

Wars of Nations are fought to change maps. But wars of poverty are fought to map changes.

Introduction: After the end of **World War 2**, the whole world was wrapped in reconstruction and rebuilding to get over the horrors and destruction of the war. Forgiveness, partnership and truce had become the watchword in the wake of the **widely adopted UN charter**. However, during that time itself, the **Korean Peninsula** became embroiled in an ugly war. The war lasted for three years with a casualty of about 5 million, changing the world's political map forever, and giving the USA a permanent place in East Asia. The Asian map had been redrawn along the 38th Parallel due to the war of ideology between two leading superpowers of the 20th Century.

The resulting nations, **North and South Korea**, emerged with a significantly different future. North Korea experienced significant poverty and isolation due to its political system and international sanctions. On the other hand, South Korea flourished due to remarkable economic development.

Efforts that followed after the war to address the poverty and developmental disparities between **North and South Korea can be seen as the 'War of Poverty' that was fought to map change**. Joint ventures, such as the Kaesong Industrial Complex between North and South Korea, aimed to create employment opportunities and foster economic interdependence.

Are wars the only way to arrive at a lasting conclusion? What have been the main reasons that nations go to war? Are wars beneficial, or does it lead to poverty? These are some of the questions that we will try to answer in this essay.

Body:

The idea that wars are the process of growing, becoming influential and settling scores has been a mainstream idea since early times. Historically, the tribes fought wars to access material resources, females and gold.

In **ancient times**, when agriculture was the main economy, wars were fought to gain control of more land. Vedas describe the war of ten kings fought between Aryan and non-Aryan tribes; Mahajanpadas and Mauryan Empire fought wars to expand so that more fertile land would lead to a stronger state economy. These wars changed the map of land boundaries.

In **medieval times**, cultural wars such as the **Holy Crusades between Islam and Christianity** in the 11th Century and the Protestant – Catholics Reformation War in the 16th- 17th Century were fought to preserve the culture and expand the religious influence. The contemporary Israel and Palestine wars also try to achieve cultural domination. These wars redrew the religious maps across the world.

After the **Industrial Revolution**, wars among nations were fought to control the resources needed for industry. Colonial expansion by imperialist countries was done to gain more resources (Iron, Cotton, Sugar, Tobacco, Gold and Timber) and markets for the industrial products by the modernised countries. India, China, Australia and Africa were all colonised at some point. These wars redrew the resource ownership map of the world.

During the 20th Century, when nationalism grew, wars were fought to change the boundaries of nation-states so that regional and cultural affiliations would become stronger. **Serbian Nationalism contributed to World War 1**, and Sub-nationalism in the USSR also led to its collapse and redrew the maps of nationalism in the world.

After the World Wars, the ideology of Communism and Capitalism came to a crossroads, and the **Cold War led to redrawing of the boundary of ideology in the world**. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the Vietnam War are important in this context and had a long-lasting impact that continues today.

The war on Terrorism, led by the US against Afghanistan and Iraq, also led to redrawing of the boundaries of Democracy in the world. Democracy was exported to various regions under the supervision of US Troops, and the **Democracy Map** was redrawn around the world.

Some other wars are also fought within nations. **Civil Wars** such as the Chinese Wars between Nationalists (Kuomintang) and Communists in the 1940s, the Pakistan-Bangladesh War of Liberation in 1971, **the Rwandan Genocide in 1994 and the Arab Spring in 2010s are some of the wars that led to redrawing of map boundaries**.

The **Present Russia-Ukraine war** is also being fought to change the boundaries of culture, ideology and resources. However, when the war ends, the trail of misery, poverty and destruction remains. At present, Ukraine has suffered a loss of more than \$250B due to the disruption in production and economy.

However, wars have failed as an instrument to achieve growth, influence or lasting outcomes. The religious wars failed to assert religious dominance after adopting secularism as a value. Wars of land have lost value after the age of information technology and cyberspace. With the realisation that the wars' outcomes are not everlasting, the significance of the war is greatly reduced. In the **Book 'Why Nations Go to War'** the author **Stoessinger** claims that the war is rooted in misperceptions and the diluted self-interest of the individual leaders or decision-makers.

