

TEST CODE 8 1 0 4 0 5

MGP 2025

Time Allowed : 3 Hours

समय : 3 घंटे

Forum IAS

Maximum Marks : 250

अधिकतम अंक : 250

ESSAY / निबंध

Name Of Candidate परीक्षार्थी का नाम	ISHAN BHATNAGAR		
Roll No./अनुक्रमांक	1910116216	Medium/माध्यम	English <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> हिंदी <input type="checkbox"/>
Center Code/परीक्षा केंद्र	BHOPAL	Date/दिनांक	8/08/2025

*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. Write two essays, choosing one topic from each of the following Section A and B in about 1000 - 1200 words each. खण्ड A व B प्रत्येक में से एक विषय चुनकर दो निबंध लिखिए, जो प्रत्येक लगभग 1000 - 1200 शब्दों का हों।	
Q.2			3. The number of marks carried by a question/part is indicated against it. एक प्रश्न/भाग द्वारा दिए गए अंकों की संख्या इसके सामने इंगित की गई है।	
Total Marks/कुल अंक			4. 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।	
Remarks/टिप्पणी :			5. Word limit in questions, if specified, should be adhered to. प्रश्नों में शब्द सीमा, यदि निर्दिष्ट हो, का पालन किया जाना चाहिए।	
			6. 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 :	
Mode Of Examination/ परीक्षा की विधि :			Online/ऑनलाइन <input type="checkbox"/> Offline/ऑफलाइन <input type="checkbox"/>	
For Office Use Only / केवल कार्यालय प्रयोग हेतु				
ECN CODE/ ईसीएन कोड :		EG/ईजी :		Evaluation Date/ मूल्यांकन तिथि :
		① ② ③ ④ ⑤		

MARKING SCHEME

<i>Parameter/ criteria</i>	<i>Aspects Considered</i>	<i>Marks Allotted</i>	<i>Essay 1</i>	<i>Essay 2</i>
Basic Format	Introduction	10		
	Body	15		
	Conclusion	10		
Content	Topic interpretation	10		
	Quotations and ideas	10		
	Analytical skills	10		
Organization	Flow of ideas	10		
	Absence of deviation	10		
	Ease of reading	10		
Language skills	Language and sentence construction	10		
	Grammar and spelling	10		
Examiner's discretion	perception/ innovation/ engaging	10		

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



SECTION - A

1. Glaciers are the canaries in the coal mine of climate change.
हिमनद (ग्लेशियर) जलवायु परिवर्तन रूपी कोयला खदान में वे कैनरी पक्षी हैं जिनकी मृत्यु सबसे पहले होती है।
2. To be content with little is difficult; to be content with much, impossible.
थोड़े से संतुष्ट रहना कठिन है; अधिक से संतुष्ट रहना असंभव है।
3. The true cost of economic and leadership gaps is deferred growth and skewed transitions.
आर्थिक और नेतृत्व अंतराल की वास्तविक लागत विलंबित विकास और विषम परिवर्तन है।
4. An India that is not pluralist is not India at all.
जो भारत बहुलतावादी नहीं है, वह भारत ही नहीं है।

THE TRUE COST OF ECONOMIC AND LEADERSHIP GAPS IS DEFERRED GROWTH AND SKEWED TRANSITIONS

Have you ever looked back at your life and thought of a pivotal moment where everything changed? Perhaps an opportunity that made all the difference - and maybe one that circumstances prevented you from availing. This ^{idea} ~~feeling~~ of moments that can change the very trajectory of one's life is immortalized in Tracy Chapman's

words: "We got a fast car fast enough so we can drive away. We've got to make a decision - leave tonight, or live and die this way". For Mahatma Gandhi, this was probably the moment he refused to disembark from that first class coach in South Africa - his fearless defiance of injustice was the beginning of a lifelong non-cooperation against unjust laws.

