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Q18

Is diversity and pluralism in India under threat due to globalisation? Justify your answer.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2020 · GS I · 15 marks · Globalisation and Indian Society

Effects of globalization on Indian society.

Core demand of the question

- Is diversity and pluralism in India under threat due to globalisation? Justify
- Keep a 15-mark length

Revision summary

Global brands and platforms can flatten language and craft.

Internal politics and caste also threaten pluralism.

GI tags, regional OTT, and diaspora archives use global pipes to save difference.

Hybrid culture is a new pluralism, not only a loss.

- **Stand:** partial threat from globalisation, not a single-cause collapse.

Introduction

Globalisation moves goods, media, and migrants. It can flatten taste into English, mall, and platform. It can also fund GI crafts, regional cinema, and diaspora pride. Diversity in India is under pressure from many forces; globalisation is one, not the only, and not only a wrecking ball.

Body

Threat pathways

- **Cultural homogenisation:** global brands, English-medium aspiration, and algorithm feeds can shrink local tongues and foodways, especially among urban youth.
- **Market concentration:** small weavers, wet-market fish, and neighbourhood cinema lose to chains and OTT catalogues that privilege scale.
- Aspirational sameness can make pluralism look rustic, which is a soft threat to everyday diversity.
- Global Islamist or Hindutva media circuits, which are also transnational, can harden identities and reduce lived pluralism even when the 'global' is not Hollywood.

Why globalisation is not the sole threat

- Majoritarian politics, communal riot memory, and caste exclusion threaten pluralism with or without WTO.
- Official language hierarchy and internal migration stress predate 1991 liberalisation.
- Blaming only 'the West' misses Indian capital and Indian platforms as globalisers.

Counter-currents that justify a nuanced no

- Regional cinema, OTT in Tamil, Malayalam, and Bhojpuri, and **GI tags** (Darjeeling, Kanjeevaram, Alphonso) use the world market to keep difference alive.
- Diaspora money and digital archives revive scripts, recipes, and festivals.
- Constitutional pluralism (**Articles 25-30, Eighth Schedule**) is a domestic legal resource that global human-rights talk sometimes supports.
- Hybridity - Indo-Chinese plates, IPL, fusion music - is a new diversity, not always a death of the old.

Justify the stand

- **Partial threat:** yes, for vulnerable languages, crafts, and attention.
- **Total threat:** no. Pluralism's sharper present danger is often political homogenisation at home.
- **Policy:** protect language in schools, enforce GI and fair trade, keep platform diversity rules, and refuse to treat globalisation as fate.

Flow diagram

Globalisation -> Homogenising market
 Globalisation -> GI OTT diaspora revival
 Domestic majoritarianism -> Threat to pluralism
 Homogenising market -> Threat to pluralism
 GI OTT diaspora revival -> Living diversity

Conclusion

Globalisation threatens some layers of Indian diversity through market sameness. It also carries regional culture farther than the district ever could. Justify a qualified yes on crafts and tongues, and a no to the claim that pluralism's only enemy is the global.

Facts & figures

GI tags

Geographical Indications that turn local uniqueness into a global market right.

Eighth Schedule

Constitutional list of recognised languages, a domestic pluralism tool.

OTT regional boom

Streaming that gave non-Hindi cinema a world audience.

1991 liberalisation

Policy turn that thickened India's goods-and-media globalisation.

Articles 25-30

Freedom of religion and minority education rights that underwrite pluralism.

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