

NEXT IAS

खण्ड-A / Section-A

उम्मीदवारों को
इस मार्ग में
लिखा जाना है।
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- Q.1 You can't serve data on a hungry man's plate.
आप किसी भूखे आदमी की थाली में डेटा नहीं परोस सकते।
- Q.2 AI is overcoming our mental limitation but not expanding our mental horizon.
ए.आई. मनुष्य की मानसिक सीमाओं को नियंत्रित कर रहा है, किंतु मानसिक क्षितिज का विस्तार नहीं कर रहा है।
- Q.3 We are using environment for politics, not politics for environment.
हम पर्यावरण का उपयोग राजनीति के लिए कर रहे हैं, न कि राजनीति का उपयोग पर्यावरण के लिए।
- Q.4 The worst form of inequality is to try to make unequal things equal.
असमानता का सबसे बुरा रूप है असमान को समान बनाने का प्रयास।

"You can't serve data on a hungry man's plate."

Recently, Chandrayaan 3 entered the moon's orbit and the first images of the dark side of the moon were captured by the onboard images as the rover gears up for a soft landing. With this mission, India will become a pioneer in the moon exploration and data collection. However, one wonders how this data will have any impact on the multi-

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dimensionally impoverished populations of India, suffering from hunger and poverty.

Likewise, across the world, there are countries and companies that are rapidly taking part in the race for data that has little to no impact on the truly needy people in the world. Companies like SpaceX are seeing rapid expansion in commercial space flight while Google and Meta are using data to target audiences and make profits. In none of the cases is the data leading to any real benefit to those most in need.

Even governments are focussed heavily on data collection & data localization with more and more funds being diverted to keeping data safe,

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sometimes with little regard to its best use for the upliftment of the down-trodden, at times even misused.

For the poor and destitute, data has barely any value. A rural labourer works seasonally at his farm, sells his produce to the local merchant and migrates to urban areas nearby for work in the off season. With very little savings, the labourer ^{lives} ~~works~~ hand to mouth, fluctuating in and out of poverty.

On the other hand, the rich take part in stock markets where they gain or value based on data points while capitalists invest based on market conditions & expectations. As a result, there exists a data dichotomy, exacerbated by digital exclusion, socio-economic inequality and inequitable growth.

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The government is trumped by this dichotomy because on one hand it must cater to its citizen's needs, on the other hand it depends on data for its growth and sustenance in an increasingly digitized world. So, is there a way to synergize both goals? Can data be used to serve the poor and needy instead of being monopolized by the well-off?

You can't serve data on a hungry man's plate but you can use it as a talisman against hunger & poverty.

When COVID-19 struck the world, India was one of the first nations to develop a vaccine. With this innovation, the government developed the COWIN app, allowing people across India to sign up

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for vaccination. Aadhaar card, voter ID, passport and any other proof of identity was used to sign up for the life saving vaccine. As a result, India's rich and poor alike availed the right to their lives as enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution. Thus, data became a harbinger of just service delivery in a time of socio-economic upheaval.

Similarly, blockchain technology has strengthened service delivery, with fewer leakages and better targeting while the One Nation One Ration Card scheme has allowed migrants to avail food in any part of India.

The land digitization scheme SWAMITVA uses drone technology to collect data on property rights thereby legitimizing claims on land and giving relief to

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fighting tenants. Simultaneously, it allows farmers to use land as collateral to avail loans from banks to build businesses. Thus, data may not directly serve the needs of the poor, but its accurate use can open up channels for sustainable development. After all,

“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”

On the same premise, PM Modi introduced the “Lakhpoti Didi” scheme that seeks to train ^{more} women ^{on} how to use drones to survey or collect data and thereby build businesses worth 1 lakh or more based on the data. Thus, data is not useful on its own, but combined with skilled and entrepreneurial women, data can help feed a family or even a village.

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Large scale data collection can also contribute to downstream benefits. NAVIC and NISAR satellites aim to study India and the world, respectively, combining geographical, meteorological & oceanographic data. Geospatial technology combined with Artificial Intelligence (AI) can revolutionize agricultural productivity by determining efficient crop choice, seed choice, water usage, fertilizer component and harvesting pattern. Apps like AgriApp can expand farmer knowledge to contribute to higher output and higher incomes.

Similarly, electronic National Agricultural Market (e-NAM) has provided a data-driven model for connecting the farmer to the end consumer, bypassing exploitative middlemen.