War is young men dying and old men talking – Franklin D. Roosevelt

Roosevelt also believed that wars **bring death to the general masses** so that the ego of older leaders is satisfied. With no benefits for the masses, wars are instruments for the leaders to draw the attention of the masses away from real problems like poverty, inequality and injustice.

War does not determine who is right but who is left- Bertrand Russell.

For the people who are left, the biggest monster that raises its head after a war is the **monster called poverty**. Supply chain disruptions and the destruction of Critical Infrastructures like power grids, transport networks, and communication networks lead to acute deprivation for a majority. Poverty has also been a challenge without nations going to war. Reasons such as lack of infrastructure, education, employment, hunger, and conflicts lead to poverty.

Poverty is the worst form of violence – Mahatma Gandhi.

World Bank says about 10% of the world's population lives in extreme poverty. Extreme poverty has been defined as people who live on less than \$2.15 per day at the 2017 purchasing power parity level. The recent Pandemic has made it worse. This is the greatest common enemy of humanity against which we all should come together to wage war. However, to fight an enemy, we need to understand it.

Poverty is not just economic; it is **multi-dimensional**. Economic poverty refers to insufficient money to meet basic needs such as clothing, food, shelter and education. Almost every second person living in the states of sub-Saharan **Africa** lives below the **poverty line**.

Social poverty refers to **social exclusion, discrimination and lack of participation** in social events. For example- menstruating women are not allowed to enter homes and temples. Dalits cannot sit on chairs and horses in front of higher caste people.

Political poverty is the **deprivation of rights from a group of people**. Migrants are a section of people who experience political poverty frequently.

Cultural poverty refers to **the lack of a cultural heritage** to which a feeling of belongingness can be attached. Intellectual poverty is the missing efforts of research and entrepreneurship to create or find something new. Poverty is multi-dimensional; therefore; therefore, the effort required to fight the monster should also be multilateral.

Agencies such as the United Nations Development Program, World Bank, Oxfam, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and all the national governments are working to alleviate and eradicate poverty. The war against poverty has started. The Nobel Prize in 2019 was awarded to the couple Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty.

Conclusion:

However, to ensure that the war against poverty is effective, it must be quantitative and qualitative. Justice should be a key component against the war on poverty so that every section gets its due share of prosperity. Imagine a world where the poor do not enjoy the protection of justice, and every dispute is settled based on might. After a certain time, the poor will rise into rebellion and violence, starting wars again. One solution for this can be to strengthen the open foundations and NGOs, such as Concern Worldwide, that work for justice in marginalised groups by appropriate intervention. These efforts will eventually bring prosperity; after all, **the moral arc of Poverty is Long, but it bends towards justice.**

The fight against poverty aims to identify improvements in societal and economic structures that will, in the end, improve the lives of impoverished people. Wars against poverty prioritise correcting socio-economic inequities and enhancing the general well-being of people and communities over wars between states, which concentrate on altering physical geographies through military conflict. Japan is a prime example of this phrase as after the Second World War, Japan discarded its military outlook and focused on improving human development, which made it one of the most developed countries in the world.

I think, therefore, I exist.

Introduction:

After giving up his status and fortune, the Hindu prince **Siddhartha Gautama** succeeded in his quest for enlightenment as a spiritual ascetic. At the age of 35, Siddhartha attained enlightenment and transformed into a **Buddha** after overcoming the forces of the evil Mara. He became "**enlightened**" due to his thoughts, illuminating a different route to the truth for everyone to see.

Or

Socrates received a death sentence after being charged with corrupting Athens' youth. He decided to stay and spent his last days with his friends before consuming the executioner's cup of lethal hemlock. The Athens court

sent Socrates to death for impiety and corrupting the youth. The contentious choice looms over Athens' illustrious history as a place renowned for its intellectual and political freedom.

