



New Delhi Office
Cluster Office for Bangladesh,
Bhutan, India, Maldives,
Nepal and Sri Lanka



Year 1 AC (After Coronavirus)

PAN INDIA ONLINE ESSAY CONTEST 2020

1. Introduction

The world is currently experiencing a global pandemic due to the outbreak of a coronavirus causing COVID-19. This critical, complex, and unprecedented situation is having major impacts for our societies across the world. Young people, just like everyone else, will face the economic and social consequences of this crisis in the coming times. In this context, UNESCO and Takhte jointly invite young people to engage in a reflection - through words - on some of those important open questions facing humanity.

Words are power. Wielded thoughtfully, words and ideas have a very real potential to bring about change and drive reflection, particularly in times of crisis. But, are today's young people from the so-called *GenZ* able to use written words effectively? Can they communicate original ideas forcefully, and construct meaningful, informative and thought-provoking pieces of writing reflecting on the challenges around them?

In order to give Indian youth a platform to demonstrate their critical thinking and writing skills, Takhte¹ and the UNESCO New Delhi Cluster Office² are launching the second edition of the contest titled as '**Year 1 AC (After Coronavirus): Pan India Online Essay Contest 2020**' for children (aged 11–14 years) and youth (aged 15–24 years), to reflect the unprecedented nature of the unfolding crisis.

Unlike last year, the competition will be launched and remain open as the on-going crisis unfolds. Entries will be received on a rolling basis, and UNESCO and Takhte will select each week the five (5) best essays from each age group to be published daily on their websites and social media. Later on, the 100 winning essays will be published as a book.

¹Takhte (www.takhte.in) offers professional writing services. In the last four years, Takhte has successfully set a series of benchmarks in relation to book writing, among the most recent being its production of the book *Artists of India: Modern and Contemporary Art*, which has been acknowledged by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. Takhte promotes creativity in a range of art forms. In 2019, the organization aims to build an innovative platform for young Indian writers to express their views about key contemporary subjects.

²UNESCO (<https://en.unesco.org/>) is a specialized UN agency with a mandate to build peace through international cooperation in the fields of education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information. UNESCO's programmes contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in Agenda 2030, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015. The UNESCO New Delhi Cluster Office is mandated to cover six South Asian countries -- Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

2. Contest Categories, Essay Topics and Submission Guidelines

2.1. Contest Categories

The essay contest has separate categories for **children (aged 11–14 years at the time of submission)** and **youth (aged 15–24 years at the time of submission)** respectively. The five essay topics for participants in each of these categories are as follows:

A. Essay topics for children

- i. Learning at home during lockdown: my parents and my teachers
- ii. Stronger together and a new word for us: solidarity
- iii. Science and health: what should we change to be more resilient?
- iv. Culture and crafts: how to be creative when staying at home
- v. Not everything we find online is true!

B. Essay topics for youth

- i. The current crisis is showing the best and the worst of humanity. Will a new form of solidarity emerge at the end of the tunnel or do you think on the contrary that previous trends of the last few years (e.g. increasing nationalisms) will be enhanced?
- ii. Do you think that the COVID-19 pandemic will force us to redefine the quest for a better use of our natural resources? Will there be a before and an after for environmental issues? If so how?
- iii. The lockdown affected men and women equally. At home, it also forced them for instance to share household chores. Do you believe this crisis will have long lasting consequences on gender roles and stereotypes in the country?
- iv. What will be the role of young people in addressing the crisis caused by the pandemic and related issues, such as new balances in power, raising inequalities and reduced employment opportunities?
- v. The 21st century, with all its science and technology, allows us to go to Mars and develop Artificial Intelligence. Yet, one virus brings us to a complete standstill in a few weeks? Do you think there should be changes in priorities for science and research in future?

2.2. Contest Guidelines

All participants in the essay contest must be Indian nationals, residing in India at the time of submission. All essays must be written in **English**.

- i. **Age group and essay category for children:** As indicated above, children who are between 11 and 14 years of age must select and write an essay on a topic from Category A.
Title and word count: The essay title should correspond exactly to one of the topics provided. Do not change the title. The word count of the essay should not exceed 600 words. (A word count of 540 – 600 words would be ideal.)
- ii. **Age group and essay category for youth:** As indicated above, youth who are between 15 and 24 years of age must select and write an essay on a topic from Category B.

Title and word count: The essay title should correspond exactly to one of the topics provided. Do not change the title. The word count of the essay should not exceed 700 words. (A word count of 630 – 700 words would be ideal.)

2.3. Submission Guidelines

- i. Participants can visit the link for the contest on the websites of UNESCO New Delhi (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/newdelhi/home>) or Takhte (<http://www.takhte.in/contest.php>) and, where the details of the contest will be available. The contest details will also be available on Takhte and UNESCO New Delhi’s Facebook and Instagram pages.
- ii. Participants must complete and submit the required **essay submission form, which will be available on line**. All fields (**participant’s personal details accompanied by a recent photograph**, as well as the **complete text of the essay**) must be carefully completed and the form needs to be submitted to the email year1ac2020@gmail.com.

UNESCO and Takhte will not charge any fee to participants at any stage of the process.

3. Review of Entries and Selection Process

Each week, a pre-screening process will review all submitted essays and eliminate entries that do not meet basic minimum criteria in terms of quality or completeness of details. The essays that qualify following this initial round of screening will then be evaluated by a screening committee composed by Takhte and UNESCO.

The screening committee will evaluate all submitted essays and will identify the five (5) best essays per category, to be published daily over the subsequent week. The screening committee will further make a final selection of a total of 100 best essays for the publication which will follow. The criteria for evaluation is the following:

- i. Comprehensiveness and clarity
- ii. Interpretation of the given topic
- iii. Depth of research and relevance of arguments
- iv. Creativity
- v. Language and style
- vi. Structure and flow
- vii. Communication of key ideas
- viii. Originality(plagiarism will result in disqualification of essays)

UNESCO New Delhi reserves the right to decide on the weekly selection of the five essays from all categories, and the final selection of the 100 essays to be included in the publication.

The overall process of evaluation and announcement of winners selected for the publication will span over the coming months until the final closure of the submission period, to be announced at a later stage.

4. Recognitions and Outcomes

- a. The top five (5) essays per category will be announced everyday for a week.
- b. The 100 winners of the essay contest will be announced on the websites and Facebook pages of Takhte and UNESCO New Delhi, later on this year.
- c. The writers of the 100 winning essays will receive Certificates of Recognition from Takhte and UNESCO New Delhi. Those selected as the top five (5) from each category for weekly publication will receive a special recognition.
- d. The 100 essays will finally be published in the form of a book entitled ***Year 1 AC (After Coronavirus): ESSAYS BY 100 YOUNG INDIANS***. The book will credit the contributor of each essay as well as the judges involved with the process of assessment and evaluation.
- e. The book of essays will be launched at a ceremony hosted by UNESCO New Delhi, and will subsequently be promoted extensively by Takhte and UNESCO in order to maximize its visibility and outreach.
