Society & Social Justice · GS - I

What is the basis of regionalism? Is it that unequal distribution of benefits of development on regional basis eventually promotes regionalism? Substantiate your answer.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2016	GS - I	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Regional identity; linguistic and cultural diversity; uneven development; resource distribution; political mobilisation; federalism; balanced development

Model Answer

Introduction

Regionalism is an attachment to a particular geographical region and the pursuit of its interests. It may promote cultural identity and democratic representation, but it can also generate conflict when regional aspirations become exclusionary.

Basis of Regionalism

- **Historical and cultural identity:** Distinct histories, traditions, languages and customs create regional consciousness.
- **Geographical factors:** Physical isolation, ecological conditions and distance from administrative centres can produce distinct regional needs.
- **Economic interests:** Dependence on particular industries, agricultural systems or natural resources shapes regional demands.
- **Political factors:** Regional parties and leaders may mobilise people around demands for autonomy, statehood or greater representation.

- **Perceived neglect:** Inadequate public investment and limited access to services can create resentment against governments.

Role of Unequal Development

Uneven distribution of development benefits can substantially intensify regionalism.

- Regions with better infrastructure, investment and employment opportunities may advance faster than less-developed areas.
- Resource-rich regions may resent inadequate local benefits from mining or industrial activity.
- Perceived discrimination in public employment, education and government spending can strengthen regional movements.
- Internal migration and competition over land, jobs and services may aggravate tensions.

For example, demands for Telangana statehood were influenced by concerns over regional development, employment and political representation. The creation of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh also reflected demands involving regional identity, resource governance and development priorities.

However, unequal development does not automatically produce regionalism. Effective institutions, fair resource-sharing, political inclusion and social cohesion can reduce grievances. Regional pride can also coexist with national identity.

Measures to Address Regional Imbalances

- Promote need-based infrastructure and human-development investment.
- Strengthen fiscal transfers and cooperative federalism.
- Improve decentralised planning and local participation.
- Ensure transparent resource-sharing and equitable access to public services.

Conclusion

Unequal development is an important driver of regionalism, but its impact depends on political and institutional responses. Balanced growth and democratic accommodation can transform regional aspirations into constructive federal participation.

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