

Time Allowed : Three Hours समय : तीन घंटे				Maximum Marks : 250 अधिकतम अंक : 250	
<b>ESSAY / निबंध</b>					
Name Of Candidate परीक्षार्थी का नाम		SHUBHANSHI SINGH			
Roll No./अनुक्रमांक		1910083218		Medium/माध्यम English <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> हिंदी <input type="checkbox"/>	
Center Code/परीक्षा केंद्र		1900		Date/दिनांक 03-Sept-2023	

### SECTION - A

- X 1. Institutions reflect the cultural values of the societies in which they are established.  
संस्थान उन समाजों के सांस्कृतिक मूल्यों को दर्शाते हैं जिनमें वे स्थापित होते हैं।
2. He who has a 'why' to live for, can bear almost any 'how'.  
जिसके पास जीने के लिए 'क्यों'/'कारण' है, वह लगभग किसी भी 'कैसे'/'परिस्थिति' को सहन कर सकता है।
- ✓ 3. The power of perception shapes our understanding of reality.  
अनुभूति की शक्ति वास्तविकता की हमारी समझ को आकार देती है।
- X 4. The tree that would grow to heaven must send its roots to hell.  
जो पेड़ स्वर्ग तक बढ़ेगा उसे अपनी जड़ें नरक में भेजनी होंगी।

### SECTION - B

1. A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions.  
जो मन किसी नये अनुभव से खिंच जाता है वह कभी भी अपने पुराने आयामों पर वापस नहीं जा सकता।
2. One health approach: a call for ecological equity.  
एक स्वास्थ्य दृष्टिकोण : पारिस्थितिक समानता का आह्वान।
- X 3. Culture can unite what history and geography has divided.  
संस्कृति उसे एकजुट कर सकती है जिसे इतिहास और भूगोल ने विभाजित किया है।
- ✓ 4. Social evils have not completely left the ground, instead are changing their form.  
सामाजिक कुश्रतियाँ व्यवहार में पूरी तरह से खत्म नहीं हुई हैं, बल्कि अपना रूप बदलती जा रही हैं।

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3. The power of perception shapes our understanding of reality

Four ~~Five~~ blind men, when asked to identify an object, shocked the experimenter:

- 'It is a snake', said the man holding the tail;
- 'It is a cow', said the man standing near the belly;
- 'It is a pillar', said the man holding the foot;
- 'It is a large fan', said the man touching the ear.

Then what was it really? How can four different people be so poles apart in their perception of the same reality? Then the experimenter understood, how a huge reality - as big as an elephant - is still not big enough to become an absolute truth. It is how one perceives it decides their understanding of reality.

This experiment raises a number of questions in our minds. How do these perceptions shape our understanding of the

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reality? Is it always the perceptions that matter? Why are these perceptions inevitable? What good do the perceptions serve in understanding reality? And is there any way to enhance the efficiency of perceptions for greater good? Let us embark on a journey through multiple perceptions to better understand the reality of these questions.

Our understanding of reality is shaped through ~~not~~ the personal beliefs and value systems. One ~~too~~ with strength of character and non-negotiable integrity would understand the situation without vested interests. One with compromised morality would try to exploit any situation. For instance, Shershiji never used his office car for personal purpose, while on the

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other hand an IAS-couple was recently rebuked for interrupting the practice of athletes in a stadium in Delhi, just to walk their dog!

Similarly, limitations of knowledge and experience could also shape our understanding of reality. Both expert-knowledge and multiplicity of experiences - good and bad - broadens the horizon of our perception.

Mr. S. Jaishankar, with his decades of diplomatic knowledge is today able to hold India's head high in global diplomatic sphere.

While detailed knowledge can help understand truth better, fragmented knowledge and hidden truth can taint our perception. Guru Dronacharya was deceived in Mahabharata by the incomplete

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truth of 'Ashwathama's death'. Assuming that his son was dead, while really an elephant had died, he quit the battle field! The reality was the same - his son was alive, the war was going on - only his perception had changed.

