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Q5

Social media is triggering 'Fear of Missing Out' amongst the youth, precipitating depression and loneliness.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · Essay · 125 marks · Philosophical and ethical quotes

Philosophical and ethical quotes

Core demand of the question

- Unpack FOMO as a designed feeling, not a private weakness
- **One stand:** the feed profits from comparison; youth pay in sleep, mood, and belonging
- Move through mind, market, family, state. Keep one honest counter
- Close on attention as a public health issue, not a lecture to "log off"

Revision summary

Not a full essay - a map.

- **Open with a 1 a.m. hostel corridor. Stand:** FOMO is designed; youth pay in mood.
- **Headings:** self, market, society, state, then one counter.

Earn one thinker once. Peg DPDP or a health line, not fake decimals.

Close on attention as a commons.

Note

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

Anecdote

- **A hostel corridor at 1 a.m.:** four screens, four lives that look fuller than the room. No one has gone out. Everyone has missed something. The topic names the product - Fear of Missing Out - and the bill: depression and loneliness among the young.

One stand

- **FOMO is not a character flaw. It is an engine:** infinite scroll, metrics, a market that sells belonging. Write to blame the design as well as the habit, and still keep a door open for real friendship.

Heading map

What the line is asking

- **FOMO:** anxiety that others are living a better reel.
- **Youth:** students, first jobs, migrants in cities - identity still forming.
- **Depression and loneliness:** not slang; health outcomes. Do not diagnose the examiner. Show mechanism.

Self

- Comparison is older than the phone; the phone made it 24-hour and ranked.

- **Sleep, body image, exam panic:** the personal desert.

Market and design

- **Notifications, streaks, "others are online":** engineered restlessness.
- **Influencer economy:** luxury as artificial poverty (cousin of the **Socrates** line).

Society

- The feed is a crowd that does not return a favour. **Durkheim**'s anomie in a new dress.
- Family WhatsApp can be care or surveillance; name both.

State and school

- **Digital Personal Data Protection, IT Rules, school phone policies:** clumsy, necessary experiments.
- **Public parks, libraries, sport:** offline commons so missing out is not the only fear.

The counter

The same tools organise a protest, a study group, a job, a queer youth's first safe room. Ban-as-solution is a desert. The essay fails if it only scolds. Demand design that does not harvest panic, and skills to leave the corridor.

Last paragraph

- **Close:** treat attention like water - public, limited, easy to poison. Raise a floor of offline life; regulate the engine; do not preach sainthood to a nineteen-year-old. Expand in the hall; this is only the map.

Facts & figures

Durkheim

Anomie: a crowd without a binding norm - the feed as a lonely crowd. One earned use.

Vivekananda

Strength is in the self you train - use against comparison, not as a slap at the depressed.

DPDP Act 2023

Consent and duties of data fiduciaries - a legal handle on the harvest of attention.

IT Rules / platforms

Due diligence on intermediaries - imperfect; name the gap, do not pretend a ban is a policy.

WHO / NMHP

Mental health as public health - FOMO belongs in the clinic and the school, not only in a moral essay.