

TEST CODE 6 2 0 3 0 3

FIAS - MGP 2023 - Essay Test (FLT) #3

Time Allowed : Three Hours
समय : तीन घंटे

ForumIAS

Maximum Marks : 250
अधिकतम अंक : 250

ESSAY / निबंध

Name Of Candidate परीक्षार्थी का नाम	AKANCHHA SINGH		
Roll No./अनुक्रमांक	1910067188	Medium/माध्यम	English <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> हिंदी <input type="checkbox"/>
Center Code/परीक्षा केंद्र	RANCHI	Date/दिनांक	06/09/23

*Center Code : For Online - 1900 / Delhi : Karol bagh - 1901, ORN - 1902, Mukharji Nagar - 1903 / Patna : Boring Rd. - 2001 / Hyderabad : Jawahar Nagar - 2101

INDEX TABLE / अनुक्रमणिका			INSTRUCTION / अनुदेश
Q. No. प्र.सं.	Max. Marks अधिकतम अंक	Marks Obtained प्राप्तांक	1. Please do furnish Name, Email, Roll No and Mobile in the answer sheet. कृपया उत्तर-पुस्तिका में नाम, ईमेल, रोल नंबर और मोबाइल नंबर भरें।
Q.1			2. There are TWO Sections. Each Section has MULTIPLE topics printed in English/Hindi. You have to write on 1 topic from Each part. प्रश्न पत्र में दो खंड हैं। प्रत्येक खंड में अंग्रेजी/हिंदी में बहु-विषय मुद्रित हैं। आपको प्रत्येक भाग में से किसी एक विषय का लेखन करना है।
Q.2			3. One question in each part is compulsory. प्रत्येक भाग में से एक प्रश्न करना अनिवार्य है।
Total Marks/कुल अंक			4. The number of marks carried by a question/part is indicated against it. एक प्रश्न/भाग द्वारा किए गए अंकों की संख्या इसके सामने इंगित की गई है।
Remarks/टिप्पणी :			5. Answers must be written in the medium authorized in the admission Certificate, which must be stated clearly on the cover of this Question-Cum-Answer (QCA) Booklet in the space provided. उत्तर प्रवेश पत्र में अधिकृत माध्यम में लिखे जाने चाहिए, जो कि दिए गए स्थान में इस प्रश्न-सह-उत्तर (क्यूसीए) पुस्तिका के कवर पर स्पष्ट रूप से लिखा जाना चाहिए।
			6. Word limit in questions, if specified, should be adhered to. प्रश्नों में शब्द सीमा, यदि निर्दिष्ट हो, का पालन किया जाना चाहिए।
			7. Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Question-Cum Answer Booklet must be clearly Struck off. प्रश्न-सह-उत्तर पुस्तिका में खाली छोड़ा गया कोई भी पृष्ठ या पृष्ठ का भाग स्पष्ट रूप से काट दिया जाना चाहिए।
For Student Only / केवल परीक्षार्थी प्रयोग हेतु			
Start Time/प्रारंभ करने का समय :		End Time/समाप्त करने का समय :	
05:00 AM		09:00 AM	
Mode Of Examination/ परीक्षा की विधि :		Online/ऑनलाइन <input type="checkbox"/> Offline/ऑफलाइन <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
For Office Use Only / केवल कार्यालय प्रयोग हेतु			
ECN CODE/ ईसीएन कोड :		EG/ईजी : ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	
		Evaluation Date/ मूल्यांकन तिथि :	

MARKING SCHEME

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

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

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

UPSC

सू. क्र
(3)

The power of perception shapes our understanding of reality

In "allegory of the cave", Plato describes a group of prisoners who live chained to the wall of the cave all their lives, facing a blank wall. These prisoners, perceive shadows of people / trees / objects on wall of the cave. However, as it turns out these objects are far from the reality. - as is revealed by the prisoner who escapes out into the open and is dazzled by the brilliant sunshine and texture of forms & phenomena. However, when the enlightened prisoner returns to the cave - he is labelled as a "mad-man" by co-prisoners who even contemplate to kill him.

