

Mains PYQs - GS-I (2026) (Q. 7 - 9)

7. “Water resources are both an asset and a source of conflict in South Asia.” Examine this statement, giving examples. (150 words, 10 marks)

Directions: Intro----- Water resources asset + source of conflict-----Conclusion.

Introduction:

Brief about water resources in South Asia (or) South Asia.

Water resources in South Asia - economic asset.

South Asia - uneven distribution, transboundary rivers, climate variability and competing demands.

Main Body

Water as an asset

- Agriculture & Food security - Indus, Ganga & Brahmaputra.
- Hydropower - Nepal and Bhutan possess immense hydropower potential.
- Economic cooperation - India - Bhutan hydropower project ties; India - Bangladesh Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin, India-Pakistan ties Indus basin.
- Livelihood - Fishing, inland navigation, livestock.

Water as a source of conflict

- Transboundary conflicts - Indus River System, Teesta & Ganges Rivers with Bangladesh, etc.
- Domestic conflicts - example: Cauvery River Dispute.
- Upper riparian tension - Upstream flow influences downstream water availability. Example: China's dams on the Yarlung Tsangpo, Teesta water sharing.
- Climate-linked water stress
- High demands for water due to urbanisation, population explosion, agriculture, etc.

Way Forward

- Strengthen data-driven river management approach.
- Ensure real-time sharing of hydrological data among riparian countries.
- Expand joint flood and drought management.
- Promote water-efficient agriculture and wastewater reuse.
- Use existing treaties as frameworks for cooperation.

Conclusion:

Give a balanced conclusion.

Thus, South Asia's rivers are simultaneously “lifelines for development” and “fault lines of geopolitics.” Shift from a zero-sum approach to benefit-sharing, treating transboundary water as a platform for cooperation rather than competition.

8. Unity in diversity remains the defining feature of Indian society despite the challenges from communalism and regionalism. Comment. (150 words, 10 marks)

Directions: Intro----Features of unity in diversity + challenges-----Conclusion.

Introduction:

Describe India & Unity in Diversity.

Main Body

Features of Unity in diversity

- Constitutional values - Fundamental Rights, secularism, equality, fraternity, citizenship, etc.
- Composite culture - festivals, arts, sports, cinema, etc.
- Traditions such as Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb, Sufi-Bhakti traditions and shared festivals demonstrate cultural intermingling.
- Linguistic diversity - Multiple languages - English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, and other regional languages.
- Common institutions - Parliament, judiciary, armed forces, elections, common legal framework.
- Economic and social interdependence - Migration, trade, education and urbanisation, etc.

Challenges from communalism and regionalism

- Religious polarization
- Political reasons - vote bank politics.
- Majoritarianism vs Minoritarian views
- Social discrimination
- Digital disinformation & hate speech
- Sub nationalism - intense regional pride
- Interstate disputes - Ethnic tensions in parts of the Northeast, Maharashtra-Karnataka border issue around Belagavi/Belgaum, etc.
- Linguistic friction - Conflicts arising from language imposition.

Conclusion:

Give a balanced conclusion.

India's unity is not based on homogeneity but accommodation. India upholds its constitutional morality, decentralised federalism, and inclusive economic growth.

9. How do you understand disability? Substantiate the need for an inclusive policy framework in India in this regard. (150 words, 10 marks)

Direction: Intro-----Need for inclusive policy-----Conclusion.

Introduction:

Define disability briefly & mention Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act) & some data related to disability in India.

disability” arises not only from impairment but also from an environment that fails to accommodate diversity.

Main Body

Need for inclusive policy framework

- Universal accessibility - Infrastructure like transport, public buildings, etc. follow universal-design principles.
- Economic growth
- Ensure equality & dignity
- Employment opportunities
- Access to Education
- Digital inclusion - Accessible-by-design digital governance.
- Human rights framework & fundamental rights
- Strengthen social security - PwDs face higher costs for healthcare, assistive devices, education and mobility.

Conclusion:

Give a balanced conclusion.

India should move from a “welfare for the disabled” approach to a “rights, participation and empowerment” approach.



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