Society & Social Justice · GS - I

Do you agree that regionalism in India appears to be a consequence of rising cultural assertiveness? Argue.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2020	GS - I	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Linguistic and cultural identity; regional aspirations; economic disparities; political mobilisation; federalism; linguistic reorganisation; subnational movements; constructive and divisive regionalism

Model Answer

Introduction

Regionalism refers to strong identification with, and political mobilisation around, a particular region. Cultural assertiveness is an important driver of regionalism in India, but it is not its sole cause.

Role of cultural assertiveness

- **Language:** Linguistic identity contributed to demands for states such as Andhra Pradesh and the subsequent reorganisation of states.
- **Ethnicity and tribal identity:** Movements in the Northeast have sought recognition of distinct cultural traditions and greater political autonomy.
- **Regional history:** Shared historical memories and cultural symbols strengthen demands for recognition and self-government.
- **Political mobilisation:** Regional parties often represent linguistic, ethnic and cultural aspirations within democratic institutions.

Other causes of regionalism

- **Economic disparities:** Perceived neglect, unequal development and competition over resources can generate regional grievances.
- **Political exclusion:** Demands for autonomy may emerge when communities feel inadequately represented.
- **Resource distribution:** Disputes over river water, employment and public investment can intensify regional tensions.
- **Administrative considerations:** Large states may generate demands for smaller units to improve governance and representation.

Assessment

Regionalism can strengthen Indian federalism by enabling local participation and protecting cultural diversity. However, exclusionary regionalism may encourage hostility towards migrants, inter-state conflict and separatist tendencies.

Conclusion

Cultural assertiveness is a significant but partial explanation for regionalism. Equitable development, cooperative federalism, constitutional accommodation and respect for diversity can channel regional aspirations into constructive democratic participation.

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