René Descartes proposed the notion that thinking itself affirms our existence. The "first principle" of René Descartes's philosophy is the Latin phrase "**cogito, ergo sum**," which is typically translated into English as "**I think, therefore I am**." Descartes' timeless philosophical thesis, which explores the core of human life and the profound significance of thought, has inspired innumerable philosophers throughout history.

In this essay, we will delve into the profound meaning contained within these words, illuminating their ongoing applicability in the contemporary era and their potential to promote both individual and societal advancement.

Body: Meaning Behind

Descartes maintained that our capacity for logical thought, including the ability to question and doubt, is proof of our consciousness and, thus, of our existence as thinking beings. This idea serves as the cornerstone of Descartes' philosophical system, known as Cartesian dualism, which distinguishes between the body (physical existence) and the mind (thinking).

Humans have traditionally contributed to the human race's individual and communal growth due to their unrivalled potential for cognition and idea production. **René Descartes said that because thinking is so essential to human existence, "I think, therefore I am." There is no denying the enormous power of the mind. It enables us to understand and make sense of our environment.** We interpret our experiences, create our own beliefs, and form our perceptions of reality through our ideas. Our perceptions, feelings, and behaviours are shaped by our thoughts, which in turn affect how we perceive the world and how we interact with others.

In his book, noted Israeli Historian Yuval Harari said humans are different from animals based on thinking. While animals are conscious of their surroundings, only humans can think, apply knowledge, and improve their lives.

Looking into history, we find that the emphasis on reason, scepticism, and individuality was revitalized throughout the 18th-century Enlightenment. **Immanuel Kant, John Locke, and Voltaire were among the philosophers who believed that people have the capacity for reason and the ability to question established institutions and ideas.** During this time, conventional religious authority began to give way to the importance of reason and critical thought. **The Enlightenment era promoted a culture where intellectuals questioned conventional wisdom, investigated novel scientific findings, and promoted political and social reforms founded on reason and individual autonomy.**

The idea that "I think, therefore I exist" has resonance with ancient intellectual traditions in the context of Indian philosophy. Indian philosophy, which has its roots in the **Vedas**, strongly focuses on self-realization and the investigation of the self. The idea of "**Jnana**" (**knowledge**) emphasizes how critical reflection and discernment are to realizing one's true nature. The importance of self-reflection and the quest for knowledge to achieve spiritual enlightenment and ultimate emancipation has long been emphasized by Indian philosophers. **Jainism strongly emphasises the cleansing of the soul (jiva) by correct belief and behaviour.**

Thinking ought to be our most prized enjoyment, both in good and bad times. Thinking helps us escape difficult situations and keeps us from engaging in "pleasure without conscience" during prosperous times. **Swami Vivekananda stressed the value of thought and introspection, saying, "Talk to yourself at least once a day, or you may miss a meeting with an excellent person in this world."**

The idea that "I think, therefore I am" was crucial in undermining the legitimacy of slavery and igniting the abolitionist movement. It provided a philosophical basis for the argument that, regardless of their circumstances or the repressive systems in which they were imprisoned, all people had intrinsic worth, dignity, and the ability to think for themselves. As scholars like **Immanuel Kant said, it is a categorical imperative to respect all human dignity.**

The idea that "I think, therefore I exist" has significant consequences for **self-awareness and personal development.** It emphasizes how important reflection and critical thought are for comprehending oneself and the outside world. When people are aware of the power of thinking, they can explore their beliefs, values, and motives, which leads to self-discovery and personal growth. Through introspection, one can confront preconceptions, challenge presumptions, and obtain a deeper comprehension of one's identity and purpose.

The statement "I think, therefore I exist" also implies the capacity for freedom and autonomy. Through thought, individuals possess the ability to deliberate, make decisions, and exercise agency in their lives. Through the power of thought, **Social Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar** can question patriarchal norms, challenge oppressive systems, and advocate for change. By acknowledging their capacity for independent thought, these reformers challenged norms like Sati, Child marriage, and widow remarriage. These acts gave women the confidence to affirm their individuality and assert their existence as active participants in shaping their destinies.

