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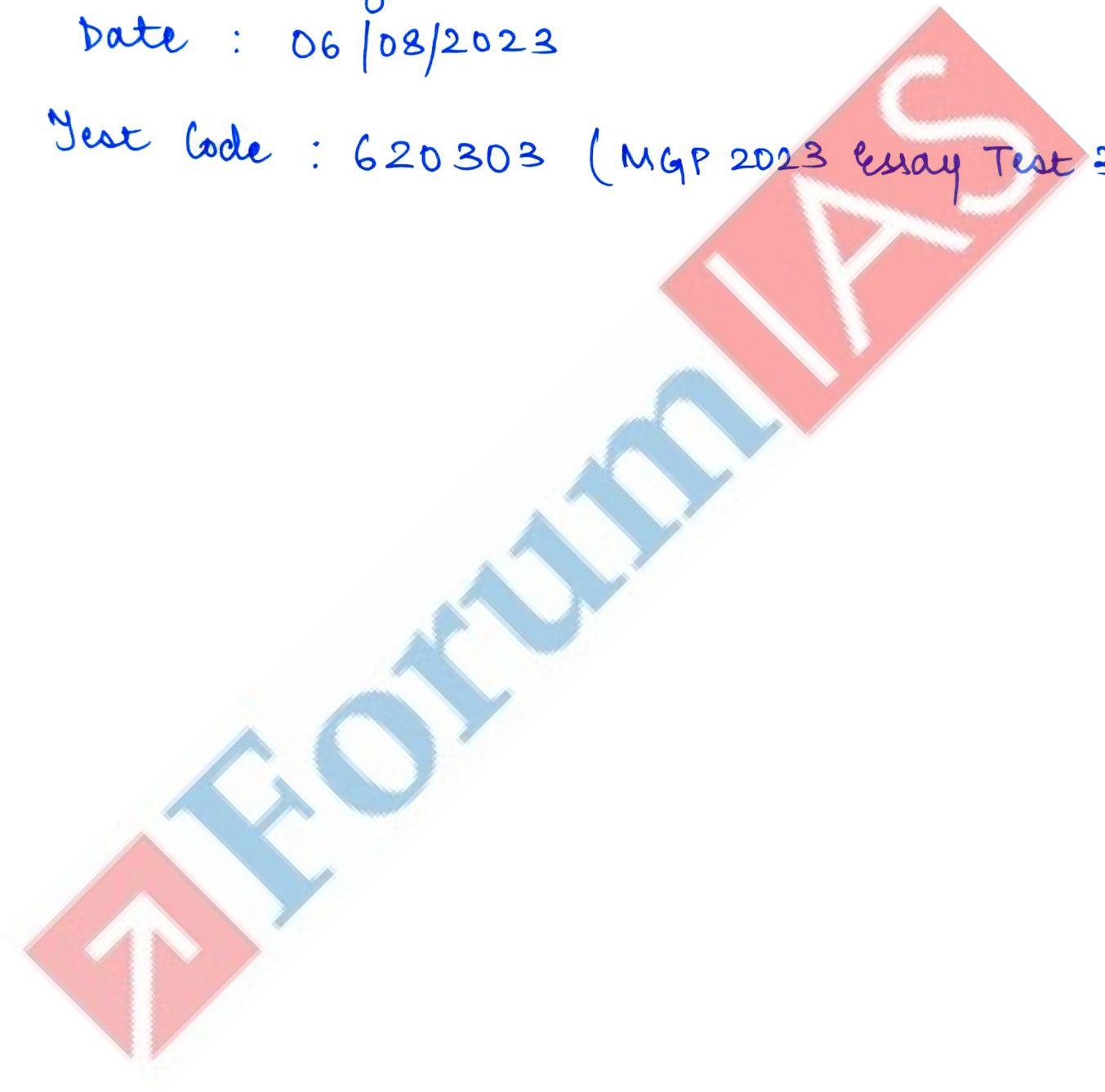
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MARKING SCHEME

Parameter/Criteria	Aspects Considered	Total Marks	Essay 1	Essay 2
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		

Parameters	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor
Coherence				
Language				
Handwriting				
Pre-writing				

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

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The power of perception shapes our understanding of reality

Rewind to the 1998 Pokharan tests done by India, to build its nuclear base. Various countries including USA did not support India and even threatened India with sanctions.

Fast forward to the 9/11 attacks in America that took multiple lives and is a deadful blot in history of America. Post this event, India-USA relations changed drastically. USA supported India's entry to nuclear suppliers' group and even views India as an emerging super power.

But what changed between the two events, was the perception

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of USA towards terrorism and terror funding.

The above example clearly highlights how a difference in perception can change completely the way we view realities.

In this essay, we will look at what a perception is and how is it instrumental in shaping our reality and its understanding, then we understand certain issues with negative perceptions and finally, what must be done to have a positive perception.

