



**An Institute for Civil Services**

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**IAS TOPPER'S**

**TEST COPY**

**MANIYA VERMA**

**AIR - 258**  
**(CSE 2022)**

**ESSAY**

Roll No. \_\_\_\_\_

Time Allowed: 3 Hrs.

Max. Marks: 250

**Instructions to Candidate**

- Both sections are compulsory.
- Attempt one essay from each section.
- Each essay carries 125 marks.
- Write each essay in about 1000-1200 words.
- After finishing the first essay, attempt the next on a fresh Page.
- Any page left blank in the answer-book must be crossed out clearly.

*(Examiner will pay special attention to the candidate's grasp of his/her material, its relevance to the subject chosen, and to his/her ability to think constructively and to present his/her ideas concisely, logically and effectively).*

Name Maniya Verma

Mobile No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

1. Invigilator Signature \_\_\_\_\_

2. Invigilator Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Remarks**

EI - 57

EII - 50





## SECTION - A

1. *Situations do not make or break us; our choices and decisions do.*
2. *Many men go fishing all of their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after.*
3. *The higher we are placed, the more humbly we should walk.*
4. *What happens to a man is less significant than what happens within him.*

## SECTION - B

1. *Leadership is not about the next election, it's about the next generation*
2. *Sports and Competition do not build character; they reveal it.*
3. *One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors.*
4. *People are not rational, they rationalise.*



## SECTION A

1

SITUATIONS DO NOT MAKE OR BREAK US; OUR CHOICES AND DECISIONS DO.

Our choices and decisions play an important role in shaping our attitude and our attitude towards life has a direct bearing on our actions and our actions ultimately decide our destiny. On the inauguration of his presidency, Nelson Mandela was asked about what had kept him going all along against apartheid even after two dozen years in prison; Mandela quoted his favourite poem 'Invictus' and remarked 'I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul'. Even though the situation may not favour us but how we choose to react and what choices we make when things seem to fall apart, ultimately decides whether we are winners or losers.

Good opening  
↓  
brings out the essence of the essay

Remarks



\* Try to have a clear distinction between the intro and body.

CS SCORE

The very Earth that we live in provides enough inspiration for one to rise up amidst the odds. Earth has survived several ages of mass extinction from Precambrian to the Permian, but still continues to nurture life for over 4.8 million years. It shows that our decisions must be based on consistency of thoughts and morals, for the situation may seem to break us apparently, however when one decides to stand firm in their convictions, victory becomes imminent.

not a  
very  
clear  
argument

Rudyard Kipling in his famous prose 'If' says, 'If you can keep your head high when all others around you are losing theirs... yours is the Earth and everything that is inside it'. Situations act as test of conviction; your choices and integrity in actions will certainly lead you to the path of glory.

Remarks



\* Avoid  
writing in one  
long paragraph.

It is said that an average adult makes around 35000 remotely conscious decisions in a day. Our choices and decisions, then, not only act as a yardstick during testing times, but also govern our everyday life. The quote, 'Dreams are not that we see in sleep but are the ones that we conquer in reality', might seem an alluring one however in reality: the choice to wake up before everyone else does and to rise up after every fall; to struggle eventhough the light at the end of the tunnel seems far from distant, is not everyone's cup of tea. It needs sheer will-power and determination to stand by one's choices, eventhough the world laughs at you; it needs courage to transform your choices into reality. When the vision is clear, situation merely does not matter then.

Suitable  
discussion

Remarks



A good situation accompanied with a good set of decisions is indeed a win-win situation. As Pierre Bourdieu calls it, 'the Culture of excellence'; when we have the odds in our favour, we are more likely to win, however, this does not mean that a person placed in a bad situation due to reasons out of one's control, will fail.

Try to not drag the same point.

The winning move here is determined by the choices one acknowledges. In spite of a good situation, one might fail when they cling on to bad decisions and vice-versa.

For instance Vijay Mallya being a rich business tycoon had all odds in his favour, but he chose to commit financial crimes and rest all is history.

On the contrary, our pride Mirabai Chanu who comes from a poor family has despite the odds made the

Remarks



whole country proud by winning Silver at the Tokyo Olympics 2020. This ultimately proves the worthiness of the quotation that our situations do not make or break us but our choices and decisions do.

One must remember that our choices and decisions are a result of our sociatisation. It thus becomes very important to inculcate the right morals and conduct in children for them to succeed in life.

