



Mains Practice Question

Q. Define the terms cooperation and competition. What are the determinants of cooperation and competition? (150 Words)

29 Apr, 2022 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Introduce by defining the terms cooperation and competition
- Give appropriate examples wherever necessary
- Mention the determinants of cooperation and competition
- Conclude with emphasis on the positive aspects of both interactions

Introduction

Cooperation is behaviour that occurs when we trust the people or groups with whom we are interacting and are willing to communicate and share with others, expecting to profit ourselves through the increased benefits. For example, the Countries of the World cooperating to mitigate Climate Change.

Competition is the activity or condition of striving to gain or win something by constant self improvement. When people think of competition, they typically think of negative competition, which leads to hostility, negative attitudes, and a "winnertakes-all" mentality. However, contrary to popular belief, there are two types of competition: positive and negative.

Positive competition helps parties involved in it by bringing better results from competing groups. Whereas, negative competition tends to harm the competing sides, for eg. arms race between the US and USSR during the Cold War.

Body

Determinants of Cooperation and Competition

- **Reward structure:** Psychologists believe that whether people will cooperate or compete will depend on the reward structure. Cooperative reward structure is one in which there is promotive interdependence. Each is beneficiary of the reward and reward is possible only if all contribute. A competitive reward structure is one in which one can get a reward only if others do not get it.
- **Interpersonal communication:** When there is good interpersonal communication, then cooperation is the likely consequence. Communication facilitates interaction, and discussion. As a result, group members can convince each other and learn about each other.
- **Reciprocity:** Reciprocity means that people feel obliged to return what they get. Initial cooperation may encourage more cooperation. Competition may provoke more competition. If someone helps, you feel like helping that person; on the other hand, if someone refuses to help you when you need help, you would not like to help that person also.
- **Social dilemma:** A social dilemma is a situation in which the goals of the individual conflict with the goals of the group. In this situation, people become hostile for their own goal.

Both cooperation and competition can help in their own ways in enhancing the abilities of individuals and

institutions if harmful consequences are taken care of. A classic example of this is cooperative and competitive federalism in India which can unlock the true potential of all the states and in turn may lead to prosperity of the nation.

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