.

सभी चीजें असमानताओं के संघर्ष से अस्तित्व में आती हैं।

Approach: The main focus is interaction among opposites and how opposing ideas, beliefs etc. have led to discovery and realization of new things. One can explain it by exploring the interaction of opposites in various domains such as polity, governance, environment, economy, history, foreign relations, science, human nature, psychology, philosophy, and ecology. Conclusion can be about how to be open about differing idea and views and cultivate innovation through interaction of opposites.

Introduction

#1 Quotation based

- "What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness." - **John Steinbeck, Travels with Charley: In Search of America**
- "The opposite of a true statement is a false statement, but the opposite of a profound truth can be another profound truth." - **Niels Bohr**
- "All progress is the result of conflict." - **Karl Marx**
- "The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your mere existence is an act of rebellion." - **Albert Camus**
- "The conflict of opposites is the dynamic principle of all life." - **Heraclitus**
- "The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference." - **Elie Wiesel**
- "God turns you from one feeling to another and teaches by means of opposites so that you will have two wings to fly, not one." - **Rumi**
- "The world is made of opposites, and it is the tension between them that creates all things." - **Lao Tzu**
- "The seed of all creation is the conflict of opposites." - **Plato**
- "The universe is a dance of opposites, and it is the interplay of these opposites that gives rise to all life." - **Alan Watts**

#2 Through Anecdote or story

In ancient Mesopotamia, the Assyrians and Babylonians clashed as powerful civilizations. The Assyrians sought conquest, while the Babylonians cherished intellectual pursuits. During their conflicts, a unique cultural exchange unfolded. The Assyrians knew about the Babylonians' advancements in astronomy and mathematics, while the Babylonians recognized the Assyrians' military strength. They were in constant conflict for occupation of each other. The conflict between two civilizations led to creation of new knowledge which was mixture of both. The clash of opposites became a catalyst for innovation and growth. The Assyrians incorporated Babylonian knowledge, enhancing their military and engineering practices. In turn, the Babylonians embraced Assyrian strategies and fortified their defences. This cultural and intellectual renaissance shaped the ancient world, exemplifying that when opposite cultures conflict, new insights and advancements can arise.

#In ancient Greece, philosophers Plato and Aristotle engaged in a clash of opposing ideas that profoundly shaped Western philosophy. Plato believed in an **ideal realm of Forms** and emphasized reason and contemplation. Aristotle, on the other hand, took an **empirical approach**, studying the physical world and advocating for **observation and analysis**. Their conflicting philosophies sparked **intellectual debates** and expanded the boundaries of knowledge. For example, Plato was an idealist who believed that absolute power to philosopher king can only be solution but Aristotle emphasized that this would result into a tyrannical rule. Aristotle suggested that best practicable form of government is 'Polity' which rule of many but not too many. The story of Plato and Aristotle highlights the transformative power of intellectual discourse and the development of new ideas through conflicts and debate.

Body Content

The notion that all things come into being through the conflict of opposites holds a profound significance in understanding the **intricate fabric of existence**. From natural forces to the human dimension, this concept sheds light on how contrasting forces give birth to new ideas, knowledge, and progress. The idea that all things come into being by conflict of opposites is a central tenet of the **philosophy of Heraclitus**, a Greek philosopher who lived in the 6th century BCE. **Heraclitus** believed that the world is constantly changing, and that this change is driven by the conflict of opposites. **He famously said, "War is the father of all things."** This idea can be seen in many different aspects of life, from the physical world to the political world.

In the natural world, we witness the clash of opposing forces leading to the emergence of new forms and systems. The forces of **attraction and repulsion**, the **push and pull** of tides, the change in day to night, the **ebb and flow** of seasons, and the **cycle of life and death** are all examples of contrasting elements driving the dynamic equilibrium of nature. In nature, opposing forces and events work together to generate something new. The **meeting of hot and cold air can create** clouds and rain, **The clash of waves and rocks can create** new beaches and cliffs, the interaction of sunlight and water can create new forms of life, such as algae and **plankton the collision of tectonic plates can create new volcanoes and earthquakes**, the union of a plant and an animal can create a new hybrid organism.

As the **ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus aptly remarked, "The road up and the road down are the same."** Nature's perpetual struggle between opposing forces is the driving force behind its perpetual renewal and evolution. In the physical world, we see the conflict of opposites in the form of the **four elements: fire, air, water, and earth**. These elements are constantly interacting with each other, and this interaction is what gives rise to all the different phenomena in the world. For example, fire and water are opposites, but they are also necessary for each other's existence. Fire needs water to extinguish it, and water needs fire to evaporate it. This is not only visible in nature but also in the realm of human nature, consciousness, society, culture etc.

Psychologists have observed that when it comes to personal and **romantic compatibility**, many people first think of similarities but while similar traits can certainly increase romantic compatibility, it's not always the case and can backfire for some couples. For example, if both the partners are firm decision makers and leaders in their own right, it might lead to frequent fights and arguments. They have observed that, many important aspects of relationships, especially personality traits, needs, and preferences are a much better fit when they are opposite or complementary, rather than similar, proving that all things come into being by conflict of opposites.

The conflict of opposites can also be seen in the world of politics and governance. In a democracy, for example, there is a constant conflict between the majority and the minority. This conflict is necessary for the proper functioning of democracy, as it ensures that the **voices of all** citizens are heard. If there was no conflict, then the majority would always have its way, and the minority would be silenced. Political systems are born out of the clash between different ideals and approaches to governance. The conflict between authoritarianism and democracy has fuelled revolutions, social movements, and the establishment of constitutions, allowing societies to evolve and progress. As **Thomas Jefferson once wrote, "Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle."** In this context, Indian constitution is a great example of accommodation of modernity and tradition.

The Indian Constitution exemplifies the synthesis of opposites, blending diverse ideologies, beliefs, and ideas to create a cohesive framework for governance. It draws inspiration from ancient texts, democratic principles, and modern constitutional frameworks. Examples include the Fundamental Rights (Article 14-32), which balance individual freedoms with social responsibilities, and the Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 36-51), which guide the state towards social justice and welfare.

Secularism ensures religious harmony and equality, while the reservation policy addresses historical inequalities. The independent judiciary upholds the rule of law and protects individual rights.

Within individuals, the conflict of opposites is also present. The **human psyche** encompasses a multitude of contrasting forces such as good and evil, reason and emotion, and the conscious and unconscious mind. **Yin and Yang** is a fundamental concept in Chinese **philosophy, medicine** and **culture**. As the Yin and Yang black and white circle symbol illustrates, each side has at its core an element of the other, represented by the small dots. Neither pole is superior to the other and, as an increase in one brings a corresponding decrease in the other, a **correct balance** between the two poles must be reached in order to achieve harmony, emphasising that all things exist as **inseparable and contradictory opposites**.

Psychologists like Carl Jung have explored the **concept of individuation**, the integration of **opposing aspects of the self**, as a means of personal growth and self-realization. **Jung stated, "There is no coming to consciousness without pain."** In the human realm it becomes the catalyst for intellectual, social, and cultural progress. Ideologies, beliefs, and ideas that collide often lead to the emergence of new knowledge and perspectives. In his book **The Opposable Mind**, **Roger Martin** writes that innovative thinkers have **"the capacity to hold two diametrically opposing ideas in their heads."** He explains, "Without panicking or simply settling for one alternative or the other, they're able to produce a synthesis that is superior to either opposing idea." Innovative entrepreneurs like to play devil's advocate. Their learning process has always been about disagreeing with what they are being told and taking the opposite position, and pushing others to really justify themselves. Their mantra 'Asking oneself, or others, to imagine a completely different alternative can lead to truly original insights'. The diverging viewpoints of contrasting political ideologies, such as **capitalism and socialism**, have sparked numerous debates and reforms that have shaped polity and governance throughout history.

The realm of philosophy thrives on the clash between opposing ideas and concepts. **The dialectical method**, popularized by philosophers like **Hegel and Marx**, emphasizes the synthesis of **opposing ideas** as a means of progress and understanding. Conflicting philosophical perspectives have fuelled intellectual discourse and the search for truth throughout history.

Throughout history, conflicts between nations, cultures, and ideologies have played a pivotal role in shaping the course of events. These conflicts have often been bloody and destructive, but they have also led to progress. For example, the **conflict between Christianity and Islam** led to the flowering of medieval science and philosophy. Wars, negotiations, and the exchange of ideas between contrasting civilizations have led to the advancement of human knowledge and the dissemination of cultural practices. The **'clash of civilizations'**, as described by **Samuel P. Huntington**, has prompted societies to reflect on their values, leading to the growth of multiculturalism and global interconnectedness. Now, human civilization is passing through fourth Industrial revolution which is led by technology.

The conflict of opposites is also present in the world of technology. Technology is constantly evolving, and this evolution is driven by the conflict of different ideas. For example, **the development of the internet was made possible** by the conflict between the idea of centralized control and the idea of decentralization and this Technological advancement of today was the result of constant **scientific development** since Industrial revolution in 1700s.

Science is based on the idea of testing hypotheses, and this testing often leads to conflict between different theories. For example, the **theory of evolution** was met with great resistance when it was first proposed, but it eventually became accepted because it was able to explain more about the natural world than any other theory. The scientific method itself embodies the conflict of opposites. Hypotheses are tested and refined through experimentation and observation, fostering the continuous

advancement of scientific knowledge. Conflicting theories and opposing interpretations propel scientific disciplines forward, as exemplified by the historic debates between **Newtonian physics and Einstein's theory of relativity**. **Albert Einstein** once remarked, "**In the middle of problems lies opportunity**." Today's most prominent problem for human civilization is environmental degradation.

