

UPSC Mains 2022 Essay Paper

Synopsis

NOTE: This is a mere outline to get you to start thinking about the topic. This is not a synopsis or a model essay. Just brainstorming. We're eager to read your insightful essays! Please post them in the comments.

SECTION - A

1. Forests are the best case studies for economic excellence.

Introduction: You may start the essay with an anecdote, poem or a riveting story or by mentioning the facts that forest is the reservoir of natural resources, a home to numerous species. Here, you can define forest. Forest functions with the interactions of biotic and abiotic components. Since forest is host to thousands of species, there are self-sustaining operation modals of life. These operation modals offer us the valuable lessons to adopt our lifestyle accordingly in a self-sustaining order. All the three aquatic, terrestrial and arboreal live in a forest. Beyond contributing to tackling the nature and climate crises, it has potential to sustain business resilience, embody values-led leadership and boost profitability and growth – the economic value of forests is vast, with one estimate suggesting the total value of intact forests and their ecosystem services to be as much as **\$150 trillion**, around double the value of global stock markets.

Thesis Statement: This essay will throw light on how forest can be a case study in itself to offer us how to sustainably economise our lives. An account on the economic benefits of the forest. Restoration and Conservation for sustainable development. Finally concluding on a positive note.

Core essence of the statement: Forests are not just a physical abode to species. They function on an environmental order with harmony and each life contributes for the perpetuation of life cycle. Forests are themselves a self-sustaining economy if conserved well. Investing in forest conservation and restoration can support businesses to stay ahead of shifting investment policies and ensure continued access to capital.

Explore the dimensions of the essay:

- **Economic lessons offered by the forest as a case study:**

- **Living in harmony:** Every species in the forest have their own purpose to serve in the food chain and life cycle. All the species live in harmony. They live and let live. This is the principle we can adopt in our economy to have various sellers and this will remove any monopolistic tendencies.
- **Diversity offers many choices:** The theory of evolution is based on the natural selection from diverse species. Natural selection works on the best adaptability and the resilient ones perish. The diversity of choices in our economy encourages more innovation to be desirable and sought after. Innovation drives every product manufacturer to be better than their competition.
- **Self-sustaining loop of life cycle:** The life in forest is naturally sustaining by timely change of whether events for the benefit of all. It rains when it has to, it catches fire when it has to. All the events which we think extreme are helpful for the forest in sustaining its life cycle. Wildfire helps in improving the fertility and dispersal of seeds. Flooding helps in replacing the infertile topsoil with the fertile soil. Incessant rains recharge the water table. This is the nature's best operated self-sustaining loop.

In our economy, we can adopt this similar mechanism where no resource is wasted. Every end waste is put to use to make a new product. When we truly practice the 5R of waste management – Refuse, reduce, reuse, rot and recycle. This sustainable way of production will ensure the good health of our ecosystem and the perpetuity of life on earth.

Forests are both reservoir of knowledge as to how to function and of resources as to how to sustainably use it for the benefit of mankind and all other species.

- **Importance of forests:** The abundance of resources of forests makes it valuable. These forests with rich flora and fauna can be sustainably utilized by men for our survival and economic benefits.
 - **Use of timber:** Major economies of the world use the forest for timber and the river in the forest for transporting the logs. It is an effective use of both raw material and the transportation from the forest.
 - **Use of medicinal herbs:** The world is moving towards herbal and organic, the demand for medicinal herbs is ever increasing. News of PM Modi consuming magic mushrooms increased the demand for such mushrooms grown in the mountains.
 - **Harnessing hydel energy from the water resource in the forest.**
 - **Forests as source of livelihood for many tribes:** Many tribes like Jenu Kuruba do Apiculture for living. Few tribes in Jharkhand belt grow Tendu leaves for livelihood. Bamboo is a minor forest produce, the right of ownership, access to collect, use and dispose is with the tribes.
- **Challenges for business due to loss of forest:** The world is facing two converging environmental crises: **the accelerating destruction of nature, and climate change**, with severe consequences for our economies and societies. Businesses are facing increasing risks due to the connected crises of nature loss and climate change, with over half of global GDP at risk.

Many businesses are directly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and nature loss, with \$44 trillion of economic value generation.

Deforestation: Deforestation is causing global biodiversity loss, with 80% of the world's terrestrial species living in forests. Most deforestation globally is driven by the expansion of large- and small-scale commercial agriculture and tree plantations. Widespread deforestation directly increases business vulnerability to the effects of the climate and nature crises.
- **New avenues for Business from forest conservation and restoration:**
 - **Business Resilience:** Investing in forest conservation and restoration protects businesses against the loss of natural capital and physical effects of climate change, while preparing for shifting consumer and investor preferences. With many governments set to introduce new regulations to address nature loss and climate change, investing in forests offers an opportunity for businesses to stay ahead of these policy shifts.
 - **Business profitability and growth:** Forest conservation and restoration can indirectly increase core business profits, through lower costs of capital and equity and increased customer loyalty associated with sustainability attributes. Investing in forests also directly generates environmental and commercial returns. Example: through the sale and use of sustainable forest products.
 - **B2B businesses** are likely to face demands from other businesses to reduce their emissions and improve the impact of their operations on nature.
 - **Carbon markets** also offer an opportunity for businesses to generate commercial returns through forest conservation and restoration.
 - **Value-based leadership:** Forest conservation and restoration support businesses to become leaders in sustainability, strengthening business reputation among customers, employees and business and ecosystem partners, including the communities in which they operate. **Example**, Nestlé has worked in partnership with its cocoa suppliers to protect and restore the Cavally forest reserve in Côte d'Ivoire and enhance the resilience of local communities

