

FORUM IAS EGP TEST #2

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	Max Marks	Marks obtained
Q1.	125	
Q2.	125	

Total Marks:

Remarks:

Marking scheme

Parameter	Aspect	Total Marks	Essay 1	Essay 2
Basic Format	Intro + Conclusion	10		
	Body	15		
Content		25		
Organisation		25		
Language Skills		25		
Examiner's Discretion		25		

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

Section A

1) Women Empowerment is essential for economic and sustainable development

'We cannot all move forward if half of us are held back.'
- Malala Yousafzai

'Women's Freedom is the condition for Social Freedom.'
- Rosa Luxemburg.

The above quotes throw light on the pivotal importance of women empowerment. Even though they form half of humanity, women have been excluded from playing their deserved role. Even today, in the age of Freedom and human rights, women's issues do not get the focused attention they deserve.

Women have remained disempowered politically, economically, socially, culturally

For the most part of human history. And we are poorer for it. Global gender gap report shows that there is still a long way to go to close the gender gap. 66% gap has been closed. But a lot more needs to be done for the interest of women as well as all humanity.

Without empowering women, we cannot dream of a bright future. In this essay, we will look at the bases on which women suffer. We will discuss how women empowerment is essential for economic and sustainable development and how we can take steps in this direction.

★ Women: The second sex

Women have suffered from structural inequality since times immemorial. In his book 'On Subjection of Women', John Stuart

Mill comments that women's inferior position seems natural, but it is not so.

Rather, women have been subjugated under a patriarchal system which disempowers them. The feminist movement

has brought out this fallacy and foiled it. Simone de Beauvoir has shown

that 'women are not born, they are

made'. It means weakness of

women is a gendered, patriarchal

construction and there is nothing

inherently inferior about being a woman.

In India, in ancient times, women were equal in social and political engagements. We hear of women participating in sabha and samiti. However, later

women were subjected and confined to the domestic sphere. There are

isolated examples of great women like Rani Laxmi Bai, Sarojini Naidee, Indira Gandhi, Mayawati. But, on the whole, women remain confined to constricted domestic servitude.

Women face disempowerment in all stages of life. We see falling child sex ratio and Female infanticide. Economic Survey estimates that around 21 million women in India are 'unwanted'. These 'unwanted' girls suffer from malnutrition and lack of education. As a result, they do not make it into higher and vocational education. This also makes women economically dependent on men. Women are married early and spend their lives in unpaid, underappreciated roles of caregivers, homemakers. Women

are underrepresented in political sphere as well which prevents them from raising their voice. India stands at a poor 122nd position among 166 countries in the Gender Development Index.

Hence, we can conclude that women are systematically excluded. They need to be empowered for humanity's sake.

★ Women's Progress is humanity's progress

'Women empowerment is not ^{just} an issue in itself. It is a necessary precondition for reducing poverty and sustainable development.'

- Kofi Annan

The global development agenda has recognised the foundational role that

women empowerment can play in global progress. Beijing Platform of Action, UN decade For Women represent the recognition of this fact. The agenda of Sustainable Development Goals also places gender equality as an important goal and one which will feed into others.

If we talk of India, labour force participation rate of women has been falling and remains low at 27%. Majority of women remain stuck in poorly paid, unskilled jobs, mostly in cottage industries.

This hampers their importance and bargaining power in the household as well. We hear of 'feminisation of poverty' and 'feminisation of agriculture'.

Even the few lucky women who work in urban, corporate jobs face

issues of sexual harassment, prejudice in the form of glass ceiling effect, glass cliff effect and gender pay gap. We cannot expect women to contribute fully to economic development when they face so many roadblocks.

Women remain underrepresented in education as well, especially higher education. On the one hand, this feeds into economic backwardness. On the other, it also leads to intergenerational development deficit. Poor and illiterate, uneducated mothers are more vulnerable to maternal and infant mortality. They are not in a position to make good nutritional choices for themselves and their offsprings.