In the context of environment, opposing forces often manifest in the struggle between conservation and exploitation. Environmental movements arise from the conflict between those who seek to protect the planet's resources and those who prioritize economic growth. **This tension has led to the development of sustainable practices**, renewable energy sources, and international agreements to mitigate the impact of human activities on the Earth. As the **environmentalist John Muir** noted, "**When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world**." **World economies** must realign themselves to be in congruence with the nature.

The conflict of opposites is also present in the world of economics. In a **free market economy**, there is a constant conflict between supply and demand. This conflict ensures that prices are kept in check, and it also leads to innovation. The conflict between economic ideologies and models has shaped the world's economic systems. Capitalism and socialism, with their opposing views on the distribution of wealth and resources, have fuelled economic revolutions, policy reforms, and debates on income inequality. This struggle has resulted in the development of mixed economies and the recognition of the importance of social welfare in achieving sustainable development. **As Karl Marx famously stated, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."**

In his book **The Opposable Mind**, **Roger Martin** writes that innovative thinkers have "**the capacity to hold two diametrically opposing ideas in their heads**." Without panicking or simply settling for one alternative or the other, the genius innovators are able to produce a synthesis that is superior to either opposing idea. Innovative entrepreneurs like to **play devil's advocate**. Their learning process has always been about disagreeing with what they are being told and taking the opposite position. Asking oneself, or others, to imagine a completely different alternative can lead to truly original insights. Struggle is necessary to generate new things but we must also be aware that excessive and prolonged conflicts can lead to destructive outcomes, fostering animosity, division, and hindered progress. Unresolved conflicts can perpetuate cycles of violence and impede the pursuit of harmony and cooperation. The balance is the key.

Conclusion

The idea that all things come into being by conflict of opposites is a powerful one that can help us to understand the world around us and our own lives. It is a reminder that change is constant, and that conflict is often necessary for progress. It is also a reminder that we should not be afraid of conflict, but rather embrace it as an opportunity for growth. The conflict of opposites pervades every aspect of our existence, from the natural world to the complexities of human society. It is through the clash of contrasting forces, ideologies, beliefs, and ideas that new knowledge emerges, progress is made, and our collective understanding expands. By recognizing the power of this conflict and embracing the diversity it engenders, we can foster an environment that promotes innovation, compassion, and growth. As the German **philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche** once wrote,

"One must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star."

Topic #3 - The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends towards justice

नैतिक ब्रह्मांड का चाप लंबा है लेकिन यह न्याय की ओर झुकता है।

Approach: Simply put, the phrase means that though justice may take long, the universe moves towards it. The topic expects students to interpret moral universe and the values enshrined in it. Further analysis can be done as to why seeking justice could be a long journey in itself but eventually justice is served. Examples from history and contemporary can be taken to justify the same.

Introduction

#1 Quotation based

- "At his best, man is the noblest of all animals; separated from law and justice he is the worst." - **Aristotle**
- "If we do not maintain justice, justice will not maintain us." - **Francis Bacon**
- "Justice delayed is Justice denied." - **William Gladstone**
- "It is not possible to be in favour of justice for some people and not be in favour of justice for all people." - **Martin Luther King Jr.**
- "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary." - **Reinhold Niebuhr**
- "Justice cannot be for one side alone but must be for both." - **Eleanor Roosevelt**
- "To be wealthy and honoured in an unjust society is a disgrace." - **Confucius, The Analects**
- "But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!- **Bible**

#2 Through Poem

*# You declare you see me dimly
through a glass which will not shine,
though I stand before you boldly,
trim in rank and marking time.
You do own to hear me faintly
as a whisper out of range,
while my drums beat out the message
and the rhythms never change.
Equality, and I will be free.
Equality, and I will be free.*

*.....
Take the blinders from your vision,
take the padding from your ears,
and confess you've heard me crying,
and admit you've seen my tears.
Hear the tempo so compelling,
hear the blood throb in my veins.
Yes, my drums are beating nightly,
and the rhythms never change.
Equality, and I will be free.
Equality, and I will be free.*

Maya Angelou's poem, "Equality," addresses how black women are seen and treated in the eyes of men and calls for an end to gender and racial inequality. In the fight for social justice, there are always people that resist progress and change. The drum keeps beating: "Equality, and I will be free." But today, the racial and gender inequality is decreasing. There are various steps taken by local, national

and international governments to empower the women and vulnerable to bring the social justice. So, the bending arc of the moral universe towards justice is now visualised through the eyes of most human beings.

Body Content

In this essay, we will first define what **moral universe** is. After that, we will try to measure the length of the moral universe in our life. Then, we will look into in what ways the moral universe bends towards justice. Along with that, we will analyse how the bending of moral universe towards justice are hindered by various elements of our society. Later, we will conclude by enumerating the methods to achieve **social and overall justice**.

A **moral universe** can be a form of **morality, or 'moral code'**, associated with a specific place, a person, a group of people, an activity, a nation or a concept. The "characteristics of one's moral code determine how often and in what life situations inner conflict is aroused. Those who reject this idea tend to believe that the **universe is just physical, has no spiritual component at all, that events are random and have no deeper meaning or purpose**, and that there can be no consequences of any kind to our actions and thus that we live in an **amoral or nihilistic universe**, as in Nietzsche's "God is dead," aphorism.

Different societies have different moral codes. There are no moral truths that hold for all people at all times. The moral code of our own society has no special status; it is but one among many. For instance, **Eastern philosophy** tends to emphasize more the role of tradition and custom in guiding ethical behaviour, while **Western philosophy** gives more weight to individual autonomy and free will. This holds same for human rights. In eastern societies, human rights are subservient to social order. But in western democratic countries, human rights are the priority over the society as long as it does not cause any harm to the society. But all the societies focus on the concept of justice in various ways. For example, China aims to provide economic justice to all of its citizens through it's common prosperity program. But in the same way, USA aims to enhance the people status through skilling the citizens. So, the end goals are almost same.

Justice is the **ethical, philosophical idea** that people are to be treated impartially, fairly, properly, and reasonably by the law and by arbiters of the law, that laws are to ensure that no harm befalls another, and that, where harm is alleged, a remedial action is taken both the accuser and the accused receive a morally right consequence merited by their actions. **When the arc of the moral universe bends towards the justice**, it gives various spectrums of the justice. For example, there will be political, economic, gender, climate, environmental, corporate and other forms of justice.

What is the relationship between **morality and justice**? **Justice is about living with other people, while morality is about living with yourself**. Justice is about right relation to others as measured against the values of society, while morality is about right relation to oneself, as measured against your own beliefs. Morality is something that exists in all of our minds, whether or not it exists "out there" objectively. We have a conscience. We have beliefs about right and wrong that are distinct from our **sense of justice**. But when we have the right **set of morality in the moral universe**, we tend to reach the path of justice. But if we have the conflicts, then justice is denied. Although what constitutes justice may vary depending on culture or historical context between justice and morality, all forms of justice are built on a foundation of moral assumptions that include ideas about **ethics, fairness and the law**.

So, in what ways, the arc of moral universe bends towards the justice? Change is the constant aspect of our lives. To reach the goal of justice, there must be a change in our **attitudes, behaviour and perceptions**. The moral universe is wide having so many diverse elements. But without the change in progressive direction, justice cannot be achieved. For example, **Taliban** banned women attending universities. Because of that, the arc of moral universe bended towards injustice. So, we can say that the bending of moral universe will not always lead to the justice.

With respect to the **political sphere**, there were times when **women were disenfranchised**. **Mary Wollstonecraft** called for the betterment of women's status through such political change as the radical reform of national educational systems. Such change, she concluded, would benefit all society. She fought for women equality in the political sphere for the justice to the women. In this way, eventually, women attained the right to vote and participate in the elections. This changed the perception of women among the other gender.

Now, after the **Covid 19 pandemic**, the world has seen how the women heads of countries like **New Zealand** enabled the fight against the pandemic efficiently than male counterparts. This is how the arc of moral universe which was used to be patriarchal changed towards the equality and empowerment of women. This is true with respect to the **civil rights movement** led by **Martin Luther King**. Also, there were various political movements are going on to bend the moral universe towards equality and justice like **Mahsa Amini protests, Arab spring etc.**

In the same way, in the economic sphere, the scholars in the 18th and 19th century supported the right to property. But it led to the inequality in the wealth creation. Later, **Karl Marx brought his communist ideas to bring justice in the distribution of the economic sphere**. Today, the concept of **humanised version of capitalism** is getting traction. And direct benefit transfer, unemployment allowance, skilling programme and many more are done by the state to ensure the welfare of the people. In India, after independence, land reforms were carried out which were successful in **Kerala and West Bengal**.

Likewise, social sphere we see hundreds of injustice in our daily life. The history of **varna system can be traced back to the ancient India**. But with the change in morality because of the efforts by the people like **Ambedkar, and Jyotiba Phule**, the social moral arc tend to bend towards social justice. Today, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes enjoy the reservation. With the change in social attitude, violence and social discrimination is decreasing. In the same ways, racism in USA witnessed change in terms of reduction in discrimination. Now, there are more expansion in the moral arc of the universe is witnessed through the introduction of climate migrants, LGBTQ+ etc in our society.