A perception is basically a viewpoint that we hold about any entity or object. One might view a

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glass half filled with water as glass
half full while other might view
it as half empty. In a similar
manner, there can be various
viewpoints to any object or experience
in life.

One might view a new job
with excitement and enthusiasm
of learning new things, while
another person might fear the
change and be anxious. This
perception will in turn shape not
only understanding of our reality
but also our behaviour. Let's see
how.

Perceptions - Shapers of reality

They shape how we view
our own personality and thus guide
our life decisions too. In competitive

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exams like UPSC CSE, half the people lose the race without giving in required hard work, because of the fear of examination.

A positive perception with the goal of learning and growing can in turn strengthen preparation.

Not only individuals, but societies at collective level also create perceptions, which can shape their viewpoint towards other.

For instance, the issues of communal and ethnic violence are a result of either superiority of own community or a feeling of deprivation compared to other community.

The age old Naxalism and

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the recent conflicts in Nuh are a testimony of this. Also, the recent Kuki-Meity conflict in Manipur shows how perception of community's respect resting in women's bodies led to harassment of two Kuki women during the conflict.

We have also seen multiple times that changing perception through persuasion is used as a tool to bring about social changes. For examples, to bring about an end to untouchability, Gandhiji tried to change perception of upper caste Hindus towards the Harijans, rather than annihilation of caste.

Because of its role in guiding our behavior, perception is also used as a tool in marketing.

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For example, the short period or flash sales try to create perception of shortage, thus coaxing customers into buying more.

Perception, might sound like a small thing, but to an extent it has even shaped the current world order! When British discovered about printing press, they used it for mass education, while when Mughal rulers were offered with scripts, they kept them in museums, rather than using the technology to spread education.

This clearly shows how much difference can perceptions create in not only understanding but shaping our realities. But how are perceptions formed?

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Shapers of perception itself

Firstly, it is our experiences that shape perceptions. For example, Ashoka after fighting Kalinga war saw immense bloodshed and gave up war, while choosing peace. This perception also led him to embrace Buddhism and even spread it.

Similarly, one might ignore a road accident nearby. But if the person himself has sometime experienced an accident, his perception to victims will be supportive and he is more likely to be a good samaritan.

Feeling of deprivation also creates perceptions as we saw in case of Naxalism. Another factor

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in shaping perception is our laws, policies, constitution etc. For examples, Schemes like Swachha Bharat Mission or Life Mission are based on principles of shaping perceptions towards cleanliness and energy saving behaviours respectively.

There are other factors like our families, peer groups, religion etc. that shape our perceptions in various ways that we might not even realise.

We now know how perceptions are formed and how are they shaping our realities. But what are the issues of negative perceptions ?

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Negative Perceptions - An Evil

They might sometimes create false consciousness that might promote complacent behaviour. For instance, some religions ^{might} promote world rejecting views where salvation becomes only goal. People might give up on working hard due to the perception that their sufferings are result of past life sins.

It might in a similar manner act as barrier to growth mindset. For example, rising cases of student suicides due to perception that one exam defines their life.

Negative perceptions can also shape an ideology which is harmful. The Nazi racial ideology based on perceptions of racial

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Superiority is example of same.

But how can one then form positive perceptions and let go of the negative perceptions?

Shaping positive perceptions

Keeping an open and accepting mind is one key to it. Looking at the broader picture of things helps cultivate this. For instance, viewing an exam as just an important part of your life, but not your life itself.

As we saw above, government initiatives also play important role in shaping perceptions.

Seminars, social media campaigns against female foeticide, dowry etc. shape a positive perceptions towards

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wives & daughters.

Also, socialisation by families and schools also are key. Values like optimism and dreaming big without fear must be cultivated here.

Lastly, a strong attitude can go a long way in building positive perceptions.

Just like India stuck to its values of zero tolerance to terrorism and kept a positive perception of self that helped it grow to one of the fastest growing economies of world despite various challenges. It brought USA and other countries to recognise our nuclear power.

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Qu

The quote

" Attitude determines your attitude
thus rightly explains how positive
perceptions determine the commanding
heights that one can attain .

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Social evils have not completely left the ground, instead they are changing their ground

A woman who is revered in her office and works effectively for growth of her firm, came back home from office at night. Her mother asked her to bring her water and cook for the family despite being tired of work.

When she rebelled, she was told that "she might be CEO in her office, but at home, she is just a woman who is responsible for taking care of the family. It is a shock to know that the woman was no other but Indra Nooyi, the CEO and chairman of Pepsico.

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The above story clearly highlights how social evil of patriarchy remains entrenched in our society. Women, even after being at top echelons of society face discrimination. We can not even understand situation of rural poor women.