Such subjectivity of perceptions provides us with a power of reshaping our destiny. It helps one understand one's socio-economic conditions in a manner that is not a hindrance but a facilitator for growth - exhibiting growth mindset (Carol Dweck). The national level volleyball player Anurima Sinha who lost her leg in a train accident went on to climb the Mount Everest in just 2 years of time. If only such a perception could overtake all of humanity - wouldn't we be a race of dedicated beings!

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~~Not only~~  
The power of perceptions not only controls the everyday experiences but also the seemingly objective world of science. The scientific experiments are really based on how one perceives reality. The very basis of statistics and 'hypothesis testing' is build upon a 'hypothesis' - which is nothing but a perception.

However, does ~~to~~ this mean that there are absolutely no objective facts and all that rules our understanding of reality is our perception? Absolutely not. There are certainly facts, scientific truths and empirical evidences to some realities. For instance, the level of pollution in New Delhi would not change with our perception or the global CO<sub>2</sub> levels would not drop below 420 ppm by ~~per~~ our perception.

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When truth can be absolute and objective, what then makes these perceptions inevitable? It is the human mind. Built on the foundation of conscious and subconscious, as advocated by Freud, our mind attributes certain biases and meanings to the reality. That forms the perception and helps us better understand reality. Like one cannot separate a <sup>drop</sup> ~~bubble~~ of water from the ocean, one cannot remove the power of perception from empirical reality. <sup>Even</sup> the objective reality of climate change was denied casually by the biased perception of Donald Trump, the former USA President.

This hints at the inevitable dangers that the subjective perceptions might pose on the society. With a narrow-minded

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perception of reality, there might be widespread denial of justice, and large scale human rights violation. The Holocaust stands as ~~an~~ a blood-stained evidence for how the anti-semitic perception of one tyrant marred the reality of millions of Jews.

Similarly, such perceptions may lead to an increase in conflicts in the modern society. The increasing radicalization of youth and building an anti-national perceptions in the reality of a welfare state has led to the rise of Urban Naxals, as noted by Vivek Agnihotri. The reality is tainted by the power of influence

This influence need not always invade the social sphere. It can simply dwell within every individual

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in the form of insecurities. In the 'Instagram-culture' today, one is bound to compare realities and form a negative perception towards one's happiness. This is a fool-proof strategy for poor mental health.

However, these perceptions do not always reduce our power. There are ways in which the power of perceptions helps enhance the reality. The inherent subjectivity provides room for new possibilities. When nothing is permanent, 'Change is the only absolute', and <sup>an</sup> innovative approach to reality is fostered. The development of the Basic Structure doctrine in the Indian Constitution is a case in point of how perceptions can empower humanity.

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The growth mindset discussed earlier not only helps one in achieving materialistic success, but also ~~is~~ helps in making a morally sound society. When one is open to new perceptions of reality, one becomes more tolerant towards differing views. Better understanding these differing views, one can cultivate feelings of empathy and compassion. Gandhiji's tour across India in the first year of his return to India helped ~~in~~ him in becoming compassionate. The perception of reality turned a suited-barrister into a fakir-clothed in a piece of khadi!

If the power of perception presents itself as a double-edged sword, is there any way to educate the perceptions, to make them benevolent and help in achieving greater good? Definitely!

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It is through emotional intelligence that one can reduce the biasness in perception. With a reduced biasness, a more objective approach to decision making is developed. Through this enlightened objectivity, where one balances the emotions and duty, the perception of reality comes to the brighter side of the spectrum. The Church Mosque in Kerala that ~~was~~ announces deaths of all Hindus and Muslims alike built its perception upon the ideal that — 'in death and grief, all are alike'.

Similarly, the perception can be trained on evidential support and data. The Supreme Court in Nagaraj case advocated the use of data for ensuring rule of law and good governance.



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Alongwith data and evidence, the light of education can save humanity from the darkness of ignorance. An educated individual would perceive reality in a developmental manner and not tainted by socio-religious forces. Dr. Kalam's message for 'Young minds' of India was filled with the need for education as the real artist of an ignited mind.

Summing up, the perceptions ~~both~~ empower humans to understand reality and shape the future, and it depends upon us, ~~how to~~ which way we go. As Milton asserted in his 'Paradise Lost',

'The mind is a place of its own  
It can make hell of heaven  
and heaven of hell',

so are the perceptions that can shape our understanding of reality.