We are the receivers of the benefits nature provides. Today, we witnessed the deadly forest fire in Australia. And the forest cover in the Amazon Forest, the lungs of the earth is shrinking. In this scenario, there were urges to protect the protectors of the earth. Recently, biodiversity summit and conference of parties 27 were held to ensure the protection of our planet. In the beginning, human race never realized the value of the nature. But in the second half of the 20th century, we became morally obliged to establish justice for the environment which we are trying to do now, coined as **climate justice**.

But sometimes, **moral universe bends towards injustice meted out as routine behaviour**. Because of the negative values we hold, it became difficult to bend the arc of the moral universe towards justice. For example, in today's world, women only make 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. As a result, there's a lifetime of income inequality between men and women and more women are retiring into poverty. Also, with the rise of populism, leaders neglect the climate and environment. For example, former presidents Trump in USA and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil neglected the environmental concerns. Also, in the administrative field, there were decline in moral literacy which led to the rise of corruption, poor service delivery and misuse of authority. For example, In Rajasthan, Indra Meghwal, a student of a private school in Jalore district beaten to death by teacher for touching waterpot. In this sense, we can clearly understand how the moral universe bend towards injustice if we don't direct it towards the right direction.

So **what can be done to ensure the justice in the world?** There were various scholars who had given their views. According to **John Rawls**, society must put the liberty first in their functioning. After that he suggested that inequalities should be arranged in such a way that it benefits all the people. But

Amartya Sen argued for equalizing capacity of people through education and health interventions. He preferred the realization of end instead of the procedural approach of Rawls. In this sense, today, society must take various steps for bending the arc of the moral universe towards justice.

With the decline of pandemic, we need to lift the people who became poor in 2020. There has to be various skilling programmes for that matter. We need to invest a lot in green technology, infrastructure and health facilities to create equality in economic sphere. In the social sphere, we need to end violence against women, children, old age people, migrants and minorities. For that matter, changes in individual, family, state and international levels are needed. For example, the **Rohingya refugee crisis** could be well addressed if all countries force the Myanmar to oblige the international standards.

Likewise, for **climate equity**, 100 billion dollar per year as promised by developed countries to the developing countries should be transferred along with the technology transfer. In the administrative section, law enforcement has to be strengthened. Judicial system has to be held accountable for enforcing the fundamental rights of people. Most importantly, pendency of the cases should be reduced along with the increase in the number of judges. For example, District courts in India have a vacancy of 5,850 judges. So, we need to have a comprehensive approach in our efforts to **bend the arc of the moral universe towards justice**.

Speaking at the Constitution Day celebrations at the Supreme Court on November 26, Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud used the famous phrase about the arc of the moral universe bending towards justice. Talking about the accessibility of the justice system, the CJI said, ***“The Indian judiciary has been adopting several measures of institutional reform with the single objective and I borrow the celebrated phrase of American civil rights activist Dr Martin Luther King Junior to describe it - to bend the arc of the moral universe towards justice.”*** So, from this event, we can understand the importance of achieving justice for establishing what Maya Angelou called for equality and freedom in everyone’s life.

Topic #4: Disinterested intellectual curiosity is the lifeblood of civilisation.

अनासक्त बौद्धिक जिज्ञासा सभ्यता की जीवनदायिनी है।

Approach: The essay can be discussed by emphasizing what drives a civilisation. Analyse how human's curiosity leads to discoveries and innovations. Elaboration on intellectual curiosity but disinterested which signifies selflessness or efforts put in without any self-interest can be done. Differing examples from variety of fields should help reiterate the point.

Introduction

#1 Quotation based

- "The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well." - **Ralph Waldo Emerson**
- "True selflessness means we care about humanity, not just our little patch of it." - **Bill McKibben**
- "Only by giving are you able to receive more than you already have." - **Jim Rohn**
- "Judge a man by his questions rather than his answers." - **Voltaire**
- "The first and simplest emotion which we discover in the human mind, is curiosity"- **Edmund Burke**
- "Satisfaction of one's curiosity is one of the greatest sources of happiness in life." - **Linus Pauling**
- "We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths." - **Walt Disney**
- "The power to question is the basis of all human progress." - **Indira Gandhi**
- "Scepticism is the first step towards truth."- **Denis Diderot**
- "Following your genuine intellectual curiosity is a better foundation for a career than following whatever is making money right now"-**Naval Ravikant**

#2 Through Anecdote or story

In the 1900s, humanity was gifted with one of its most cherished pharmaceutical inventions – penicillin. The story of penicillin involves the contributions of several individuals, with notable figures including Scottish biologist **Sir Alexander Fleming**, Australian pharmacologist **Howard Florey**, and British biochemist **Ernst Chain**. In 1928, Alexander Fleming **accidentally discovered** the mold *Penicillium notatum* in a petri dish, which had contaminated a culture of **Staphylococcus bacteria** he was studying. He observed that the **mold inhibited the growth of the bacteria** surrounding it, leading to the realization that it possessed antibacterial properties. Later, it was **Howard Florey** and **Ernst Chain** who took up the task of furthering Fleming's discovery and turning penicillin into a viable treatment. Despite facing numerous challenges, including the pressures of **World War II**, they went on to turn the invention into an accessible medical resource. Their efforts resulted in the successful large-scale production of penicillin, which **played a crucial role in saving countless lives** during the war and revolutionized the field of medicine. **Most importantly**, Florey and Chain recognized the significance of their discovery and the potential impact it could have on public health. They made a conscious decision to prioritize the greater good over personal gain and **did not patent penicillin**. Instead, they worked to make the antibiotic widely available, ensuring that it could be accessed and utilized by medical professionals around the world. Their actions exemplify the spirit of **disinterest** in scientific innovation, where the goal of improving human well-being takes precedence over personal recognition or financial gain. Their intellectual curiosity not only

benefitted those of their times, but beyond as well. It highlights **how disinterested (selfless) intellectual curiosity is the lifeblood of civilization.**

#In the early 2000s, **Google** created a **billboard in Silicon Valley** with the text “{first 10-digit prime found in consecutive digits of e}.com”. The people who took the time to figure out the answer found themselves on a website with another equation to solve. Those whose curiosity led them even further were invited to submit their resume to Google. It’s a very unconventional approach to find job candidates but it does make an excellent example of how following one’s curiosity can land a job at one of the world’s most prestigious companies. Intellectual curiosity has been the major trait of extremely successful people.

Body Content

Sometimes, curiosity isn’t always good, or good in an unqualified sense. As goes the famous saying “**curiosity killed the cat**” and it can kill or harm us, if we are not careful. **Isaac Newton** once wedged a flat stick between his skull and the back of his eye, and recorded the visual experiences he had. This was a part of his curious quest to know how it is that we human beings perceive colour and light. However, when curiosity is aimed at the right end, and pursued in the right manner, it can lead to wisdom and a deeper and more enriching life. **Intellectual curiosity** is a person’s willingness and desire to learn new things and dig deeper than the surface. Intellectual curiosity makes learning a much more **natural process**, instead of just a duty or a chore.

Disinterested intellectual curiosity means the **spirit of selfless inquiry**, wherein an individual seeks knowledge not for motives like recognition, material benefits, etc. but to genuinely only arrive at the answers. Disinterested intellectual curiosity has many merits. It often results in **everlasting benefits**, caters to a larger audience, is more innovative, and certainly is very fulfilling. Further, it fosters the feeling of empathy and exemplifies an ethical way of leading one’s life. Thus, inspiring future generations as well. However, it poses a few harms as well, for an individual does not pay attention to the potential consequences, which sometimes could turn out to be fatal.

Disinterested intellectual curiosity is driven by an **honest desire to acquire knowledge** and understand the world. It is focused on the **pursuit of truth**, rather than personal gain or recognition. This approach encourages individuals to explore a wide range of subjects, fostering a broader understanding of various disciplines and promoting interdisciplinary thinking. In contrast, selfish or “**interested**” **intellectual curiosity** may be limited to areas that directly benefit the individual’s ulterior motives. This leads to a **narrower scope of exploration**, thereby risking subpar solutions.

Further, disinterested intellectual curiosity **encourages collaboration and shared learning**. It fosters an environment where individuals are willing to share their knowledge, insights, and discoveries with others. This collaborative approach often leads to an **exchange of ideas, constructive debates, and collective progress**. This is simply because an individual focuses beyond oneself. On the other hand, selfish intellectual curiosity may discourage collaboration, as individuals may be more inclined to hoard knowledge or use it for personal gain, inhibiting the free flow of information and hindering collective advancement. Disinterestedness also leads to many societal benefits such as **community lifestyle** and respect for one another.

The substantial benefits in the form of innovation and holistic understanding often also lead to life-changing events for people. The same was observed in the widely acclaimed movie “**The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind**”. It is based on the true story of **William Kamkwamba**. Set in a drought-stricken rural village of Malawi, William and his family face immense challenges due to the unavailability of water and power. With a thirst for knowledge, he discovers an **innovative way to harness wind power** to bring electricity and water to his community. For the same, he did not just rely on the theoretical

concepts of science and technology but also studied the **geography of the region, the culture and traditions of his ancestors**, etc. Despite facing scepticism and obstacles, William's determination and resourcefulness inspire others and transform their lives. Through his **ingenuity and selflessness**, and despite the fact that he had **no material motivations** for doing what he did, he altered the lives of his people.

