



# ESSAY TEST 3 (FLT)

## CONTENT BUILDER (FODDER POINTS)

### **Instruction to Students**

Answers provided in this booklet exceed the word limit so as to also act as source of goodnotes on the topic.

Candidates must focus on the keywords mentioned in the answers and build answers around them. Elaborate answers are given with the purpose that candidates understand the topic better.

We have also adopted a grey box approach to provide context wherever necessary, which is not to be considered a part of the answer.

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## Section - A

### Topic #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।

**Approach:** The topic is about how the institutions established in a country or society reflects the general ethos and cultural values of that particular society. Start with a captivating opening statement or anecdote that introduces the concept of institutions reflecting cultural values. Explain the relationship between institutions and cultural values, emphasizing how institutions serve as a reflection of the prevailing cultural norms, beliefs, and customs within a society. Provide specific examples, anecdotes, or evidence to illustrate the alignment between the institution and the cultural values it embodies from a range of institutions from different spheres (e.g., education, law, healthcare, religion, politics, arts) to support your argument. Conclude with a thought-provoking statement or a call to action, encouraging further exploration of the topic.

#### **Introduction:**

##### **#1 Quotation based**

- ❑ “Culture is the foundation of the mind, the mind is the foundation of institutions, and institutions are the foundation of a nation.” - **Confucius**
- ❑ “Institutions are the reflection of a society's cultural DNA, perpetuating its values across generations.” - **Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**
- ❑ “Culture shapes institutions, and institutions, in turn, shape the culture of a society. They are interdependent and interconnected.”- **Shirin Ebadi**
- ❑ “The success and effectiveness of institutions depend on their alignment with the cultural values of the society they serve.” - **Aung San Suu Kyi**
- ❑ “Institutions are the visible expressions of a society's deeply held beliefs and principles.” - **Amartya Sen**
- ❑ “The institutions of a society are the embodiment of its cultural heritage and collective consciousness.” - **Fali S. Nariman**
- ❑ “The strength of institutions lies in their ability to reflect and uphold the cultural values of a society.” - **Kofi Annan**
- ❑ “Institutions are the codification of a society's shared values and norms.” - **Douglas North**

##### **#2 Through anecdote/story**

# In Japan, the concept of "**omotenashi**" is deeply ingrained in their cultural values. Omotenashi can be loosely translated as **the spirit of hospitality**, similar to that of "**Atithi Devo Bhavah**" in Indian culture, where the utmost care is taken to anticipate and fulfil the needs of guests or customers. When staying at a Ryokan (guest house), guests are not merely provided with accommodation; they are immersed in a holistic cultural experience that exemplifies the principles of omotenashi. From the moment guests step foot inside the ryokan, they are greeted with warmth and respect. The staffs pay meticulous attention to every detail, ensuring the comfort and satisfaction of each guest. By examining the ryokan as an institution, we can clearly see how it **reflects the cultural value of omotenashi** in Japanese society.

# The majestic **Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus**, formerly known as Victoria Terminus, was designed by the **British architect Frederick William Stevens**. The building aimed to showcase the grandeur and efficiency of British engineering and colonial power. However, as Stevens started the project, he realized the **importance of incorporating local Indian elements into the design to**

**resonate with its cultural values.** Embracing the cultural diversity of Mumbai, he collaborated with Indian artisans, craftsmen, and laborers, valuing their expertise and contributions. The final design of Victoria Terminus reflected **a fusion of Indian and Victorian architectural styles.** After independence, it was rechristened to Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, to honour the Maratha warrior king who epitomized valour, sovereignty, and cultural pride. The story of Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus **highlights how institutions, even when established under external influences, have the capacity to reflect and adapt to the cultural values** of the societies they serve.

### Body Content:

The sociologists and anthropologists **consider the institutions of society to be the reflection of cultural values**, which is an important component of culture itself. The relationship between institutions and cultural values is **complex and intertwined.** Institutions, whether they are educational, legal, religious, political, or otherwise, are established within a society to serve specific functions and address societal needs. These institutions are not isolated entities but are **deeply influenced by the prevailing cultural norms, beliefs, and customs of the society** in which they exist. Cultural values refer to the shared beliefs, principles, and ideals that **shape the behaviour, attitudes, and aspirations of individuals within a society.** These values are often deeply rooted and guide individuals' actions, decisions, and interactions with one another. They encompass various aspects of life, including ethics, social relationships, notions of justice, and perceptions of right and wrong.

In this essay we will look into the various institutions in the field of governance, parliament judiciary, economics, environment, science and technology along with art and architecture. Further discussing the cultural values reflected by those institutions along with impacts of global institutions on the cultural values. We will also be discussing about those institutions which are isolated and independent with the cultural values.

Cultural values have **a profound impact on governance institutions**, which are responsible for making and implementing policies, managing public affairs, and ensuring the well-being of a society. Cultural values shape the design and functioning of democratic governance institutions. In societies that value participation and inclusivity, governance institutions emphasize citizen engagement, transparency, and accountability. Democratic principles, such as free and fair elections, respect for human rights, and the rule of law, reflect the cultural values of equality, freedom, and individual liberties. Leadership styles, decision-making processes, and the qualities valued in leaders are often influenced by cultural norms and ideals. **For example, some cultures may value consensus-building and collective decision-making, while others may emphasize strong, decisive leadership.**

Cultural values play a role in the prevalence of corruption and the emphasis on transparency within governance institutions. Cultural values of honesty and ethical behaviour underpin efforts to establish and strengthen mechanisms for transparency and accountability. Furthermore, as the highest legislative body in the country, the Indian Parliament reflects and embodies the cultural values of the Indian society. The Indian Parliament represents **diverse cultural, linguistic, and regional identities, ensuring that all voices are heard and considered** in the decision-making process. Cultural values of **respectful discourse and debate** shape the proceedings in the Indian Parliament. Cultural norms of mutual respect, despite differences in opinions, encourage **constructive dialogue and the exchange of ideas.** Thus, cultural values have a significant influence on the functioning and dynamics of the Indian Parliament and its governance institutions.

Moreover, cultural values have a significant influence **on judicial institutions and the judgments** they render. The Indian judicial system is deeply influenced by the country's diverse cultural heritage, traditions, and social norms. Judicial institutions in India often deal with cases related to religious practices, beliefs, and disputes. Cultural values of **religious tolerance, respect for diverse faiths, and**

**the principle of secularism** influence judgments in matters concerning religious freedom, communal harmony, and protection of minority rights. The judiciary plays a crucial role in **upholding the constitutional principles of equality, justice, and affirmative action** to promote social equality. Cultural values regarding gender roles, women's rights, and patriarchy influence judicial decisions in cases related to gender discrimination, violence against women, marital rights, and property inheritance. It can essentially be seen in various statutory and legal aspects like **the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, etc.**

The judiciary is tasked with balancing the principles of personal freedom, individual rights, and cultural practices in delivering judgments in family matters. For example of the judgements pronounced by the Supreme Court in **Sabarimala Case, Shah Bano Case etc.** The judiciary in India aims **to address historical inequalities and promote social welfare through its judgments.** Therefore, it can be said that the evolution of cultural values and societal norms continues to shape the Indian judiciary, as it strives to address contemporary challenges while staying true to its cultural foundations.

Also, Cultural values play a significant role in **shaping economic institutions** in India.

Cultural values of giving back to society and practicing philanthropy have a significant impact on economic institutions in India. Many businesses and wealthy individuals in India actively engage in **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** initiatives, contributing to social causes, education, healthcare, and environmental sustainability. Economic institutions in India often support and promote the cultural values deeply rooted in a rich heritage of traditional crafts, Craft clusters, handloom industries and artisanal enterprises and skills **in traditional industries and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**, recognizing their cultural significance and economic potential. Cultural values influence consumer behaviour and preferences in India, which in turn shape economic institutions. The demand for certain products, services, and experiences is driven by cultural values, traditions, and customs. **For example various offers in festival seasons across the nation and according to the demand of the people and their region as well as religion reflect the same.**

Furthermore, cultural values have also greater impact on the **environment protection** and various practices as well as law/rules associated to it. For example, **Mith/Mit or Mitini** practices in Sikkim, which refers to the practice of forging a relationship with a tree, that is, a man or woman regards the tree as his/her brother. Thus, **Sikkim's nature conservation policy** has made an effort to encourage citizens to preserve nature by forming a long lasting bond with trees. Cultural values such as **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** (the world is one family) and **Ahimsa** (non-violence) promote a deep respect for the environment. These values inspire individuals and communities to protect and conserve natural resources, wildlife, and ecosystems.

India's national parks and wildlife sanctuaries often incorporate cultural values into their management strategies. For example, **Kaziranga National Park in Assam, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is not only known for its population of Indian one-horned rhinoceros but also for its cultural significance to the local Assamese people.** The park's management includes traditional knowledge and involvement of local communities to preserve the park's biodiversity and cultural heritage. India has numerous natural sites, forests, rivers, mountains, and lakes that hold deep religious and cultural significance. **These sites are often considered sacred and are protected due to the cultural values associated with them.**

Many festivals celebrate agricultural cycles, water resources, and natural elements. These cultural practices promote sustainable use of resources, water conservation, and the preservation of biodiversity. Also, India's framework for environmental protection, including **the Wildlife Protection**

**Act, Forest Rights Act, National Green Tribunal (NGT) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**, reflect cultural values of nature conservation and sustainability. The NGT, for instance, is mandated to address environmental disputes and ensure access to justice for all stakeholders, including marginalized communities. It recognizes **the cultural value of fairness and strives to provide a platform for communities to voice their concerns and seek redress for environmental harms**.

Additionally, **the institutions of science and technology** are influenced by cultural values in several ways. Institutions of science and technology in India, such as the **Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs), and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) laboratories**, reflect this cultural value by providing rigorous academic programs, research opportunities, and a strong emphasis on intellectual growth. Science and technology institutions in India encourage an entrepreneurial mindset, promoting innovation, and supporting the translation of scientific knowledge into practical solutions.

Initiatives like **start-up incubators, technology transfer offices, and entrepreneurship development programs** within these institutions reflect the cultural value of innovation, risk-taking, and the application of scientific knowledge for economic growth and societal progress. These examples highlight how **cultural values in India shape the institutions of science and technology**, influencing their approach to education, research, collaboration, ethical considerations, and societal impact.

Besides, **temples, mosques, churches, and other religious institutions** in India reflect the cultural values of spirituality, devotion, and religious tolerance. These institutions serve as important cultural and social hubs, promoting religious harmony, community engagement, and moral teachings. Also, institutions like the **National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Mumbai, Kalakshetra Foundation in Chennai, and Sangeet Natak Akademi in New Delhi** promote cultural values by preserving and promoting traditional Indian music, dance, theatre, and other performing arts forms. Further, Museums, such as the **National Museum in New Delhi, Indian Museum in Kolkata, and Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad**, showcase the cultural values of preserving and promoting India's rich history, art, and heritage. These institutions house collections of artifacts, archaeological finds, and artworks, providing insights into the diverse cultural traditions and historical legacies of India. These examples demonstrate **the diverse range of institutions in India that reflect cultural values and contribute to various aspects of society**, including spirituality, arts, education, heritage preservation, community development, and environmental sustainability.

