



An Institute for Civil Services

IAS TOPPER'S

TEST COPY

SHASHWAT TRIPURARI

RANK - 19

ESSAY - 1



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Roll No. _____

Time Allowed: 3 Hrs.

Max. Marks: 250

Instructions to Candidate

- Attempt both essays
- The test carries 250 marks.
- Write each essay in about 1000-1200 words.
- 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).

Remarks

Name Shashwat Tripurari

Mobile No. _____

Date _____

Signature Shashwat Tripurari

1. Invigilator Signature [Signature]

2. Invigilator Signature [Signature]

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1. Nothing is absolute, subjectivity applies everywhere
2. Life happens to all, only a few make it happen

1. NOTHING IS ABSOLUTE, SUBJECTIVITY APPLIES EVERYWHERE

'Ekum Sat Vipra Bahuda Vadanti'
(Truth is one, Sages call it by various names)
- Rig Veda

The above quote beautifully explains the astorsible dichotomy between absoluteness and subjectivity. It exclaims that even though the ultimate reality is absolute, it is interpreted by man and different cultural groups subjectively. Therefore, even in transcendental matters where human mind aims to understand absoluteness, he inevitably brings subjectivity. Similarly, in nearly all walks of life, nothing is absolute, subjectivity applies everywhere.

Remarks

Nicely elaborated.

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Before starting with the essay, should've clearly described absolute and subjectivity for the clarity of the analysis.

We may think that isn't Science absolute? However, a closer look reveals that sciences like physicals also leave certain room for subjectivity. For example, the famous Heisenberg uncertainty principle in physics postulates that we cannot absolutely predict both position and velocity of an object simultaneously. If one is predicted absolutely, the other becomes subjective.

In social sciences too, the 21st century is an age of postmodernism. Postmodernism holds the view that nothing is absolute. Every social phenomenon is explained by each scholar subjectively, corroborating the assertion that nothing is absolute.

Remarks

Could've given example to explain subjectivity.

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One might ~~them~~ ask that isn't my rights absolute? I have inalienable rights, so how can they be subjective?

Well, even our Constitution has the doctrine of 'reasonable restrictions' on fundamental rights. It lays down that the state can subjectively in certain instances abridge the rights of citizens, like for preserving law and order, public morality, dignity of women.

For e.g., my freedom of speech and expression (Article 19(1)(a)) is not absolute to the extent of giving hate speeches. It has to subjectively conform to the standards of public morality.

The modern polity of democratic nation state rests on the very principle of protecting diversity and subjectivity

Remarks

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of each individual. In medieval times rulers called themselves absolutists and ruled in a despotic manner. However people have always resisted such absolutists, like in the French Revolution. The masses asserted faith in a democratic order, which gives a voice to each individual, bringing subjectivity and variety in politics.

Subjectivity even makes us more tolerant. Jain ethics talks about 'Anekantavada', which says that reality is rooted in pluralism and subjectivity. It asks us to respect the ideas and views of others. In today's time, when moral policing and Khatam Panehaya

Remarks

Could've also shown the presence of subjectivity and lack of absoluteness across the economical dimension.

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verdicts against inter-caste marriages and inter-religion marriages are pronounced in the name of absolutist ethics, we need to become more tolerant and give room to subjective morals.

As many anthropologists propose, we need to adopt the doctrine of cultural relativism, that each culture is unique and must not be judged. The 19th century Europeans believed that only white skin is superior. They considered other people like black Africans, yellow Asians as inferior. They exclaimed, 'white man's burden' to attempt to civilize the 'primitive people'. However today it has been ~~propo~~ proved that the bias

Remarks

→ Firstly, should highlight what this point tell about subjectivity and secondly if it is linked with tolerant points, if should've been brief as it is not the the main theme of the topic.

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of skin colour is adaptation to hot or cold climate. No culture is superior or inferior, in absolutists' binary terms. We need to rise above binaries, and adopt a subjective lens.

Having a subjective attitude thus makes us broad-minded and prevents majoritarianism. A decade ago, homosexuality was believed to be a mental disorder! It was even classified so by WHO (World Health Organisation). But today we recognize that there can be subjectivity in sexual orientation, and therefore LGBTQ community has been given rights. Today being homosexual is no more

Remarks

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a mental disease.