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4. Social evils have not completely left the ground, instead are changing their form

Decades ago, a poor man in a small town of Haryana fought against the entire society to ~~teach~~ train his daughters in wrestling. His endeavours not only gave India the unstoppable Geeta Bhogat but also paved a way for all the aspiring girls to chase their dreams without fear. He eradicated the patriarchal hindrance from the arena of wrestling.

However, once again India witnessed a transformed version of the same patriarchal mindset in 2023 in wrestling. Wrestling champions like Sakshi Malik sat on protest against the chief of Wrestling Federation of India for sexually

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harassing the female wrestlers. He allegedly used ~~both~~ verbal comments, text messages and physical advances against them. The social evil that had seemingly gone away, never completely left the ground and instead changed its form.

The patriarchy that once stopped girls from playing now exploited them, hampering their mental and physical well being.

The numerous social evils that have haunted humanity have met points of eradication. However, they never really vanished but found expression in newer forms and media.

The caste-based discrimination which was earlier practised as untouchability, was banned <sup>first</sup> by the

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British and later by the Article 17 of the Indian constitution. It Today, it might not be practised on the face of it, the hidden manifestation is evident in Safai Karmacharies (manual scavengers). Majority of them belong to scheduled castes. <sup>They are</sup> and ~~are~~ virtually ostracized from other communities owing to the 'filthy' or 'polluting' nature of their work, as society calls it.

Another form caste has taken today is in the electoral politics. Several political parties like BSP (scheduled castes) and SP (backwards castes) identify with caste-identities — further strengthening the social cleavage. In between populist 'reveri' culture and caste neglect, it is the common man that suffers.

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At the global level, this suffering is manifested in the form of racial discrimination. Even though Nelson Mandela fought the 'Apartheid' cause, the Black Lives Matter movement today shows the hollowness of any reform that ever took place. What was slave trade in the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century is discrimination in workplaces today.

Slavery also seems to have been eradicated from the entire globe today. But somewhere in the shade hides the evil of modern slavery. It takes various forms like 'intellect - emigration' or 'brain drain' from countries like India to US and UK. Another instance was seen in a village in Punjab where

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the poor locals kidnapped mentally challenged strangers from the railway station and put them in chains to work in the farms. If this is not slavery, what is?

Perhaps even more concealed forms of modern slavery would make the picture clear. The 'hustle culture' of the modern age — the slavery of not only mind but of the talent, the family time and of physical well being is plaguing the educated society today. The CEO of Bombay Shaving Company who valorized the 18-hour work day was rightly rebuked on such an unhealthy mindset.

It is the mindset that has made a humanity a slave of 'communal superiority' for ages. The 'crusades' aimed at proving the superiority of Christianity over Islam

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centuries ago appeared to have gone with the ~~was~~ world becoming increasingly secular. However, it always stayed. Instead of evident inter-country fights, today it is manifested in communal riots and terrorist attacks. The Delhi riots of 2020<sup>(India)</sup> and the Christchurch Mosque shootings of 2015 (New Zealand) are some instances. The cow vigilanties across India are killing several others in name of religion.

Now returning to the patriarchal mindset, this social evil never went away. Earlier, it was 'sati burning', then it was domestic violence (which sadly still persists) and then it turned into the modern age of heinous crimes. With Nirbhaya becoming the voice of lakhs of rape survivors, the country was sensitized toward the changing form of patriarchy.

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When women were empowered to leave the domestic sphere to work and be independent, men took to public control over their lives. Eve teasing, acid attacks and gang rapes <sup>became</sup> ~~began rampant~~ an everyday event. As NCRB grimly presents, a girl is raped every 15 minutes.

When women broken the glass ceiling at workplace and refused to rest on the 'casting couch', the patriarch wasn't satisfied. They introduced the 'glass cliff', handing over loss-making units to women, ~~later~~ only to blame them later for its doom.

When women got equal access to the internet, cyber bullying emerged. The 'Bois Lecker Room' incident from Delhi is hidden from ~~the~~ none.

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Amidst these social evils, marital rape also rose as a violation of the very basic right of consent. And to everyone's surprise, the live women weren't enough, that necrophilia (attraction to corpses) ~~took~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~a~~ ~~real~~ became a reality.