Also, in the recent times, **influence of global cultural values on various institutions** can also be observed. For instance, issues like **gender equality, racial justice, LGBTQ+ rights, and environmental sustainability** have gained international attention. Institutions are under pressure to address these concerns, leading to policy reforms, organizational changes, and increased accountability. Thus, these examples illustrate how **global culture, facilitated by technological advancements and increased interconnectedness, influences institutions in multiple domains** and institutions are adapting to global trends, integrating global cultural values, to stay relevant and address the needs and aspirations of a globalized world.

Along with all these, **the institution of marriage** is deeply influenced by cultural factors and varies significantly across different societies. Cultural values, traditions, and norms shape the understanding, practices, and expectations surrounding marriage. **For example, some cultures prioritize procreation, lineage, and the preservation of family ties through marriage**. Others emphasize companionship, love, and emotional fulfilment as the primary purposes of marriage. Cultural attitudes towards marital stability and divorce differ across societies. Some cultures place a strong emphasis on the sanctity and permanence of marriage, valuing commitment and endurance in the face of challenges. In contrast, other cultures may have more flexible attitudes towards divorce,

acknowledging individual happiness and personal accomplishment as important factors. However, **cultural influences on marriage are dynamic and subject to change over time.** With globalization, cultural exchange, and evolving social norms, the institution of marriage continues to adapt and evolve, reflecting a blend of cultural traditions and contemporary influences.

However, while institutions in India often reflect cultural values, there **are instances where certain institutions may not align with or fully reflect these values.** For instance, India's caste system, though deeply ingrained in the country's social fabric, is widely criticized for perpetuating social inequalities and discrimination. **Some caste-based organizations,** which prioritize caste-based identity and interests over broader societal values of equality and inclusivity, **may not reflect the cultural values of social justice and equality.** Also, commercial and corporate institutions in India, driven primarily by profit-making motives, may not always align with cultural values related to sustainability, social responsibility, or ethical conduct. Some companies have faced criticism for environmental degradation, labour exploitation, or disregard for local communities' welfare, which contradicts cultural values of responsible business practices and social well-being.

### Conclusion:

Therefore, it is evident that institutions indeed reflect the cultural values of the societies in which they are established. **Cultural values serve as the foundation upon which institutions are built, shaping their norms, practices, and decision-making processes.** Whether it is educational institutions, governance institutions, judicial institutions, or economic institutions, the influence of cultural values is pervasive. They **evolve and adapt to changing societal values, technological advancements, and global influences.** However, India's cultural landscape is diverse, and **different institutions may align with cultural values to varying degrees, while there are institutions which completely deviate from the cultural values.**

The existence of such institutions highlights the complexities and challenges within Indian society and the ongoing **need for promoting cultural values of equality, inclusivity, sustainability, and social justice.** Thus, recognizing the symbiotic relationship between institutions and cultural values is essential for fostering harmonious and inclusive societies. It enables the **alignment of institutional practices with societal expectations,** leading to greater legitimacy, effectiveness, and public trust in institutions. Additionally, understanding the influence of cultural values on institutions **allows for informed decision-making, policy formulation, and institutional reforms** that respond to the evolving needs and aspirations of the society.

## Topic #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।

**Approach:** The main focus of the essay is to write about having a purpose in life and its importance. Introduction can be about explaining the importance of the purpose in life and how it influences every aspect of our life. Write about how historical journey of human civilization has been driven by different purposes. Cover various dimensions like society, culture, environment, politics etc. while explaining the importance of having a purpose in life. Conclude with the idea that it is through the pursuit of our 'why' that we discover our true potential and unlock the ability to overcome life's most daunting challenges.

### Introduction:

#### #1 Quotation based

- ☑ "The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why." - **Mark Twain**
- ☑ "The greatest tragedy in life is not death, but a life without purpose." - **Rick Warren**
- ☑ "Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do." - **Steve Jobs**
- ☑ "The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away." - **Pablo Picasso**
- ☑ "Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive." - **Howard Thurman**
- ☑ "If you can't figure out your purpose, figure out your passion. For your passion will lead you right into your purpose." - **T.D.Jakes**
- ☑ "The mystery of human existence lies not in just staying alive, but in finding something to live for." **Fyodor Dostoyevsky**

#### #2 Through Anecdote or story

**# Helen Keller's** remarkable journey from a world of darkness and silence to a life of purpose and accomplishment is a testament to the transformative power of having a sense of purpose. After losing her sight and hearing at a young age, Keller faced enormous challenges in communication and connection with others. However, with the help of her dedicated teacher, Anne Sullivan, Keller learned to communicate using tactile sign language. This breakthrough ignited her intellectual curiosity and desire to make a difference in the world. **Keller's unwavering sense of purpose** became the driving force behind her incredible achievements. Despite her disabilities, Keller became an accomplished writer, political activist, and lecturer. She fought for the rights of the disabled and advocated for various social causes, leaving a lasting impact on society. Her purpose-driven life served as an inspiration to countless individuals, proving that determination and a clear sense of purpose can overcome even the most profound obstacles. Keller found a 'Why' of her life to overcome life's difficulties enabling her to transcend her limitations and become a symbol of hope and resilience.

**# Viktor Frankl, an Austrian psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor**, discovered a profound truth amidst the atrocities of the concentration camps. He observed while living amongst the holocaust survivors found out that individuals who possessed a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives were more likely to withstand the unimaginable suffering they faced. This highlights the

transformative power of having a "why" to live for, in life. They remind us that by **finding our "why"**, we can navigate and endure the most arduous trials and find resilience in even the darkest of times. Frankl's personal experience became the foundation for his ground-breaking concept of **logotherapy**, which emphasizes the significance of finding meaning in life as a driving force for resilience. In his influential book '**Man's Search for Meaning**', Frankl emphasized that when individuals can find purpose in their suffering, it becomes bearable. He witnessed first-hand how those who held onto a sense of meaning, whether through their relationships, future aspirations, or dedication to a cause, were able to endure even the direst circumstances. Frankl's story stands as a remarkable testament to the human spirit and its capacity to find strength and hope in the face of immense adversity. It serves as a powerful reminder that having a clear sense of purpose can provide individuals with the inner fortitude needed to overcome the most challenging and traumatic experiences. Frankl generated a 'why' to live and hence bore any 'how' through life.

### Body Content:

Throughout the history of human civilization, having a **sense of purpose** has played a crucial role in shaping **societies and individuals**. Since the dawn of time, humans have sought meaning and purpose in their existence, leading to significant developments and achievements. From the earliest civilizations, humans had the purpose of survival and ensuring the well-being of their communities. This drove the **development of agriculture**, the formation of **settlements**, and the establishment of **societal structures** to protect and support one another. The development of agriculture during the **Neolithic Revolution** was driven by the purpose of ensuring a stable food supply and improving the living conditions. The construction of irrigation systems in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt was driven by the purpose of maximizing agricultural productivity and support growing populations.

Purpose has been central to the **development of cultures and belief systems**. Throughout **history**, **religious and spiritual practices** have provided people with a sense of purpose, guiding their **moral values, rituals, and social structures**. The purpose-driven construction of monumental structures like the Great Pyramids of Egypt or ancient temples in various civilizations, served religious and spiritual purposes as well as asserting cultural identity. The establishment of religious institutions, such as the Vatican or Mecca etc. provided guidance and moral values, fostering a sense of purpose and unity among believers.

The **pursuit of knowledge and understanding the natural world** has been driven by the purpose of uncovering truths, solving problems, and improving human lives. **Scientific and technological progress, from ancient civilizations to the modern era**, has been fueled by the purpose of advancing society and enhancing human capabilities. The purpose-driven construction of monumental structures like the **Great Pyramids of Egypt** or ancient temples in various civilizations served religious and spiritual purposes as well as assertion of cultural identity.

Human civilizations have often been motivated by the purpose of exploration, discovery, and expansion. From ancient explorers and conquistadors to modern space exploration, the pursuit of new frontiers has driven societies to push boundaries and expand their knowledge and influence. Explorers like **Christopher Columbus and Vasco da Gama** were purpose driven while seeking new trade routes. The purposeful space exploration missions, such as the **Apollo program**, were driven by the desire to expand human knowledge while they pushed scientific boundaries and reached new frontiers.

Throughout history, purpose has been a driving force behind social and political movements aimed at creating change, justice, and equality. Movements such as civil rights, **feminism, and environmental activism** have been fueled by a sense of purpose to bring about a better society. The **Indian Independence Movement, led by Mahatma Gandhi and other prominent figures**, was driven by the

purpose of liberating India from British colonial rule and achieving self-governance. The movement encompassed various methods, including nonviolent resistance, civil disobedience, and mass mobilization. The **Dalit Rights Movement**, also known as the movement for the rights of the "untouchables" or Scheduled Castes, emerged to challenge caste-based discrimination and fight for social equality. Leaders like **B.R. Ambedkar** advocated for the rights and empowerment of Dalits, resulting in significant social and political reforms.

Having a purpose has given individuals and societies a sense of direction, meaning, and motivation. It has spurred progress, innovation, and the pursuit of a better future. While the **specific purposes may vary across cultures and individuals**, the fundamental human need for a purpose has been a driving force in shaping human civilization since its earliest days. Having a strong sense of purpose or a meaningful reason to live can give individuals the strength and resilience to endure difficult circumstances. This purpose can vary from person to person and may include personal goals, values, relationships, passions, or a sense of contributing to something larger than oneself.

When individuals have a clear reason to live, they become better equipped to handle and persevere through challenging situations. It implies that a strong sense of purpose can provide the necessary motivation and inner strength to overcome obstacles, adversity, and suffering. When individuals have a deep understanding of **why they exist and what they want to achieve or contribute**, they are more likely to find meaning and fulfillment, even in the face of adversity.

On the other hand having a **wrong or misguided purpose** can indeed be dangerous, as it can lead to negative outcomes and harmful consequences. Certain extremist groups may adopt a purpose-driven ideology that promotes violence, hatred, and the destruction of others. The rise of **extremist groups like ISIS** (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) exemplifies how a **distorted purpose** driven by religious fanaticism can lead to widespread violence, terrorism, and the destabilization of entire regions.

Some leaders or governments with misguided purposes may prioritize their own power and control over the well-being and freedom of their citizens. This can result in oppressive regimes that suppress human rights, restrict freedom of speech, and lead to the suffering of the population. The Holocaust during **World War II** stands as a chilling example of how a distorted purpose based **on anti-Semitism** led to the systematic persecution, dehumanization, and genocide of millions of Jewish people.