Subjectivity also promotes entrepreneurship and innovation. Absolutist and monopolistic tendencies always hurt the economy. For e.g., pre-1991 economic liberalisation it was believed that only BSNL can provide telephone connections to the masses. But, post-1991 the different choices available to the consumers has lead to greater welfare. Thus, every economy should not aim for absoluteness and state control, but for freedom & subjectivity to boost creativity of each player.

Even in economic trade between different countries, we see rise of protectionism & trade war today. The protectionists, in an absolute manner, might argue that

Remarks

Should've placed this point before starting to evaluate the merit of subjectivity.

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free trade is causing trade deficit to their country. But a subjective view, points out that consumers in the importing country are also benefiting because of cheaper goods. Trade is and must not be viewed as a zero sum game, and a subjective understanding is necessary to ensure the welfare of diverse stakeholders.

However, despite subjectivity being present everywhere, there is a need to have certain degree of absoluteness in ~~at~~ many areas.

For example, human rights should be absolute. We should not try to defend inhuman practices like Sati, honour killings, ethnocide & genocide in the name of subjectivity.

Absoluteness

Remarks

means something which exist independent of the observer and is constant across space and time. However the meaning of words are not concrete - even then

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Certain ethical principles like integrity, compassion, love, empathy, honesty needs to be promoted. They should not be subjectively condemned, and the corrupt should never be defended. However, to a certain degree, here too the manifestation of these principles and the actions of one to embody these can be subjectively interpreted.

Also, today social media and fake news tries to capitalise on subjective biases. Even good people are trolled today in the name of ~~their own~~ subjective analysis. Many people promote confusion & chaos in society so that truth is not discovered. For e.g. many Cigarette companies in 1950s & 1960s played commercials that showed women smoking in the

Remarks

Think about the difference
between absoluteness and minimum consensus,
" " " rigidity
" " " credibility.

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name of gender emancipation and breaking ~~subject's~~ the shackles of patriarchy. Here, the subjective interpretation of smoking cigarettes was deliberately created so as to scut vested interests.

Therefore certain degree of absoluteness is also required in public morality. Certain principles should be given a degree of placed on a higher pedestal. But again they

For example, national security is vital which everyone should understand. But here too, it should not be beyond questioning. National security should never become inhuman for e.g. state sponsored surveillance or

Remarks

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state sponsored terrorism may be subjectively criticised.

As a famous Chinese proverb says, there are 3 truths: his, mine, the truth. Therefore, what is needed in various subjective interpretations is that 'the truth' is always protected.

Subjectivity should apply everywhere but everything should not be wholly subjective. There should also be room for the truth to remain one.

'Ekam Sat Vipra Bahuda Vadanti'
(Sages call it by various names, but truth is one) - Rig Veda

It's good that the essay has kept the complexity related to the topic intact in conclusion

* Understanding of the topic is good,

Remarks

57
125

and also there is clarity in written expression.

* The aspect of subjectivity in terms of its presence across different dimensions has not been clearly elaborated.

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2) Life happens to all, only a few make it happen.

Some decades ago, a young army driver was frustrated with his life. He was young, but was depressed and dejected. He was on the verge of committing suicide. But then he suddenly realised, life happens to all, but I can make it happen as I want. He restored self-faith and decided to work for society and his village. That army driver is the famous Anna Hazare who made life happening for thousands of people in Ralegaon Siddhi, not just for himself. As rightly unclaimed by this topic, life happens to all, but only a few make it happen.

Remarks

Doesn't explain happening of life though. Require more elaboration in the story to connect it with the topic.

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Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was an ordinary man in his youth. He had even lied to his father and stole money from him. But he realised that his aim in life was to make his country free from British exploitation. He reformed his mistakes, walked on a spiritual path, adopted truth and non-violence, and made the mighty British Empire decolonize India.

Similarly, Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar faced many hardships in his early life. He was once mocked by upper caste fellow students despite he being brilliant in academics. Had he wanted, he could have settled abroad because of his impeccable academic credentials so

Provide some theoretical grounding before giving examples.

Remarks

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as to escape from the caste-based discrimination in India. But he chose to stay in India and fight for the millions of oppressed Dalits and their rights. Ultimately, he became the chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution, and inked it one of the most progressive constitutions of the world.