Subordination of women is also leading to social instability. Poor sex ratio leads to sexual crimes,

bride shopping and other evils.

Women face issues of sexual harassment, eve teasing on a regular basis. This prevents them from participating freely in social and political processes.

Politically, we have seen the experience of women reservation in panchayats. Reports have shown that panchayats with greater female representation and especially female sarpanchs lead to better welfare outcomes in their community.

Internationally also, there is a growing movement to include women's perspective and say in international politics. Global politics remains masculinist which is the reason for militarism and conflicts. Including women's perspective will lead

to peace and better outcomes for global community, as suggested by Feminist scholars like Ann J. Tickner

Women are also linked closely to environmental issues. Women are more intimately connected and dependent on environment for livelihood. We can consider the views of Vandana Shiva who believes that women empowerment is linked to environmental safety as well. (Eco-feminism)

Therefore, we have seen how women empowerment is closely intertwined with development of greater humanity. As said by Bella Hooks, 'Women's issues are everyone's issues'.

✶ Steps to be taken

The agenda of women empowerment needs to be pushed forward urgently if

We want to achieve sustainable development goals by 2030. Women need to be empowered socially, economically, politically and in all stages of life.

Female enrolment ratio in primary education is reaching almost 99% now in India. We need to continue this momentum and provide greater avenues for higher education. Female representation policy is a good in itself and needs to be pushed in higher education institutes, especially in STEM fields and cutting edge research like Artificial Intelligence.

Women's overall and reproductive health also needs focus. Women need to be empowered to pursue effective family planning. Schemes like ICDS need to be streamlined for better health and nutritional outcomes.

There is also a need to empower women socially by highlighting female role models. Campaigns like selfie with daughter and schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao have led to greater social respectability and value for women.

Above all, women need to be allowed to play their deserved political role. Given a chance, women can steer their own destiny and also push society forward. Leaders like Angela Merkel and Jacinda Ardern have ~~shown~~ shone a light on this path. We can consider the proposal of women reservation in parliament as a start.

✧ A better future for women is better future for everyone

To conclude, there is absolutely no

doubt that women empowerment is essential for economic and sustainable development.

We need to build global partnerships between nations, international organizations and women's movements to push the agenda of women empowerment.

We need to study the aspect of women empowerment in light of emerging changes like information society, industrial revolution 4.0 and take necessary steps so that women can take hold of the sail and push the boat of humanity forward.

'Freedom for all cannot be achieved, unless women are emancipated from all forms of oppression.'

- Nelson Mandela

Section - B

2- Integrity without knowledge is weak and Useless,
and Knowledge without integrity is dangerous & dreadful

Socrates had remarked that knowledge is virtue. To lead a happy and fulfilling life, we need to have the knowledge of doing so. Knowledge refers to the information and experience that helps us to make decisions and navigate our way in the world. Prime Minister Modi has underlined the importance by stating the goal of making India a "knowledge society".

However, knowledge is multi-faceted and expansive term. Knowledge is not only about the instrumental act of fulfilling our desires. Rather, knowledge should be understood in a maximalist sense. True knowledge guides us on how to live a good and ethical life. Knowledge has

to be accompanied by integrity to live a virtuous life. Otherwise, knowledge is easily amenable to misuse.

Integrity refers to the state when our thoughts, speech and behaviour are integrated. Integrity is said to be a value of values. Integrity helps a man to follow and implement ethical values in his life.

Without integrity, there is likely to be a gap between what we think, what we say and what we do. We can give example of Former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri who used to carry two candles with him always. One for personal use and the other for official use. Integrity helped him stay true to his morals even when no one could see him. Great characters are always full of such integrity.

In the modern world, however, we see an erosion of ethics and integrity. This has created various problems for mankind.

In this essay, we will discuss how both knowledge and integrity are required. Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless. On the other hand, knowledge without integrity is really dangerous and dreadful. We will explore whether the two can exist separately. We will also look into how we can foster both knowledge and integrity in the society.

