Society & Social Justice · GS - II

Discuss the major socioeconomic causes of mass protests in France. How do these protests reflect the challenges of balancing economic reforms with social justice in a democracy?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 21/10/2026	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

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Answer Hint

Socioeconomic inequality, pension reforms, rising cost of living, labour rights, austerity measures, working-class discontent, social justice, democratic participation, government accountability, inclusive policymaking.

Model Answer

Introduction

France has a long history of mass protests rooted in its revolutionary tradition and the demand for liberty, equality and social justice. Recurring demonstrations reflect tensions between government policies and citizens' socioeconomic expectations.

Main Body

Major Causes of Protests

1. Pension reforms: Changes in the retirement age and pension benefits have generated opposition among workers.
2. Rising cost of living: Inflation and increasing household expenses have weakened purchasing power.
3. Economic inequality: Perceived disparities in income and wealth have fuelled public dissatisfaction.
4. Labour rights: Workers oppose policies they believe threaten job security, wages and welfare benefits.
5. Austerity measures: Spending cuts and welfare reforms can disproportionately affect vulnerable groups.

Challenges for Democracy

These protests highlight the need to balance fiscal sustainability and economic competitiveness with social protection. While governments require policy flexibility to implement reforms, public consultation, transparency and meaningful dialogue are essential to maintain public trust. Excessive use of force against peaceful demonstrators can further weaken confidence in democratic institutions.

Conclusion

France’s protests demonstrate that economic reforms are more sustainable when they are socially inclusive. Democratic governments must combine fiscal responsibility with social justice, protect peaceful dissent and ensure that the costs of reform are distributed fairly.

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