In the pursuit of scientific and technological advancements, a wrong purpose can result in unethical practices. For instance, if the purpose of a scientific study is solely focused on achieving a desired outcome without considering potential negative consequences or ethical implications, it can lead to harmful outcomes such as human rights abuses or environmental damage. **He Jiankui** was a Chinese scientist and researcher who gained international attention in 2018 for claiming to have created the world's first genetically modified babies using **CRISPR-Cas9 gene-editing technology**. He conducted the controversial experiment in secrecy and without proper ethical oversight, resulting in widespread condemnation from the scientific community and ethical concerns about the long-term implications of his actions. His work drew significant criticism for its ethical violations and lack of transparency. Following the global backlash, *He Jiankui* faced professional repercussions and legal consequences in China. *He Jiankui's* misguided purpose was driven by a desire for fame, recognition, and possibly a **misplaced sense of "improving" the human race**.

In the context of the future of humanity, having a wrong or misguided purpose can have far-reaching and profound implications. As we navigate **the complexities of an interconnected and rapidly evolving** world, it becomes crucial to be aware of the potential dangers that arise from misguided purposes. With the advancement of technology, the future holds immense potential for innovation and progress. However, if the purpose behind technological development is solely driven by profit,

power, or control, without considering ethical implications and the well-being of humanity, it can lead to detrimental outcomes such as misuse of **artificial intelligence, surveillance technologies, or genetic engineering**, which could threaten **privacy, individual autonomy, and the fabric of society**.

As we strive for a more equitable future, a wrong purpose rooted in self-interest, discrimination, or disregard for the well-being of marginalized communities can exacerbate social divisions and widen inequality gaps. The challenges faced by humanity, such as climate change, global pandemics, and resource scarcity, require international collaboration and collective action. If the purpose which is driving nations and institutions is primarily centered on and around **nationalism, self-preservation, or power struggles**, it can impede effective cooperation and hinder progress in addressing these global issues.

### Conclusion:

To shape a positive future for humanity, it is crucial to **foster a collective purpose** that prioritizes sustainable development, social justice, global cooperation, and the well-being of both current and future generations. This necessitates aligning our purposes **with principles of empathy, ethics, and long-term thinking**, ensuring that our actions and endeavors contribute to a prosperous and harmonious future for all of humanity. The future of humanity lies in finding a meaningful purpose, guided by a collective vision that inspires us to reach new heights and overcome challenges together.

Sustainable development must underpin our purpose-driven pursuits. By prioritizing environmental stewardship, responsible resource management, and ethical technological advancement, we can ensure the well-being of future generations. Creating a purposeful future also demands inclusivity and equity. By embracing diversity, promoting social justice, and equalizing opportunities, we can forge a more just and harmonious society.

By embracing a positive perspective, being mindful of potential dangers and working collectively, we can shape a purposeful future that upholds human dignity, fosters well-being, and preserves the planet for generations to come. Having a meaningful purpose gives us the strength to overcome any challenges we may encounter along the way. Let us hold onto our purpose, navigate wisely, and forge a better future for all. **Finding purpose in life is the key that unlocks the door to fulfillment, resilience, and the profound impact we can make on the world around us. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said,**

***“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.”***

## Topic #3 : The power of perception shapes our understanding of reality.

अनुभूति की शक्ति वास्तविकता की हमारी समझ को आकार देती है।

**Approach:** The essay can begin with defining perception and its significance in shaping our worldview. Explain why perception is crucial in interpreting and making sense of our surroundings. Further essay can be explored as to how perception forms our opinions, biases, and prejudices. Negative instances can be illustrated where flawed perception distorts our understanding of reality.

To strengthen the argument, include quotes from renowned thinkers, philosophers, or scholars who have addressed the power of perception in shaping reality. In conclusion, reiterate the central theme and highlight the significance of critical thinking and self-awareness in navigating the complexities of perception and reality.

### Introduction:

#### #1 Quotation based

- ☑ "Perception is the key to unlock the doors of reality." - **Plato**
- ☑ "We see the world not as it is, but as we are." - **Talmudic Saying**
- ☑ "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world." - **Ludwig Wittgenstein**
- ☑ "Perception is reality; what is perceived is believed." - **Thomas Hobbes**
- ☑ "There is no such thing as an objective reality, only interpretations." - **Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche**
- ☑ "What we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning." - **Werner Heisenberg**
- ☑ "The reality we perceive is the result of a dynamic interaction between our minds and the external world." - **George Berkeley**
- ☑ "To know the world, we must first understand how we perceive it." - **Immanuel Kant**
- ☑ "Our senses deceive us; they show us appearances, not reality." - **Rene Descartes**
- ☑ "Reality is a construct of the mind; perception is the architect." - **David Hume**

#### #2 Through Anecdote or story

# Once upon a time, there were two friends named **Jake and Emily** who loved exploring new places together. One day, they decided to visit a nearby forest rumored to be haunted. As they entered the forest, Jake became conscious of his fear of that forest. Every rustle of leaves and crack of branches sounded like ominous footsteps to him. He saw eerie shadows lurking behind trees and felt a chilling presence in the air. Jake's fear grew stronger with each step, and he couldn't wait to leave the forest. On the other hand, Emily perceived the forest differently. She saw the same rustling leaves as the playful dance of the wind and the crackling branches as the forest's lively chatter. Instead of shadows, she noticed the interplay of sunlight filtering through the leaves, creating a beautiful mosaic on the ground. Emily felt a sense of serenity and awe in the forest, and she wished to explore further. When Jake and Emily met outside the forest, they couldn't believe how differently they had experienced the same place. **Jake's perception of the forest as a haunted, fearful place shaped his understanding of reality. Emily's perception of it as a peaceful, enchanting environment shaped hers.** Their contrasting perceptions highlighted how the **power of perception can shape our understanding of reality**, making it a subjective experience influenced by our thoughts, beliefs, and emotions.

# The book 'Perception and Misperception in International Politics' by **Robert Jervis** is an application of **cognitive psychology on political decision-making** through historical examples and patterns. The premise of the book lies in Jervis' straightforward observation that "**the broadest**

**justification** for looking at **how leaders perceive**, judge and choose is that **international politics depends on national actions**, even if the international results are not the simple sum of how each country behaves” The book has an overarching focus on two pillars: **first, the process of perception, for example how decision-makers learn from history and second, the common forms of misperception, such as overestimating one’s influence on other decision-makers**. In a contemporary application of Jervis's ideas, some argue that **Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990** in part because he misread the **signals of American leaders** with regard to the **independence of Kuwait**. Also, leaders of the United States and Iraq in the run-up to the most recent Gulf War might have been operating under cognitive biases that made them value certain kinds of information more than others, whether **or not the information was true**. Jervis proved that, **once a leader believed something, that perception would influence the way the leader perceived all other relevant information**.

### Body Content:

**Perception**, the process through which **we interpret and make sense of the world** around us, is a fundamental aspect of human experience. It shapes our understanding of reality, influencing the way we perceive and interact with others, the choices we make, and the opinions we form. The power of perception lies in its ability to construct our version of reality, often without us realizing it.

#### What is perception, and why does it hold such sway over our understanding

**of reality?** Perception can be understood as the mental process by which we interpret sensory information and construct our subjective experiences of the world. It encompasses not only our five senses but also our cognitive processes, memories, and personal beliefs. Our perceptions are deeply ingrained and automatic, shaping our thoughts and actions in ways that are often invisible to us. As philosopher **Friedrich Nietzsche** once wrote, **“We have art to save ourselves from the truth”** – suggesting that perception can provide us with comforting illusions that shield us from harsh realities.

Negative examples vividly illustrate how incorrect or distorted perceptions can lead to **misinterpretations of reality**. Consider a **case where two people witness a heated argument**. One observer, who perceives the situation through the lens of their own negative experiences, may interpret it as a confrontation or even violence, while another, who approaches the scene with a more positive mindset, might see it as a passionate debate. These differing perceptions can result in contrasting judgments and responses, **highlighting how the power of perception can color our understanding of reality and shape our subsequent actions**.

**American sociologist Andrew Cherlin** noted that a feeling of **relative deprivation** is what shaped support for ex-President of USA Donald Trump. Lower class whites acutely feel the **loss of privilege** their parents enjoyed in a ‘bygone era’ where black-white differences were large and being white brought greater rewards while the African Americans were shut out of good jobs. With declining premium of whiteness, these same individuals feel beleaguered and supported the Republican presidential candidate who capitalized on anti-immigrant and anti-black feelings.

Perception acts as a powerful tool in the formation of our opinions, biases, and prejudices. Our individual experiences, cultural backgrounds, and social environments all contribute to the way we perceive the world. As **neuroscientist David Eagleman** observed, **“Every brain is different, and the differences between our brains influence how we perceive the world.”** Our perceptions are subjective and inherently biased, influenced by a multitude of factors. For example, **the media** plays a **significant role** in shaping public opinion by selectively presenting information that aligns with specific

narratives or ideologies. This **manipulation** of perception can lead to the formation of biased beliefs, influencing our understanding of reality and potentially **perpetuating stereotypes or misinformation**.

Media and social media play a crucial role in shaping public perception. The media's selection and presentation of news influence **public opinion** by framing issues and events in specific ways. **Social media platforms** further amplify the impact of perception acting as **echo chambers**, as algorithms personalize content based on user preferences, reinforcing existing beliefs and prejudices. This narrowing of perspectives can limit exposure to diverse viewpoints, leading to a distorted understanding of reality.

**One area where perception's impact is particularly noteworthy is in the realm of data and information.** In the digital age, we are inundated with vast amounts of information, and how we perceive and interpret this data can profoundly shape our understanding of the world. As American statistician **W. Edwards Deming** has said, *"In God we trust; all others must bring data."* **The power of data lies in its perceived objectivity and authority**, often lending credibility to our beliefs and opinions. However, the interpretation of data is subjective and can be manipulated to support various arguments or perspectives. **Confirmation bias**, the tendency to favor information that confirms our preexisting beliefs, can lead to the selective perception and interpretation of data, reinforcing our existing opinions and limiting our ability to consider alternative viewpoints.

Perception also plays a pivotal role in **social interactions**, as it influences how we perceive and understand others. Our initial impressions of individuals are often formed within seconds, based on subtle cues such as **body language, tone of voice, or appearance**. These snap judgments can have significant consequences, as they shape our attitudes and behaviors towards others. As **novelist Harper Lee** has written *"You can never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."* Recognizing the power of perception in interpersonal relationships can be helpful in developing compassion, empathy, understanding, and respect for others, while also challenging our own biases as well as prejudices.

**However, perception is not the sole determinant of reality**, as there are objective facts and truths that exist independently of individual interpretations. While this is true to some extent, it is crucial to acknowledge that our perceptions filter and shape the way we experience and understand these objective realities. As psychologist William James once stated, *"The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another."* Our interpretations and reactions to reality are influenced by our perceptions, and understanding this relationship empowers us to question and challenge our own biases, leading to a more nuanced and accurate understanding of the world.

As individuals, we perceive the world through our senses, which include sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. However, these perceptions are not infallible and can be influenced by various factors such as personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and societal influences. Our **interpretations of reality are subjective** and can be biased due to these factors. We often develop cognitive biases, which are inherent tendencies to think or perceive in certain ways that may deviate from rational or objective judgement. These biases can affect how we understand and interpret information, events, and interactions with others.