This also shows that disinterested intellectual curiosity **takes into account ethical considerations** and the impact of knowledge on society. It seeks to apply knowledge for the greater good and considers the potential consequences of intellectual pursuits. On the other hand, selfish intellectual curiosity may disregard ethical implications and focus solely on personal interests or gains, potentially leading to negative outcomes or the exploitation of knowledge for harmful purposes.

In this context, it is fitting to remember the work of **Dr. Maria Telkes**. She was a Hungarian-American scientist who dedicated her life to developing **solar energy technology**. She invented the solar-powered thermal storage system, which utilized solar panels and phase change materials. This led to her creating the **first fully solar-powered house**, showcasing the practical application of solar energy. In order to ensure that her work benefits the most needy, she selflessly shared her knowledge and **did not seek personal gain by patenting her inventions**. Telkes' contributions laid the foundation for sustainable energy development and inspired future generations to pursue innovative solutions for a better world. For instance, India-led **International Solar Alliance** and **One-Sun, One-World, One-Grid** initiatives aim to share the benefits of solar energy with the world at large.

Closer to home, many judges of constitutional courts in India, including the current **Chief Justice, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud**, choose public service at the expense of their highly lucrative careers as senior advocates. Upon being asked as to why they do so, many explained that while both – senior advocates and judges – have tremendous curiosity as law officers, the former largely possess it for themselves and their clients, whereas the latter are driven by the interests of society as a whole. It is this difference that persuades them to choose judgeship as their career. They assert that the self-fulfilment and satisfaction gained in judgeship is strikingly immense as compared to that of an advocate. In other words, although the quenching of curiosity is a satisfaction unmatched by any other virtue, the sense of fulfillment attained due to disinterested curiosity is on a much higher level.

In a similar context, the renowned financial guru, **Morgan Housel**, in his book “**The Psychology of Money**”, writes that an individual constitutes an infinitesimally minuscule part of the world and the human race, yet s/he believes that 80% of the world revolves around him/her. He blames this widespread misperception on the selfish nature of an individual's curiosity, wherein one only feeds and thinks for herself. Concerningly, this also breeds arrogance and short-sightedness. A person's horizons remain narrow, thereby disabling her foresight. For this, he advocates that an **individual would benefit much if they were to be a little humble**. This would enable them to think of others and not just themselves. Such curiosity would lead to solutions that would be less combative and more collaborative in nature, i.e., **helping all instead of oneself**.

While the benefits are galore, as stated earlier, disinterestedness also poses a few harms. A disinterested inquiry is oblivious to the possible consequences of the solutions being arrived at. For instance, the **Manhattan Project** led by the renowned scientist **J. Oppenheimer** resulted in the creation of atomic and nuclear bombs. While the motivations for J. Oppenheimer were mostly noble, as the nuclear test was successfully carried out, he immediately realized the catastrophic consequences that could follow. His prescient realization turned out to be accurate as lakhs of lives have already got consumed by the direct consequences of his invention.

Similarly, there are likes of **Gain of Function** research, which enhances the function, transmissibility, or pathogenicity of a biological organism, typically a virus or bacterium. While it is done to better understand diseases, develop vaccines, and improve public health preparedness, it may sometimes have dangerous fallouts. That too of epidemic proportions. For instance, considerable research has suggested that the **Covid pandemic** was due to the leakage of unstable viral organisms. While the circumstances surrounding the covid episode might not entirely be apparent, the point stands that such inquisitive research may have fatal consequences. Therefore, possessing aimless disinterestedness could also do more harm than good. As **Socrates** has commanded, "**Nothing should be in excess, everything should be in moderation**". In that spirit, one should be cognizant of the risk their curiosity may pose.

Conclusion

One must realize, that disinterested curiosity does not only help the world but helps us **transform ourselves**. In the words of **Albert Einstein** "**The minds that open to a new idea, never return to their original size**". That is this curiosity helps us find the best version of ourselves as it expands our horizons. In the remarkable story of Dr. Maria Telkes, driven by her passion for **advancing solar energy** technology, she selflessly dedicated her work to the betterment of humanity. She **refused personal gain**, ensuring that her inventions could benefit society as a whole. Likewise, the discovery of **penicillin** by Alexander Fleming and the subsequent efforts of Howard Florey and Ernst Chain exemplify the selflessness embedded in scientific progress. They recognized the immense potential of penicillin as a life-saving antibiotic and worked relentlessly to make it widely accessible, prioritizing the well-being of others over personal gain.

The conclusion is clear: **selflessness drives innovation and progress that positively impacts humanity**. Similarly, Their selfless actions remind us of the **power we hold to shape the world through our choices**. When we prioritize the greater good and extend our efforts beyond personal gains, we unlock the potential to transform lives, communities, and even the trajectory of civilization. Man's curiosity led us from stone-age to the current age of moon and Mars exploration. As Ayn Rand says,

"From the smallest necessity to the highest religious abstraction, from the wheel to the skyscraper, everything we are and everything we have comes from one attribute of man – the function of his reasoning mind."

Section – B

Topic #1: Women's freedom is the sign of social freedom.

महिलाओं की स्वतंत्रता सामाजिक स्वतंत्रता की निशानी है।

Approach: This essay explores the interconnection of women's freedom with societal progress. The introduction can highlight women's freedom as a catalyst for advancement, while the body discusses historical struggles, economic empowerment, political representation, cultural shifts, and education's impact. The conclusion can be about this reciprocal relationship, guiding societies towards a more inclusive future.

Introduction

#1 Quotation based

- "Women's freedom is not just about rights; it's about rewriting the narrative of progress and inclusivity." - **Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**
- "When women are free to make choices, societies become free to flourish and prosper." - **Kofi Annan**
- "The freedom and empowerment of women hold the key to unlocking the true potential of any society." - **Michelle Obama**
- "Societies that embrace women's freedom as a core value tend to flourish in every dimension." - **Melinda Gates**
- "A society can be judged by how it treats its women. The more empowered they are, the more socially advanced the society becomes." - **Desmond Tutu**

#2 Through Anecdote or story

#Emmeline Pankhurst, a pivotal figure in the suffragette movement in the United Kingdom, embarked on a tireless quest for women's right to vote in the late 19th century. Frustrated by gender-based inequalities, Pankhurst founded the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903. Their tactics evolved from peaceful protests to civil disobedience, including hunger strikes and public disruptions. Pankhurst's leadership and unwavering determination inspired a groundswell of support, forcing society to confront its discriminatory norms. Amid escalating tensions, World War I intervened, shifting priorities. In 1918, the Representation of the People Act granted certain women over 30 the right to vote. Pankhurst's efforts laid the foundation for the eventual universal suffrage achieved in 1928. Her story illuminates that women's fight for political representation was more than a vote, a beacon, signalling society's journey towards greater freedom and equality.

#Aruna Roy is best known for her efforts to fight corruption and promote government transparency. She had a strong life background where her father instilled a strong social conscience, while her mother taught her to be independent minded. After studying in Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry and Indraprastha College in Delhi, Aruna started teaching. But, she realised that teaching wasn't her passion as she aimed to become a civil servant. She cleared the Indian Administrative Services (IAS) examination in 1967. Aruna is known as a prominent leader of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), a social and grassroots organisation for the empowerment of workers and peasants. In 2005, she played a crucial role in establishing the Right to Information Act (RTI). Aruna has received various awards for her service to the society, such as the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership in 2000. In 2011, Aruna was named as one of the '100 most influential people across the world by Time Magazine.

Body Content

Social freedom refers to the **ability of individuals** to freely express themselves and participate in society **without fear of discrimination or persecution**. It encompasses a wide range of rights and freedoms, such as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, and freedom from discrimination based on race, gender, sexuality, and other factors. It also includes the right to access education, employment, and other opportunities without discrimination. Simply put, it means **'All the rights (Legal/Fundamental/Humanitarian etc.) are available to people subjected to such rights available to other people as well.'**

But for an individual, social freedom will stand true to its meaning the day only when we will unleash the fear of facing this inevitable question of "what will the society say or think"?

From the perspective of women equality, social freedom is the desire to be free from patriarchy and social taboos, conventions, rituals, which impose conventional roles and restrictions on women. Women though have been given equal rights in our constitution, but worldwide and in India, much progress is desired. It is a sad reality that women are still discriminated and face injustice just like ages ago. It is pleasant to talk about women liberation; but, no one has really given them **real freedom** despite all the laws.

Women's freedom has been an ongoing struggle that not only aims to transform the lives of women but has also can have profound effects on the entire fabric of society. The journey toward women's emancipation has been marked by milestones that highlight the interconnection between a woman's freedom and the broader concept of social freedom.

History is replete with instances of courage and resilience for women's fight for freedom. From the **suffragette movement to modern-day activism**, women have tirelessly strived for their rights. Pioneering figures such as **Susan B. Anthony**, who fought for women's suffrage, and **Rosa Parks**, whose actions ignited the civil rights movement, have shaped the discourse on social freedom by championing women's rights. When women are given freedom to act they not only act for themselves but for the entire society.