The role of parents, schools, friends is thus very crucial in instilling the right spirit in children and guiding them to be good human beings as well as good citizens.

Hence the focus of a society should be directed towards bolstering education, innovation, equality so that the little children of today become the torchbearers in future igniting candles in times of gloominess.

Relevant  
way  
forward

Remarks



While constructive socialisation is valuable one must however remember to not fall into the trap of deviance in fulfilling one's short term goals.

As Anthony Giddens quotes that high modernity has ingrained the concept of cut throat competition,

whereby everybody wants to become a HAVE. Since resources are limited, but everybody aspires for victory and in the fear of remaining a HAVE NOT for the entire life, one may be tempted to taint one's ethos and give in to shortcuts. However shortcut

may sometimes cut short your life. One may achieve

the material pleasure they aspire for but deep down

they are never satisfied because of the fact that they

have betrayed not others but their very souls.

The situation may look sparkling and rosy but deep within people are fighting themselves.

The point is good but limit the use of ornamental language for better flow of ideas for the readers.

Remarks



As Robert Frost in his verse 'Stopping by the woods on a snowy evening' states, 'Two roads diverged in a yellow wood and I, I took the one less travelled by and that has made all the difference'. This reminds us to not give in to peer pressure and short term pleasures but maintain consistency of thoughts in order to achieve the highest glories of life.

We must remember that Ashoka would not have been 'Ashoka-The Great' had he not condemned war even after winning a furious battle. He could have enjoyed a lavish life but instead he chose to repent for the misery caused due to war, outrightly rejecting his advantageous situation for the sake of others and that is what makes him great. Our choices thus not only affect us but also the others we are associated with and hence our decisions must imbibe the principle of the greater good of all.

Repetitive  
Justification  
of the  
topic  
↓  
try to  
explore  
more  
dimensions

Remarks



Placed in the same situation, individual's choices may reflect altering consequences. Corona pandemic is a fitting example whereby some members of the society came forward to lend a helping hand while some others tried to convert adversary into personal opportunity.

This provides a clear picture of how our decisions and choices can either make the situation better or can break the situation apart. It is imperative to think logically before taking a decision because being a member of the larger society, our choices can either push us to the mountain peak or topple us all to the deepest pit. Hence our choices define our fate.

By merely making a choice we open the first door towards invention, but if we really want to pass through the final door of success, we ought to be diligent in our undertaking.

discuss  
why  
aren't  
people  
able to  
make  
the  
right  
choice.

Remarks



For instance Thomas A Edison exhibits the glory of science not because he discovered the light bulb, but because he made thousand unsuccessful attempts and displayed continuity in actions & conformity in decision making to arrive at the invention of light bulb.

Whatever be the situations, when one has a deep passion towards a purpose in life, and is adherent to their decisions, no force in the world can stop them.

Gandhi Ji for instance had a purpose of freeing India and due to his adamance towards Ahimsa; inspite of the various oppressive hurdles thrown by the colonialist, he was able to guide India to the path of independence.

Even if our decisions are morally correct, it is not guaranteed that the same will be accepted by the wider society. Since change is not an easy process,

Relevant  
but  
not  
adding  
anything  
new  
to the  
topic

Remarks



and sometimes a new idea can't prove detrimental for the protagonists; at such times one must remember that nothing worth having comes easy.

We may break or create history by the choice of our decisions, at times when situation seems to fall apart.

We must remember Oprah Winfrey's musing that 'where there is no struggle, there is no strength'.

The Age of enlightenment and the French Revolution are apt examples where struggle for change led to glory and more strength for all.

Socrates defines good decision as one that is based on thought, sense, judgement and prudence and he believes that people take bad decisions due to ignorance. Ignorance leads to hindered choices and thus it is important to raise awareness among people.

They say that 'education is the most powerful tool' that can change the world & it is necessary to use it.

Explore these ideas more

Remarks



in the right direction to empower people to take the right decisions.

Barry Schwartz mentions the 'Paradox of Choice'. He says that learning to choose is hard, to choose well is harder. And learning to choose well in a world of unlimited possibilities is harder still, perhaps too hard.

Sometimes 'More is less'. Hence it becomes imperative to give a sound, rational thought process if we want to arrive at the best decisions to reinforce our situation.

Situations may not be in our control, but our choices and decisions certainly are and life is nothing but the sum of all our choices. Sometimes even the smallest decisions can change our life forever.