This changing form of social evil can also be seen in the lives of LGBTQIAT community. The decriminalization of section 377 opened equal rights for them. They moved from the tag of 'Hijra' and 'Chakka' to self <sup>determined</sup> identified gender identity. However, the contention on same sex marriage still deprives them of becoming a part of the society in letter and spirit.

Alongwith the social cleavages, the economic cleavage of ~~in~~ poverty is

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also transforming. Although multidimensional poverty in India reduced from 30% to 15% in the past few years (NITI Aayog), the inequality has remained unchanged. What was once a global epidemic of poverty is now a selective-disease; making the rich richer and the poor poorer.

While the social evils are changing form, there are some novel social evils emerging. In the 'highlights culture' of today, body dysmorphia is on the rise. It is a condition where one obsesses over a body flaw that isn't really there. The relentless comparisons one does on social media ~~mag~~ amplifies the insecurities.

Another evil is the rise of hedonistic tendencies and rampant consumerism.

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'Retail therapy' looks like a panacea but is really a termite hollowing one from inside. 'Greed would only breed more greed' is at the root of this culture. Instead, yoga and spiritual exercise should be the escape from the stress of modern age.

This stress has also led to the modern-evil of 'lifestyle diseases'. The noncommunicable diseases form a majority of global death burden.

Although the picture appears gloomy there is a silver lining to this dark cloud too. Today, we have achieved new height of equality, liberty and freedom fraternity which was only a dream in the French revolution. India's fertility rate has reduced to 2.0 (NFHS-5), curbing the issue of overpopulation.

(Please do not write anything except the question number in this space)  
कृपया इस स्थान में प्रश्न संख्या के अतिरिक्त कुछ न लिखें।

# UPSC

Answer Questions in NOT MORE THAN the Word Limit specified for each in the Parenthesis.  
Content of the Question is more Important than length.  
( Specimen Answer Booklet - For Practice Purpose Only)

उम्मीदवारों को इस छांटाए में नहीं लिखना चाहिए  
Candidates must not write on this margin

In order to convert all these dark clouds into sunny afternoon, a holistic multi pronged strategy is needed. The legislations need to become more inclusive and representative, like EWS reservation. The institutions need to be empowered with financial and administrative autonomy, like the Panchayati Raj institutions. The society needs to be sensitized against the universal impact of the social evils and motivated to help eradicate them. The nations need to join hands to work collectively to ensure the world becomes a better place to live in and to realize the motto of:

'Sawa bhavantu Sukhīnāh'  
[All shall be happy]

# The power of perception shapes our understanding of reality

Intro: 45 blind men: tail - snake  
body - cow  
boot - pillar  
front car - fan

Body: perception → Lincoln - slavery freedom for both white & black  
Reality is the same

Anekantवाद

How perceptions shapes our understanding? → limitation in knowledge  
→ value system (eg) shanti vs IAS couple dog (eg) Bishanwar →  
L personal bias system 'There is no truth, only interpretations'

Child  
'Meri chotiya choro's kaun  
Deewar movie  
'Mere paap na hai'

fragmented truth (eg) Ashwathama's death  
socio, economic, political, national, science, history  
experiments = perception

mindset → Arjunima Sinha  
creation to origin  
Moderate vs Extremist

Is it all about perceptions? → No → Objective truth → facts → PM name  
empirical data, life → science → Pollution levels  
→ CO<sub>2</sub> level 415ppm

Why are perceptions inevitable? → human mind - conscious + subconscious (Freud)

## Danger of perceptions

- ↓ justice (eg) Treaty of Versailles
- ↑ conflict (eg) Utkal - radical nationalism
- self confidence ↓
- body dysmorphia

## Benefits of perceptions (+)

- room for innovation (eg) Kinn Bedi - Yamada
- growth mindset (eg) Elon Musk
- not as a matter of fact → Hard Times (eg) Kadam Reita Fania
- empathy, compassion
- tolerance (eg) Gandhi's experience

## How to ↑ efficiency of perceptions:

- emotional intelligence
- brassness
- evidential (Nagraj case)
- conscience
- education → elephant