## Conclusion:

The power of perception in shaping our understanding of reality is undeniable. Perception acts as a filter through which we interpret the world, influencing our thoughts, emotions, and actions. However, it is essential to recognize the limitations and potential pitfalls of perception, as it can be distorted, biased, and manipulated. As the writer Anaïs Nin aptly noted, *"We don't see things as they are; we see them as we are."*

By critically examining our perceptions, seeking alternative viewpoints or being aware, and being open to new experiences, we can expand our understanding of reality and foster a more inclusive and empathetic society. By acknowledging the power of perception and actively engaging in self-reflection and introspection, we can begin to dismantle the barriers created by our limited perspectives, leading to a more nuanced and compassionate understanding of ourselves and the world around us. As **American philosopher and psychologist William James** wisely said,

***"The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind."***



## Topic #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।

**Approach:** The topic is philosophical in nature which demands interpretation of the terms- tree, roots, heaven and hell. Hell can be associated with misery, pain, hardships, sacrifice and heaven as success, fame, glory. The connection between period of adversity and euphoria of success is the crux of the topic. Substantiate the points with people's example and conclude on the positive note of working hard and not giving up.

### Introduction:

#### #1 Quotation based

- ❑ Never throughout history has a man who lived a life of ease left a name worth remembering. — **Theodore Roosevelt**
- ❑ Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle. – **Napoleon Hill**
- ❑ Strength does not come from winning. Your struggles develop your strengths. When you go through hardships and decide not to surrender, that is strength. - **Arnold Schwarzenegger**
- ❑ Don't feel entitled to anything you didn't sweat and struggle for. -**Marian Wright Edelman**
- ❑ Long live the rose that grew from concrete when no one else even cared. Proving nature's laws wrong, it learned to walk without having feet. — **Tupac Shakur**
- ❑ If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome. — **Anne Bradstreet**

#### #2 Through Anecdote or story

# On **6 February 1958, British European Airways flight 609** crashed while taking off from Munich airport. On board was the **Manchester United team**, along with supporters and journalists, returning from a match in Europe. Of the 44 on board, 23 sadly passed away, including 8 Manchester United players and 3 members of staff. Along with those who were lost, players Johnny Berry and Jackie Blanchflower were severely injured and never played football again. This tragedy hit the team immensely hard and there were rumours the club would have to fold. Despite a lack of players, many of whom suffered from PTSD, the club managed to complete the 1957-58 season. After the crash the team only won 1 league match, but during that summer the team were able to begin the rebuilding process. That season the team played with purpose, crash survivor Bobby Charlton finishing as top scorer on 29 league goals. Despite the immense challenges they faced, the team were locked in a title challenge with Wolverhampton Wanderers, ultimately finishing in second place. Over the coming years the 'Busby Babes', including the likes of George Best and Denis Law, continued to progress, culminating in European Cup success in 1968. This highlights the fact that with adversities comes opportunities to grow develop and progress.

# **Charlie Chaplin**, the king of comedy, underwent great struggles in the initial stages of his career due to acute poverty and lack of parental support. His father was a severe alcoholic and his mother suffered from mental illness which made Charlie enter the job market at the young age of 7. With no money or connections, he rose himself from rags to riches. He developed and polished his art while earning a living. His hardships and troubles is what shaped him as a comic artist. He understood people's need to laugh in the life which could be daunting at times. His journey towards success is inspiration to many. To grow to heaven, our challenges puts us through hell but one can emerge victorious in life just like Charlie Chaplin.

## Body Content:

As we all know, **the lotus, the most beautiful flower grows only in the mud**; the beautiful destinations are often accessible through difficult roads; similarly, the tree that would grow to heaven has its roots in hell. The above statements highlight the fact that struggle is an unavoidable part of success. Nothing ever comes easy when we try to build our dreams. Difficulties and hardship are the constant companions of someone trying to achieve something great. Similar to a tree, the **roots of a person are unseen. They consist of our beliefs, experiences, environment**, etc., but what really **defines a person is their trials, adversities and tribulations**. Hell can be interpreted as the misery, hardships, troubles one has to go through or the sacrifices one makes in order to achieve heaven, which can be decoded as **dreams, desires, glory, fame, wealth, happiness**.

Now, one might wonder what is it about hell that can lead us to heaven? Why roots in hell are being glorified? Well! The answer is pretty simple. Lessons learned from hardships often reveal limitations, patterns, beliefs, and skills we didn't see or appreciate before. This shift, which increases **self-awareness**, is powerful. We have the chance to make new choices based on what matters; how we act, think, and feel; and what we can and can't do. Apart from this, hardship develops humility. It's never easy to confront the truth that we aren't perfect, invincible, or immune to difficult or even terrible things. But going through hardships can open our eyes to the struggles of others. Receiving support and help from others may motivate us to give support more readily. Our sense of **compassion** can grow.

**Steve Jobs** was forced to resign from the very company he began. It took him 12 years to join the company again. But he didn't let getting fired from Apple define him for the rest of his life in a *bad way*. He used his time away to **introspect, innovate, re-design and search for superior products**. Along with this, he worked on his interpersonal skills. And the result is he came back better than ever. In one of his interviews, he said- **"Getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me."** The hell created because of his removal from the company shaped his path to become one of the most successful and wealthy man of the world.

There were people who were deprived of the experiences of growing their roots in hell and achieved heaven. Historically speaking, **Louis XVI** of French Revolution, the Mughal ruler **Muhammad Shah 'Rangeela'** were ineffective, pleasure-seeking emperors lacking in decisiveness and authority. Born with a silver spoon, their heavens were offered to them in inheritance which didn't gave them a chance to strengthen their roots, develop traits like patience, empathy eventually making them catalysts for the decline of their empires.

One of the **Buddha's** four noble truth is all beings experience **pain and misery (dukkha)** during their lifetime. It is inevitable truth. But how we deal with that pain and misery decides our course of life. **Osho** said that greater awareness of miseries makes them smaller and meaningless. Adversities can be dealt by changing the focus on solutions rather than problems. One needs to trust the process and have faith in themselves. **Skill enhancement, self-discipline, hard work, mindfulness** and not giving up can help a dream becoming reality. Nothing is permanent in this wicked world, not even our troubles.

**Abraham Lincoln** is one of the greatest examples of persistence on grounds of his failures Born into poverty, Lincoln was faced with defeat throughout his life. He lost eight elections, twice failed in business and suffered a nervous breakdown. But he didn't quit, he kept moving forward. **Tim S. Grover once said- "If you think the cost of winning is high, just wait until you get the bill for regret. And that bill is generational."**

Exploring the roots of world history, Europe's journey towards **enlightenment** is perfect example of rising to heaven with roots in hell. The increased authority of church and rampant corruption during medieval times sowed the seeds for reforms, rational thinking and skepticism. The society faced

turbulence when phenomenon like **renaissance, scientific revolution, commercial revolution** happened but with this came the heaven of modernity, liberty, democracy and equality.

Another incident that comes to mind is **India's journey to self-sufficiency in food production**. We had **ship-to-mouth economy** right after independence, we relied heavily on imports to meet our food requirements. The food crisis can be understood by the fact that when **India was at war with Pakistan in 1965**, Prime Minister **Lal Bahadur Shastri** asked Indians to miss a meal on Mondays. The wars, famine and irregular external food aids worsened the crisis. The solution to our crisis was given by **Green Revolution**, so much so, that we never had to beg for food again. Green Revolution started during the time of the Shastri when we realized that food-aids may cost us our hard-earned sovereignty. It was in that 'hell' that we embarked upon the journey to self-sufficiency.

Indian institutes like **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) or Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** had their fair share of experience with failures. In order to develop cutting-edge technology, they need to take risks which not always go their way. They experience failed launches, delayed projects, crunch in manpower and resources but their success rates speak for themselves. **The west even mocked us for our efforts when The New York Times newspaper published a cartoon on India's Mars Mission** where it showed a farmer with a cow knocking at the door of a room marked '**Elite Space Club**' where two men sit reading a newspaper on India's feat. **DRDO's** achievements include nuclear triad, indigenous weapons like Akash missile, Dhanush (howitzer) etc. and **ISRO** has feathers of GSLV, Mangalyaan, ASAT missions in its hat.

Our **resilience** was also witnessed at the time when India tested **nuclear weapons** or we were denied **cryogenic engines**. We put our best minds to work to develop indigenous technology. So, if history is any indication, we passed with flying colors whenever we were cornered, isolated or denied something and made to pass through Hell. India's ambitious plan to become a **developed country by 2047** needs high income, higher exports and large-scale technological advancements. Our health policies, our educational initiatives are also designed to strengthen our roots. A strong primary healthcare system has capability to build a strong tertiary sector and a productive workforce will eventually lessens the burden on health resources. Similarly, emphasizing on foundational literacy, improvement in elementary and primary education may make a better skilled workforce with improved quality of life.

**Stoicism**, the **Hellenistic school of philosophy**, says that just as nature takes every obstacle, every impediment, and works around it—turns it to its purposes, incorporates it into itself—so, too, a rational being can turn each setback into raw material and use it to achieve its goal.

The traits like **integrity, patience, perseverance, self-awareness, goal-orientation, empathy, gratitude, self-discipline** are developed or strengthened with our experiences with failure, sufferings or loss. Every hell can lead to heaven, if we keep our roots strong and continue to blossom. One needs to remember that '**we are not buried, we are planted**'.

### Conclusion:

On the long voyage of life, there are times when the **sun shines with the warmth and brightness** of a spring day. There are other times, like bitter winter nights, when we must battle the freezing cold. Periods of hardship and failure, we might say, are the winter nights of life. However, we learn more from our failures than from our successes. Not only do we find out what doesn't work so that we can adjust our future attempts, we learn about ourselves in the process and gain a bit of empathy towards others that might be struggling as well. The **journey from hell to heaven requires patience, perseverance and practice**. **Muhammad Ali**, an American professional boxer, once said that—**"I hated every minute of training, but I said, 'Don't quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion.'" His heaven of success is rooted in his hell of practice.**

## Section – B

**Topic #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।

**Approach:** The topic aims to explore the extent of impact of experience and human imagination. It deals with the importance of learning and accumulating knowledge with constant efforts and experiences to shape our world and foster development. The main argument should be to explore the various means and impacts, learning has on an individual and society. The second part of the main argument should focus on if at all it is possible to unlearn what is learnt and what consequences it may have. In the end, we can conclude on the line of the lessons we must learn from history and how such learnings can have ethical aspects needed to make an equitable and just society.