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Research and development on use of stubble and development of ethanol blending has further increased returns to farmers as raw material providers to big businesses. Similarly growth in data related to biopharma and nanotechnology has further revolutionized agriculture and related activities.

Just as data has had a role in the agricultural sector, the same has been seen in industry and employment. e-shram portal acts as a database for migrant labourers through which the government identifies and delivers social service schemes. ~~websites like~~ GATI shakti uses networking and data collation to synchronize infrastructure development, allowing for rapid filtration and digital inclusivity through Bharatnet.

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Direct Benefit Transfer using bank account data allows corruption-free and swift transfer of directly usable money to beneficiaries. Similarly, penetration of digital public infrastructure like VPI allow small businesses to earn and save efficiently. Now, government is preparing an open network for digital commerce [ONDC] that will give local retail shop owners equal leverage as large companies like Amazon and thereby expand their businesses.

Thus, data can formalize employment and expand businesses, thus making it a tool for economic growth and equitable development. Similarly, the government seeks to use data for better service delivery. Schemes like pradhan Digital health mission aim to create a repository of data for

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better healthcare services. Similarly, National digital library seeks to use information collation to enhance pedagogy and learning outcomes.

NATGRID brings together all national security agencies on one network where criminal information can be shared to enhance security and ensure right to a safe and secure environment ~~freedom~~ to all citizens.

e-governance mechanisms cater to the poorest of the poor through identification and grievance redressal. Telemedicine and e-courts deliver critical information and justice to the doorstep of the poor. The penetration of the internet allows individuals across the spectrum to access knowledge and excel. Thus, data is rightly called the oil of the 21st century - essential for growth at all levels.

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Clearly, data has many uses. Although it is ^{somewhat} useless on its own, its efficient use can uplift and feed the poor, empower them to take their development into their own hands and contribute to sustained growth. It is thus rightly said that data is power. It is up to the government and the people to use data for the greater good and contribute to socio-economic upliftment of all.

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खण्ड-B / Section-B

- Q.5 Existence is a science, living is an art.
अस्तित्व एक विज्ञान है, जीना एक कला है।
- Q.6 If the truth shall kill them, let them die.
यदि सत्य से किसी की मृत्यु होती है, तो उन्हें मरने दो।
- Q.7 The only way to go beyond things, is to go through them.
हालातों से परे जाने का एकमात्र तरीका उनसे होकर गुजरना है।
- Q.8 Dream for the best. Be prepared for the worst. Enjoy life in between.
सर्वश्रेष्ठ के लिए सपना देखें। सबसे बुरे के लिए तैयार रहें। इसके बीच के जीवन का आनंद लें।

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“If the truth shall kill them,
let them die.”

In 1930s India, Gandhiji had called for civil disobedience at a national scale. At Dharasana, led by Sarojini Naidu, men lined up calmly and peacefully as one by one they were beaten up by the British officers. Not a single man lifted a hand. Some had broken bones while others lost their lives. Some valiant ones lined up over and over again, fearlessly facing the violence of colonial power.

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This is one out of countless examples where men, women and children alike stood bravely and exemplified Gandhiji's "satyagraha" or "holding onto truth". With a steadfast conviction for the truth Gandhiji believed that a satyagrahi must be willing to die in his attempt to make the other side "see" the reality. Hence, to him, the truth was supreme - more valuable than life itself, and must therefore be preserved no matter the cost.

[What is truth?]

Before the impact of truth is discerned, it is necessary to define truth. Truth has different meanings amongst different religions and communities. While Shankaracharya believed in Advaita philosophy which claimed that atman & brahman are one,

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आप इसे पढ़ेंगे।
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Jains believe in multiple truths or "Anekantvada". In contrast, whereas Buddhists and Jivikas believe the real world to be "maya" or "illusion", for scientists, the world made of atoms ~~is~~ ^{is} the truth, as are the fundamental principles of science. In society, one's world view is often construed as the only truth whereas in reality there are as many truths as there are people.

So in a world of so many truths, when is it justified for truth to be upheld even at the cost of life?

Truth Reigns Supreme

There are some universal truths that history has judged as supreme, for which people have sacrificed lives.

In the modern world, the first such truth was the 'divine' right of liberty. Starting with the American &

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French revolution, democracy or rule "by the people" was becoming a repeated phrase. On the same premise, India along with other subjugated, colonized nations called for Independence. Revolutionaries willingly sacrificed their lives for the cause of freedom, like Bhagat Singh and Chandrashekhar Azad.

Similarly, slavery as a crime was the next big truth. Apartheid & racism were fought viciously with the truth of "equality" of all humans, irrespective of colour and background. Throughout the enslaved nations, people were ready to die for the cause of equality and justice.