At the end of the day, we must remember: "Life is about choices - some we regret, some we're proud of, some will haunt us forever". The bottomline is 'We are what we choose to be'.

Remarks

Satisfactory  
Closure



## SECTION-B

4. PEOPLE ARE NOT RATIONAL, THEY RATIONALISE.

When a child is born into this world, it is unaware of the uncertainty of human life. It laughs even at the lightest trigger and cries when it feels like to : in all a child's emotions are unpredictable.

Humans are thus in their indigenous form irrational beings. As humans tend to grow and socialise, they realise how humanity is entangled in the affairs of an apparent rational world.

Rationality refers to the quality of being based on or in accordance with reason or logic. One might wonder if rationality is an individual concept or a social construct. George Herbert Mead in his theory of 'I versus Me' explains that as humans grow from the play stage to the game stage, they develop an understanding of what the society considers rational.

## Remarks

The intro is long and does not bring out the real idea of the topic!



# Can end the intro by indicating briefly the arguments to be discussed in the

GS SCORE

essay  
ahead.

and accordingly align their behaviour as per the norms of the society. Thus an unaware child is filled with the seemingly rationality of life. We are made to believe that 'if it is not rational, it is not right' and in an attempt to prove oneself right, the probable irrational humans wear the cloak of rationality and pretend to be amused by the decisions driven out of logic.

Should our decisions be based on logic? Do emotions have any role to play in manipulating our decisions? It is believed that one who is emotional is weak, but this is not always true. Emotions are humans' unique asset. A robot can imitate human intelligence, but it is emotions which places humans above robots. Peter Watts writes, 'People are not rational, we are not thinking machines, we're feeling machines that happen to think. It is our emotions that help us arrive at better logical inferences.'

link to  
the  
topic  
clearly

Remarks



While rationality may help us in arriving at better conclusions, however when rationality is used to prove one's selfish endeavours, it becomes deleterious.

As Orson Card states, 'Your trust in rationality makes you irrational'. For instance Olympe de Gouges, who was a playwright during the Renaissance period wrote in her play 'spirit of reason' that the civil rights propounded in the French Revolution applied to women also. She was beheaded in response to her perfect rationality — Was it then not an evil and murderous irrationality? I leave it onto you to decide that.

Who determines rationality, one might think, since whenever individuals speak against established norm, they are susceptible to ostracism. Take for eg. the cow vigilantism in India which is a unique feature not to be found anywhere else in the world. This then means that something which seems rational in one circumstance would be irrational in some other circumstance.

Too much focus on 'rationality' alone  
↓  
to balance the key ideas

Remarks



# Divide  
your  
arguments  
into  
smaller  
paragraphs  
for  
better  
flow!

The legitimacy to rationality is then given by religious elites (Dark Ages), Social elites (caste system in India), political elites (rational policies) and many other elites in different sectors. Steven Lukes calls it the 'Third Phase of Power' - in that all those who exercise power have the ability to manipulate and shape the opinions of the larger masses. However it becomes detrimental for humanity, when the so called rational-legal authorities justify the rationality of their private skewed interests by making orthodox statements, biased policies, favouring despotic rule and nepotism. Danger looms over humanity then. For instance Adolf Hitler justified the rationality of the superior German race and the consequences (Holocaust, World Wars), are enough evidence to showcase the fact that in trying to make irrational seem rational, the price one will have to pay is beyond human imagination.

Remarks



"Animals are rational as they don't get mired in deliberation & hesitation and execute actions perfectly suited to them", says Justin Smith. On the other hand humans are always-paralyzed by doubt and worry and their acts of rationality keeps on changing with time.

Post Industrial Revolution, it was globally believed that one who could maximise the exploitation of nature to meet human needs would emerge as neo-global leaders. Countries across the world were satisfied with the rationality of development at the cost of nature.

Now, it is exactly opposite # Climate change.

As real is the new catchphrase. Sustainable development and the co-existence of nature and human welfare is the new rationality. Rationality is thus, not constant; it keeps on evolving both in space and time. It is hence imperative that rationality is accompanied with critical reasoning and discussion so that the challenges

Remarks



bound to appear at a later stage are mitigated earlier.

Relevant  
ideas

Rationality is not mere logical thinking. One cannot ignore the role of feelings. Plato describes the dichotomous role of logic and feelings in his theory of 'Two competing horses'. The white horse, he says represents logic and the black horse represents feelings. The culmination lies in the balance between the two horses. Although successful people, he says, have a better grip on the white horse.