Ways to conserve: There are many ways to conserve the forests on an individual level and societal level. At sub-national, national and international level. Try to various international environmental treaties like REDD and REDD+, national initiatives like CAMPA Funds.

Conclusion: One of the important lessons of forest is realising that all are rightful inheritors of the earth. Living and letting live is the principle to live by. The perpetuity of life on earth depends on us being an intellectually evolved species. It is high time we realise our responsibility to conserve and grow together as fellow living entities.

2. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world

Brainstorm: Let us begin by breaking down the quote. The first question is who is poet or what does it mean to be a poet, poet can be a person who creates poetry or one who possesses special ability of imagination or expression of his emotions and thoughts. The second part is 'unacknowledged legislators' legislators are someone who passes the law and rules the society follow. The legislations can be at a societal level or an individual level. By unacknowledged it might mean they are not recognized or not rewarded.

Introduction:

Here, explain who is a poet. The external measures include having someone's work published, earning an advanced degree in creative writing etc. We live in a world where we value recognition and praise. So, sure they matter. But they don't decide whether someone is a poet or not. Or maybe, to be a poet requires only that you read and write. Thus, might be a narrow definition too. For instance, Vedas spread through generations through oral traditions. So, literally anyone can be a poet, it's the use of language or carefully choose words to express a range of thoughts and emotions to tell epic stories or reveal truths of nature, society, human actions etc.

Define legislation. Legislation can be both internal and external. Internal means setting rules to ourself, For instance, we might follow Gandhi's message of nonviolence and decide not to harm others. It might be social too, influenced from the same message a society can declare killing or harming others as bad or illegal. Unacknowledged can be internal and external too, society not recognizing them or poets expressing their thoughts without any external benefits.

What does a poet express?

French poet Jean Cocteau points out the "The poet doesn't invent he listen". Poets hold a mirror to the real world. For instance, Thiruvalluvar says "A country's jewels are these five: Without epidemic or illness, wealth, farm productivity or crop, happiness and good defence", Here the poets express the major things which a country should focus on.

Poets also focus on virtue signaling, Aristotle points that "Courage is the first virtue that makes all other virtues possible".

They express their desires or thoughts on future of the society or how society should be organized, for instance the veil of ignorance concept of John Rawls, the poets of British Romanticism who emphasized on the importance of nature- "back to the nature" because nature is pure, innocent and beginning of life,

Explain the correlation between expressions of poets and legislation.

No society exists without poets. Even if the act of creating is performed in solitude, poets do not live in a bubble. Whether their poetry is written down or sung, poets play a very important educational role. MPs create laws based on public opinion, but who creates public opinion? -The poet by giving a message in his poetry. He is the self-appointed spokesman of the people.

Eg: The Poetess, Mrs Elizabeth Barrett Browning, wrote the poem The Cry of Children. It had such a tremendous influence on people's minds that Lord Peel's ministry passed legislation to ban the employment of small children in factories under certain conditions.

Also elaborate on a similar quote 'the pen is mightier than the sword'

Dimensions of legislations:

Political transformation: American poet June Jordan says "Poetry is a political act because it involves telling the truth". The expression of poets gives a voice to the truth of the world. For instance, Romantic period in England coincides with the societal transformations of the Industrial Revolution, the rise of liberal movements and the state's counter revolutionary measures, and the voicing of radical ideas—Parliamentary reform, expanded suffrage, abolitionism, atheism—in pamphlets and public demonstrations.

Social transformation: The vachana movement in Karnataka, where poets like Basavanna articulated the vachanas which resonate in relevance even today. Composed of simple words, in just four or five verses, vachanas propounded profound philosophical and reformist ideas. They advocated social justice and equality. "Rich build temples for Shiva; What can I, a poor man, do? My legs are pillars; My body is the temple; My head makes the golden cupola; Oh, Lord of kudala sangama; The standing will perish; The moving will stay on."

Moral transformation: Dharma – The essence of Rmayana. Ramayana is an epic that dwells in detail about the complex relations of truth and dharma -- which may be roughly described as moral propriety. In a way, more than a divine story, it is more in tune with humans and their mental transactions. The epic revolves around Rama, the embodiment of dharma, who faces challenges in behaving as per dharma because of his many roles and circumstances in life.

Economic transformation: poets can institute laws and create new materials for knowledge, determining the role of poets as legislators. Artha shastra the importance of wealth. Kautilya claims that wealth earned through proper means is justified and that accumulation of wealth was a safe method for protecting the people against famines. Therefore, much of the valuable philosophy needed to make the world moral and judicial was found in the minds, and works, of poets.