### **Introduction:**

#### **#1 Quotation based**

- ❑ "The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance." - **Alan Watts**
- ❑ "The biggest risk is not taking any risk. In a world that is changing quickly, the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks." - **Mark Zuckerberg**
- ❑ "Life begins at the end of your comfort zone." - **Neale Donald Walsch**
- ❑ "The mind that opens to a new idea never returns to its original size." - **Albert Einstein**
- ❑ "The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page." - **Saint Augustine**
- ❑ "Growth and comfort do not coexist." - **Ginni Rometty**
- ❑ "The only way to discover the limits of the possible is to go beyond them into the impossible." - **Arthur C. Clarke**

#### **#2 Through Anecdote or story**

# One cannot imagine any single discovery that would have profound impact on humanity than the **discovery of life** outside of our solar system. Our perception of life is a **human-centric, Earth-centric view** that permeates most cultural and societal thinking. Finding that there are multiple, perhaps millions of origins of life and that life is ubiquitous throughout the universe will profoundly affect every human. To the average earth dwelling human, a paradigm shifting moment is experienced when the news about **NASA's Kepler spacecraft** discovering evidence of potential "billions" of Earth-like planets in "habitable" solar orbits in the universe was published. If there are billions of Earth-like planets out there, the possibility of life existing somewhere other than Earth suddenly goes from fiction to a possible fact. Humankind has come a long way from Astronomers like **Galileo Galilei in ancient Rome and Aryabhata in ancient India** when they tried to convince the societies about the **heliocentric principles of the universe**. It was a much harder task to make those people, who have grown up believing earth to be the Centre of universe that they were in fact wrong and not earth, but the sun is the actual Centre of the universe. From, **watching Neil Armstrong land on the moon** to recent **capture of photos of black holes**, we cannot go back to believing old age facts like earth being flat or sun revolving the earth. This is because of the 'ripple effect' that rose from the convictions of the **ancient astronomers** and touched every generation after them, **to go and seek the truth** that is so plain yet hiding from our sight. **A human mind transgresses into a new dimension on the basis of new information from where there is no point of return.**

# In Jonathan Swift's novel "Gulliver's Travels", Lemuel Gulliver, a surgeon and a sea-captain embarks on a series of **extraordinary journeys** to various fictional lands, encountering societies and creatures vastly different from his own. Throughout his travels, Gulliver's mind is **exposed to new cultures, customs, and perspectives** that challenge his preconceived notions and expand his understanding of the world. This leads to a transformation in his mindset and a re-evaluation of his own society. For example, in the **land of Lilliput**, where the inhabitants are tiny, Gulliver initially feels superior due to his size and strength. However, as he becomes more involved in **Lilliputian politics** and observes their absurd conflicts, he gains a critical perspective on the flaws of his own society. These encounters challenge Gulliver's beliefs and provoke him to reflect on the shortcomings of his own civilization and native society. **The literary work highlights how exposure to radically different cultures and perspectives can expand one's mind, prompting critical self-reflection and leading to a greater understanding of oneself and the world.**

### Body Content:

The '**constancy of changes**' in and around us is one of the fundamental laws of nature. Every living and breathing second is a new experience. However, some experiences are of such nature that hold the potential to alter our world view completely. Once it is seen, it becomes impossible to unsee it. Such experiences create a **ripple effect** whose impact is felt through generations to come. It often starts with a whimper and takes the world with a bang, when nurtured in the right manner.

Ever since our ancestor apes learnt to make beds and ensured a proper sleep cycle, human brains have been constantly expanding. They are shaped by the experiences they have, and the curiosity innate in our nature makes it almost impossible to not act on our ideas, imaginations, and thoughts. This **restlessness of human nature to innovate and ideate** makes us the most advanced of all the species on this planet, who hold the '**power to shape**' this planet as well as hold the **aspiration to control the realms beyond this planet**. This virtue becomes fundamental in human development and across societies, mediums, methods or procedures that shape it are revered and promoted.

One such **medium is education**. Be it in the form of **formal education at schools**, or informal education within family and society or be it traditional wisdom, education works as a tool to open the eyes of a student to the bigger realities of life. What fire **Socrates stirred, and Plato and Aristotle nurtured with their ideas** shaped the dominant political thought of today's modern world. Their ideas are still as relevant today as they were during their times. It is supported by this fact it that is **impossible** for us as a society to **go back to era of anarchy and irrational order from today's day and age of democracy and rule-based order** which is shaped by power of critical thinking.

In modern times, **Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani activist for girls' education**, has become an international symbol of courage and determination. Despite facing threats from the Taliban, she continued to advocate for girls' right to education in Pakistan. The two time former **President of Chile** and former executive director of UNWomen **Michelle Bachelet** has famously said "**We focus on girls' education, because it sets them on a path to greater economic opportunities and participation in their societies.**" The path to greatness has been made possible by expansion of human consciousness and wisdom moving away from 'patriarchy entrenched' to a 'gender equal society'.

However, education is not something that can be confined to ideas being taught. The ideas and opinions which are shaped by **practical experiences** in life are far more transforming. **History is replete with examples** of travelers who dared to leave the comforts of their homes and went through the **world collecting ideas, opinions, and experiences**. They helped in the **cross cultivation of these ideas** and opened new dimensions to the otherwise isolated and protected societies. **Ibn Battuta, a Moroccan explorer**, traveled extensively throughout **Africa, Asia, and Europe in the 14th century**. His

remarkable journey spanned over 75,000 miles and covered territories that are now part of over 40 different countries. Battuta's travels exposed him to diverse cultures, religions, and ways of life, shaping his understanding of the world and leaving a lasting impact on geographical knowledge. **His travelogue, "The Rihla," provides valuable insights into the medieval world and the people he encountered.**

Similarly, **Captain James Cook, a British explorer and navigator**, undertook three significant voyages during the **18th century**. His expeditions to the **Pacific Ocean, including the exploration of New Zealand, Australia, and Hawaii**, provided valuable scientific and geographical information. Cook's encounters with different cultures expanded European knowledge of the Pacific region and had a profound impact on subsequent exploration, colonization, and trade in the area.

Just as gaining experience is important to open new horizons, **denying experiences and opportunities** also becomes an important factor in igniting the fire to learn more. Many **revolutions in history were started** because a part of society was denied what was rightfully theirs. The oppressive system of patriarchy is one such aspect where for generations women as well as other genders were subjugated to their male counterparts. But the **awakening of political conscience**, support from the **proponents of equality** and **economic and legal empowerment** among the disadvantaged sections is giving way for more gender inclusive societies where burdens are shared by all.

This argument can be extended to other classes of discrimination too- be it based on race, caste, religion etc. For instance, **Rosa Parks**, an African American woman, is known for her pivotal role in the civil rights movement in the United States. By refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955, Parks challenged the discriminatory norms of the time. Her act of defiance sparked a city-wide boycott and became a symbol of resistance against racial segregation. Parks' singular act of courage and the subsequent events contributed to significant social and legal changes, expanding the collective mindset, and advancing the civil rights movement. Thus, it can be argued that **'once an idea is born and it takes its shape, there is no going back'**.

The **role of media** in this context becomes very important. As mortal humans, we are limited by nature, to access and approach most experiences, firsthand. In earlier times it was through literary discourse that people would share their ideas and earn experiences through the power of imagination. In the literary work **"To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee**, **Scout, the young protagonist, grows up in a racially divided society in the American South**. Through her interactions with her father, **Atticus**, and her experiences with prejudice and injustice, **Scout's worldview is challenged and expanded**, leading her to question societal norms and develop empathy.

Similarly in **George Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four,"** the protagonist **Winston Smith** lives in a **'dystopian society' ruled by a totalitarian regime** known as the Party. Winston's mind undergoes a profound transformation as he begins to question the oppressive regime and seeks to find freedom and individuality. Winston's **journey of resistance and self-discovery** in the face of a repressive regime represents a struggle for personal liberation and the stretching of his mind to question and **resist the Party's imposed reality**. These works help people live experiences through various characters and help them develop a critical thought of their world orders which is necessary for any society to make progress. Hence, it is truly said **'Poets and creative people are the unacknowledged legislators of the world'**. This role today is carried forward by means of **social media** which connects the world on a more profound level. Today, we are not confined by our physical realities, but we have developed a **global consciousness** that helps us experience the world and its good and bad at a more personal level.

However, this can be seen as an overload of information and experience which may not always be beneficial in nature and limits the prospects of overall development. **It does not end with gaining a new experience, but efforts should be made to make its impact long-lasting and constant work to make it worthwhile.** It is very easy to fall back on 'old patterns' as it gets uncomfortable to always 'row against the tide' or one can say its difficult to teach an 'old dog new tricks'.

Such experiences are seen in many **modern societies like South Korea, USA, Japan** where women after having seen economic liberation are receding from workforce to take childcare and household responsibilities. The increasing **dual burden** on women makes it easier for them to go back in time and prefer home duties over jobs. This travelling back in time is more disruptive and painful for both the society and economy of a country. The revival of Taliban in 1990 and again in 2020's in Afghanistan is seen not only detrimental but inhuman to the right of its citizens, especially women.

Also, the **selective impact of the ideas** can be another issue. Not everyone will benefit from the waves of development, and some will always be left behind. This has been an issue with most **top-down approach models**, be it in spheres of economy or education or health. As it is said, 'A rising tide can lift all boats' but on one condition, everyone should possess boats. Even good ideas when implemented in a bad way can create bigger problems like widening socio economic inequity and lack of trust in the governments.

Today, most of the world has moved to a **bottom-up approach to widen the impact scale**. In modern democratic societies, it becomes more important as the **in-principal objective** is to target the **last man standing**. Such an approach becomes crucial especially in climate change governance at global scale where the impact of climate is felt more by those who lay at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. Thus, riding over the individual differences, maximizing the impact and adding contextual factors while implementing the ideas becomes more important for its success and long-lasting impact.

One such idea that promotes this thinking is **Universal Basic Income**. Under it, a basic minimum income will be provided to an individual irrespective of any circumstances. It will not only give the personal autonomy and freedom to live as per their want but also help in creating a **right based and need driven targeted approach of governance**. This is one such idea that takes us to a new age of development, however the feasibility and success of this idea lies in its formulation and implementation. Another similar idea is **identifying the care economy and paying wages to homemakers and caregivers** for the time and effort they put into making the lives of those around them comfortable. Now that we are accounting for hours spent by otherwise unaccounted members of society, we cannot discard these ideas as irrelevant and obsolete. Like so many new changes, this is one very **disruptive change** that we are staring and it may not be possible to ignore it for long.

### Conclusion:

**Can we ever go back to the age of no internet? Can we go back to the old political orders of anarchy or monarchy? Do we have an option to opt out of globalized order? Can we undo the climate change? Is it possible to strip people of their rights at the whims of a government?** The answer to all these questions is probably 'NO, not possible.' It is indeed very difficult to move back to old orders and dimensions. In parts, it may be possible but in entirety we have the option to move forward only. We cannot control the inevitability of the change, but we can and should attempt to control the direction of the same.

There will always be new experiences and new dimensions to explore. With these new developments new challenges will arise. But one thing must always be central to any new development and that is- its core must be ethical and moral. It is very easy to get carried away with the new developments, but

one must not lose sight of possible consequences. We must be held responsible for our actions and accountable for our deeds. For instance, It is not possible to go back to the age of no internet today, but how we make use of it today will define our future. **We are living in very disruptive times-** be it in the field of science, geopolitics, or environment, that changes we are witnessing are rewriting the whole new order of life on this planet. Thus, we must not lose sight of the past while running towards the future, as it is in the past that we truly see the reflection of our future. As **Eleanor Roosevelt** quoted,

***“The purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience.”***

## Topic #2 : One health approach: a call for ecological equity.

एक स्वास्थ्य दृष्टिकोण : पारिस्थितिक समानता का आह्वान।

**Approach:** The topic expects to analyse the **concept of OneHealth**. The need for **One Health** could be explored giving references to recent pandemics and ecological crisis in the era of Anthropocene. Why ecological equity is the need of the hour and how One Health will help achieve it – could be the central theme of the essay. The essay can be substantiated with mentions of reports, data and ecologist and environmentalist's viewpoints. Essay can be wrapped up by giving a suitable conclusion on giving a call for sustainable development with prime focus on ecological equity.