★ Integrity Without Knowledge

Integrity refers to the quality of being true to our values. However, without knowledge, integrity cannot achieve much. We can look at the example of

Yudhishthira from Mahabharata. He always yearned to act with integrity even towards his enemies. However, that led ultimately to a greater war which ~~was~~ he could have avoided.

In the colonial history of India, we can cite the examples of multiple tribal and agrarian revolts like sanyasi, Munda, etc. Even the 1857 war of independence had presence of multiple leaders with exceptional character and integrity. However, they lacked the true knowledge of the colonial character of economy and British rule which led them to failure.

Even after independence, we can trace the same in Pandit Nehru's Foreign Policy. India followed non-alignment and Panchsheel in true spirit. However, it has resulted into defeat in 1962 Sino-India war because we lacked the knowledge of how real politics of power works.

In societies, integrity is not a sufficient value in itself. Rather too much integrity can lead to stagnation and intellectual stubbornness. New ideas and knowledge is continuously needed for social evolution and progress.

Intellectual integrity and intellectual autonomy should not turn into intellectual arrogance. New ideas and knowledge is what makes integrity relevant.

Integrity should not become an excuse for being status-quoist and risk-averse. In bureaucracy, we see risk-aversion in recent times due to fear of judicial scrutiny. In such cases, excessive integrity leads to suboptimal outcomes. What is needed is creativity and initiative for good and responsive governance.

☆ Knowledge without Integrity :

Knowledge without integrity is a recipe for disaster. Greater knowledge gives us the power to influence society. However, it can also be put to selfish ends and wrong use. We can even argue that knowledge without integrity is a worse situation than integrity without knowledge.

From Indian mythology, we can cite the example of Ravana. He was said to be a learned priest and had knowledge of all kinds. However, he lacked integrity and that was what led to his and his kingdom Lanka's downfall.

The worst and naked image of knowledge without integrity was observed during the Second World War. Diabolical use of science was made in the

Form of atomic weapons, biological weapons which were used to kill millions of people. Example of Eichmann can be given who had knowledge of doing his job but no capacity for critical and integral thinking.

Closer home in India, we see the prevalence of caste system. Some higher castes claim their monopoly on scriptural knowledge. However, this knowledge leads them to practise discrimination and even untouchability against lower castes. Knowledge is used to dominate over others rather than seek to empower all.

In the economic sphere, we can look at the problems of corruption, crony capitalism and financial scams.

This shows the misuse of knowledge for nefarious ends at the cost of many. Notorious names like Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi are examples of knowledge without integrity. We can contrast them with people like Ratan Tata who have shown that integrity with knowledge leads to sustainable and long term gains.

Knowledge and integrity become especially important in the case of emerging science and technology developments. Science can tell us how to clone a dinosaur from dna, but values and integrity guides us on whether we should do it. Emerging technologies like genetic engineering, artificial intelligence create scope for monumental changes in human civilization. Therefore, a dialogue-based

approach is needed otherwise it can put humanity under danger.

✧ Integrity and Knowledge :

Knowledge with integrity makes for great characters like Mahatma Gandhi.

Gandhi showed us the right path through his 'experiments with truth'.

Knowledge is transient. Nobody can know the absolute truth. Knowledge is not

only consisting of facts. Rather, knowledge

is a maximalist concept. Knowledge is

made of our lived social realities. Thus,

real knowledge always exists with

integrity.

Knowledge should be understood in widest form. It includes knowledge of

ethical values and how to live a

moral life.

In the present information age,
information of all kinds can be accessed
at our fingertips through internet. A
person can learn 'how to build a bomb
or how to build a thing to benefit the
society. Therefore, value education that
imparts integrity is a must in our
education system.

Integrity helps information to
become knowledge and knowledge to
become wisdom. We should aim to
cultivate integrity among our younger
generations.