Just as this applies to people, this idea of some moments and a few crucial decisions shaping destinies also applies to economies, societies and nations. For instance the year 2035 represents such very moment for India - this is when our demographic dividend will peak and we will have the largest proportion of working population in the workforce. But

With the Skills India Report, 2025 showing that only 52% of Indian graduates are employable, the question is, are we ready for 2035?

I. Two Indias?

This question of where we're placed as a country and what our prospects are is difficult to answer. It is often said that in India, "if something is true, the opposite of it is also likely to be true".

So, we see two distinct stories spanning out: one is the story of incredible growth post the 1990s, and the other pertains to enduring gaps in our strategy of growth and transitions.

Jagdish Bhagwati has long argued that "growth is the wave that makes all boats float" - he

argues that the 1991 reforms plugged crucial gaps in our economic system. For instance, excessive state interference, in the form of enterprise size caps under the MRTA Act, were against the economics of scale. The reforms, heralded by the resolute leadership of Hon'ble former PM PV Narasimha Rao and at the time, Hon'ble finance minister Manmohan Singh brought about a fundamental transition to India's economy.

However, Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze have famously contested this vision in 'An Uncertain Glory - India and its contradictions'. They point out that crucial economic gaps have led to skewed transition from agriculture to service-led growth. Service boom in IT-BPO sectors have

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expanded India's middle class and taken 25 crore + people out of poverty (NITI Aayog). But it has failed to generate enough jobs - owing to low employment elasticity of services sector and high skills needed, making it an abode of opportunities for the more urbanized, better educated, privileged individuals.

Economists like Kaushik Basu point out that this skewed transition owed itself to enduring infrastructural and logistics gaps that prevented the scaling up of manufacturing. Coupled with a lower savings rate, there simply wasn't enough investment in manufacturing to lead to scale and productivity enhancements, crucial for manufacturing-led growth. The net outcome has been the proliferation of a few, high paying jobs in services driving growth - juxtaposed

with near-stagnation in industrial wages. Our economic impediments, owing partly ~~from~~ ^{to} colonial exploitation and protectionist policies post independence prevented a smoother transition to labour-intensive industries like textiles and toys, which would employ more people or make our growth more broad-based.

This deepens our initial analysis about pivotal moments - the 1991 reforms were surely a pivotal moment that set us on the growth trajectory.

However, our choices were constrained by the state of our economy, with crucial gaps in the economy preventing broad-based growth, and leading to a skewed transition. It is precisely because of these reasons that the present government is emphasizing de-regulation, ease of doing business and aggressive infrastructural development under PM Sahishakti to provide

the structural basis for taking growth to the last mile. This indicates that visionary, decisive and agile leadership is needed to both capitalize on pivotal moments and set the stage for future prospects.

II. The Curious Case of Sub-Saharan Africa

The importance of good leadership is underscored most prominently by instances of its absence. World Bank in an influential pre-Covid report took stock of poverty reduction effects across the world. While most regions that made moderate to high improvements, Sub-Saharan Africa

remains distinct in that poverty rates have actually risen in the last 30 years! This is completely at odds with most global poverty trends, and very difficult to understand given the substantial aid that has been pouring into

Africa'. In 'Why Nations fail', the authors reveal the preponderant reasons behind this seeming anomaly - leadership and institutional failures.

Successive military coups, authoritarian regimes and short-lived governments led to the absence of any long, development oriented vision.

Piecemeal efforts were overturned in periodic civil wars and violence. Hence, their leadership failed to predict the impending water crisis, leading to water wars. They also did not lay down the infrastructural foundations for an economic transition from subsistence to surplus.

We can contrast this with South Africa, where Nelson Mandela's visionary leadership healed a fractured society - paving the way for a "rainbow nation" anchored in principles of truth and reconciliation. The African Constitution is testament to a vision of inclusive growth.

with expansive socio-economic rights, like right to housing and a living wage, and with strong institutions delivering a more inclusive growth model.