### Introduction:

#### #1 Quotation based

- ☑ "The environment is where we all meet; where we all have a mutual interest; it is the one thing all of us share." – **Lady Bird Johnson**
- ☑ "In nature's economy, the currency is not money, it is life." – **Vandana Shiva**
- ☑ "What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another." – **Mahatma Gandhi**
- ☑ "Planetary health is a field focused on characterizing the human health impacts of human-caused disruptions of Earth's natural systems." – **Samuel Myers**
- ☑ "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." – **William Shakespeare**
- ☑ "The first rule of sustainability is to align with natural forces, or at least not try to defy them." – **Paul Hawken**
- ☑ "The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it." – **Robert Swan**

#### #2 Through Anecdote or story

# In **Aldo Leopold's** groundbreaking book, "**A Sand County Almanac**," he introduces the concept of a '**land ethic**' which expands the **definition of community** to encompass not only humans but soils, waters, plants, and animals. Leopold writes, "**We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.**" As our world grapples with pressing environmental challenges, diseases crossing species boundaries, and strained healthcare systems, **One Health** comes to the forefront. With its emphasis on the intrinsic relationship between human, animal, and environmental health, **One Health embodies Leopold's land ethic and calls for ecological equity** to restore the harmonious coexistence that sustains life on our planet.

# In a **quaint village** nestled amidst **lush forests**, a **wise old woman**, revered as the village healer, was often seen conversing with animals and plants. The villagers believed she understood the language of the earth. She once said, "**When the animals are unwell, the forest whispers. When the trees weep, the animals retreat. And when man disrupts the harmony, the earth recoils.**" This can be further understood by the concept of '**butterfly effect**'. The term "**butterfly effect**" was first coined by **Edward Lorenz**, a **mathematician and meteorologist**, in a **1972 paper titled "Predictability: Does the Flap of a Butterfly's Wings in Brazil Set Off a Tornado in Texas?"**. Lorenz was studying the behaviour of weather systems, and he found that even small changes in the initial conditions of a system could lead to large changes in the long-term behaviour of the system. These references elucidates a fundamental truth that has often been ignored in modern times – the **innate interconnectedness of humans, animals, and the environment**. In an era marked by ecological

upheavals and emerging diseases, One Health emerges as an approach that recognizes this age-old wisdom, calling for a holistic and equitable synergy between human, animal, and environmental well-being.

### Body Content:

One Health is a **synergistic approach that recognizes the intricate web woven by human, animal, and ecological health**. A wise adage posits, “**The health of soil, plant, animal, and man is one and indivisible**” - **Sir Albert Howard**. One Health epitomizes this aphorism by acknowledging that the fate of all organisms inhabiting Earth is deeply intertwined. Amidst the ominous shadows cast by the pandemic and environmental degradation, ecological equity is indispensable for the longevity and well-being of our planet.

One Health’s integrated approach with respect to **human-animal-ecological coexistence** is paramount. The fundamental essence of One Health lies in its insistence on a collective, inclusive approach that knits human and veterinary medicine, environmental science, and public policy. Human actions have incessantly sculpted the contours of ecosystems, and One Health seeks to remediate and harmonize this relationship.

Dwelling further into human-nature interactions, Environmentalism emerges as a potent lens. As opposed to **Environmental Determinism**, which argues that the environment shapes human actions and development, and **Possibilism**, which posits that humans have the agency to change the environment, Environmentalism walks a middle path. It calls for a sustainable and conscientious partnership with nature, underscoring the mutual dependence and consequences of the human-environment interplay.

The advent of COVID-19, a zoonotic disease, unveiled the inextricable links between human and animal health, and the ecosystems they share. It is believed to have originated from a wet market in Wuhan, China, where an array of wildlife was available for consumption. The transmission of the virus from animals to humans encapsulates how ecological disruptions can unleash havoc on a global scale. The swiftness with which the virus spread and crippled economies, societies, and geopolitical structures serve as a testament to the necessity of One Health. **According to a study published in the journal ‘Lancet Planetary Health’ in 2020, a 10% increase in forest cover was associated with a 25% decrease in zoonotic diseases.**

From an economic standpoint, the One Health approach is quintessential. The global economic meltdown catalyzed by COVID-19 highlighted the repercussions of not respecting ecological boundaries. **The Asian Development Bank estimated that the global economic loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic could range from \$5.8 trillion to \$8.8 trillion, or 6.4% to 9.7% of global GDP.** Economies rely on ecosystem services such as agriculture, fisheries, and forestry. A balanced ecosystem safeguard against diseases, augment food security and stimulates economic growth. A study led by ecologist **Robert Costanza estimated that the annual value of ecosystem services to humanity is around \$125 trillion.**

As the economist E.F. **Schumacher** proclaimed, “**An ounce of practice is generally worth more than a ton of theory.**” The theory of ecological preservation must metamorphose into diligent practice for sustainable economic development. **Embracing One Health can foster resilience and social equity.** Societies that depend on natural resources for sustenance are particularly vulnerable to ecological imbalances. Social structures, traditions, and cultures are rooted in the symbiosis with nature. An equitable approach to **One Health** promotes social justice by ensuring access to resources and healthcare, shielding vulnerable populations, and safeguarding indigenous knowledge and traditions.

In the geopolitical realm, **One Health emphasizes global collaboration and solidarity**. In an era of globalization, no country is an island. The pandemic illustrated that diseases know no borders. Transnational cooperation is crucial in monitoring, managing, and mitigating health risks. One Health can be the cornerstone of a global alliance for ecological and health equity.

Internationally, organizations such as WHO, OIE, and FAO have endorsed One Health. They have fostered collaborations, research, and policies revolving around this concept. Nationally, India has adopted **the One Health approach through the establishment of the One Health India project**, focusing on infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance, and policy coordination among various stakeholders.

To achieve "One Health", both **grassroots and global initiatives** are essential. Education and awareness regarding **ecological preservation must penetrate the grassroots**. Governments should incentivize **sustainable practices** and enact legislation for wildlife and habitat conservation. Moreover, international organizations should facilitate knowledge-sharing and financial support for under-resourced nations. Global monitoring systems and rapid response teams should be established for tackling potential threats.

Furthermore, technological advancements ought to be harnessed in the quest for One Health. Leveraging big data, artificial intelligence, and remote sensing can streamline the monitoring and analysis of environmental patterns and disease spread. This would contribute to better-informed decisions, aiding in averting ecological disasters and pandemics. As **William Gibson**, a visionary science fiction writer, astutely stated, **"The future is here – it's just not evenly distributed."** The distribution of cutting-edge technology should be impartial, ensuring that even the most marginalized communities benefit from these advancements.

Moreover, nurturing an ethos of **ecological mindfulness** is imperative. This starts with our education systems. Imbuing young minds with a sense of stewardship for the environment and a recognition of the interconnectedness of all life forms can sow the seeds for a greener future. **Thoreau's Walden elucidates transcendentalist philosophy, which posits the inherent goodness of people and nature**. Encouraging this philosophy within educational curricula would foster an innate respect for nature, underpinning the One Health approach.

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can also play a pivotal role in promoting One Health. **By synergizing the efficiency of the private sector with the scale and regulation of the public sector, PPPs can drive innovation and expand healthcare and environmental services**. Such collaborations can catalyze the development of new vaccines, bolster surveillance systems, and promote sustainable agricultural practices. Furthermore, the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) cannot be overlooked. **NGOs often operate at the forefront of community engagement and conservation efforts**. Their role in mobilizing communities, particularly in rural and remote regions, is indispensable. Partnering with NGOs ensures that the One Health initiative has both global and local footprints, which is crucial for its success.

Additionally, **indigenous wisdom should be integrated into the One Health framework**. Indigenous communities have thrived symbiotically with nature for millennia. Their knowledge and practices often embody the principles of ecological equilibrium. Respecting and integrating traditional knowledge systems can provide invaluable insights for sustainable natural resource management. Research published in **the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in 2019 revealed that though Indigenous Peoples manage or have tenure rights over 25% of the world's land surface, these areas account for about 80% of the planet's biodiversity**. This underscores the importance of integrating indigenous wisdom and land stewardship in One Health.

**Attention must also be given to gender dynamics in One Health.** Women often bear the brunt of environmental degradation due to their roles in many societies as primary caregivers and subsistence farmers. Incorporating a gender perspective ensures that programs and policies are cognizant of the unique challenges and contributions of women in human, animal, and environmental health. Lastly, a **long-term perspective** is crucial. Policymakers and stakeholders must transcend the limitations of short-term gains and political cycles. Decisions should be weighed against their impact on future generations. The Native American proverb, **“We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children,”** encapsulates the essence of this principle.

### **Conclusion:**

The call for ecological equity through One Health is a clarion call for humanity to recalibrate its compass toward a more sustainable, equitable, and harmonious coexistence. This necessitates the synergistic amalgamation of environmentalism, socio-economic cognizance, political will, and transnational solidarity. The magnification and fortification of One Health require a concert of efforts – integrating technology, education, public-private partnerships, NGO engagement, indigenous wisdom, gender perspectives, and long-term planning. It is through this rich mosaic of collaborative enterprise that One Health can fulfill its promise of ecological equity, safeguarding the delicate tapestry of life on Earth for present and future generations. **This is not merely an approach; it is a mission – a mission that calls for every hand on deck, as the ship of our singular planet navigates the tempestuous waters of the Anthropocene.**

### Topic #3 : Culture can unite what history and geography has divided.

संस्कृति उसे एकजुट कर सकती है जिसे इतिहास और भूगोल ने विभाजित किया है।

**Approach:** The focus of the essay should be on how culture is the unifying force in the human society. You should first write about the divides which geography and history have created in the past and then can write about unification power of culture. Culture cover many aspect of human society like language, religion, race, dialect, dresses etc. we can also mention all these with example to highlight the power of culture in unifying people. Conclusion can be about the potential of cultural unification in bridging the gaps in society in present and future.