Swami Vivekananda, born as Narendra Dutt, was an ordinary person before he met Swami Paramahansa. He along with his other friends visited Swami Paramahansa together. But only he had a spiritual vision among his friends. He was laughed on by some of his school friends that

Remarks

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are you mad?' Who needs spirituality which is only for the week'

But ~~Swami~~ Narendra was firm. He continued to tread on the spiritual path and became a world-renowned Saint. Later, the same friends used to come to him to seek path for self-realization. Swami Vivekananda's address at Chicago Parliament of World Religions, which he started by 'Dear Brothers and Sisters of America' is remembered even today.

Thus, all leaders and visionaries are born ordinary. Life happens to all of them. But what differentiates them is that they, through conscious efforts, make their ~~life~~ lines happening and also that of fellow humans

Remarks

Should've given such aspects before giving examples. Also, should have given less examples as they were not - adding new arguments in the essay

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THE INGREDIENTS TO MAKE LIFE HAPPENING

As the example of various great people shows, what is needed to make life happening is having compassion, love, empathy for others. One can't become great without these attributes. For example, mother Teresa, an ordinary nun from westside Yugoslavia, served in India because of her empathy and compassion for Indian diseased and malnourished population.

Persistence is also required whenever we walk on a difficult path. A famous dialogue in the Hollywood movie Rocky aptly exclaims, life is not how hard you can hit; it is

Remarks

Should've also highlighted the subjectivity related to 'making life happen'

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Think about the difference between making life happen and being famous.

about how hard you can get hit and still keep moving forward.

For example, Nelson Mandela spent decades in jail but never lost hope.

A strong willpower and determination is also required. Abraham Lincoln was the U.S. President at a time when the country was facing its greatest political and moral crisis i.e. during the Civil War.

But because of his determination and firmness, he preserved the American Union from being divided, modernised the US economy, abolished slavery and strengthened the federal government. His efforts paved the way for USA to become a future superpower.

marks

Could've also explored the dimension of external factors

→ material security
→ social location — Caste
→ Institutional support by the government — Gender

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NEGATIVE FALLOUTS

Human culture many a times becomes obsessed with making life happening. Many children are taught explicitly to 'perform or perish'. This has led to rising frustration and sometimes lack of contentment among the youth.

Some youth misinterpret the phrase of making life happening. They resort to taking drugs and psychotropic substances to achieve 'sense of high'.

It is very important that we properly delineate what it is to make life happening, else people can go on the wrong path.

Remarks

Certain leaders like Hitler tortured Jews and caused the Holocaust, in the name of creating an ideal society. Osama Bin Laden spread terrorism in the name of God, and claimed to give a fulfilling life to his followers. Thus, the human psyche of achieving something great can also be misused.

Hence, we need to sensitize people right from an early age the value of human rights, tolerance, law, integrity so that 'no wolf leads the flock astray' (Bible).

Remarks

Should've covered the inequality aspect as well. → to highlight how these factors can influence life's outcome.

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THE IDEAL WAY

In today's time of rising consumerism, materialism, individualism, and commercialisation, humans are being told that life has happened to you so enjoy it and fulfil all your desires and prefer self over everyone else. This has led everyone today to only think of their own self-interest.

We need the youth today to rise above this false notion of self-fulfilment at the cost of everyone else. There needs to be instilled the right meaning of making life happening.

Remarks

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Could've used certain thinkers like Plato, Socrates to further add depth to the analysis.

Service to others, respecting elders, doing work for collective welfare needs to be harmonised with individual's self-goals. Only then ~~his~~ & his/her life will be truly happening. India, in particular, has the largest number of poor people in the world. We need leaders who can ameliorate their misery and make their lives happening.

As William Shakespeare once said, 'All things are ready if our mind be so'. Similarly, life can be made happening if we desire so. Moreover, life has to be made happening not only for ourselves

Remarks

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but also for those around us.

'Arise, Awake and stop not till the goal is achieved'
— Swami Vivekananda.

We all should rise from this very day to make ours as well as others' lives happening, in a positive way, so as to bring greater human welfare and prosperity.

* Has not covered the dimension of - what is life? And how life happens to all?

* Avoid unnecessary arguments and examples that doesn't take the essay forward.

Remarks

* Read more & improve content.

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Should've connected the conclusion with the topic.
↓
Whether it's true that life happens to all, few make it happen.

57
125
53
100