Mains Practice Questions

Q. Examine the specificities of Indian culture and society. What are the changes that you observe in society over recent decades? (250 words)

20 Jan, 2020 GS Paper 1 Indian Society

Approach

- Describe some unique features of Indian society and culture. Briefly explain each of them.
- Highlight changes in these features after independence and LPG reforms.
- Discuss the positive and negative sides of these changes.
- Give way forward in dealing with challenges due to such changes.

Introduction

Indian Society and Culture exhibit many unique features that make diverse, united and a natural physio-cultural nation state.

Body

- Demography: India is still in the third stage of demographic transition with a relatively young population cohort. This presents the situation of demographic dividend.
- Caste System: Predominantly observed in Hindu Society but has affected other religions as well. Such societal division is rooted in the varna system of ancient times, but have gone transition resulting in numerous jatis and subdivision today.
- Family and Kinship is a central social institution and generally governed by patriarchal norms, exceptions exist like the matrilineal system in Kerala and Meghalaya.
- Commerce had been closely linked with caste and community setup like Baniyas, Banjaras.
- Cultural Diversity: Religion, Lingual, Racial, Tribal etc. have been ethos and cherished values.

Such a social setup has been going through changes post-independence, more intensely in the era of Globalisation.

- Social phenomena of Sanskritization, increasing urbanisation is changing the traditional caste hierarchy. These at times become reasons for conflict, especially in the form of movements against social inequality and discrimination.
- India's population growth has been declining since 2011. The adverse child sex ratio presents the dilemma of prevalent son preference among the educated middle class.
- Individualism, consumerism is changing the family structure from joint towards nuclear.

- Globalisation, Liberalisation era has ushered in more liberal values, as a result phenomenon of Westernization, Capitalism is changing preferences that affect social and cultural values and norms, especially among the younger cohort of the population.

Way Forward

The effect of such changes is both; positive like Glocalization, adoption of Indian practices and values by the Western world like Yoga etc., negative like development's adverse effect of tribal identity, Communalism etc. It's important to encash over gains and resolve challenges with constitutional principles.