Beyond personal growth, this statement holds significant implications for societal development. **A society that values and encourages critical thinking fosters innovation, progress, and social change.** When individuals

engage in thoughtful analysis and questioning, they can challenge outdated norms, seek solutions to complex problems, and drive positive transformations.

The cultural sway, superior educational system, technical accomplishments, and political values of the US are sources of its soft power. American culture has enthralled the world and spread American values and ideas through its music, film, literature, and fashion. The American educational system draws students from all over the world and develops future leaders who bring information, values, and cultural experiences from America with them.

The concept of "I think, therefore I exist" carries **vital implications for the education system.** An education system that promotes critical thinking and intellectual autonomy empowers students to become active learners and independent thinkers. As India's New Education policy also focuses on imbibing critical thinking to make India a knowledge economy.

The concept that our thoughts affirm our existence empowers individuals to **engage critically with political issues.** It encourages active participation, informed decision-making, and the exercise of political rights. When individuals recognise the power of their thoughts, they become conscious of their ability to influence political outcomes and drive positive change through their ideas, opinions, and actions. Therefore, political scholars like **Hannah Arendt advocated critical thinking and active participation in politics to prevent totalitarianism.**

Throughout history, social movements and activism have been fuelled by individuals who question existing power structures and strive for social change. At one time, when **Machiavelli advocated the separation of religion from politics, he was criticized as evil.** But later, his ideas formed the basis of modern-day "Secularism" The belief that one's thoughts and ideas have the power to bring about meaningful transformation advocates questioning existing beliefs.

To **address environmental challenges,** activism, consumer decisions, policy advocacy, and conservation initiatives can all be used as examples of the "I think, therefore I am" principle. Individuals are more equipped to take responsibility for the environment, support sustainable practices, and contribute to preserving our world when they are aware of the power of their ideas and deeds. **Examples include Wangari Maathai, who started the Green Belt Movement in Kenya to promote reforestation and community empowerment, and Greta Thunberg, who inspired a global movement of young people to become climate activists.**

Thinking fuels innovation, though it cannot guarantee success, but it does ensure learning, as Edison failed countless times while inventing the incandescent bulb. Though every time he did similar experiments, each was different from the others. Each new experiment was a new one with lessons from the past. As **Edison himself said, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." Thus, each step is a new learning experience.**

Abraham Maslow's concept of self-actualization emphasizes the importance of individuals reaching their full potential and fulfilling their innate needs. Maslow believed that self-actualization is the ultimate goal of human existence and that individuals should strive to reach this goal through personal growth and self-discovery.

Consequences of not thinking: As our world becomes increasingly tech-savvy and fast, we are expected to make decisions in split seconds. The modern **attention economy** edifice rests on clickbait consumerism, where we buy products without thinking. On social media platforms, people, in general, are responding to hateful content and fake news due to their impulsive mindset. This has wider implications for our social fabric by spreading fake news and fuelling tensions between communities.

Some careless actions can backfire horribly and make the situation worse. For instance, **China's infamous one-child policy** is now experiencing an unprecedented labour shortage, which is causing a significant loss of business even though it immediately had favourable impacts on resource management and development.

The Flip-side

According to Mahatma Gandhi, thought must be translated into action to shape our existence. For him, the thinking process was inseparable from the actions it inspired. Gandhi believed that our thoughts must align with our values and principles for them to manifest into meaningful existence. Thus, in the Gandhian perspective, **"I think, therefore I exist" becomes "I think and act, therefore I exist."**

As Ralph Waldo Emerson also said, "An ounce of action is worth a tonne of theory."

On the other hand, **Karl Marx argues that our thinking is shaped by society's economic conditions or class structure.** According to Marx, the dominant section of society influences the ideas that prevail. In this perspective, it can be said that **"the dominant thinks; therefore, we exist."** This influence can be exerted through mechanisms such as media controlled by the dominant class. Even postmodernist scholars like **Foucault say that "nothing is absolute, and the wide discourses are shaped by those in power".**

Conclusion:

As Albert Einstein said, "Any fool can know. The point is to understand."

