International Relations · GS - II

Cultural diplomacy can provide alternative channels of engagement between countries facing persistent political and security disagreements. Examine the potential of multilateral platforms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in promoting regional cooperation through civilisational and cultural dialogue.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 13/11/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Cultural diplomacy, civilisational heritage, SCO institutional framework, people-to-people contacts, India-Pakistan relations, regional connectivity, strategic mistrust, soft power, multilateral cooperation.

Model Answer

Introduction

Cultural diplomacy uses shared heritage, traditions and people-to-people exchanges to build mutual understanding. It can complement formal diplomacy, particularly where political relations remain strained.

Potential of SCO Cultural Engagement

- **Shared heritage:** Historical trade routes, linguistic connections and cultural traditions provide opportunities for regional dialogue.
- **People-to-people relations:** Academic, artistic and cultural exchanges can strengthen mutual understanding.

- **Regional cooperation:** Cultural engagement complements the SCO's wider objectives of economic and security cooperation.
- **Soft power:** Participation in civilisational forums enables countries to project their cultural influence.
- **Diplomatic communication:** Multilateral platforms preserve channels of engagement despite bilateral disagreements.

Challenges

1. **Political mistrust:** Persistent disputes may restrict meaningful cooperation.
2. **Security concerns:** Cross-border tensions can overshadow cultural initiatives.
3. **Institutional limitations:** Cultural dialogue cannot independently resolve territorial or strategic disputes.
4. **Unequal engagement:** Differences in participation and political priorities may limit outcomes.

Way Forward

India should promote inclusive cultural exchanges, academic partnerships, heritage preservation and sustained multilateral dialogue while maintaining its national security priorities.

Conclusion

Cultural diplomacy cannot substitute for political negotiations, but it can create a constructive environment for regional understanding and long-term cooperation.

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