The bond between a woman's freedom and societal progress is undeniable. Women, as mothers, wives, and daughters, wield the power to cultivate virtues, empathy, and social responsibility in their family members. **Philosophers like Aristotle** emphasized the significance of family as the foundation of society. Psychologists such as **Erik Erikson** highlight the importance of the early stages of life in forming an individual's identity and values. **Mothers and female caregivers** play pivotal roles in nurturing emotional intelligence, empathy, and self-awareness in children. This underscores that women's role as educators and value builders extends beyond formal education systems. That's why their empowerment affects the whole society. **As Melinda Gates has said, "Investing in women means investing in the people who invest in everyone else."**

Economic and educational empowerment of women translates into a more prosperous and equitable society. As women gain control over their lives, they contribute to economic growth, innovative thinking, and the development of their communities. Their freedom of choice ripples through society, fostering a culture of diversity and progress. The International Labour Organization (ILO) indicates that increasing **women's participation in the labour force can lead to poverty reduction**. Women's income helps lift families out of poverty, contributing to better living conditions and quality of life.

The role of women in the workforce has evolved from being limited to certain fields to encompassing a broad spectrum of industries. As women break through glass ceilings, economies are invigorated. According to the **World Economic Forum, gender equality in the workforce could add trillions to global**

GDP. In a 2018 report, the International Monetary Fund(IMF) estimated that if all countries achieved full gender equality, **global GDP could be 10% higher by 2025.**

Countries like Norway, where women's participation in the labour force is high, have reaped the benefits of enhanced social welfare and economic stability. The **World Bank** highlights that **women's earnings contribute significantly to household income**, enabling better access to education and healthcare for their families. Research also shows that educated working women tend to invest more in their children's education and well-being. **Christine Lagarde has said, "Investing in women's freedom is an investment in a brighter future. It sets in motion a chain reaction of progress that benefits us all."**

Education has long been regarded as a potent tool for transforming societies, and women's education is no exception. When girls are educated, they become catalysts for change within their families and communities. Educated women are better equipped to make informed decisions, advocate for their rights, and contribute to nation-building. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reports that **women's participation in the labour force is linked to increased political participation and decision-making.** When women are economically active, they often gain more voice in societal matters.

The inclusion of women in political spheres brings a fresh perspective to governance and policy-making. Countries that have embraced gender parity in politics have seen improvements in social welfare policies, healthcare, and education. The election of leaders such as **Angela Merkel as German Chancellor and Jacinda Ardern as New Zealand Prime Minister** underscores the transformative power of women in leadership roles. Their ability to balance pragmatism with empathy reflects the essence of social freedom.

While progress has been made, societal norms and stereotypes continue to impede women's freedom. **Cultural expectations and traditional gender roles** hinder the full realization of social freedom. However, these challenges underscore the need for persistent efforts to dismantle barriers. Initiatives that challenge these norms, such as campaigns against child marriage and female genital mutilation, exemplify the fight for women's and social freedom.

According to UNICEF ' One in three of the world's child brides live in India, of the country's approximately 223 million child brides, around 102 million were married before turning 15'. Child marriage lead to early pregnancy and this can lead to maternal death and if not, overall as an individual growth of girl child mentally and physically get affected. **Gandhiji said, " Without emancipation of women, Independence is meaningless."**

The **evolution of cultural perceptions** regarding women's roles is instrumental in advancing social freedom. Societies that move beyond ingrained biases tend to be more inclusive and dynamic. For instance, **Iceland's emphasis on gender equality** has led to it being ranked as one of the most gender-equal nations globally. Iceland has a female labour force participation rate of 80.3 percent as compared to 77.8 for male and has only 14.2 percent gender pay gap. This has resulted in Iceland being one of the happiest and most democratic countries with one of the lowest child mortality and a country with one of the highest life expectancy.

However, even in regions where patriarchal notions persist, initiatives like **microfinance programs for women entrepreneurs** demonstrate the positive impact of empowering women for social upliftment. **A study by the World Bank** found that microfinance can have a significant impact on women's empowerment. The study found that women who received microfinance loans were more likely to be involved in **decision-making** in their households, more likely to have a say in their children's education, and more likely to participate in community activities. In the state of Uttar Pradesh, a microfinance program called the **Grameen Foundation India** has helped over 2 million women to start or expand their businesses. **Grameen Foundation India** has also helped to improve the access of women to

healthcare, education, and other essential services. Economic empowerment of women can be the starting point for overall change in their condition and eventual upliftment of the whole society.

As **Zainab Salbi**, a humanitarian working for women welfare has said, **"Women's freedom is not a standalone goal; it's the nucleus of change that radiates across societies, altering norms, and elevating possibilities."** Women's freedom acts as a catalyst for **holistic societal transformation**. Their participation in the workforce sparks economic growth, while access to education and health empowers families. Gender equality erodes biases, fostering inclusivity, innovation, and progressive policies. Women's political engagement prioritizes social welfare, and their evolving roles reshape cultural norms. This empowerment reduces poverty, enhances family dynamics, and amplifies community engagement. Internationally, such societies gain recognition, fostering global ties. Ultimately, women's freedom elevates social standards by permeating economics, politics, culture, and overall well-being, exemplifying the profound interdependence between women's empowerment and societal advancement.

Considering this many efforts at the global level have been taken to achieve gender parity. The **United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5** explicitly focuses on gender equality and women's empowerment, setting global targets to address gender disparities. **UN Women** works towards women's economic empowerment, political participation, and ending violence against women. The **HeForShe** campaign engages men and boys as allies in advancing gender equality. Additionally, organizations like **Women for Women International** provide support and training for women survivors of conflict. These initiatives underscore the global commitment to women's empowerment and illustrate the collective effort to ensure women's freedom as a cornerstone of social progress.

In conclusion, the assertion that **"woman's freedom is the sign of social freedom"** holds true as a testament to the interconnectedness of these two concepts. The historical struggles of women, their economic and **educational empowerment**, political representation, and the changing cultural landscape collectively illustrate the symbiotic relationship between **women's and social freedom**. A society's progress is intricately linked to the freedom and empowerment of its women. As we forge ahead, let us recognize that the liberation of women is not only a measure of social progress but also a catalyst for a more equitable, vibrant, and harmonious world.

Recognizing women's freedom as a signpost for social freedom is an affirmation that embracing gender equality is not merely an act of justice, but a deliberate step toward building a **harmonious, inclusive, and thriving world** for all. The journey toward social freedom is undeniably intertwined with the liberation of women, signifying a collective path forward into a brighter and more equitable future. As **Amartya Sen** quoted,

"Nothing, arguably, is as important today in the political economy of development as an adequate recognition of political, economic, and social participation and leadership of women."

Topic #2 - If humankind poisoned nature, nature in turn poison humankind

यदि मानव जाति ने प्रकृति को विषाक्त किया है, तो प्रकृति ने बदले में मानव जाति को विष दे दिया है।

Approach: The essay highlights the reciprocal relationship between man and nature in which we reap what we sow. We can start by writing the ways in which humankind poisons nature through its industrial leaks, plastic waste, air pollution, overexploitation, unsustainable agriculture etc. Then explore the other aspect as how nature maintains balance and reverts to its original state through disasters, increased mortality, food insecurity etc. Conclude by talking about sustainability, circular economy and government efforts.

Introduction

#1 Quotation based

Nature provides a free lunch, but only if we control our appetites. -**William Ruckelshaus**

The greatest threat to *our planet* is the belief that someone else will *save* it. - **Robert Swan**

"We still do not know one thousandth of one percent of what nature has revealed to us." -**Albert Einstein**

"Man has been endowed with reason, with the power to create, so that he can add to what he's been given. But up to now he hasn't been a creator, only a destroyer. Forests keep disappearing, rivers dry up, wild life's become extinct, the climate's ruined and the land grows poorer and uglier every day"-

Anton Chekhov

"Many call this process 'the destruction of nature.' But it's not really destruction, it's change. Nature cannot be destroyed."- **Yuval Noah Harari**

"If you live in harmony with nature you will never be poor; if you live according what others think, you will never be rich."- **Seneca, Letters from a Stoic**

"When the last tree has been cut down, the last fish caught, the last river poisoned, only then will we realize that one cannot eat money."- **American Indian proverb**

#2 Through Anecdote or story

Guangdong province in China was one of the places where typhoon Mangkhut made a landfall in 2018. The cyclone was predicted and humankind was prepared to brace its impact but what came as a surprise was the tons of plastic waste, it left behind. There were plastic litters around residential areas, malls, cars etc. It felt like a return gift from nature for all the plastic dumps and environmental pollution we did over the years and a warning sign that it can't take it anymore.

The **Black Sea Biosphere Reserve**, on the southern coast of Ukraine, is a haven for migrating birds. More than 120,000 birds spend the winter flitting about its shores, and a multi-coloured spectrum of rare species- the white-tailed eagle, black-winged stilt, to name just a few- nest among its protected waters and wetlands. The reserve is also home to the the Black Sea bottlenose dolphin, rare flowers, countless molluscs, dozens of species of fish – and, in recent weeks, an invading military. Today the territory of the reserve is occupied by the Russian troops. Military activity in the area sparked fires large enough to be seen from space, prompting concerns about the destruction of critical bird breeding habitats. the ecological impact of the conflict could be profound. Wars destroy habitats, kill wildlife, generate pollution and remake ecosystems entirely, with consequences that ripple through the decades. **"The environment is the silent victim of conflicts,"**

In **2004, an Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami** killed more than 230,000 people. The countries worst hit were Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand, all of which had experienced significant declines in mangrove cover, according to a report by the Environmental Justice Foundation. From 1980 to 2000, the area covered by mangroves in these countries fell by 28%. In places where the trees had been destroyed, the waves penetrated further inland, killing more people and aggravating

the destruction of homes and livelihoods. The “mangrove forests played a crucial role in saving human lives and property”, the report said.