UPSC

This example clearly illustrates -
that the power of perception shapes
our understanding of reality

Philosophical underpinnings

The Jain story of seven blindfolded
men touching different parts of
an elephant's body and coming
to various conclusions - about
the elephant being - wall, tree trunk,
rope, spear, snake and a fan.

The story underlines the philosophy
of "anekant" or "many-sidedness".
While all the seven blindfolded
men - relied on their subjective
perceptions, they were far from
the absolute truth / reality.

The Jains therefore attach
high significance to the philosophy
of syad-vaad - conditional truthfulness.

UPSC

Even in Buddhist philosophy, we have stories of (Jataka Tales) which underline the significance of linkage between perception & reality.

Once upon a time, a villager came upto Buddha and yelled and rebuked him at length. Buddha was calm-composed and smiling. Buddha asked the villager, "do you ever have guests at your house?"

villager: "yes, of course."

Buddha: "how do you host them?"

villager: "I prepare the best delicacies and offer them to eat."

Buddha: "what if the guests do not consume those delicacies?"

villager: "In that case, it is even better. There is lots left for me to savour."

Buddha - "Exactly, so I refuse to accept your unkind words, criticism, and hate. You may please to consume it yourself."

UPSC

Through the above Salāka story we understand the fundamental role of perception (how we sense ~~react to~~ an adverse situation) in shaping our reality (response to adversity).

The dichotomy between perception & reality

The dichotomy between perception and reality is a fundamental concept of philosophical enquiry.

Immanuel Kant had argued that we can never truly understand external reality as it is always filtered through our perception (numera + phenomena).

While perception is a subjective process, influenced by an individual's sensory organs - sight, hearing, touch, cognitive experience. Reality refers

UPSC

to the way, the things are in
the external world.

However, the nature of
reality is itself contested. While
some regard reality as an absolute,
~~the~~ undisputable interpretation of
the external world for ones like

Adi Shankaracharya (Advait Vedanta)
- reality is a force - the material
world is maya and 'Brahme'
is the only truth.

But, even if we exclude the
metaphysical world, we still find
our perception can be deceptive -
and limited - for instance an optical
illusion.

How does negative perception shape
reality?

To answer the above question we
can take examples from the personal,

UPSC

Social, National, and International
Realms.

Let us take the case of students
who are preparing for competitive
exams like IIT/NEET in Kota.

For most of these young teenagers,
the definition of being successful
and worthwhile is attached
to cracking these competitive exams.

Unable to withstand failures, so
students in Kota commit suicide
~~every~~ each year. This clearly
illustrates that the wrongful perception
about self worth, success/failure
has led to sad reality of suicides.

At an individual's level,
one's perception about happiness
shapes one's life goals, & pursuits.
Whether one prioritizes money
over contentment determines the
way he leads his life.

UPSC

Further, the perception of women as 'weaker sex' inhibited their participation in public life. It also led to oppressive & regressive social practices like - sati practice, widow-ostracisation, female infanticide, which subjugated women.

Similarly the mainstream perception by upper caste groups regarding "untouchability" and "impurity" of lower caste groups - led to discrimination & marginalisation of Dalits.

Moreover, it was the perception of 'white supremacy' in general that gave birth to ideas of colonialism. Besides, the perception of "Aryan-race as supreme" led to large-scale extermination of Jews by Hitler.

UPSC

In the 21st century, our ideas about human rights - (freedom, liberty, dignity) have shaped our reality, at the same time - The misplaced notion about 'development' has harmed us.

Excessive reliance on economic growth led development model has led to environmental degradation and widespread inequality.

After assessing the negative ramifications of 'perception' on 'reality' let us discuss.

How does positive perception shape our reality

'Perception' is of utmost significance

It is said that battles are won/lost first in the mind and then on the ground.

Question No.
प्रश्न संख्या

UPSC

For
Practice
Use Only
सिर्फ अभ्यास
के लिए

one ground" when Alexander's army
stood tired and demoralised,
Alexander exhorted them by saying,
"There are no Alps mountain -
march with ease, you strongmen,
we have reached our destination"
and suddenly the forces marched
as if, "there were no Alps".