Conclusion: I

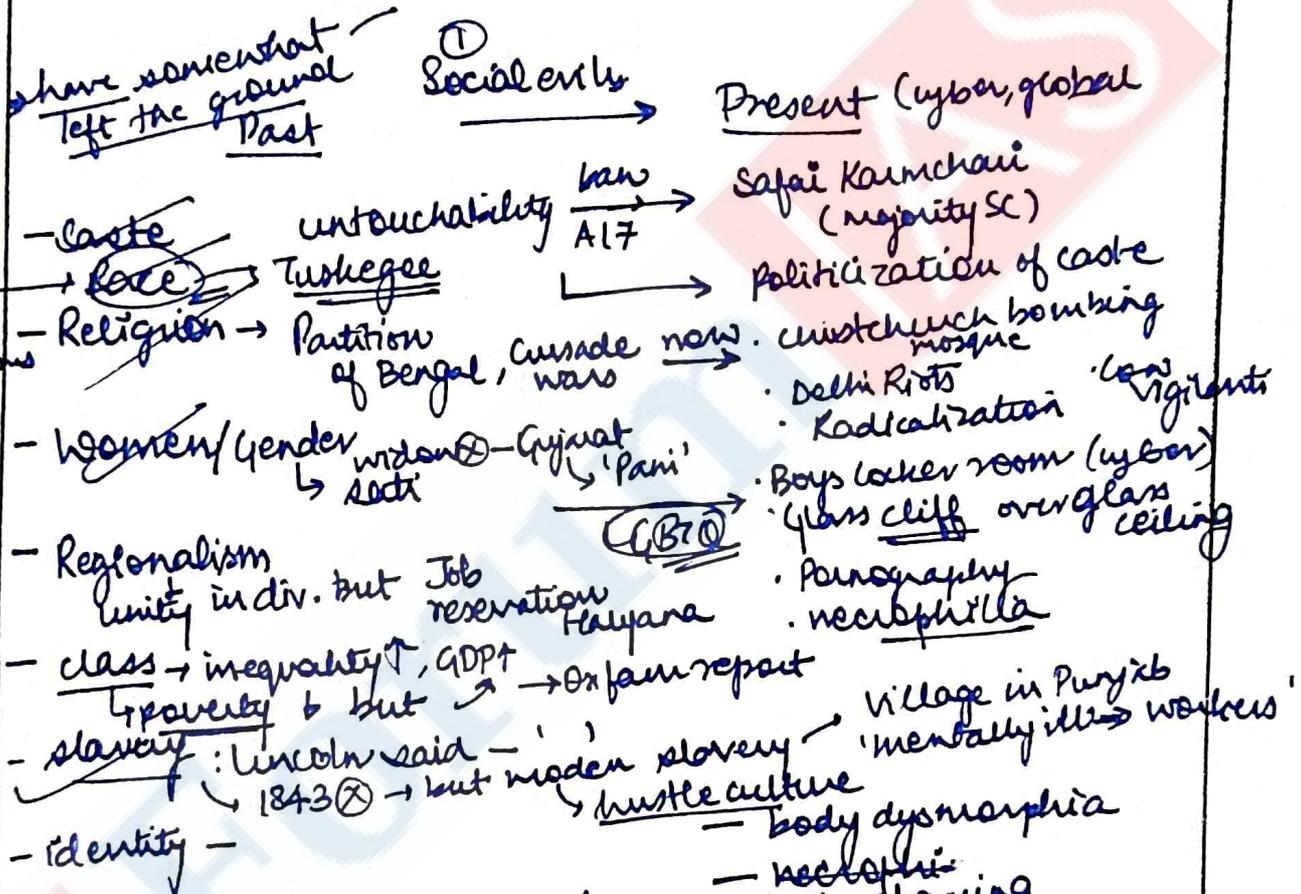


4. Social evils have not completely left the ground, instead are changing their form

Intro

Wrestlers

Body



- global
- Losapark
  - Uyghur Muslims
  - Iran Hijab

③ Answer using

- way forward
- Empower personal
  - Institutional
  - International
  - Social stigma

④ Conclusion

- ② Newer forms of evils
- ↳ Non comm. diseases
  - ↳ alienation, isolation
  - ↳ hedonism
  - ↳ Hustle culture