Why are they unacknowledged:

Poets are 'unacknowledged legislators', because their role in the progression of society will not be publicly recognized. History studies ancient societies mainly through the eyes of the kings or queen who rule during those times. It is through reason but also through imagination that we can identify beauty in the world, and from such a perception or realisation are great civilisations made. Poets, then, are the makers of civilisation itself. The world does not feel that the poets are making laws. They sit in no parliament. The laws made by them are written in no statute book. But they create an atmosphere, a strong public opinion and these do the rest.

The poet does not ask for recognition either, he does not get his mandate from the people; he gives the mandate to them. He does not canvass for their votes at the elections. He gets no votes. By his living ideas, he creates an atmosphere and the atmosphere does the rest.

The Hymns of the Bible have shaped the lives of Christians through the centuries. The Sermon on the Mount gave the law of God. Lord Krishna turned into a poet and his Gita is in poetry. The Gita and the Bible have been a beacon-light to guide the conduct of the untold millions in a way that no earthly law could be obeyed or treated with reverence. The moral values these spread are followed by those who doesn't believe in religion too.

Expand on the quote to include other dimension too. Such as

Not just in legislation, Poets also unacknowledged revolutionaries: give examples from French, American, Russian revolution how this has manifested.

Poets are unacknowledged conscience keepers of society: how they have been the champions of secularism and anti-caste discrimination. Poetry flows out of free thinking, literature which is nature oriented and close to truth, literature is filled with substance and literature that fills the reader with a new ray of hope.

Poets open door to the knowledge and future: A former Chairman of Lalit Kala Akademi, Ashok Vajpeyi "open to truth which sometimes remain closed and which often we are not even aware of". Poetry, according to Vajpeyi, is a kind of door calling out to be opened.

These legislations might not always be correct

Every artistic medium has its limits - you can't smell a film, can't hear a sculpture. These sensations are suggested through other means such as food and movies. Yet, poet must explore this sensation through language only, through symbols on the page. It's only natural that this creates tension, that it pushes language into unfamiliar places. Thus, a solution of the poet may seem feasible on paper than in reality. For instance, A poet named Iqbal gave to the Muslims the idea of Pakistan. Some said that it was a poet's fancy, a flight of imagination. But within ten years, Pakistan was established and the poet's dream had become a reality, with the enthusiastic support of the Muslim masses. The poet had created a state, even though the idea became question with the formation of Bangladesh. Explore the limitations of the Quote

External limitations: is it true all across the world. How about non democratic societies. Does authoritarian governments such as Saudi Arabia , China value poets and free thinkers?

Within democracies, religious intolerance and literacy has affected the freedom of speech and expression.

There is a systematic effort to silence the voice of writers and poets. For instance, recent attack on Salman Rushdie in New York.

Internal limitations: Writers are owners of a powerful and rich legacy called words. Despite possessing such a strong brahmastra if writers keep aloof or remain quiet then we cannot call such writers as legislators of the society. Silence on the part of writers would make way for pseudo writers to have their own say and whatever they say will be believed as gospel truth. In such a situation writers and poets should not remain as dumb spectators but should rise in unison against efforts to silence their voices.

Conclusion:

The laws made by the legislator become outdated and unsuitable; there are risings against the unjust laws and they are repealed. But a poet, like his Nightingale, sings because he must, and the world listens to him because such are the dictates of the heart. The poet is the legislator in the Parliament of Man. They imbibe ideas in the minds of the world and one thing we know about ideas is that they travel.

3. History is a series of victories won by the scientific man over the romantic man.

Brainstorm: Let us begin by breaking the quote. The first part "History is a series of victories" means history is a set of past events. It accounts both victories and defeats. The second part "won by the scientific man over the romantic man" meaning such victories are won by the scientific men who are practical and logical. They are not too idealistic and romantic in understanding a situation or a problem at hand.

Introduction: You may start the essay with an anecdote, poem or a riveting story that illustrates the statement of the essay. On a philosophical level "I think, therefore I am" Descartes's famous quote, where he explains metaphorically that human beings exist because they think. Hence, thinking defines the living of a person. The nature and subject of thinking can make a huge difference in one's life. Scientific, logical thinking based on empirical evidences and a heightened sense of intuition of things can be major contributing factors for a person's victory. And history makes a note of such victories.

Thesis Statement: This essay will throw light on how scientific thinking is different and effective than romantic thinking. Objective analysis of various dimensions of the statement of the essay. Mentioning of a few instances where scientific thinking has brought the victory than the romantic thinking. Ways of achieving the scientific temperament. And finally concluding on a positive note.