Parallely in Indian freedom
struggle, all of our social reformers,
religious reformers were motivated
~~with~~ positive perception about
society and religion. Illustrations

examples include - Jyotiba Phule,

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda

, B.M. Malabari, Ishwar Chandra

Vidya Sagar, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Jyotibaji and others.

UPSC

The perception of Bhutanese people regarding environmental preservation has shaped their reality of eco-sensitive development while mainstreaming Gross Happiness Index.

Similar sensitivity of our tribal communities have led to eco-preservation in fragile areas of India (eg- Dongria Kondh tribe - Odisha, Bhotia, Bakawals in Himachal Pradesh in Sikkim & Apatani in Arunachal Pradesh).

Thus, the perception of 'significance of environment' has made us responsible for both our action as well as inaction towards environmental preservation.

UPSC

The link between perception and reality is more fundamental at the individual level :-

"What you think, you become"

If we are constantly engaging with negative, pessimistic thoughts it becomes our reality. On the other hand, if we are a positive, forward looking person - most of our actions flourish and our lives are filled with abundance & prosperity. Success or failure is as much as state of our minds as it is a reality.

Conclusion

While the name of reality itself is concluded, we can only work on rewiring our minds for better perception.

UPSC

The perception and awareness about 'fickle nature of human life', 'inevitability of pain', fundamental unity of man and nature shall make us more humane, grounded, sensitive, and benevolent.

This change of perception will make our lives more meaningful and relatively simpler. For, as George Orwell has summed up - "Reality exists in human mind (perception) and nowhere else"

— x — x —

UPSC

Section
B

③

Culture can unite what history
and geography has divided.

In my second semester of graduation,
our class had a foreign exchange
student from Bangladesh - Lina.
She had a mesmerizing personality
and looked friendly. I thought of
befriending her, before she finds 'some
companions' in college.

To my surprise, I saw her
bonding very well with my friend
Shonali, the next day. I kept wondering
how Lina - a recluse, quiet girl
befriended Lina so quickly. In a
conscious attempt to eavesdrop,
I heard them gossiping about
humidity, variety of fishes - Rohu,
Hilsa, sweets like 'shondesh' in
Bengali language.

UPSC

Shonai hails from Kolkata, West Bengal while Lena is a native of Dhaka. While Shonai is a Hindu, Lena is a devout Muslim. However, owing to common language, cuisine and weather, Lena found a companion in Sonai who made her feel at home in Delhi.

This, in my personal experience, is one perfect example of 'culture can unite, while history and geography have divided'.

Through this essay, let us explore the following questions —

- Q1. What is culture?
- Q2. How have history and geography played a 'dividing role'?
- Q3. What are the manifestations/
tools of the unifying thread of culture?

UPSC

Q4.

homogenisation of culture -
an extrapolation or impending reality?

Q5.

How to synergise 'global' with 'local' &
vice-versa?

What is culture?

The term culture refers to
shared customs, beliefs, norms, values,
institutions which are transmitted
from one generation to another. It
includes materialistic, abstract and
behavioural practices that may
vary across societies.
Ultimately, culture may
be simplified to mean 'the way of
life'. It may include - distinct language,
dialect, religion, rituals, cuisine,
forms of entertainment - dance, music,
dressing style, manners and
community beliefs among others.

UPSC

How have history and geography played a dividing role?

While geography has an element of natural predisposition, history and politics are human constructs.

For instance, the cuisine, liveliness, dressing style of those living in Ganga plains are quite distinct from the tribes residing in Tibetan Highlands (5000m above mean sea level) owing to terrain physiography, climate and natural vegetation.

Similarly, while Esquimos of Alaska, Canada live in igloos, owing to freezing cold temperatures, North East India has houses made on stilts for flood mitigation.

UPSC

Additionally, the staple food of Eastern India is rice while that of Northern & western India is 'wheat' as a result of demarcation by 100 cm isohyet. The liberal use of rice is not just seen in food but also art - 'alpone' & 'rangoli'.

Due to scarcity of rainfall, South western & central India relies on millet & coarse grains for nutrition.

The role of history in dividing culture - is more conspicuous.

For instance - partition of India & Pakistan, liberation of Eastern Pakistan and creation of Bangladesh, British colonialism, rise of independent countries from the Indian subcontinent - example Nepal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka etc.

