



Mains Practice Question

Q. How far has linguistic diversity helped in strengthening Indian unity? (150 words)

18 Apr, 2022 GS Paper 1 Geography

Approach

- Briefly highlight the linguistic diversity of India.
- Examine how linguistic diversity has been fostering Indian unity.
- Also, discuss the issues of linguistic diversity.
- Conclude by giving a way forward.

Introduction

India is a land of diverse languages, the major ones being the Indo-Aryan languages spoken by 75% of Indians and the Dravidian languages spoken by 20% of Indians. It has 22 scheduled languages and several dialects which are in mutual co-existence in a contiguous space.

Body

Linguistic Diversity and National Integration

- Formation of linguistic states such as Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab etc has strengthened the federal feature of India and prevented secessionist tendency of the regions thus maintaining the national unity.
- Linguistic diversity shows that there is respect for regional sentiments including the minority and tribal languages. Also Constitutional provisions under Articles 29, 30, 347, 350 are there to safeguard each language, promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people.
- Even if there is diversity in languages, they have been derived mainly from Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages. This sense of common origin of languages has also promoted unity.
- In contemporary times, 'Hinglish', which is the blending of English language with Hindi and other languages spoken in India acts as a bridge between different languages of India and has become an 'all India common vocabulary'.

Issues

- Increasing Regionalism and Parochialism: The people of different linguistic groups who are concentrated in a state seem to think only in terms of interests of their own States. This undermines consideration of national issues and causes parochial feelings.
- Demand for Separate States: The demand for a separate state on linguistic lines creates problems for the concerned state as well as the centre.
- Persecution of the Linguistic Minorities: This can perpetuate separatism and threaten national integration.
- Erosion of National Feeling: The national feeling is eroded due to linguistic and regional loyalties. The erosion of national feeling threatens the sovereignty of the country.

Way forward

- A new States Reorganisation Commission can be set up which will invite suggestions, arguments for and against division of particular states or to create new ones.
- Strengthening of criminal justice system to prevent persecution of linguistic minorities.

Due to India's remarkable quality of accommodation and tolerance, linguistic diversity helps in promoting national unity. Any attempt to forcefully enforce a common language can bring negative impact on national integration.

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