

## Essay Writing

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**Importance of cyber security in sovereignty of India. Share your views.**

**OR**

**Inequality in India can be reduced by the market forces rather than the Government interferences.**

## Precis Writing

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FREE speech appears to be under attack in India. There are comedians who are in jail or are facing criminal contempt proceedings. It's hard to miss the chilling effect. Last week, the Madhya Pradesh High Court rejected the bail pleas of comedians Munawar Faruqui and Nalin Yadav, who was arrested for allegedly hurting religious sentiments during an event in Indore. Comedian Kunal Kamra and comic artist Rachita Taneja are facing criminal contempt of court proceedings before the Supreme Court for allegedly scandalising the judiciary by their tweets. Maintaining that it would be an overestimation of his abilities to suggest that his tweets could shake the foundations of 'the most powerful court in the world', Kamra has complained about a growing culture of intolerance 'where taking offence is seen as a fundamental right and is elevated to the status of a much-loved national indoor sport.'

Free speech has never been an easy proposition. Almost 24 centuries ago, Socrates was executed for corrupting the youth of Athens and showing irreverence towards the gods. The persecution and death of scientists in pre-Renaissance Europe still remain a grim reminder of the risks involved. Galileo was sentenced to house arrest at the instance of the Catholic Church for his heliocentric views, while Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake.

In most parts of the Islamic world, blasphemy remains a crime punishable with death. In India, Kamlesh Tiwari was killed in 2019 for his allegedly blasphemous statements about Islam. Celebrated author Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* was banned for fear of violence. Painter MF Husain left India after several criminal cases were filed against him for his paintings that allegedly offended religious sentiments. Often, India witnessed violent protests against films. There are two main villains of free speech — the State and religion. Ironically, when it's under threat from the religion, the State comes to the rescue of citizens. One turns to the judiciary when aggrieved by the State's actions. Unlike the US, free speech in India is not absolute. The State can impose 'reasonable restrictions' on eight grounds, including contempt of court and public order. Courts decide the cases based on evidence, laws and precedents. As for citizens, it's time to push the envelope.

## Reading Comprehension

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Today, Grameen has earned its credit, Grameen is one of the largest microfinance organizations in the world. It started out providing small sums to underprivileged tycoons in Bangladesh to help them grow from a survival living to a livelihood. The great discovery its founders made was that even with few assets, these entrepreneurs repaid on time. Grameen and microfinance have since become financial staples of the developing world. It's an approach, distinct from other microfinance, uses the group lending model. Costs are kept down by having borrowers vet one another, tying together their financial fates and eliminating expensive loan officers entirely. The ultimate promise of Grameen is to use business lending as a way for people to lift themselves out of poverty. Recently, Grameen has taken on a different challenge by setting up operations in the US. Money may be tight in the waning recession, but it is still a nation of 1,00,000 bank branches. Globally, the microfinance equation consists of borrowing reserves economically and keeping loan evasions and overhead expenses adequately low. Microlenders, including Grameen, do this by charging colossal interest rates as high as 60% or 70%-which is necessary to compensate for the risk and attract bank funding, but loan rates much above the standard 15% would most likely be attacked as usurious in America. So, the question is whether there is a role for a Third World leader in the world's largest economy. Grameen America believes that in a few years it will be successful and turn a profit, thanks to 9 million US households untouched by mainstream banks and 21 million using the likes of payday loans and pawn shops for financing. But enticing the unbanked won't be easy. After all, profit has long eluded US microfinanciers and if it is not lucrative, it is not microlending, but charity. When Grameen first went to the US, in the late 1980s, it tripped up. Under Grameen's tutelage, banks started microloans to entrepreneurs with a shocking 30% loss. But Grameen America says that this time results will be making loans, not training an American bank to do it. More often than not, the borrowers, Grameen finds, in the US already have jobs (as factory workers for example) or side business-selling toys, cleaning houses etc. The loans from Grameen, by and large, provided a steadier source of funding, but they don't create businesses out of nothing. But money isn't everything. More importantly for many entrepreneurs, group members are tremendous sources of support to one another.

**Ques-1: Why was Grameen America's initial US initiative of a flop?**

**Ques-2: Why Grameen made a second attempt to launch itself in the US?**

**Ques-3: According to the author, what has enhanced the likelihood of success for Grameen America at present?**

**Ques-4: What is the central theme of the passage?**

**Ques-5: Which of the following is a benefit of the Grameen system of microfinance?**

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