#### Introduction:

##### #1 Quotation based

- ❑ "Culture makes people understand each other better. And if they understand each other better in their soul, it is easier to overcome the barriers." - **Paulo Coelho**
- ❑ "The power of culture to create a better future lies in its ability to unite people, ignite conversations, and celebrate our shared humanity." - **Ban Ki-moon**
- ❑ Cultural differences should not separate us from each other, but rather cultural diversity brings a collective strength that can benefit all of humanity". **Robert Alan**
- ❑ "In the vast country of ours, people profess different religions, speak different languages, dress differently and observe different customs; but we are one nation; the history of our struggle for independence and our faith in our future development are our common bonds." -**Lal Bahadur Shashtri**

##### #2 Through Anecdote or story

**# Silk Road was the ancient trade route**, spanning over 6,000 kilometers, connecting civilizations and regions across vast distances. Despite **geographic and historical differences**, the Silk Road became a pathway of cultural exchange and understanding. Through trade and travel, people encountered diverse languages, customs, religions, and artistic traditions. Instead of focusing on their dissimilarities, the Silk Road became a hub of cultural fusion. Merchants and travellers embraced the opportunity to learn from one another, exchanging ideas, and forging connections. Buddhist teachings from India spread to China, while Islamic scholars disseminated knowledge along the route. **Artistic techniques, philosophies, and scientific advancements** were shared, enriching the lives of people across continents. The Silk Road transcended political boundaries and historical conflicts, demonstrating the power of cultural unification. It showcased the ability of culture to foster cooperation, dissolve prejudices, and nurture a shared sense of humanity. The story of the Silk Road serves as an enduring reminder of the potential of cultural exchange to bridge divisions and create a more interconnected world that celebrates our diversity and unites us in our shared experiences.

**# During the medieval period in India, the Bhakti movement emerged** as a remarkable example of how culture provided unity despite divisions. This movement, marked by **intense devotion and love for the divine, transcended social, religious, and regional barriers**. Prominent Bhakti saints like **Kabir, Mirabai, and Tukaram** composed devotional poetry and songs that resonated with people from various backgrounds. Their verses emphasized love, compassion, and direct connection with the divine, promoting an inclusive approach to spirituality. The Bhakti movement attracted followers from different castes, genders, and even religious affiliations, creating a space for collective worship and mutual respect. Temples, mosques, and public spaces became hubs of communal singing and recitation of devotional verses, fostering a sense of unity and shared experience. Moreover, the Bhakti movement contributed to the development of regional languages as the saints composed their poetry in **vernacular tongues**, making it accessible to a

wider audience. This linguistic inclusivity further strengthened cultural unity and identity. The legacy of the Bhakti movement continues to shape India's cultural fabric. Its influence is seen in the diverse forms of music, dance, and devotional practices that thrive across the country. The Bhakti movement stands as a testament to how cultural expressions of devotion can transcend divisions, promote unity, and inspire individuals to seek higher truths together.

### Body Content:

Geography has divided the world in various ways, characterized by natural barriers, landlocked regions, mountain ranges, river systems, climate variations, resource distribution, and distance. For instance, the **vast Atlantic Ocean** has historically separated **the Americas from Europe and Africa**, leading to distinct cultural, political, and economic developments on each continent. In India, geography has also played a significant role in divisions. **The Himalayas**, with their formidable peaks and challenging terrain, act as a natural boundary between India and its neighboring countries. This geographical feature has not only influenced political borders but has also contributed to distinct cultural and linguistic identities in the region.

Furthermore, India's diverse climate and geography have resulted in distinct **ecosystems, languages, and cultural practices** across different regions of the country. For example, the **arid deserts of Rajasthan** in northwest India have shaped the lifestyle, attire, and traditional practices of the local communities, setting them apart from the coastal regions of Kerala in the south, known for its lush **green landscapes, backwaters, and unique cultural heritage**. Although these divisions are natural; some are divisions which are driven by historical factors.

Throughout history, divisions and conflicts have emerged as a result of various factors, including geography and historical events. These divisions often shape the interactions between nations and communities, leading to deep-seated tensions and animosities. In this context, specific examples from around the world exemplify how history has created divisions, hindering efforts towards unity and peaceful coexistence. The **Korean Peninsula, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Irish Troubles**, the Balkans, and the **Israeli-Arab conflict** stand as significant illustrations. These cases reflect the complexities and challenges faced by divided societies, driven by historical grievances, territorial disputes, ideological differences, and ethno-nationalist tensions.

In the Indian context, divisions and conflicts have arisen due to a combination of geography and historical factors, shaping the interactions and dynamics within the country. These divisions reflect the complexities and challenges faced by a diverse nation with a rich history. Instances such as the **Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, the ongoing tensions in Kashmir, and the historical impact of the caste system illuminate the divisions** that have been perpetuated over time. These divisions, fueled by historical grievances, cultural differences, and socio-political factors, continue to impact social cohesion and national identity.

Recognizing the impact of history in shaping divisions is crucial for fostering understanding and reconciliation, as it paves the way for **building bridges, promoting dialogue, and working towards a more united and harmonious global community**. Culture has a magical power over people to unite through its soft appeal. Culture fosters understanding through exchange, education, and dialogue. By embracing diversity, promoting inclusivity, and valuing shared heritage, culture can bridge divides and create a more harmonious world. **As Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."**

Cultural values and the dissemination of culture have proven to be powerful forces in bringing unification in a divisive world. Cultural values provide a shared foundation of beliefs, norms, and principles that can transcend divisions and promote unity. When societies prioritize values such as

**respect, empathy, inclusivity, and social justice**, it creates common ground for people from diverse backgrounds to unite and work towards a more harmonious and inclusive world.

We can see cultural values fostering unification in movements advocating for human rights, equality, and social justice. These movements draw upon shared cultural values of fairness, justice, and dignity, rallying people around common causes regardless of their cultural or ethnic backgrounds. The Civil Rights Movement in the United States, the feminist movement, and **LGBTQ+ rights movements** are powerful examples of how cultural values can bring diverse communities together in the pursuit of equality and justice.

**Cultural diplomacy** is another avenue through which cultural values can foster unification. Cultural **exchange programs, art exhibitions, music festivals**, and film screenings enable people to learn about different cultures, challenge stereotypes, and foster understanding. For example, **India and Southeast Asia** share cultural heritage through Hindu-Buddhist influences, temple architecture, performing arts, cuisine, and textiles. The spread of Indian religions, artistic traditions, and culinary practices has left a lasting impact, showcasing the historical and cultural connections between these regions. India promotes cultural exchanges to enhance its **soft power** across the world. Indian Constitution also exhorts people to preserve the composite culture of the country by enumerating this as one of the Fundamental duties of the citizens.

Furthermore, media and cultural productions play a significant role in disseminating cultural values and narrative that bridge divides. **Films, music, literature, and other forms of media** have the power to showcase diverse cultures, challenge stereotypes, and promote understanding. Such productions can connect audiences from different backgrounds, fostering empathy and a sense of shared humanity. For instance, films like "**Slumdog Millionaire**" or "**Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon**" have not only entertained global audiences but also fostered cross-cultural understanding by shedding light on different cultures and experiences.

In **the digital age**, online platforms and social media play a crucial role in unification. They enable individuals to connect and engage with different cultures, providing spaces for **cultural discussions, language exchange, and learning from one another**. Online communities centered on cultural interests, language learning platforms, or social media groups dedicated to cultural exchange create virtual spaces for individuals to interact and develop a sense of global unity.

**Globalization**, as a present cultural value, has significantly contributed to the unification of the world by fostering cultural exchange, interconnectedness, and understanding. Concepts such as **open borders, frontiers, and the interaction of religions have played important roles in this process**. The removal of barriers to the movement of people, goods, and ideas has facilitated cultural exchange and unification. **The European Union (EU)** is a prominent example of open borders. With the free movement of people and goods among its member states, the EU has fostered cross-cultural interactions, intermarriages, and collaborations, leading to a sense of shared identity and understanding among Europeans. Another example is **the Schengen Area**, comprising 27 European countries that have abolished passport control at their mutual borders. This has enabled easier travel and cultural exchange, fostering unity and cooperation within the region.

Globalization has created new frontiers for cultural interaction, both physical and digital. Cities like **New York, London, and Dubai, Mumbai** have become cultural frontiers where people from diverse backgrounds converge, bringing their traditions, languages, and customs. Such cosmopolitan cities serve as melting pots of cultures, fostering cross-cultural understanding and unity. Religions have also historically played a significant role in shaping cultures and fostering unity. In Southeast Asia,

Buddhism has acted as a unifying force. Countries such as **Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar share a rich Buddhist heritage, which has contributed to a sense of regional unity and cooperation.** **Islam has also been a unifying force in West Asia and North Africa.** The shared religious beliefs and cultural practices among countries in the region have facilitated cultural exchange and mutual understanding. The **annual Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia** brings together millions of Muslims from around the world, fostering a sense of unity and shared religious experience.

While culture has the power to bring people together, it can also create divisions and contribute to societal fragmentation. Cultures often develop a sense of pride and superiority in their **own** customs, traditions, and values. This can lead to **ethnocentrism**, where one culture considers itself superior to others. Ethnocentric attitudes can result in **prejudice, discrimination, and conflicts** between different cultural groups, hindering unification. For instance, historical conflicts between different ethnic and religious groups, such as the **Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda or the Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians in the former Yugoslavia**, were fueled by deep-rooted cultural divisions and a sense of superiority. Cultural clashes occur when different cultural norms, practices, or values come into conflict. Also, historical events and grievances tied to culture can contribute to long-standing divisions. Cultural memories of past conflicts, colonization, or injustices can perpetuate animosity and prevent reconciliation. These historical grievances can fuel resentment, mistrust, and conflicts between cultural groups.

**The Israeli-Palestinian conflict**, for example, has deep historical roots and is influenced by conflicting narratives and memories tied to land, identity, and sovereignty. The cultural and historical dimensions of the conflict have resulted in a persistent divide between Israelis and Palestinians. **The Israeli-Palestinian conflict illustrates how culture has not been enough to unify people.** Despite sharing historical, religious, and cultural ties to the region, Israelis and Palestinians remain deeply divided. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict demonstrates that **cultural similarities alone are insufficient to overcome the deep-rooted divisions and achieve lasting unity.**

**Cultural relativism**, the idea that cultural practices and beliefs should be understood within their own context, can sometimes hinder unification efforts. While understanding different cultural perspectives is important, cultural relativism taken to extremes can discourage critical analysis and moral judgment of certain cultural practices, even when they violate human rights or lead to discrimination. For instance, the practice of **female genital mutilation (FGM)** is deeply rooted in certain cultures, but it is also a violation of human rights. **Balancing cultural understanding with the promotion of universal human rights** can be challenging, as cultural relativism can impede efforts to address harmful practices. As Ruth **Benedict** has said, ***“The crucial differences which distinguish human societies and human beings are not biological, they are cultural.”***

**Identity politics**, where individuals or groups align strongly with their cultural or ethnic identities, can further exacerbate divisions. This can be seen in instances of nationalist movements, separatist movements, or **ethno-nationalism**, where cultural identity becomes a basis for exclusion and conflict. While **culture** has the potential to unify people, it can also create divisions when accompanied by ethnocentrism, cultural clashes, historical grievances, lack of understanding, cultural relativism, and exclusive identity politics. Acknowledging these challenges and promoting dialogue, empathy, and respect for diverse cultural perspectives can help mitigate the divisive aspects of culture and foster a more inclusive and unified society.