Core essence of the essay: History takes note of all the past events. But the future generations will only remember either too victorious or too tragic ones or any course changing events. All these events are a document of what went through behind those victories or defeats. History gives us the facts of a series of choices and the following victory or defeat. This leaves it to our interpretation that the root of a certain choice or a decision was a scientific mindset or a romantic mindset. Scientific mindset sees through the situation as is without any romanticization. Whereas a romantic mindset looks through any situation with a rose-tinted glass. Even the harshest of truths would be mellow to a romantic fellow. Decisions should be taken based on empirical evidences and brutally honest opinions. Such, decisions are well informed and lead to a victory.

Explore the dimensions of the essay:

Thinking is the key: Explain French Philosopher Descartes's quote of "I think, therefore I am." This led to the scientific revolution and the age of enlightenment. Thinking is a quality or a strength of human beings. Thinking is a common quality, but what stands out is the temperament through which we think. The temperament enables a certain line of thinking. According to Descartes thinking should be scientific, empirical and logical.

Victories are scientific temperament driven: Scientific temperament makes a person to collect the empirical evidences and draw a logical conclusion. Estimating a situation with lowest of assumptions and thoroughly seeing through any situation as is, guides one to take an informed decision. Such decisions have high chances to be victorious. Evidences doesn't overestimate one's strength and underestimate others. A transparent analysis aids in winning any situation at hand.

Example: Lord Krishna had estimated the actual strength of Kauravas. Hence he meticulously planned to break his biggest strength Karna from inside by telling him his birth story. Although war was Duryodhana's choice, Krishna steered the course of the war towards Dharma.

Example: Dharmaraya, one of the most honest characters in our mythology had romanticised his principles of truth. That got him and his family into an epic war and massive destruction. Had he timely understood the ill intentions of his cousins to usurp his throne. Such epic wars wouldn't have happened, thousands would have been spared from the misery.

Rightly interpreting the evidence is the master key for any victory: The scientific temperament in one's mind enables them to think objectively. Collecting the perspectives of a situation in various dimensions. Drawing right conclusions from such perspectives are more imperative. A right judgement can draw a line between victory and defeat. The judgements should always be for the larger good of the people.

Example: India while taking a stance on Ukraine's invasion of Russia, it didn't decide on the prevailing feeling in the world. It empirically thought of the Importance of Russia and took a decision to abstain from voting in the UN against Russia.

Romanticising clouds the judgement: A clear and open mind is ready to receive, understand and assimilate the things as is. A romantic mind looks through a rose-tinted glass and forms various assumptions on the outcome. These outcomes can be far from realities and results in epic misjudgements and defeats. Most of the tragedies of our history are driven by such romanticising mindsets.

Example 1: Ratan Rawal Singh of Chittor knew what Allauddin Khilji was capable of, but assumed that Khilji would stick to the principles of war and would fight a righteous war. It ended in a defeat and the jauhar of thousands of ladies.

Example 2: Dharmaraya, one of the most honest characters in our mythology had romanticised his principles of truth. That got him and his family into an epic war and massive destruction. Had he timely understood the ill intentions of his cousins to usurp his throne. Such epic wars wouldn't have happened, thousands would have been spared from the misery.

Example 3: Letting the Trojan Horse into Troy was the biggest mistake of Troy. Romanticising that the Trojan's who were hostile would leave a gift for Troy was an epic misjudgement resulting in the fall of Troy.

Scientific Temperament not always ensures victories: [Counter Argument] A correct estimation doesn't always ensure the victory. There are certain factors that drive a success. A great motivation can move mountains against the odds. Although it is essential to gauge a situation rightly, it can determine the quantum of motivation as the final resort.

Example 1: Vietnam is a tiny country against a giant power the USA. USA had the both money and muscle, yet it ended up losing to a tiny Asian nation is the motivation of Vietnamese People.

Example 2: Ukraine is although with a great damage to its territory it is successfully fighting against the mighty Russia. The motivation of Ukrainian civilians to fight for their country has marked the difference. This would certain go to the pages of history.

Conclusion: History documents each and every event, one person's victory is another person's defeat. Its always advised to learn from the history, because as they say history repeats may be in different forms. Hence to be equipped for the unforeseen one must gauge the choices of the people behind their success and failures. Cultivating a scientific temperament is also documented in our constitution by our forefathers to make the generations to come super victorious.

4. A ship in harbour is safe, but that is not what a ship is for.

Brainstorm: Lets begin by breaking the quote by John A Shedd. The first part "A ship in harbour is safe" meaning a ship anchored well in the harbour is safe and away from the turbulent waves of the sea. Away from the dangers of storms. The second part "that is not what ship is for" meaning ship is built not to be docked at a harbour, it is built to set sail in open oceans.

Introduction: You may start the essay with an anecdote, poem or a riveting story or a quote like "the biggest risk a person can take is to do nothing" by Robert Kiyosaki. Ships run an inherent risk of sinking or wreckage, fearing a wreckage if docked safe. It runs a greater risk of rusting without even using. This ship would still a wreck once it's starts to rust. Fear is a part and parcel of life, it gives a sense of thrill and makes it worth living.

Thesis Statement: This essay will throw light on the risk-taking aspects of life. Objectively analysing the risks and its positive and negative consequences. Few instances of risks and their following success and failures. Finally concluding on a positive note.