While the power of thought is undeniable, various challenges hinder its realization in contemporary society. These challenges include societal conditioning, dogmatism, and the prevalence of misinformation. Overcoming these hurdles requires fostering a culture of intellectual curiosity, open-mindedness, and respectful discourse.

Encouraging interdisciplinary approaches, promoting scientific literacy, and nurturing creativity can enhance critical thinking skills and empower individuals to challenge preconceived notions.

According to APJ Abdul Kalam, thinking should become our greatest asset because it helps our mind explore every aspect of life. Thinking critically and questioning the world around us is fundamental to our existence as sentient beings. Through thought, we explore the depths of our minds, unravel the mysteries of the universe, and strive for personal growth and societal progress. Embracing this profound idea can serve as a guiding principle for individuals and societies, inspiring us to continually seek knowledge, challenge assumptions, and make meaningful contributions to our world.

If we are to preserve our culture, we must continue to create it

Introduction: In 2022, India entered into **Amrit Kaal of Azaadi**, i.e., we are celebrating 75 years of independence. But does the History of India date back to only 75 years? The answer is NO. We stand as the bedrock of human civilisation. This fact has been attested to by numerous textual, scriptural, archaeological, epigraphical, scientific, and allied evidence. We pride ourselves as the bearers of the longest-continuing culture known to humanity and the only culture that continues to rejuvenate itself with the tides of time.

In the words of the **great Indologist Max Mueller**: "If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions, I should point to India." This statement of Max Muller is sufficient to highlight India's importance in the world and to be specific about Indian culture and traditions that have evolved over time. Now here arises a question: What is culture, and how do we get to know about our culture?

It raises a very curious question: What is the culture?

According to **Andre Malraux, culture is the culmination of all artistic, romantic, and intellectual expressions that have helped free man from slavery throughout history.** The traditional definition of culture consists of the shared patterns of attitudes, actions, values, traditions, customs, and artefacts that define a particular group or community. It encompasses the beliefs, customs, and material things passed down from one generation to the next and influences how people view and engage with their environment. However, culture is not only tied to a particular physical area or race; it can also be **connected to several subcultures, groups, or even online communities.**

Overall, it is a **higher level of belief, broadens the mind and spirit,** and improves intercultural communication. Additionally, if they have a deeper spiritual understanding of one another, getting past political and economic obstacles will be simpler.

The cultural components emphasise the importance of culture and demonstrate the crucial part that culture plays in forming people, societies, and the world in which we live. For our heritage and identity to continue, culture must be preserved. **Culture connects us to our roots and ancestors by showcasing our historical, aesthetic, and intellectual accomplishments.** We give future generations the ability to comprehend their place in history and appreciate the knowledge and achievements of those who came before them by preserving culture.

The **preservation fosters social cohesiveness and harmony by promoting respect and understanding between various populations.** It fosters a sense of self, community, and pride, fostering social ties and advancing both individual and group well-being. Additionally, culture preservation enables the passing down of priceless customs, knowledge, and abilities from one generation to the next, encouraging education and individual growth. We ensure our cultural heritage's continuous relevance and significance to our lives and the lives of future generations by embracing and protecting it.

Why and How of Culture Preservation

For several reasons, culture has to be preserved. The continuity of a community's distinctive heritage is ensured by preserving cultural practices, traditions, and knowledge, enabling subsequent generations to connect with their roots, comprehend their position in history, and uphold a strong sense of cultural identity.

Diversity is celebrated and promoted by cultural preservation. It enables the celebration of the distinctive contributions and viewpoints of many cultures, fostering a more diverse and inclusive society. For example, the Indian model is known as the "**salad bowl**" **model**, where each element is distinct yet holds its individuality which is one of the factors for India's thriving Democracy.