Our discussion of post-LPG reforms India shows us the salience of good leadership in commencing transformations, and the limitations placed on these transitions by economic gaps, which are being filled by current leadership.

Our cross-regional comparisons within Africa informs us of the salience of leadership in delivering inclusive growth and transition from subsistence to surplus - and the catastrophic effects of its absence. We must now explore the underlying reasons for the disastrous effects of economic and leadership gaps, and then explore a model for inclusive growth and just transitions.

III The opportunity cost of 'Failing Backwards'

Rational choice theory very clearly tells us that each decision has certain costs and benefits.

In fact the cost of a decision, for instance, to promote heavy industries, is seen in terms of the next best alternative foregone, like agricultural growth.

Leadership gaps affect this equilibrium in three significant ways. Firstly, a short-sighted leadership

may ignore the long-term implications of its actions, such as present US trade tariffs on India, which risks alienating India, US's close ally.

Secondly, leadership may not have the right incentives, leading to profiteering at cost of public welfare, such as the mindless consumption

of the global commons. Lastly, a complacent leadership may "miss the boat" on crucial moments. All of this can derail the economy, preventing sustained growth or just

transitions. Economic gaps on the other hand, reduce the set of viable alternatives, effectively constraining choice - people are forever left choosing unviable "second best" outcomes - like precarious jobs in the informal economy.

The big question that remains is - how does one break the cycle? And going back to an earlier observation, what can India do to capitalize on its pivotal moment in 2035.

IV Engaged leadership and a resilient economy

I have previously argued that harnessing pivotal opportunities requires strong, structural planning laying strong foundations. Here, we shall

seek to harmonize Sen and Bhagwati's divergent viewpoints to come to some general recommendations. A larger demography will need greater jobs, which can be brought in

with Bhagwati's emphasis on structural reforms, like better infrastructure, increased scientific research, making investments in frontier technology and expanding our manufacturing base. At the same time, Sen & Przew would remind us that we need employable individuals that can utilize the opportunities thrown open by just economic transitions. This would entail developing capabilities - literacy, numeracy, quality education, health, the capacity to reason and become lifelong learners adapting to an ever changing global world environment.

more importantly, deriving such inclusive growth and just transitions we will need a strong, decisive, visionary leadership - constantly taking stock of emerging trends and navigating constraints with agility - like a sea captain at the rudder. Thus combined, our "F-1 drivers" in our "fast lane" can take us to prosperity, inclusion and empowerment.



SECTION - B

1. True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice.

वास्तविक शांति केवल तनाव का अभाव नहीं है; यह न्याय की उपस्थिति है।

2. The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom.

इस समय जीवन का सबसे दुखद पहलू यह है कि विज्ञान, समाज की तुलना में अधिक तेजी से बुद्धिमत्ता एकत्रित करता है।

3. Human development suffers when interdependence is mismanaged.

जब अंतर्निर्भरता का कुप्रबंधन होता है तो मानव विकास प्रभावित होता है।

4. No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.

आपकी सहमति के बिना कोई भी आपको कमतर महसूस नहीं करा सकता।

NO ONE CAN MAKE YOU FEEL INFERIOR
WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT

Maya Angelou famously said that "you can trod
me in the very dirt, but still, like dust, I
rise". Her words, filled with defiance against
injustice, point to a fundamental truth. There
is a gap between what happens to us and how
we respond to it - and in that gap lies the
freedom to choose our response. Eleanor
Roosevelt famously said that "no one can

make you feel inferior without your consent" attuned to the idea that another person's treatment of meting out indignity is simply the stimulus. One still has a choice in how one interprets the indignity - as proof of the other's prejudice or one's own inferiority. Hence, Viktor Frankl famously argued that the very attitude we take towards our suffering is the sole, surviving inalienable freedom, which remains even when all other freedoms have been stripped away, such as in a Nazi concentration camp.