UPSC

Similarly, even at international level we have numerous examples of history - dividing cultures. For example, the British colonialisation of America and subsequent independence; Napoleon's European conquest and his fall, the disintegration of USSR, independence of former colonies of the global south.

Even at meso-scale, the impact of history on culture can be sensed - USA - Mexico, America - Latin America, Australia - Oceania, Russia - Ukraine, Iberian peninsula and United Kingdom etc.

In the backdrop of such historical and geographical diversity, culture is said to play a unifying role.

UPSC

What are the tools and manifestations of culture as a unifying force?

We can answer the above question by taking both domestic as well as international examples.

India - Sri Lanka

while the tussle between Tamil-Sinhalese community continues to plague peace in Sri Lanka & South India, the religious connection between the two countries is strong.

Since the time of Ashoka - who sent his daughter Sanghamitra and son Dasratha to Sri Lanka for the propagation of Buddhism

(Bhramar), Sri Lanka has looked towards India - as spiritual / religious 'epuri'.

UPSC

India - Pakistan

While much of animosity between the two countries is showcased in popular media, the cultural ties between Indo-pak run deep.

It is exemplified in common cuisine - like Halim, Korma, Pulao, Lassi and Dahi Bhajiyas to Salwar Kameez which is ~~considered~~ a staple fashion of both India & Pakistan.

The Hindustani dialect and coke studio music with icons like Rohat Fateh Ali Khan, Saman Sami, Mehdi Hassan, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Noor Jahan (all Pakistani musicians) who are popular in India.

Besides both countries share love for cricket as well as Bollywood music.

UPSC

The common cultural & historical heritage is reflected in poetry. The works of Allama Iqbal ('Saare Jahan Se achha - Hindustan hamara', 'Lab pe aati hai dua banke tamanna mei'), Khalid Jaib, Faiz Ahmed Faiz ('Hum Dekhenge') and Amrita Pritam's Work are popular equally in both countries.

India - Nepal & India Myanmar

The epic song - "Neha piya gaye Rangon, Neha se kiya hai telephone" by C. Ramachandra & Samsad Begum continues to resonate with us and tell us that ties between India - Myanmar are both historical & cultural.

UPSC

India & Nepal share common
civilizational heritage - Hinduism.
The government's recent effort
of building Ramayana, Mahabharata
and Buddhist circuits are
an attempt to strengthen religious
cultural connect.

Similarly at the international
level - we see the influence of
culture as a unifying force -
in lifestyle - dressing - language
and mannerism.

There are various instances
of India's culture impacting global
culture - for instance popularisation
of Yoga - for preventive healthcare
UNGA - adopting 21st June as international
Yoga day. At the same time -

UPSC

alternative medicines from India - Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy, are also in the process of export making.

In the realm of language - various Hindi words like - 'Jungle', 'Jaggerant', 'pajamas', 'boot', 'almirah' are now popular English words.

The Indian ethos of peace, non-violence and fraternity, and spirituality are increasingly acknowledged and revered across the world. The Indian diaspora has played a central role here.

But, has this cultural diffusion led to homogenisation?

In all probability, an affluent Indian teenager would have

UPSC

lashed - Italian pizza, American Burger, Chinese Noodles, Mexican Tacos etc. We literally, have the 'entire world on our plates today'.

while India boasts of the largest English speaking population of the world, 600 native languages are fading and on the verge of extinction (UNESCO).

while we are adopting a homogenised dress code for offices - coat-pants, pant-suits and skirts - tops - 108 ways of saree draping are fading out of memory.

At a sub national level - regional festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi,

UPSC

Kanwa Chaur are gaining national importance while local festivals like 'Sankul', 'Tej' are becoming parts of archives.

The role of globalisation, internet and social media is of immense significance in cultural diffusion.

Conclusion

The underlying unifying forces of culture emanate from common human values - emotions and priorities. The regard for human freedom, liberty, values like - empathy, compassion, peace & brotherhood transcend frontiers & boundaries of space & time.

The uniform philosophical pursuits - questions about life & death unite us. However, cultural unification must not translate to cultural homogenisation. A synergistic effort towards 'globalisation' is in the best interest.