International Relations · GS - II

Comment on the role of civilisational dialogue and cultural diplomacy in strengthening regional cooperation. How can such initiatives contribute to mutual understanding without necessarily resolving political differences?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 22/11/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Cultural diplomacy, soft power, civilisational heritage, people-to-people contact, mutual trust, regional cooperation, political differences, SCO

Model Answer

Introduction

Cultural diplomacy uses shared heritage, dialogue and people-to-people exchanges to build mutual understanding among nations. The SCO's civilisational dialogue initiative provides a platform for such engagement.

Contribution to regional cooperation

1. **Building mutual trust:** Cultural exchanges can reduce stereotypes and improve public understanding between societies.

2. **Soft power:** Shared traditions, literature, art and historical connections can strengthen a country's cultural influence.
3. **People-to-people ties:** Academic, youth and cultural exchanges create channels of engagement beyond official diplomacy.
4. **Regional identity:** Dialogue can highlight shared civilisational experiences and encourage cooperation among diverse member states.

Limitations

Cultural engagement cannot independently resolve territorial disputes, security concerns or political mistrust. Its outcomes also depend on sustained institutional support and genuine participation.

Conclusion

Civilisational dialogue should complement, not replace, political and economic diplomacy. Sustained cultural cooperation can create an enabling environment for regional understanding even when strategic disagreements persist.

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