Patriarchy is just one form of social evil in our society. There are many more. Through this essay, we'll try to understand what are various forms of social evils in our society, the efforts to remove these evils historically. Then we see how they still remain in society in changed forms. Later, we look at reasons for the same and some ways to improve the situation.

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THE EVILS AND THE FRUITFUL EFFORTS

Social evils can be seen as various forms of discriminations & disabilities, that arise owing to ascriptive identities of individuals generally. It is generally derived from inequality.

Indian society has been home to various evils. Women have traditionally been given a lower status. Evils like purdah system, sati, ban on widow remarriage, and no access to education are a few things out of many they suffered from.

The Hindu caste system has also created evils like untouchability which is the most inhuman form of violence one can face. The tribals

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have similarly faced discrimination, and are seen as devoid of any culture.

Various other evils like child labor, communalism etc. have marred our society. There have but been various steps to improve the position of our society historically.

The socio-religious reform movements have tried hard to remove such evils from our society. Jyoti Rao Phule and his wife Savitribai Phule were one of the first reformers, who worked for upliftment of womens' position and for lower castes.

There were various fruitful efforts like Ram Mohan Rays' Brahmo

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Samaj's effort led to Abolition of Sati Act, 1829 and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's efforts led to widow remarriage Act, 1856. Various women friendly schools & colleges, home for destitutes etc. were opened up.

But has the situation actually improved? We all clearly know it hasn't. The evils might not exist in earlier rigid forms, but still present in changed forms.

THE PARADOX OF IMPROVED POSITIONS AND EVILS

Let us look at the position of tribals. Our honorable President Draupadi Murmu belongs to a small tribe and has distinction of being first tribal president of our country. There are various tribals which have

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improved their position through govern-
-ment efforts like the Meenas.

But on the other hand, a recent news of a tribal man being poorly harassed in MP, came to fore. Not only was he harassed, but was urinated upon stripping him of his right to dignity.

Similar is the case of position of Dalits. While on one hand, Dalits have benefitted from affirmative action and vote bank politics like former President Ram Nath Kovind from Dalit community. But studies show that untouchability remains entrenched in our society.

A Dalit child being murdered for merely drinking from an upper caste's earthen pot recently in Rajasthan show presence of civic

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disabilities on Dalits despite various reforms. It takes form of physical violence often. Over 45,000 cases of atrocities against Dalits were reported in 2021 by NCRB.

It has even adapted in modern forms. In Tamil Nadu, in various schools Dalit children are made to sit separately in mid day meals promoting untouchability at a very tender age.

The position of women is no different as seen from Indira Nooyi's case. While there are women like Salguni Nair, founder owner of Nykaa and one of biggest businesswomen & women like Ritu Karidhal - face behind Chandrappan mission.

On the other hand, the

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evil of domestic violence fails to leave us. The COVID pandemic was termed shadow pandemic by UN women owing to rising cases of violence. We even saw cases of brutal violence like Shreaddha Walkar's gruesome murder that shook our conscience.

Women, though participating in workforce post industrialisation face dual burden of home and work and issues like sticky floor, glass ceiling and pink collarization of workforce.

This shows how earlier evils have taken newer forms but still remain huge cause of concern. But why have we failed to address such issues?

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There have been various efforts ranging from affirmative actions, constitutional values of equality and justice like Articles 14, 15, 17, 51 etc. Apart from this, individual actions like IAS in Tamil Nadu eating meal cooked by a ~~to~~ Dalit cook have tried to tackle the evils at various levels.

But the evils stay in our mental systems. There is lack of internalisation of the values. As ~~the~~ Dr. Ambedkar said that "The constitution is only as good as its followers". While laws can determine the direction in which society ^{must} goes, its only society that decides where it actually goes.

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We learn these evils at our homes, our work places. And these days, even social media promotes misogynistic behaviour. But how can these be tackled?

THE GUIDING LIGHT

The change needs to begin at our hearts. Our beliefs need to be changed. As Gandhiji said "Our beliefs become our thoughts, and our thoughts turn to actions and attitudes." Our schools, families, societies thus need to promote values of empathy and justice.

Secondly, just passing of laws passively cannot alter the situation. Active internalisation and sensitisation is need of the hour. For example,

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the chief minister of Madhya Pradesh felicitated and had lunch with the tribal man who was nominated upon. This shows a resolve towards positive attitude to tribals and threatens social evil of discrimination.

We are a land of beautiful philosophies. "Bharat" has traditionally seen and respected women as goddesses. The intellectual Apala & Maitreyi come from our land. We have had a history of peaceful co-existence through Idea of "Varader Kutumbhakam". There was no space for such evils in these ideologies.

Lastly, we must embrace humanism and act against evils inside of us and outside of us.

Because -

"The biggest social evil is
Hear no evil,
See no evil,
and speak of no evil
attitude of our society."