Core essence of the essay: Fear is an emotion. Infact it is an essential emotion. We as humans, should learn to manage our emotions and capitalise on that. Risk is at every step on the road to success. Risk management is the core message of this essay. Metaphorically ship is our life, sailing is our living and life at ocean is our life in this world full of dangers.

Explore the dimensions of the essay:

- **Fear is an emotion:** Since, human beings are very driven in life to acquire tangible and intangible things, they have a sense of attachment to their possessions. Hence, it is only natural to be fearful to lose those possessions.

Example: Insurance as an industry entirely leverages on this fearful emotion of people. Fear of not regaining one's health due to timely good healthcare, fear of losing the material possessions.

- **Fear as an inhibition:** Fear when it is not managed well, it becomes a limiting factor to one's success. Mahatma Gandhi has said "the enemy is fear." Fear can inhibit the motivation from within and the cost of lack of motivation is the life itself. It is more costly to compromise on fear than capitalising on it.

Example: Arjuna was overwhelmed by the situation at war. Had he not overcome his fear by Krishna's motivation, Arjuna would not have been hailed as a great warrior.

- **Standing still is a higher threat:** Great opportunities are rare, one has to grab it and start working on it. In moving ahead, there is always an inherent risk of losing all and coming back to the square one. Fearing a risky step and staying put can be more dangerous than moving ahead.
Example: Arunima Sinha after losing both her legs to a train accident, she didn't brood on her life, she got mountaineering training and scaled the Everest. She gained her motivation to live by scaling the highest peak not by brooding over her life in a corner.
- **When in doubt, the safest option is to be sailing:** Sometimes in life it is very essential to go by the flow when one plagued by many doubts to proceed further. In such circumstances, taking life one day at a time is more courageous and sagacious than limiting our life by being dubious. Because as we proceed we keep gathering more strength and information to manage and tackle any problem.
Example: A ship on sail in the open ocean is safer than the one docked in a harbour during tsunami.
- **Change is the only constant:** Our life encounters a change each passing day, it is essential for us to embrace it. Some days we encounter pleasant surprises and some days we encounter shocking truths. We have to embrace both to lead a wholesome life.
- **Fear is an essential element of life [counter argument]:** Sometimes fear is essential in life. Sense of fear will guide us through difficult times. Fear when managed well, is a tool kit for a well lead life.
Its well managed fear has many advantages like:
 - Fear of stringent punishments deter the potential offenders from committing a crime.
 - Fearful of getting hurt and hurting others on road ensures wearing of helmet and riding vehicles at the prescribed speed limit.
 - Fearful of elders ensures respect towards them
- **Ways to manage fear:** Fear can be managed by reading the success stories of others, by talking to a guru who can throw light on the path ahead, by meditating one can look within and this will provide a deeper perspective to look at life as a whole.

Conclusion: Courage is a great virtue, and fear is an equally great emotion when managed well. Fear in us should be managed by the courage in us, only then we can fly high without any inhibitions of our own.

SECTION - B

5. The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining.

Brainstorm: Let us begin by breaking the famous quote by John F Kennedy. The first part "the time to repair" denotes an existing distress. The second part "when the sun is shining" meaning the most opportune moment. Tackling a distress is the most effective when the time is ripe and right.

Introduction: You may start the essay with an anecdote, poem or a riveting story that illustrates the idea clearly that any distress times can be managed effectively when the opportune moment is utilised to its optimum and as a buttress for any future distress. This quote was quoted in the context of American Economic booming and the right time to make investments to reap maximum returns and be prepared for the subsequent economic downturns. Kennedy at the helm of the administration had rightly identified the opportune moment and laid an influence on his

people through this quote.

Thesis Statement: This essay will throw light on the stages of managing a distress. An objective analysis on the various dimensions of the essay. Giving few instances of crisis situation and how it was managed. Finally concluding it on a positive note.

Core essence of the essay: The core message of this statement one should be prepared in advance for the hard times. Here, it is metaphorically said a roof should be fixed when the Sun is bright and shining, not after dark and a rainy season. Things should be taken care of when there is still room for some improvements and its not too late. Seizing of the opportune moment and taking actions to prepare for the future determines one's intelligence and efficiency in managing things.

Explore the dimensions of the essay:

