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Q10

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

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2020 · GS I · 10 marks · Social Empowerment, Communalism and Secularism
Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism and secularism.

Core demand of the question

- Do you agree that regionalism in India appears to be a consequence of rising cultural assertiveness? Argue
- Keep the argument within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Language and identity pride have produced states and **regional parties**.

Sons-of-the-soil politics uses culture to gate jobs and migration.

Telangana and fiscal federalism show economic regionalism beside culture.

The 1956 linguistic map was cultural state-making with an administrative aim.

- **Agree in part:** culture is a cause, not the only consequence-engine.

Introduction

Regionalism in India is the claim of a language, a homeland, or a state against a centre or a neighbour. Cultural assertiveness is part of it. It is not the whole cause. Economy, federal power, and migration also make regions.

Body**Where culture does drive regionalism**

- Language movements - Telugu, Tamil, and later identity politics of script and school - were cultural assertiveness that became states and parties.
- **Sons-of-the-soil campaigns mix pride of culture with jobs:** Shiv Sena's Bombay, or nativist turns in Assam's language and citizenship debates.
- Festival, film, and caste-region pride can harden a 'we' against Hindi or against a migrant 'they'.

Why the thesis is incomplete

- **Regionalism also follows uneven development:** **Telangana's** complaint was irrigation and jobs as much as culture.
- Federal design - States Reorganisation, **Article 370's** old speciality, **Sixth Schedule**, and GST bargaining - creates regional politics even without a new cultural wave.
- Sometimes culture is the idiom of a class or tribal material fight, not the independent cause.

Argue a balanced yes-but

- Agree that rising cultural assertiveness, in language and identity media, has fed many **regional parties** since the 1980s.
- Disagree that it 'appears to be' the consequence as a single arrow. Older regionalism of 1956 was linguistic state-making; newer regionalism is also fiscal and urban-job nativism.
- **Best argument:** culture supplies the banner; political economy supplies much of the fuel.

Flow diagram

Cultural assertiveness -> Regionalism
Uneven development -> Regionalism
Federal power jobs -> Regionalism

Conclusion

Cultural assertiveness is a real and rising source of Indian regionalism. It is not a sufficient explanation. Argue for a both-and: language and pride, plus development and federal power.

Facts & figures

States Reorganisation 1956

Linguistic states that institutionalised cultural-regional claims inside the Union.

Sons of the soil

Nativist job claims, as in Mumbai politics, mixing culture with labour markets.

Telangana

Statehood movement in which irrigation, jobs, and regional dignity travelled together.

Assam movement

Language, migration, and citizenship fused cultural fear with resource politics.

Regional parties

DMK, TMC, BJD and others that convert cultural publics into federal bargainers.