This insight is especially crucial in our present world where discrimination is often covert rather than overt, and inequality is implied, rather than expressly stated.

② Systemic discrimination and the dialectics of inferiority

Discrimination in the modern world is no longer tolerated in its earlier forms of physical segregation, legal exclusion, and deprivation of citizenship rights. Rather, it is increasingly more insidious, covert and systemic. It is manifest in unequal access to opportunities, leading to limitations in choice in determining life outcomes. This leads to an unequal distribution of dignity under the guise of "meritocracy".

This can be illustrated through two distinct examples. At the societal level, this can be seen in systemic racism in the U.S. African American neighbourhoods are overcrowded, underfunded, and minimally serviced by a fund-strapped public school infrastructure and prohibitively expensive healthcare. African youth, seeing

opportunities for legitimate social mobility diminish, are derailed into crime, precarious living conditions on the margins of society. Despite a grossly unequal starting point, they are judged on common American 'meritocratic' standards and seen as "uncouth, uncivilized" and thus "inferior".

Similarly, on the global level, we see what Wallerstein describes as a "World System" of unequal relations between the developed and developing countries where developed countries are seen as "modernized economies", "generously giving aid and technology" to the third world.

→ reading of modern Indian history quickly

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aquaints us with a historical fact unmasking this facade - as Dadabhai Naoroji pointed out more than a hundred years ago, the very prosperity of the Western World was based on drain of wealth from the Colonies. This ~~was~~ unjust drain led to increasing enrichment of the Global North at the cost of the Global South and persists as neocolonialist relations of unfair trade terms, debt trap diplomacy and attempts to use "aid" to undermine strategic autonomy.

thus, systems are rigged to create "winners" and "losers", the "advanced" and the "backward".

Louis Dumont presents a fascinating insight - unequal systems, such as the caste system, are grounded in ideology that places the unequals in hierarchy and opposition. Thus, Dumont argues that caste system is based on principles of purity and pollution, where

the "pure" is described with respect to, and superior to the "impure". Thus we see for categories like "civilized" and "savages", "developed" and "underdeveloped". These categories underscore the superiority of one and the inferiority of the other. Frankfurt's notion of fundamental freedom of interpretation would ask us to investigate and dismantle these constructed hierarchies that place some people at a pedestal and "trod others to the very dirt". But how must one accomplish this?

II Contesting Hegemony to assert Pride

Gramsci described the concept of Hegemony as the ability of the ruling class to justify their rule by shaping the norm. This enables them to rule by the "consent of the oppressed".

Sen illustrates this in the Indian context, where women are often the "last and least to eat". Here, value system of welfare of the family preceding the individual woman leads to the women not seeking to renegotiate access to food and other entitlements, rather accepting them as just and fair.

Thus injustice can only be weakened on individuals upon convincing them of their inferiority - that they deserve less, and must ask for less.

Even though socially constructed, an "inferior identity" can be greatly enshackling, constraining even the thought of subverting it.

To overcome it and regain autonomy, one must investigate the notion of inferiority which is being imposed. Kant famously said that the enlightenment is simply the "ability to think for oneself". Often, underlying impositions

of inferiority are vested interests, like Colonial conquest, or patriarchal exploitation.

Dr Ambedkar famously noted that education was crucial in developing the ability to reason, enshrined in his motto - "educate, agitate, organize". And it is through reason that we can contest externally imposed inferiority.

At a societal level, we must construct a counter-culture that takes pride in identity.

This involves taking back autonomy to define oneself and refusing to believe in false narratives of inferiority. The present Government's efforts at Atmanirbharata to uphold economic self-reliance point towards a choice to refuse the "aid based" developmental model of dependency upon the Global North and rather asserting our economic autonomy and equality.

moreover, we need systemic change that no longer seeks ~~for~~ to put people in hierarchical relations of superior and inferior.