- **Estimating a situation rightly:** The right estimation of a situation is essential. Once the situation is assessed, the effects and consequences can be analysed. The quantum of the consequences and the quantum of the resources should be juxtaposed and analysed to tackle any situation. In a situation inclined more towards the adversity, even the slightest opportunities should be fully utilized to gain the strength to stand against any future adversities.
Example: India's credible minimum deterrence is on the same principle. India has two hostile nuclear neighbours and a history of four wars with them. It is only logical for India to strengthen its weaponry for a future war like situation and only in the interest on protecting itself.
- **Seizing the moment to strengthen:** Once the gravity of a situation is well analysed, its effects and consequences are estimated thoroughly, its time to act upon it to contain the further damages and strengthen for the future. Time cannot be brought back and every second today might be precious to ensure a better future. And "a goal without a plan is just a wish." We might be hoping for a better tomorrow, but if the necessary steps to ensure the better tomorrow was not taken, then we might not be there to see the better tomorrow. It would be too late to re-emerge from the ruins.
Example: India recognised the booming young population and it has formulated its policy in alignment to reap the maximum demographic dividend and to strengthen itself for the future when this younger population grow up to be old and be a burden on the economy.
- **When we miss the bus:** This is metaphorically speaking, when we miss to take actions at the right time, the cost of that opportunity would be costly and grave.
Example: After the first wave of the pandemic, we had a decent understanding of the virus as to how it spreads and the effects on one's body. The necessary precautionary steps were taken by the people resulted in a more graver second wave with numerous deaths due to mismanagement.
- **Right calculation of the actions to be taken:** Just the right estimation of a situation is not enough, right estimation of the solutions is equally important. Some actions can misfire badly and aggravate the existing misery.
Example 1: America didn't have a well charted plan to do in Afghanistan after killing Osama Bin Laden. After containing Taliban, they did not formulate an effective and slow withdrawal from Afghanistan. Such miscalculated moves ended in the Taliban gaining control over Afghanistan. America is back in the square one.
Example 2: China's infamous One Child Policy, although it led to the immediate positive effects of resource management and development, China is facing an unprecedented labour problem and facing a huge loss of business due to this labour crisis.
Example 3: During the Arab Spring, the people of Middle east mentally fiddled by the western powers and arranged a coup against their dictators. Without any set policy for the future establishment, these nations are still reeling under epic migration crisis and an uncertain political environment.

- **Its better late than never [Counter Argument]:** Sometimes actions are needed, if the quantum of actions can compensate for the late actions, still the desired results can be achieved.
Example: During 1950's Jews in Germany had no place to live, but after 75 years they have a country of their own Israel, and excelling in every field right from defence to space technology, education to culture on par with the powerful nations of the world. It is rightly said that "the one who laughs last is the one who laughs long."

Conclusion: As long as there is the world, there will be problems. But these problems once acknowledged, analysed and worked upon, there is always a hope for better and a brighter tomorrow.

6. You cannot step twice in the same river

Brainstorm: Let us begin by questioning why can't we step on the same river twice. What does the quote mean by this? First question would be to ask, 'Is the river same always?', we know that the name of the river is same, but the water and the contents it's takes along isn't the same. Next 'are we the same?' humans evolve, we learn every minute. The quote tells us that 'change' is the universal phenomenon. So when there is change, one should not resist change and should live the present movement and enjoy life.

Introduction

Define the quote. It means that the world constantly changes and that no two situations are exactly the same. It illustrates how even things that seem constant to us are actually undergoing change. When we look at a river, we see a single entity that has always been there and always will, seemingly, be there. Therefore, a river seems to be almost the epitome of something that does not change. But, it really is not possible to say that the river remains the same.

Shed light on change within ourself. For every step we take in the river, we learn the flow of the river, the nature of rocks whether it's slippery. This makes that each step isn't the same. Our experience and learning add up to each step. As Buddha said "Nothing is forever except change"

The essence of changing river.

The river is constantly changing and is, in effect, not the same river. The water one touched previously will be downstream, while one steps in water from up the stream. Something similar can be said for many other things: individuals, communities, countries, planets, universes. Even if change is so slow that we cannot perceive it with our naked eyes—it still exists, always. Each interaction one has in society has implications for the future.

The essence of changing people.

Einstein said, "Problems cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them." It is not possible to repeat past experiences, as time changes all things. You won't get the exact experience twice. You need to live in the present and enjoy each moment.

Evaluate the various dimensions of river and step:

Individual: Edison failed countless times while inventing the incandescent bulb. Though every time he did similar experiments, each are different from others. Each new experiment was a new one with learning from the past. As Edison himself said "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." Thus, each step is a new learning and its different.

Societal: society is similar to a river in that it constantly changes. We don't live in the same society every day. It's changing, even though we call its Indian society our shared values and commitments are changing. For instance, recent floods in Bengaluru have led authorities to take action on encroachments. As a society we are realizing the

importance of storm water drains. Society has been changed by all the things that happen.

Country: We don't live in the same country every day, Geography says that as a result of plate tectonics, the Himalayas continues to rise more than 1cm a year, pushing the Indian plate towards the Eurasian plate. Even though it's not perceptible to the naked eye, There's change.

In the **galaxies of outer space**, where our sun will burn out in a few hundred million years, change is happening. In the **subatomic world**, where particles are colliding with one another and morphing into something else in hundredths of a second, change is happening. Everything is always changing.

Implications of such steps.

whenever you have a change, it comes with an opportunity. The bigger the change, the bigger the opportunity.

Understanding the nature of life: Same actions may not lead to same results circumstances change in ways one cannot detect. This is true in case of diplomacy and international relations, US experience with Korean war in 1951 differ drastically from its intervention in Vietnam in 1967. India's has a difficult path ahead in negotiating and coordinating with Taliban which has taken over Afghanistan, but it's important to understand that Taliban has changed too, Taliban 2.0 is eager for international recognition and sees India as a doorway for such recognition.