Mangroves absorb the impact of waves and rising sea levels by their large root systems, which dissipate energy. **“Conserving and restoring coastal mangrove areas is essential if coastal communities are to recover and be protected from similar events,”** the report concluded.

Body Content

The relationship between humans and nature is an intricate, **symbiotic bond**, profoundly shaped by millions of years of evolution. Humans, as sentient beings, have developed sophisticated cultures and technologies, yet our survival remains inextricably tied to the natural world. We rely on nature for our basic necessities – air, water, food, and shelter. However, this relationship is **not one-way**. **Ecologist Robin Chazdon** argues that while nature can play an important role in mitigating climate change, concerted human interventions are also essential. Nature, in turn, relies on us to maintain its balance which includes afforestation, carbon sequestration, saving the biodiversity etc. Though nature doesn't depend on humans for its existence but it certainly needs humans to maintain its shape and form.

As we continuously exploited and used nature for our own advancements, it is glaringly evident that humans haven't held their end of the bargain. Coral reefs have been disappearing dramatically year on year, carcinogenic plastics are found in the gut of over 90% of marine life, and the advent of **rising sea levels, floods, heatwaves, hurricanes, typhoons, landslides due to deforestation, loss of biodiversity, global warming** etc. are just the tip of the iceberg.

There are various ways through which humankind poisons nature. We set the lungs of the earth—Amazon Forest on fire, we test the **carrying capacity** of nature time and again, our industries release harmful chemicals like **mercury, cadmium** etc. in the environment, our recurrent shopping sprees end up in the ocean making it a huge landfill. The genetically modified crops, pesticides and chemicals used in agriculture can cause unanticipated consequences because of **bioaccumulation** and **biomagnifications**. Overconsumption and overpopulation exploited nature to the extent that it has started endangering our own existence.

Since, we corrupted our symbiotic relationship with nature, nature has unleashed its wrath on humankind from time to time. If humankind poisoned nature, nature in turn poisons and can make existence of humankind extremely treacherous. **Diseases** caused by environmental pollution, exposure to heavy chemicals and harmful gases, contaminated soil, **extreme weather events** are all part of nature's revenge.

The 2013 Kedarnath floods caused by midday cloud bursts causing devastating floods and landslides was one of the many of recent examples of nature's fury. It caused hundreds of people to lose their lives and the tourist place remained closed for almost a year. The event felt like a reminder from nature as to who has the real authority on this planet. Increased frequency of occurrence of floods, cyclone and other natural disasters is testimony that humankind is at the mercy of nature. The floods in Himachal Pradesh are testament to the natural justice followed by nature.

Nature also makes nations spend thousands of dollars in mitigation, adaptation and rehabilitation. **It is expected that climate change will reduce global economic output by 11-14%, or as much as \$23 trillion annually by 2050.** Nature can cause food insecurity by lowering the crop yield because of unpredictable weather, can decrease the productivity of the workers, increase the demand of energy and exacerbate inequality.

According to **World Meteorological Organization**, from 1970 to 2019, weather, climate and water hazards accounted for **50% of all disasters, 45% of all reported deaths and 74% of all reported economic**

losses. Around 8 lakh people die every year because of unsafe drinking water. Air pollution causes 7 million premature deaths annually. And the list continues!

Apart from increasing mortality and economic losses, nature impacts our politics as well. **The civil war of Sudan** is considered as the first climate change war, disasters are one of the leading reasons for displacement, overexploitation of forests is the root cause for **tribal militancy**. A healthy relationship with nature seems a prerequisite for political peace and stability.

Nature not only ensure human's physical needs but it is an indispensable part of our **culture** as well. Almost all religions of the world worship nature and have rituals around it. For instance, the declining **population of vultures** impacted the death rites of Parsis as they lay dead on an open-air terrace to be eaten by vultures. Nature impacts every aspect of human life. However, its wrath impacts some people of the society more than the others specially. According to **Emission Gap Report of 2022**, top 1% of the households contribute 17% of the Green House Gas emissions while bottom 50% households contribute 12%. Irrespective of their contribution in climate change, often the marginalized and vulnerable sections of the society- tribes, women, children, poor- ends up taking the toll and paying the price for the damage they never did. The lack of access to finances, social security and climate justice makes them susceptible to **environmental apartheid**.

Realizing the importance of nature and the crucial role it plays in our lives, various initiatives have been taken to transform our relationship of greed to a relationship of gratitude. For instance, **Mission LiFE** to promote sustainable lifestyle, **National Mission on Natural Farming**, **Namami Gange program**, **Cheetah relocation project** etc. Circular economy, carbon trading and renewable energy are becoming the blueprint for future development. 2021-2030 is named as **The United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**.

We need to **restore-or "rewild"- biodiversity** on the planet. When ecosystems are more diverse, they are better able to perform essential ecosystem services, like carbon sequestration. **Palau is a western Pacific island** nation dependent on its oceans for food and tourism. When fishing stocks were rapidly depleting, the government restricted fishing practices and banned fishing entirely in some areas. The protected fish populations soon became so healthy that they spilled into areas where fishing was allowed. These no-fish zones resulted in increased catches for fishermen and recovered coral reefs. Globally, if no-fish zones were implemented over a third of the world's oceans, we would have all the fish we would need.

As the human race continues to advance and evolve, it may seem like we dominate society; but, that doesn't make us above nature, as we are still very much a part of it. We need to understand that we need nature for our own survival. Nature has been on this planet for almost 3 billion years, it has survived without humans for a long time and can do so even now. It is humans who need nature for its existence.

Conclusion

Victor Hugo once said- **"When God desires to destroy a thing, he entrusts its destruction to the thing itself. Every bad institution of this world ends by suicide."** The path humankind has taken in the name of development is a step towards our own extinction. The relationship between humans and nature is at a crossroad. We can continue down the path of exploitation and face the consequences, or we can choose a new path of respect, sustainability, and coexistence. The choice is ours to make. As we stand at this juncture, let us remember that our relationship with nature is not just about survival, but also about who we are as a species. It is about our values, our beliefs, and our legacy. It is about our future. **As Leonardo DiCaprio a staunch climate change activist said, "As we progress into the twenty-first century, anyone who considers themselves a realist will have to make the environment a top priority."**

Topic #3 - History Doesn't Repeat Itself, but it often rhymes.

इतिहास खुद को दोहराता नहीं है, लेकिन यह अक्सर तुकबंदी करता है।

Approach: This essay can be explored by examining various historical events. First, dive into the 1920s and 1930s, discussing the Spanish flu pandemic, the Great Depression, and subsequent recovery efforts. Parallels can be drawn with today's COVID-19 pandemic and recession, emphasizing similarities in global healthcare, economic crises, government responses, and societal impacts. Throughout the essay, recurring historical themes and lessons and the importance of global cooperation during pandemics, government intervention during economic crises, the persistence of human behavior, and the consequences of societal inequalities can be stressed. Present more dimensions and counter arguments that history does not always follow familiar patterns. Conclude by emphasizing the need to learn from history's echoes to shape a better future and avoid repeating past mistakes.

Introduction

#1 Quotation based

- "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." - **George Santayana**
- "We learn from history that we learn nothing from history." **George Bernard Shaw**
- "History is a mirror for the future; it shows us not just where we've been, but where we could go." - **Walter Thompson**
- "In the grand symphony of time, the familiar melodies of history play on, but with new instruments and players." - **Maya Angelou**
- "History is a master storyteller, weaving tales of caution and inspiration for those willing to listen." - **Winston Churchill**
- "Whoever wishes to foresee the future must consult the past; for human events ever resemble those of preceding times. This arises from the fact that they are produced by men who ever have been, and ever shall be, animated by the same passions, and thus they necessarily have the same results." **Machiavelli**

#2 Through Anecdote or story

During the **Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962**, **President John F. Kennedy's** advisors debated whether to respond to Soviet missiles in Cuba with military force. One advisor, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., recalled the similar dilemma faced by President Abraham Lincoln during the Trent Affair in 1861. **The Trent Affair** was significant in that the US diplomats were able to avoid a war with Great Britain while fighting the Civil War against the Confederacy, and additionally convince Great Britain to remain a neutral party in the war. In both instances, leaders grappled with the risk of war with a major power. Kennedy, influenced by this **historical rhyme**, chose a diplomatic solution. **This avoidance of conflict exemplified how history doesn't repeat itself precisely but can provide valuable lessons for navigating contemporary crises.**

During the horrific **Holocaust**, Nazi Germany systematically rounded up and imprisoned Jews, gays, Roma people, communists and others who did not fit into Hitler's worldview. Some 11 million concentration camp prisoners ultimately died from starvation, exhaustion or execution. It was so dehumanising that German schools now mandate teaching of the Holocaust in hopes that future generations will never repeat the mistakes of their past. The other countries have pledged to stop it if it does happen. **"Never again will the world ... fail to act in time to prevent this terrible crime of genocide,"** U.S. President Jimmy Carter proclaimed in 1979. But sadly there have been as many as two dozen instances of genocide since the Holocaust. Take **Cambodia's Khmer Rouge**, which, between 1975 and 1979, killed as many as 2 million political dissidents, a shocking one-third of the country's

population. Just 15 years later, during a 100-day span in 1994, **Rwanda's Hutu** government killed between one-half and 1 million **Tutsis**. Such crimes continue into the 21st century, as persecution of **Rohingyas of Myanmar** has led to the biggest humanitarian crisis.

