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Q5

Culture is what we are, civilization is what we have.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2020 · Essay · 125 marks · Philosophical and ethical quotes

Philosophical and ethical quotes

Core demand of the question

- **Stake:** culture is being; civilisation is having - inner form vs outer kit
- **One stand:** a people can have airports and still not be a culture of dignity; or be rich in being and poor in kit. Hold both
- Move through self, India, tech, world. Keep one honest counter
- Close on being that can still build

Revision summary

Not a full essay - a map.

- **Open with three phones and no meal vs a courtyard and a leak. Stand:** being vs kit; refuse both swaggers.
- **Headings:** self, caste/boast, feed, border, then one counter.

Earn **Tagore** and **Ambedkar**.

Close on drain plus a non-humiliating song.

Note

This is a map, not the full 1,000-1,200 word essay.

Anecdote

A family owns three phones and no shared meal. Another owns a courtyard song and a leaking roof. Culture is what they are when the kit is off. Civilisation is the kit and the city. The line asks which one we are becoming - and what we only have.

One stand

- **Culture:** meanings, restraints, a language of respect. Civilisation: surplus, law, science, a drain that works. Write against both civilisational swagger and a romance of poverty as culture.

Heading map**What the line is asking**

- **What we are:** habits of the heart (**Tagore** vs a museum of the past).
- **What we have:** GDP, missiles, a metro, a stack of rights on paper.
- **Risk:** using 'culture' to freeze caste as being.

Self

- Manners without a library; a library without manners.

India

- A civilisational boast that skips a manual scavenger. **Ambedkar**: annihilate that being.
- A temple and a lab: having and being can sit together (**Nehru** plus a bhakti line).

Tech

- We have a feed; we are an attention span. **Digital civilisation**, thin culture.

World

- A high-GDP **civilisation** that cannot be kind at a border.

The counter

The leaking roof is not culture; it is a missing civilisation of drains. Do not baptise deprivation. And 'having' a constitution is also a kind of being if we practise it. The line is a diagnostic, not a ranking that always prefers the song to the hospital.

Last paragraph

- **Close**: build the drain, keep the song that does not humiliate. Expand - this is only the map.

Facts & figures

Tagore

Where the mind is without fear - culture as being, not as a museum.

Ambedkar

A culture of caste is a being that must be unmade - civilisation as a new habit.

Art. 17 / 21

Having a clause vs being a people who still practise the clause.

Manual scavenging

The boast's hole - a test of what we are.

Public goods

Drains, labs, a metro - civilisation as kit the song still needs.

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