Cultural preservation also protects priceless traditional knowledge, abilities, and wisdom accumulated over generations. Cultural customs and traditions represent accumulated knowledge about many facets of life, such as farming, medicine, handicrafts, and more. Future generations can pass down this information if cultural heritage is preserved, preventing its loss. For example, the knowledge of **Yoga and Ayurveda**, which proves better for holistic healthcare, is based on India's traditional knowledge.

So far, we have discussed the aspects of preservation, but can we also create the culture?

We can, in reality, shape and contribute to the cultural practices, beliefs, and expressions within our societies as individuals since culture is formed by human agency. Innovation and adaptation are necessary for the

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construction of culture since new concepts, technological advancements, and societal changes influence its development. By **sharing, borrowing, and transforming practices and traditions, cultural exchange and engagement with different communities and societies enrich and affect cultural aspects.** Artists, musicians, writers, and other creative people contribute to cultural creation through their artistic expressions, which reflect and interpret social ideals, difficulties, and goals. Cultural institutions and movements provide platforms for the development, diffusion, and preservation of cultural practices and knowledge. In India, the development of **the "Urdu" language, and Indo-Islamic architecture** is a perfect example of how merging two cultures can beautifully create a new hybrid culture.

Due to **causes including globalisation, cultural integration, and language supremacy, many languages around the world are in danger of dying out.** The **revival of the Hawaiian language** is one famous case of language preservation through creativity. Following efforts to develop new terminology and instructional materials due to the language's serious endangerment, immersion schools and language programs were established throughout the Hawaiian Islands. **The Hawaiian language** has seen a rebirth thanks to these activities, with more people speaking, writing, and utilising it in a variety of settings. This illustration shows how the ongoing development of linguistic materials, vocabulary, and learning opportunities can aid in the preservation and revival of endangered languages.

What links preservation and creation?

The idea of **cultural continuity** can be used to explain the connection between creation and preservation in the field of culture. The act of preservation acts as a link between the works of the past and the creative projects of the present and the future. Drawing from this **protected cultural history, artists and producers recreate, reinvent, and incorporate elements into their work.** Cultural heritage preservation serves as a source of inspiration, enabling the investigation of novel concepts and the revival of traditional forms. For example, **the government revives traditional water harvesting in Rajasthan, like step-wells "Bawaris".**

The act of creation also emphasises the worth and significance of preservation. As new cultural manifestations develop, they are woven into the fabric of a culture that succeeding generations will work to protect. The creative process can also motivate new preservation initiatives and emphasise the value of preserving cultural assets for present and future generations.

The **Indus Valley Civilization's culture** and history are preserved and valued by the present and future generations through historical research, knowledge dissemination, and creative inspiration.

There must be a relationship between cultural creation and preservation for the continuity, vibrancy, and development of our shared history. **Preservation makes sure that the works of the past are protected, serving as a basis and inspiration for present-day and future creative pursuits.** It promotes respect for the variety and depth of cultural manifestations, fostering a better awareness of and appreciation for our common humanity. In response, creation gives **conserved cultural legacy new vitality by offering new viewpoints, innovations, and aesthetic forms that advance culture.** Production and preservation promote a dynamic cycle that ensures that culture is sustained, changed, and expanded. For example, **the Andaman and Nicobar tribe's survival techniques during the 2004 tsunami are commendable.**

Conclusion:

Every act of creation is, first and foremost, an act of destruction, as famous artist Pablo Picasso famously said. It highlights the **connection between preservation and creation.** It also serves as a reminder that cultural development and preservation are complementary rather than mutually exclusive processes that have allowed the culture to flourish and influence future generations.

We create a lively and **welcoming cultural landscape that celebrates diversity, fosters understanding, and contributes to the continued development of human civilisation by protecting historical riches and encouraging creative innovation.** Therefore, let's continue to value both creation and preservation because they both contribute to the continuity, evolution, and **vitality of culture and serve as a link between the past, present, and future.** Additionally, by doing this, we leave our future generations with a rich cultural heritage and a legacy of inspiration.