Learn at every step: For instance, though the common element was the British and goal was freedom, each freedom movement launched by Gandhi is different from another. Gandhi withdrew non-cooperation movement after Chauri Chaura violence in 1922, but Gandhi advocated for "Do or Die" during Quit India movement in 1942.

Living the moment: Each step in life or the river is unique. We cannot replicate it, so its important to live in present and enjoy every step. As Buddha said "Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present moment."

Being responsible for our actions: By stepping into the river, one puts oneself into its environment, thus changing it for someone else downstream. Thus, our actions should be responsible and benefit the community.. Gandhian Model of Trusteeship: Under this principle surplus wealth needs to be kept in trust for the common good and welfare of others. Tata Trusts holds 60 percent of Tata Group assets that flow back to community projects.

What if we don't recognize change:

Just as every move in a game of chess alters the state of play, every step we take alter the state of our society and surroundings. Change is not problematic and should be included in how we evaluate the forms that our ideas take. We Humans fail to recognize the effects of our steps. Fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas – are by far the largest contributor to global climate change, accounting for over 75 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and nearly 90 per cent of all carbon dioxide emissions. These changes in the climate and associated increase in extreme weather events are among the reasons behind a global rise in hunger and poor nutrition. Over the past decade (2010–2019), weather-related events displaced an estimated 23.1 million people on average each year, leaving many more vulnerable to poverty.

Extra dimensions: Analyse how this statement acts as an order too, by asking us not to step on the same river twice. As Einstein said "The definition of insanity is to repeatedly do the same things and expect a different outcome" Also link the concept with futility of human centric view of the world where we think humans are important and think change world as we wish.

Conclusion

Everything is in the process of becoming something else. Change happens everywhere and with everyone and happens constantly. So too in our lives, change is the one constant that we can be absolutely sure of. We have to live our lives acknowledging this and initiate change on a regular basis, thus putting ourselves in harmony and rhythm with this process.

7. A smile is the chosen vehicle for all ambiguities

Brainstorm: The essay simply means that in situations of doubt and dilemmas the way out is to smile, the challenge here is to elaborate it and explore various dimensions and implications. Is smile a cool minded response to ambiguities or an excuse to avoid challenges? Why should we have such an attitude? What does it lead to? What happens if we don't smile? Can the art of smiling be taught or is it inherent? And many more.

Introduction

Start by writing a story on the importance of having a sense of humour in life. For instance, A reporter once asked Gandhi: "Why do you always choose to travel by third class in a train?" He replied: "Simply, because there is no fourth class as yet".

Explain on what the quote means to you. Among humans, a smile expresses delight, sociability, happiness, joy, or amusement. A smile does not only mean the act of smiling but also having a sense of humour. Ambiguity means the quality of being open to one or more interpretations, in life we are often not sure what to do. We have many options at once or we face difficult situations which might not have one single solution. Vehicle represents our response which helps us travel beyond the ambiguities. As Kalam said smiling is a fantastic thing "Smiling is a fantastic thing. If you smile, your whole day will be smiling."

Explore why we should have such an attitude of smiling or a sense of humour

When we face ambiguous questions: we can use a sense of humour, Michael Faraday discovered that magnetism can make electricity which had a huge technological impact. When the King of England was told about Faraday's discovery, the King asked him of what use it was. Faraday couldn't answer and only said, 'I don't know what use it has, but I am sure that one day you will tax it.' And sure enough, today we do!

When we encounter ambiguous situations: When Angulimala encountered Buddha, Buddha was unshaken. He just stood there smiling. Angulimala tried to chase him, 'Are you not afraid? You know I am Angulimala.' People were terrified, just by hearing his name. And here he sees a man just standing there, embodiment of peace, just smiling. With so much compassion and grace looking at him! Angulimala came in front of Buddha and looked at him and he was stunned! A few minutes and then he melted.

Explaining difficult concepts: Humour through satire is an effective method to explain or question prevailing notions. Vivekananda explained "We see this universe as human beings, and our God is our human explanation of the universe. Suppose a cow was philosophical and had religion, it would have a cow universe, and a cow solution of the problem, and it would not be possible that it should see our God. Suppose cats became philosophers, they would see a cat universe..." What a beautiful way to summarize the philosophical and religious babble of the human race.

Send a message: When Gandhi was invited to have tea with King George V at Buckingham Palace in 1931, a reporter asked: "Mr. Gandhi, do you think you are properly dressed to meet the king?" Gandhi replied: "Do not worry about my clothes. The king has enough clothes on for both of us."

What does smiling lead to?

Self benefits: Psychologists say that smiling can trick your brain into believing you're happy which can then spur actual feelings of happiness. Thus smiling can help us find a way out of difficult situations. What's crazy is that just the physical act of smiling can make a difference in building our immunity. When we smile, the brain sees the muscle [activity] and assumes that humor is happening.