Body Content

The topic is oft-quoted wisdom from Mark Twain which encapsulates the idea that while history may not recreate itself verbatim, it frequently echoes **similar themes, patterns, and lessons in different epochs**. To understand this notion more profoundly, let's delve into the **tumultuous period of the 1920s and 1930s**. This era, marked by the Spanish flu pandemic, the Great Depression, and subsequent economic reconstruction, bears a striking resemblance to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, recession, and slowdown in the modern world.

The **1920s marked the end of World War I** and a brief interlude of relative prosperity, often referred to as the **"Roaring Twenties."** However, beneath the veneer of economic opulence and social exuberance, the world grappled with the Spanish flu pandemic. In the words of **historian Laura Spinney**, **"The Spanish flu pandemic of 1918 was the greatest medical holocaust in history, killing 50 million people worldwide."** Just as COVID-19 would later expose the vulnerability of our global healthcare systems, the Spanish flu revealed the inadequacy of healthcare infrastructure in the early 20th century.

The parallels between the Spanish flu and COVID-19 are uncanny. Both were novel viruses that spread rapidly due to increased globalization. The Spanish flu, just like COVID-19, highlighted the importance of **international cooperation** in combating pandemics. Yet, in both instances, the initial response was characterized by nationalistic tendencies, with countries primarily focusing on safeguarding their own interests. The Spanish flu, despite its name, did not originate in Spain, yet **Spain's open reporting** about the outbreak gave the impression that it was the epicentre. Similarly, in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a propensity to label it the **"China virus, or the WUHAN virus"** emphasizing a blame game instead of collaboration.

Moreover, the economic fallout of the Spanish flu and the COVID-19 pandemic reveals another facet of **history rhyming**. The Spanish flu was followed by the **Great Depression**, a catastrophic economic downturn that affected millions worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic, too, unleashed an **economic crisis, albeit in a different manner**. The lockdowns and restrictions implemented to curb the virus's spread led to a **sudden and severe recession**. Both events saw a significant increase in unemployment rates, with businesses shuttering and livelihoods disrupted. **In both cases, governments had to intervene with substantial fiscal and monetary policies to stabilize their economies.**

The 1920s and 1930s also witnessed an era of **economic reconstruction**. After the Great Depression, nations embarked on ambitious plans to rebuild their economies and societies. In the United States, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal aimed to provide relief, recovery, and reform. Roosevelt's famous quote, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," resonates with the message of hope and resilience that leaders worldwide conveyed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Massive infrastructure projects, social reforms, and public works programs were initiated, mirroring the stimulus packages and vaccination campaigns of the COVID-19 era.

Similarly, the current times have witnessed a renewed focus on infrastructure and sustainable development, with various nations announcing ambitious green recovery plans. The idea of **"building back better"** became a rallying cry, echoing the spirit of reconstruction efforts in the 1930s. Indeed, in the words of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, **"I think the world needs to be ready for a pandemic"**

in the same way that you're ready for a war." This sentiment reflects the lessons learned from history and the need to be prepared for crises that may, in different forms, repeatedly threaten humanity.

Turning our attention to the Cold War era, we find further evidence of history's rhymes. The ideological standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union defined this period. While the specific circumstances were unique to the time, the underlying themes of great **power rivalry**, **nuclear brinkmanship**, and the constant threat of global conflict bear an eerie resemblance to the geopolitical tensions of today. The Cold War era serves as a reminder that the world is no stranger to rivalries among superpowers and the delicate balance required to prevent catastrophic conflict.

Moreover, the Cold War era teaches us about the enduring nature of human behaviour. **The McCarthy era**, marked by anti-communist hysteria and the suppression of dissent, parallels modern instances of political **polarization and the erosion of democratic norms**. As historian **Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.** noted, **"The greatest danger of the Cold War was that Americans would come to resemble their enemies."** This warning resonates in contemporary discussions about the **erosion of civil liberties** and the rise of authoritarian tendencies in democratic societies.

One dimension where history often rhymes is **technological progress**. For instance, the invention of the automobile in the early 20th century disrupted transportation systems much like how the advent of electric and autonomous vehicles is reshaping mobility today. Similarly, the **internet's rise** in the late 20th century, paralleled by the growth of artificial intelligence in the 21st century, has transformed the way we communicate and work. These historical echoes demonstrate that technological innovations have consistently reshaped societies and economies across different eras.

The changes in Political ideologies and rise of populism **represent another dimension where history rhymes**. The rise of authoritarian leaders and populist movements in the 1930s, exemplified by figures like Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, bears similarities to the resurgence of populism and hyper-nationalism in recent years. These historical echoes underscore the **cyclic nature of political ideologies** and the need to safeguard democratic institutions.

In addition, **cultural shifts and social movements** are yet another dimension of historical rhyming. **The civil rights movement** of the 1950s and 1960s in the United States, characterized by demands for racial equality, can be compared to contemporary movements like **Black Lives Matter**. A tweet by American actor Alyssa Milano sparked a social media phenomenon that raised awareness, gave voice to survivors, and led to sweeping cultural and workplace changes. While Milano's tweet is largely recognized as the tipping point of the modern **#Me Too movement**, it had resemblance to an event more than a decade earlier. Community activist **Tarana Burke** coined the phrase who was sexually assaulted as a child, worked with young survivors and found that the phrase "me too" could help assure others that they were not alone in having experienced abuse. Both reflect the ongoing struggle for social justice and equality, illustrating that certain societal issues persist over time and require sustained efforts for change.

But what stops humankind to learn from history? One major trait of human species is to put the blame on others or circumstances. Religious beings also term it as **fatalism**, everything is pre-destined, pre-determined and hence inevitable. On individual level, when people make errors, they are willing to learn from their mistakes. Those with **narcissistic personality traits** fail to acknowledge when they make mistakes and are thus unable to learn from errors they have made. Acknowledging and learning from mistakes can occur when the person has shunned away the ego or the attitude of **'might is right'**. It takes **courage and fortitude** to accept mistakes and improve upon them.

While the idea that "history rhymes" is certainly compelling, it's important to consider that **history does not always follow familiar patterns** and that drawing parallels between different eras can be over simplistic and misleading. Firstly, **history is incredibly complex**, and attributing similarities between different time periods can overlook the unique and nuanced circumstances that each era presents. For example, comparing the economic fallout of the Spanish flu and the COVID-19 pandemic, while tempting, **may not fully account for the distinct economic structures, globalization levels, and policy responses in place during each crisis**. The lessons learned from one historical event may not always apply seamlessly to another, as the context and conditions can vary significantly.

Additionally, the concept of history rhyming can sometimes be a form of **hindsight bias**. When we look back at the past, we have the benefit of hindsight and access to a wealth of historical data. This makes it easier to **identify patterns and draw parallels** that may not have been apparent to those living through those times. **People in the midst of a crisis** may not have the same perspective or ability to see these patterns as clearly as we can in retrospect.

Moreover, **history is not a linear progression**. While some themes and challenges may reappear, **human societies also evolve and adapt**. Technological advancements, shifts in political ideologies, and changes in global dynamics can lead to new and unprecedented challenges and opportunities that may not neatly rhyme with the past. Thus, while it is valuable to draw lessons from history and find inspiration in the echoes of the past, it is equally important to approach **historical comparisons with caution**. History is a complex tapestry of unique events, and not all historical rhymes are as clear-cut as they may seem. Recognizing the differences and nuances between different eras can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the present and a more effective response to contemporary challenges.

Conclusion

Mathew Syed, a British columnist and writer for "The Times" newspaper, writes in his book "**Black Box Thinking**" about how people and organizations learn from failure. This book covers various studies of individuals and organizations, such as the aviation and medical industries, and how they overcame failure. In contemporary fields like cybersecurity, the industries experience some truly advanced attacks that cannot be prevented. However, most security incidents are caused by simple mistakes, such as misconfigurations, using weak passwords or forgetting to apply updates to fix vulnerabilities. For mortal humans, making mistakes is inevitable but learning from them is non-negotiable.

So the question we must ask ourselves today is this: **can we afford to learn nothing from history?** That particular choice becomes very clear when we remember the words of Martin Luther King Jr who said, "**We are not makers of history. We are made by history.**" Today we must decide how history will make and remake us, how history will shape and reshape our world, and how history will see and remember us. In the words of historian George Santayana, "**Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.**" The past may not repeat, but its echoes remind us of the path we must tread to shape a better future.

Topic #4 - The century advances but every individual begins anew.

सदी आगे बढ़ती है लेकिन हर व्यक्ति नए सिर से शुरुआत करता है।

Approach: The essay topic expects to talk about human efforts and endeavors which has brought freshness to mankind and human civilisation. Since the dawn of mankind, much time has passed but with each passing year, decade and century, it was the ingenuity of man and his fresh approach to all the things around him which has led to not just scientific inventions and discoveries but even spiritual upliftment of the entire mankind. With every birth, man gets an opportunity to do something rare and pathbreaking, different from his predecessors.