III Reconstituting society on principles of tolerance, justice and inclusion

The fundamental principle to systemic change would be moving past seeking to place individuals on a "ranking" and appreciating differences instead. This is based in the idea of multiculturalism that gives equal respect to all cultures, languages, religions and customs and its essence is enshrined in Swami Vivekananda's speech at Chicago, where he said that "we regard all religions as true and equal paths to the divine" - indicating the idea that two different things can be simultaneously true, without one thing having to be better or worse than the other.

We must also recalibrate the focus of institutions from considerations of merit to focus on enhancing the quality of life of the maximum number of people. Mihir Shah has criticized the Indian education system, with its focus on ranks in boards and competitive exams as being an "excellent filtration system" that filters out the "cream of talent" while the rest are left to their own devices. The NEP has acknowledged this structural flaw and is re-directing focus on drop outs, 'catch-up education', adult education and foundational literacy and numeracy, thus broadening systemic focus away from "merit-based exclusion" to human development orientation.

At this point, it is necessary to clarify that a social system that refuses to classify people as superior or inferior with against objective assessments and constructive criticism. Rather, it is against generalizing criticisms to reach the conclusion of overall inferiority of a people or nation.

Thus, the founders of the Indian Renaissance were open to Occidentalists critique of Indian society in terms of untouchability, sati, proneness to superstition etc. However, they refused to allow our society to be characterized as backward. Rather, they investigated our past to prove that many of the social evils were secondary accretions on a largely tolerant, dialogical and scientific culture. However, they were no revivalists - they understood that questioning imposed inferiority

and asserting pride did not mean blindly
revising the past, or self congratulatory
chest thumping. Rather, it meant the
courage to look at oneself and one's
society objectively, and to say that
despite its flaws - one's identity & society
is worthy of equal respect and love. The acts
of reform, critique and improvement then
become labours of love for the full
expansion of human potential.

and this, really, is the heart of my argument :
between the gap of external treatment and
our response, we must each practice this
form of objective, yet unphatetic love -
being fully willing to see our flaws yet
firmly refusing to see ourselves as "inferior"
or "less than" anyone else.

moments in the destiny of a nation

Pivotal moments → life of person/nation → what changes everything → a train to catch

Economic & leadership gaps → deferred growth & skewed transitions

Such as

2035 → demographic dividend peaks → w/ only 52% graduates employable → are we ready?

Pareto rule 80:20

→ certain crucial decisions about eco & inst's → shape destiny of the nation. → hierarchy & values.

I. Infra & logistics gap → skewed transition from agr → services

- 1) Issues w/ infra etc.
- 2) Skewed transition
- 3) Consequences → low employment elasticity, informality, agr dependence

II. leadership → deferred growth gaps (Africa)

- Sub-Saharan Africa → only region in the world where poverty = or ↑.
- Resource curse, aid curse
- Why nations fail

III Opportunity costs - failing backwards.

- Econ. drain → enduring cost → Wallerstein
- Absence of leadership → Pak.
- India → strength of early leader → strong inst's.

IV Prosperity

- Inclusive, sustainable, contextually growth
- Strong, decisive response been

(4) "You may tread me in the very dirt, but still, like dust, I rise"

Thesis statement - Gap bet'n stimulus & response → free will. Frankl → attitude you take towards your suffering → final bastion of freedom. Circle of control → cannot always control how people act, but can control how we choose to interpret their actions.

(1) Systemic Discrimination & dialectics of inferiority

systemic racism, apartheid, Dumont → hierarchy of P/P → one is superior or inferior only in relation to the other.

(II) Contesting Hegemonic Narratives to Assert Identity & Pride

- Gramsci - Hegemony → rule by consent → convincing people of their inferiority + "making allies of out of the disempowered" (Sen)
- Creating a counter-culture around pride in identity -

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civil rights movement, tribes as indigenous people.

(III) Reconstituting society

→ empathy → Pedagogy of the oppressed → common goals → civic nationalism → India