In today's world of social media & fake news, the premise can also be applied to a government built on lies. Every citizen of a nation has the

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responsibility to raise their voice against an authority built on untruths. In fact, a democratic government must willing let itself topple if when the truth is revealed because only then can democracy prevail. Otherwise cases like military junta rule in Myanmar become vehicles of violence.

Thus, there are cases in which truth reigns supreme and it must be adhered to even if it causes death & instability. This is because in these cases, the truth is a call against injustice. However, is it always worth dying for the truth? Are there times when truth need not be told for the greater good?

The Significance of Untruths

In the Mahabharat, a war of good over evil, Yudhishtira is asked to

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tell a white lie about the death of Ashwatthama as a means to gain an upper hand in the war. Later on, Lord Krishna uses his chakra to cover the sun, signalling the end of the war to take advantage of an unsuspecting enemy.

In both cases, had Yudhishtira & Krishna allowed truth to prevail, it may have killed them and changed the outcome of the war. The Mahabharat thus shows that when a greater sacrifice is at play, manipulating the truth may be a necessary evil.

Similarly, there are cases where the truth is futile. In Hitler's Germany, declaring oneself as Jewish or even a supporter of the Jewish cause meant immediate death. In the face of a rigid and emotionally fueled belief like

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that of Hitler, the truth gets lost & loses relevance. Only people who hide and lie to the draconian regime are able to survive to tell their story - like Anne Frank.

Similarly in Khmer Rouge regime of Pol Pot in Cambodia, the intellectual class was brutally murdered to create a communist society. However, those who lied about their professions were able to survive 4 years of cruelty and lived to tell the story at the end.

Thus, although the cause was the same - freedom, democracy, equality - the authoritarian regime made the truth ^{futile} ~~unworthy~~ to die for. Instead, ~~lying~~ lying, deceit and underground networking was what brought these systems to their end.

~~However~~

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Thus, it can be said that the statement "if the truth shall kill them, let them die," does not always hold. Whereas it must be expected that one must be strong enough to withstand the truth, examples from the Mahabharat show that truth can be sacrificed at the altar of ~~the~~^a greater cause.

Who decides what is truth and who decides the greater good? These are just a few of the many unanswerable questions that humanity has contended with since the ancient Greeks up until today. In the midst of a climate crisis, a Russia-Ukraine war and rising authoritarianism, different faces and versions of truth contend with each other. The Russia's "truth" is fighting the "truth" of Ukraine, creating

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death across borders. The truth of democratic rights continue to fight against the "truth" of authoritarian regimes in Myanmar and African nations. Climate injustice continues to pit believers against non-believers and the vulnerable become helpless victims.

It is time to reach collaborative truths. India's G20 motto of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" is a reminder that as ~~just like~~ members of one big global family, everyone has a responsibility to "see" and understand one another's truths and act collectively for the global good. It is time to value life and fight hand-in-hand for the ultimate truth of human prosperity.

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Space for Rough Work

Can data be used?

A

Can't serve data on a hungry man's plate.

What is the point of how does Chandrayaan 3 serve the poor man?

Blockchain data, cryptocurrency
Can't serve on plate
→ but can be a tool

DNDC

50
x 20
1000

Give a man a fish → feed for a day.

Teach him to fish → feed forever.

data can help beat hunger & poverty.

NAVIC

NISAR

data → Lakshmi Didi → drones → collect data

geospatial tech → agri

geography + meteorology + oceanography → dis. man.

If the truth shall kill them, let them die.

National Digital Lib
NDHM
data on social media.

Truth is supreme

→ it must be upheld at all cost

→ satyagraha

Truth will kill

Amne Frank

lying abt Jewish identity could save ppl in Germany.

→ but what was that life worth in the midst of ghettoization and ruthless discrimination of brethren.
(WWII)

Dharasana

only one?

many truths
Anekantvada
Swadawada

Truth | What is it?

1

Should truth always be told?
↳ Mahabharat → Yudhishthira lied abt Ashwaththama's death as a means of winning the war of good over evil.

↳ Krishna used chakra to hide sun → end of war

Cases where truth may kill but truth is not supreme

Islam Terror

Khmer Rouge Cambodia → Pol Pot kill all doctors/intellectuals

↳ lie to live

↳ truth of self gov.

↳ freedom, liberty

↳ govt → fake info

American Rev

French Rev

Anticolonial

env.

Supreme Truths

↳ lie to live

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