Culture plays a crucial role as a unifying force and **India can be torch bearer in such movement** especially in the face of deep divides all over the world. Festivals **like Diwali, celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains, bring people together** across religious lines to celebrate the triumph of light over darkness. Classical dance forms like **Kathak, Bharatanatyam, and Odissi** showcase the rich diversity

of Indian culture, transcending regional and linguistic boundaries. The national anthem, "**Jana Gana Mana**," sung in multiple languages, instills a sense of national pride and unity. Additionally, the diverse cuisines of India, such as biryani, dosa, and samosa, symbolize the amalgamation of different regional flavors and traditions. These examples demonstrate how cultural practices, traditions, and artistic expressions in India serve as a unifying force, fostering a shared sense of identity and promoting social harmony.

### Conclusion:

Cultural unification remains a significant goal in a world divided by geography and history because it has the potential to bridge divides, foster understanding, and promote peaceful coexistence. While cultural differences may exist, they also provide an opportunity for learning, appreciation, and celebration of diversity. Recognizing our shared humanity through cultural understanding can help break down barriers and promote **empathy and compassion**. By engaging in cultural exchange and learning about different traditions, beliefs, and customs, people can gain a more nuanced and accurate understanding of diverse cultures, fostering greater tolerance and acceptance. **Cultural unification allows for the synthesis of ideas, artistic expressions, and innovations from different cultures**, leading to cross-pollination and the creation of **new cultural forms that transcend geographic and historical divisions**. It can contribute to peace-building efforts, strengthen identity, empower marginalized voices, and enhance global cooperation.

While the world may be divided by geography and history, cultural unification holds immense promise for creating a more harmonious and inclusive global society. Through cultural exchange, appreciation, and understanding, we can break down barriers, challenge stereotypes, and foster empathy. By recognizing our shared humanity and celebrating the richness of diverse cultures, we can promote peace, strengthen identity, and empower marginalized voices. **Cultural unification offers a pathway to bridge divides, promote dialogue, and build a sense of global community**. It has been said that:

*“Culture is the compass that guides us through the vast landscape of human diversity, showing us the way to understanding, unity, and shared humanity.”*

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

सामाजिक कुरीतियाँ व्यवहार में पूरी तरह से खत्म नहीं हुई हैं, बल्कि अपना रूप बदलती जा रही हैं।

**Approach:** The essay topic focuses on how despite progress made in some areas, social evils continue to exist in different forms. To start this essay briefly explain what social evils are and why they are a concern. Discuss how some social evils have decreased in prevalence in traditional form but continue to modify their appearance and exist in different forms. Further it can be analysed why social evils continue to exist despite efforts to eradicate them. The essay can be concluded on what changes and modifications the society has to do to tackle these evils in all forms, traditional and contemporary.

### Introduction:

#### #1 Quotation based

- ❑ "The evils which afflict mankind are of a changing character; and the remedies which are adapted to one state of things are often inapplicable to another." - **Thomas Malthus**
- ❑ "The form of evil may change, but the substance remains the same." - **George Eliot**
- ❑ "The social evils of our time are not new; they have only changed their form." - **Mahatma Gandhi**
- ❑ "The evils of society are like the Hydra; cut off one head, and two grow in its place." - **Charles Caleb Colton**
- ❑ "The evils which afflict society are like the waves of the sea; they may be driven back, but they will return again." - **William Hazlitt**
- ❑ "Social evils are like the roots of a tree; they may be hidden, but they are the foundation of the problems we see above ground." - **Wangari Maathai**
- ❑ "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." - **Edmund Burke**

#### #2 Through Anecdote or story

# In one of the newspaper reports in 2017, a 23-year-old woman named Kritika Sharma was **harassed and threatened online** after she posted a video criticizing the lyrics of a popular song. The online harassment included rape and death threats, and Kritika was forced to file a police complaint. In another incident last year, news of **Sulli deals and open source app Bulli bai** on web platform **GitHub** came out in the open. It was used to auction Muslim women whereas women were projected as deals for the day. Both the case highlight how social evils such as misogyny, sexism, and online abuse can take on new forms in the digital age, and there is a need for stronger laws and enforcement mechanisms to protect victims of online harassment.

# India has grappled with numerous social evils which has been a blot on her golden history. The advent of education and modernism has led to lessening of such incidents but the same has led to birth of new forms of social evils. One of them has been the mushrooming of High rise apartments, condominiums and gated communities in tier 1 and 2 cities which provide a sense of superiority, exclusion and promises privacy. Hence, giving birth to a new **social evil classism** and the people practicing the same are extremely **class-conscious**. Now the basis of discrimination is not gender, race or caste but economic class. There have been numerous incidents in such places highlighting the **discriminatory attitude** towards house help, caretakers, plumbers and electricians. Notices by residential management committees about usage of separate elevators, separate areas to sit and have food and restriction to access even common areas, amphitheatres, gazebos have been put in

place. This shows the prejudiced belief that people belonging to poor class are not humans. Time and again the debate has been raged on various social media platforms but are **usually justified** by residents in the **guise of security**. In reality they are based on **unfounded biases** that see those from the lower-income group as criminal or unclean and hence unfit to exist in common spaces alongside the elites.

### Body Content:

Aristotle said *“Man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something that precedes the individual. Anyone who either cannot lead the common life or is so self-sufficient as not to need to, and therefore does not partake of society, is either a beast or a god.”*

Human beings are inherently flawed creatures and the society created by man always suffers from social evils. In simplistic words, **social evils can be described as harmful practices or behaviours that negatively impact individuals, communities, or society as a whole**. These can include things like discrimination, corruption, poverty, violence, drug abuse, and human trafficking, among others.

India is a developing nation that shelters a **diversity of all sorts** such as religion, caste, creed, racial background and social stature. Hence Indian society is more susceptible to social evils in comparison to most developed nations. Social issues are a concern because they impact individuals, communities, and society as a whole. It can cause harm, suffering, and inequality, and can prevent people from reaching their full potential. They can also result in economic, political, and environmental problems. Like **Kofi Annan** said *“Social evils are like viruses, constantly mutating and adapting to new environments.”*

Today social evils continue to exist in different forms. For example, while slavery has been abolished in many countries, it still exists in the form of **forced labour and human trafficking**. Similarly, while child labour has decreased in some parts of the world, it still persists in other regions and industries. Discrimination against marginalized groups has decreased in some areas, it still exists in more subtle and insidious ways, such as **implicit bias, microaggressions, and structural inequalities**.

Corruption and economic inequality are also examples of social evils, it exist in many countries and industries, but has changed its form with the rise of digital technology and new forms of financial crime. While poverty rates have decreased in some regions, they continue to be a major social evil in many parts of the world, with an **estimated 9.2%** of the global population living in extreme poverty.

**Social issues are complex and multi-faceted, and they often have economic, political, and environmental dimensions**. For example, poverty is not just a moral issue, but also an economic issue that impacts individuals and communities. Poverty can lead to economic inequality, which can create social unrest and political instability. Similarly, environmental issues such as climate change can have social and economic impacts, such as displacement of people, loss of livelihoods, and increased poverty. Political issues such as corruption and discrimination can lead to social and economic inequality, which can have detrimental effects on individuals and communities. Therefore, it is essential to recognize that social issues are not just moral issues, but also economic, political, and environmental issues that require a comprehensive approach to address.

Vandana Shiva said *“Social evils are not isolated problems, but rather interconnected issues that require a holistic approach to address.”* Over the years, India has made significant efforts to eradicate these social evils. One of the most important steps taken in this direction has been the spread of education and awareness. Through education, people are made aware of their rights and the importance of treating everyone with respect and dignity.

The government has launched many initiatives to promote education and literacy, including the **Right to Education Act, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and Mid-Day Meal Scheme**.

Another important step taken by the government has been to **introduce legal reforms** to address social evils. The Indian Constitution guarantees **equal rights to all citizens, regardless of their caste, religion, gender, or ethnicity**. The government has enacted many laws to **prevent discrimination and promote equality**, including the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, and the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.

Also at global level the **United Nations** has adopted various conventions, declarations, and protocols to protect human rights, including the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child**. In addition to the UN, many other international organizations are working to address social evils. These organizations include Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Oxfam. These organizations work to promote awareness, provide support to victims, and advocate for policy changes to address these issues.

Despite efforts to eradicate these social evils, **they persist due to their complex causes and deep-rooted nature**. Social evils are often rooted in **structural inequalities**, such as economic inequality, gender inequality, and racial inequality. Addressing these underlying factors can be difficult and complex. Some social evils are **perpetuated by cultural norms** and values that support discriminatory or harmful practices, such as child marriage or female genital mutilation. Lack of education and awareness can contribute to the persistence of social evils, as people may not understand the harm caused by certain practices or may not know their rights.

Also Governments may **lack the political will** to address social evils due to **competing priorities, lack of resources, or corruption**. Like Noam Chomsky said "**Social evils are not just the result of individual actions, but also of the systems and structures that shape our societies.**" For narrow interests, the already present divide among people is instigated further. It has been witnessed In the numerous ethnic conflicts in African countries, racist discrimination in western countries, communal disharmony in South Asian countries like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar etc.

Eleven activists and intellectuals were arrested in connection with the **Bhima Koregaon violence** that took place in Maharashtra in 2018. The activists were accused of **inciting violence and having links with Maoist groups**. The case highlights how social evils such as **state surveillance, censorship, and political repression** can take on new forms in the digital age, as the activists were allegedly targeted for their **online activities and social media posts**.

Another Indian real-life story that illustrates how social evils can change form is the case of the 2020 **Hathras gang-rape case**. A 19-year-old Dalit woman was gang-raped by four upper-caste men in Uttar Pradesh, India. The case sparked nationwide outrage, as it highlighted the deeply entrenched **social evils of casteism, patriarchy, and sexual violence**. The case also highlighted how social evils can take on new forms in the modern age, as the victim's family was allegedly harassed and intimidated by the police and other authorities, and the case was initially suppressed by the government.

The Dalai Lama once said "**Social evils are the product of ignorance, intolerance, and fear, and they can only be overcome through education, compassion, and courage.**" So to counter this changing form of social evil we must continue to **educate people, promote awareness, and enforce laws that protect the rights of all citizens**. It is important to create a culture of respect and dignity for all individuals,

regardless of their caste, gender, religion, or ethnicity. This can be achieved through community engagement, dialogue, and collaboration between various stakeholders, including the government, NGOs, civil society organizations, and the media.

By working together, we can create a more just and equitable society, where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential. Also the national and international cooperation and collaboration are critical to addressing social evils. Countries need to work together to share best practices, promote awareness, and enforce laws that protect the rights of all individuals. Like **Ban Ki-moon** said *"Social evils are not something that can simply be swept aside; they are deeply rooted in our societies and take many forms. As we work to address them, we must be vigilant and adaptable, recognizing that they may change shape and form as we make progress."*

### Conclusion:

Social evils continue to be a significant challenge in many parts of the world. While some progress has been made in addressing these issues, social evils have not completely left the ground, but have instead changed their form. This requires a continued effort to identify and address new forms of social evils. While there is still a long way to go, there is hope that with continued efforts, we can overcome social evils and create a brighter future for all.

*"Social evils are like a shadow; they follow us wherever we go, but they disappear when we shine a light on them."*