Facing others: "When someone is rude, keep a smile on your face. When you keep your joy, you take away their power" Vivekananda

Beginning of relationships: “Let us always meet each other with a smile, for the smile is the beginning of love.” – Mother Teresa.

Is smile a cool minded response to ambiguities or an excuse to avoid challenges?

Buddha gave up his throne and renounced his position, that was true renunciation; but there cannot be any question of renunciation in the case of a beggar who has nothing to renounce. In the same way is smiling an excuse for people who has nothing to say or those who want to avoid challenges. People facing criminal accusations have different reasons for smiling for their mugshot.

What happens if we don't smile during ambiguous situations?

WE cannot understand ourself and our behaviour, smiling helps us ease ourself and imbibe rational thinking in our thoughts. Humans are emotional beings and act on their emotions. For instance many murders are a crime of passion where perpetrator commits the act against someone because of sudden strong impulse such as anger rather than as a premeditated crime.

We cannot form bonding with others: “If you have only one smile in you, give it to the people you love” Maya Angelou. A smile seems to have a favorable influence upon others and makes one likable and more approachable.

Can the art of smiling be taught or is it inherent?

Art of smiling can always be learned. In the movie “Life is beautiful” a Jewish father uses his sense of humour and imagination to shield his son from the horrors of internment in a Nazi concentration camp. Therefore, children and adults can be taught to use humour as a defense and effective mechanism to ease through pain and sorrow. “Laughter is strong medicine”

The future of smile

Smile provides an answer for global ambiguities. For instance, we know that the consumerism and materialistic growth based economic models are leading to over exploitation and unsustainable growth. Many economists point out to measuring happiness (smile) as a way for measuring human development.

Conclusion

Maya Angelou: “I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” In the same way, more than the situation, we always remember how we responded to a situation. Therefore always respond with a smile, more importantly during all ambiguities.

8. Just because you have a choice, it does not mean that any of them has to be right.

Brainstorm: Let us begin by breaking the famous quote by Norton Juster. The first part is “Just because you have a choice” meaning here there is an acknowledgement that there is a choice for everyone. The second part is “it does not mean that any of them has to be right” meaning the options for choice may not necessarily be always right. Holistically it means incorrect options are as good as having no choice.

Introduction: You may start the essay with an anecdote, poem or a riveting story like a person being caught between a pride of lions and a crocodile is almost certainly dreading his impending doom. This shows that neither the option of going towards a pride of lions nor towards a crocodile would keep him alive. Here, although he had options of going two different ways, none of the options would have kept him alive, such an option is a vain for that person.

Thesis Statement: This essay will throw light on how choices are necessary for the wellbeing, and how meaningful choices can make a difference in one's life. An objective analysis of the choice and the right choice dynamics. Giving instances of meaning full choices and the reality of a dreaded choice. Finally concluding on a positive note.

Core essence of the essay: Having a choice is a human right. Having a choice is the agency. When the given options are no better than the other, the true purpose of giving a choice is lost. These choices should be meaningful to attain

its true purpose.

Explore the dimensions of the essay: Choice can empower a person to understand their needs better. When something is imposed upon, we tend to get used to what is given to us. When there are options placed

- **Choice is empowering:** Choice gives agency to a person. The very act of choosing gives a sense of liberty. That liberty will contribute immensely for the mental wellbeing of a person. Choosing one's own word, action and thought is the true human right. Hence such choices are made fundamental rights by our constitutional fathers. Choice certainly empowers and increases the quality of living.
- **Choosing is intellectual:** Choice can empower a person to understand their needs better. When something is imposed upon, we tend to get used to what is given to us. When there are options placed in front, we tend to think logically with the empirical evidences. We juxtapose the options and gauge the most helpful/useful option. Choosing stimulates a person intellectually to be right almost every time.

Example: Henry Ford the pioneer car manufacturer had once said "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have asked for faster horses." That was the time when people did not know cars can be a means of transport.

Current times, there are numerous car brands, numerous kinds of car. Customers can think on their needs and pick their choice.

- **Choice in various fields:**

Choice and Society: When girls are given a choice at home to drop out from school and either to help the parents out in their jobs or to get married. Here, no of the option is for the betterment of the girl. Either way she will be a school dropout, with no education and future prospects. Such options are both meaningless and horrendous.

Choice and Politics: The option of Nota was brought in our ballot paper to give us this liberty of choice. Through Nota, if all the candidates are not desirable to be elected then, Nota can be selected. This is a great tool of choice with people to show their displeasure.

Choice and economy: In a market, if there is no choice, then it is a monopolistic market. It is up to the whims and fancies of that particular seller to mark up the price, decide on the nature of the product or service. Then, the buyer is at the mercy of the monopolist.

- **Counter Argument: Ineffectiveness of NOTA:**

When given a choice of choosing that none of the above options are worthy, if it is not equipped to make any difference, then the choice becomes meaningless and is no better than other options. It will remain as a mere instrument to show the displeasure of the people and not as an effective tool to bring about a change.

 **Conclusion:** A quality human life begins with recognising the choice as a human right, followed by placing right and meaning options and sustained by protecting the right to choose.