Introduction

#1 Quotation based

- The only constant in life is change - **Greek philosopher Heraclitus**
- **Appo Deepo Bhavah** - Be lamps unto yourselves as all of u must work out your own liberation. - **Buddha's** last words while dying
- The greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall- **Confucius**
- Great things happen to those who don't stop believing, learning and trying-**Roy Bennett**
- "If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavours to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours."- **Henry David Thoreau**
- "The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavour."- **Vince Lombardi**

#2 Through anecdote

The century of sixth century BCE in India was a time of the advent of **Second Urbanisation in Indian subcontinent**. While there was rise of materialism due to springing up of city life, there arose a person who changed the history of mankind altogether. The man was no other than Prince Siddhartha who later came to be known as **Gautam Buddha**. At a time when the century was advancing or progress was being made, he brought an entirely different approach of living life. At that time when the subcontinent was edging towards extremism in religious philosophies and social life, he advocated "**The Middle Path**". In this he gave importance of maintaining a balance in life. In this way he helped in not only furthering overall development of mankind but also infused a new idea of living.

In the mid of the 20th century, **Albert Einstein** regarded as the Person of the Century by Time Magazine famously rejected quantum mechanics. Einstein saw **Quantum Theory** as a means to describe Nature on an atomic level, but he doubted that it upheld "a useful basis for the whole of physics." Not even a century had passed when the greatest scientist of previous century was proved inaccurate. The **2022 Nobel Prize in Physics** has been awarded to three scientists for their contributions to quantum physics. An idea rejected by Einstein a century ago has proved to be the most important idea of the next century opening new avenues in field of drug delivery, agriculture, space travel and much more. Hence, as rightly said by **Professor Freyman- It is the way an individual imagines thing is what makes the difference. Sometimes an individual does not just start anew alone, he makes world look afresh towards things which were always there.**

Body Content

The above-mentioned instances clearly reflect the importance of every individual and that is why the German poet **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** said that the century advances but every individual begins anew. It means that every individual gets an opportunity to contribute something new or different to the society. And this difference of thought process and perspectives have brought all these changes in the world.

The **21st century** is the most important century in human history, according to some thinkers Their argument is pretty simple. Mostly, it's that there are huge challenges that we have to surmount this century to get any future at all, making this the most consequential of all centuries so far. Furthermore, a solution to those challenges would likely mean a future farther from the brink of destruction which makes this century more pivotal than future centuries, too. The century advanced seeing the two world wars, the holocaust, globalisation, two pandemics and numerous epidemics but what brought newness to it was human efforts and endeavours.

Essence of every individual

What does beginning anew mean? It means that every individual has an opportunity to bring something new or different in the world. It is also the essence of our life when everybody has to be for himself, thus the old adage- **every Man for himself** and this process begins with the birth.

Birth of an individual is celebrated in every culture. It is considered to be auspicious with a new hope as an individual begins its life anew. One needs to learn all the nitty-gritties of the culture along- with the social and intellectual development. And in this process of learning and coping with the advances of the time, one gives birth to newer ideas and visions. This is because as **the teacher of the child protagonist** says, in the Bollywood movie "**Taare Zameen Par**", every child is unique. And due to this uniqueness, he/she brings altogether different perspectives to things.

I took the road less travelled by, And that has made all the difference

This excerpt from the poem "**The road not Taken**" by English poet **Robert Frost** clearly brings out the significance of doing something **unique and different** in life. All the important changes and revolutions in the human history has been brought by such individuals who did not let their uniqueness to drown within the everydayness of life. The biggest revolution of our time the **Industrial Revolution** gave birth to the idea of '**Individualism**' which has brought both laurels and shame to the human society. This Industrial Revolution was also a result of something new- that was the idea of '**Capitalism**'.

This capitalism powered by **Industrial Revolution** according to **Marxist historians** started a chain reaction that led to other political revolutions globally- French, American, Russian and Chinese Revolutions etc. None of these revolutions would have been possible if people would have just clung to the status quo afraid of bringing a change. And as the **Greek philosopher Heraclitus** said - **The only constant in life is change**.

This change was widely visible in the changing political and governing systems of the world with a shift from monarchy to democracy. But the biggest change in the recent centuries have come from the realm of science and technology. It was all due to the work of some individuals beginning anew, building upon the advances of the century.

Tim Berner Lee was once such individual who gave birth to **World Wide Web**. He devised and implemented the first Web browser. Such was his greatness that he made his idea available freely, with no patent and no royalties due at a time when materialism is at its peak. It was all due to his innovation that we were able to step into a digital age which changed the shape of the century altogether.

Thomas Malthus in the year 1798 predicted a **Malthusian catastrophe** – a situation in which population growth outpaces agricultural production, causing famine or war, resulting in depopulation. The 19th century was filled with such speculations but then came **Fritz Haber**. An individual who is popularly known as the Man who **killed millions but saved Billions**. He invented the **Haber-Bosch process** that takes nitrogen from the air and turns it into fertiliser, feeding billions. He won a Nobel prize for the same. However, Haber was also one of the fathers of gas warfare, responsible for countless horrific deaths (including his wife's) and is considered a war criminal today. It was all due to his innovations that the century was shaped and we were able to tackle **Malthusian theory**.

The beginning of twentieth century brought with itself a sense of youthfulness. With this spirit, **Wright Brothers** step out on a seemingly impossible path of flying an aeroplane. Local media made fun of their attempts calling them futile. But Wright Brothers unfazed by the criticism continued on their journey of shaping the century. It was due to their undeterred scientific spirit that fuelled a revolution. A revolution where in the beginning of the century when people did not even believe that flying would ever be possible: at the end of the same century, scientists were dreaming of building a colony in our neighbour planet–Mars.

Similarly, it was the vision of **Verghese Kurien**, also known as the Milkman of India which brought the **White Revolution in India**. The idea was not something new but was presented in such a way which turned AMUL into a success story. It not only gave employment to thousands of poor Indians but also uplifted the milk intake of Indians. **Till the 1970s, per capita consumption was only 110 gram per person per day which is 360 gram per person per day**. This was done by improving the accessibility, affordability and availability of milk and milk related products.

In the same way, in the century filled with wars when violence had become the norm, there arose a saintly figure who taught the world the significance and relevance of '**Non-Violence**', propounded centuries ago by **Mahavira and Buddha**. That person was **Mahatma Gandhi** who later not only became the Father of India by bringing independence but also became a messiah of non- violence globally. Various global leaders which shaped the century like Dalai Lama, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and Aung San Suu Kyi among others were called by the Time magazine as **Children of Gandhi**. This was because it was Gandhi's strategy of non- violence which spawned these generations of leaders who were understood to be his **spiritual heirs**. Hence, Gandhi through his novel vision helped in advancing the century.

However, there are many issues in the world which are awaiting such individuals which bring a breath of fresh air to resolving it. One such societal evil is **women discrimination**. We may have stepped into the **Anthropocene epoch** but the long- dreamt goal of gender equality still seems elusive. Despite our claims of treating women like goddess, **India reports 1 rape every 15 minutes (NCRB)**. Our ancient scriptures have exhorted us to worship and respect women in hymns like "**Yatra Naryastu Poojyante Ramante Tatra devatah**" meaning that- wherever ladies are worshipped, their resides God. Still, misogyny and patriarchy prevail. And this gross inequality itself has prevented Human Race from achieving its objectives.

This failure was best portrayed by **Swami Vivekananda** who said that there is no chance of the welfare of the world until the condition of women is improved as it is **not possible for a bird to fly with one wing**. Hence, this is a sphere where the human civilization has not really advanced how much we would have liked it to be. This is the responsibility of our generation to subdue this societal evil along with other evils like casteism, racism and communalism. This can only be done by beginning anew with a new vision and imagination of especially the **youth**.

One other responsibility of our generation is to **conserve the planet**. Mindless development and advancement over the years following **anthropocentrism rather than biocentrism** have brought us towards the door of doom. **UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres calls these actions to be similar to that of digging our own graves**. Hence, Sustainable Development is the call of the day. Our generation must begin anew with novel ideas to save the planet giving it the urgency it deserves.

Achieving the meaning of life

But one may argue that why is there a need of going through all these efforts and rather than passing through the easiest path. This is because only then we would be able to fulfil our purpose of life for which we have taken birth. This would also give us inner satisfaction and a sense of completeness.

As to how one should begin anew, one must keep in mind the last words of Buddha- **Appo Deepo Bhavah**, meaning- **Be lamps unto yourselves** as all of you must work out for your own liberation. Hence, self - knowledge is very important on this tortuous journey of life so that we are not lost. In this journey of self - realization, the society also helps us through our parents, teachers, religion, media, etc. But the major work has to be done by an individual herself.

Towards a Better World

One must keep in mind to take all the knowledge of advances of our generation, because only then one would be able to contribute something meaningful to the society. It may not be necessary that we succeed in all of our efforts. But as **Confucius said that the greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall**. Hence, after our every failure we must remember to rise again and begin anew. This is because as it is always said failure is nothing but a stepping stone to success. In those moments, one must remember how a **young prince Siddharth became Buddha** and changed the course of history through his novel ideas and vision. It is only then we would be able to achieve our purpose of life.

Great things happen to those who don't stop believing, learning and trying-Roy Bennett

Hence, in our journey to achieve our purpose of life, we must realize that there would be setbacks, but what we must not do is stop. We must keep on believing in ourselves, keep on learning newer ideas and techniques and keep on trying with all of our energy. Then only we would be able to leave our imprint on this century just like various great people before us did such as **Albert Einstein, Wright Brothers, Tim Berner Lee, Fritz Haber, Verghese Kurien, Mahatma Gandhi and Vivekananda**. Only then we would be able to turn this world into a better place with a feeling of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam meaning that the World is one family**.