Plato's theory is contradicted in the scientific discoveries made in the course of time. For instance the falling of apple, the accidental discovery of X-Ray, radioactivity and the steam engine are all based on irrational events. Albert Einstein once said, 'I never made one of my discoveries through the process of rational thinking'. It is the very irrationality of human nature that allows us to observe, question & discover things.

Remarks



However one cannot ignore the importance of rationality in a society. It helps in maintaining the structure and order and delineating the right code of conduct. When rationality is based on moral reasoning, it guarantees the formation of an ~~equal~~ and just society. For instance, the Constitution of India acts as a guiding force in setting out the order of society. It is based on the logical thinking of our nationalist leaders.

It is not purely logical, it has an emotional tinge as well. It favours equality (Article 14) as well as positive discrimination. Similarly, the clause of equality before law and equal protection of law is a befitting example.

It is thus true that people cannot be purely rational at all times, there are ~~exceptions~~ because ultimately 'the heart wants what it wants'.

Relevant  
but  
don't  
drag

Remarks



Is there really a need to be rational at all times or are we just following others! In today's modern world, individualism is paving way for overthinking. The cheerful joint families are being replaced by nuclear families. There is so much anonymity in the urban centres, that people don't even recognise their neighbours. As a result, egoistic tendencies pave way for mental disorder & anxiety. WHO estimates that about 7.5% Indians suffer from depression and the global rate for the same is 6%. Too much of rationality, that depression has become a buzzword.

Today people attend stand-up comedy shows to laugh and express joy. Stand-up shows are a result of modernity. No body knew of it in the gold old days because laughter was so common that nobody even gave a thought to the existence of such comic shows specifically in India.

Relevance  
to the  
topic  
not  
clear

Remarks



Even though humans rationalise events but deep down we are irrational beings. There are exceptions<sup>as well</sup>, some might be rational beings, but there is similarity in the fact that humans derive pleasure from irrational events. Swami Vivekananda quotes, 'In a conflict

between the heart and brain, follow your heart?

For the small things in life are often so much bigger than the great things and blessed are those who see beautiful things in humble places.

Positive Irrationality encourages humans to pursue what they really want to achieve even if it means going against the flow. Rationality on the other hand makes one status quoist. Francis Fukuyama in his book 'The last man' quotes that the last man is averse to change. He is so content with the material pleasure and the rationality of events that he doesn't want to accept change and innovation.

Remarks



Rationality can in such cases hinder progress and thus it is necessary to have a flexible frame of mind.

Democracy promotes free thinking, the rationale

behind the same is participation of people, however in reality the picture is quite deviant from the ideal

rosy notion. Mesca notes that democracy can be by the people & for the people but never of the people.

Thus, an ideal rationality of thoughts should manifest itself pragmatically as well.

Idea  
of  
rationality  
is  
missing!

There is so much diversity in rationality - for someone authoritative regime is better while for others capitalistic regime and for the rest socialistic regime is the best; it sometimes seems that rationality itself is irrational. Consider the rationality of maths - the Pythagoreans had trouble dealing with the discovery of the existence of irrational numbers. Thus, it is better to follow the advice of Jeh. Knox here: 'An intelligent person can rationalise anything, a wise person just does not try; and <sup>hence</sup> enjoys life in eternity!'

Remarks



## Remarks

### Essay I

- You understood the essence of the topic well and justified how choices we make are more important than our situations through multiple examples.
- However, after a point, the examples and ideas felt repetitive. Try to add more dimensions to the topic like
  - Not all people in same situations have same destiny
  - Response to the situation decides our happiness
  - People are unable to choose wisely because
    - peer/social pressure
    - wrong choice is easier choice
    - think of immediate benefits & not long term
  - What's the wayforward?
- The essay also lacks a clear structure. Give your essay a distinct intro, body and conclusion.



## Essay II

- You seem to have missed the essence of the topic. Your only focus was on the idea of 'rationality'. 'To Rationalise' was also a key idea which was completely overlooked
- Can discuss points like
  - Being Rational involves
    - analysing based on logic
  - To Rationalise involves
    - take decisions based on emotions
    - justify decisions after you take them, even if they are wrong
    - value self interest over ethics
    - assert what we think is right
    - leads to ideas being implemented without scrutiny
- Make sure to analyse the topic well. Avoid dragging the essay with less relevant points. 'Quality' is more important than 'quantity' of ideas.



Remarks.