Society & Social Justice · GS - I

Intercaste marriages between castes which have socio-economic parity have increased, to some extent, but this is less true of interreligious marriages. Discuss.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2024	GS - I	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

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Answer Hint

Caste endogamy, religious endogamy, education, urbanisation, social mobility, socio-economic parity, family acceptance, honour, community identity, personal autonomy, social networks, legal safeguards

Model Answer

Introduction

Marriage in India has historically been shaped by endogamy. While education, urbanisation and occupational mobility have facilitated some intercaste marriages, interreligious marriages continue to encounter additional social and institutional barriers.

Why Intercaste Marriage May Increase with Socio-economic Parity

1. **Shared social status:** Comparable education, income and lifestyles can reduce perceived status differences.
2. **Urbanisation:** Urban anonymity and diverse workplaces create greater opportunities for interaction.
3. **Education:** Higher education can encourage individual choice over traditional social norms.
4. **Economic independence:** Financial autonomy reduces dependence on family approval.

Why Interreligious Marriage Faces Greater Resistance

1. **Religious identity:** Marriage may be perceived as crossing not merely social hierarchy but a distinct cultural and religious identity.
2. **Family and community concerns:** Issues involving rituals, conversion, children and cultural continuity can intensify resistance.
3. **Community networks:** Dense religious networks can reinforce endogamous preferences.
4. **Social polarisation:** Broader communal tensions can affect private marital choices.

Way Forward

Respect for adult autonomy, constitutional safeguards, counselling, safe spaces for couples and reduction of communal prejudice can facilitate freedom of marital choice.

Conclusion

The central issue is the tension between individual autonomy and community-controlled social norms. A democratic society should protect consensual adult choices while promoting social dialogue and mutual respect

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