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Q20

How does Indian society maintain continuity in traditional social values? Enumerate the changes taking place in it.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · GS I · 15 marks · Indian Society and Diversity

Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.

Core demand of the question

- How does Indian society maintain continuity in traditional social values? Enumerate the changes taking place in it
- Keep a 15-mark length

Revision summary

Family, ritual, and caste marriage keep traditional values in motion.

Pilgrimage, language, and personal law add continuity inside the Republic.

Change shows in fertility, women's work, and urban households.

Caste becomes political even as workplaces mix.

Yogendra Singh's modernisation of tradition is the right frame, not simple Westernisation.

Introduction

Indian society keeps old values by family, ritual, and caste-kin networks that still organise marriage and care. It also changes those values under law, market, and media. Continuity and change are one process, as **Yogendra Singh** argued for modernisation of tradition.

Body

How continuity is maintained

- **Family and kinship:** intergenerational households, kanyadan ideals, and care of the old still teach duty (dharma) even in city flats.
- **Ritual calendar:** Diwali, Eid, Onam, and village jattras reproduce a sacred year; television and WhatsApp now carry the same calendar.
- **Caste and endogamy:** matrimonial ads and apps still filter gotra and jati; **Srinivas's sanskritisation** is itself continuity-through-change.
- **Food, language, and guru:** vegetarian marks, mother tongues, and pilgrimage (Char Dham, Haj) keep identity when jobs do not.
- **Law as conservative of diversity:** **personal laws** and **Article 29** cultural rights let communities carry values inside a secular state.

Changes underway

- Nuclear and neo-local households, later marriage, and live-in debates in metros; **NFHS** shows falling fertility as a value shift toward the small family.

- Women's education and work, **Panchayat** reservations, and the **POSH** and domestic-violence laws challenge patriarchal values without erasing them.
- Caste in politics and jobs is more assertive even as urban workplaces mix; untouchability is illegal yet practised in forms **Shah** and others still document.
- Consumer youth culture, inter-caste love, and online dating sit beside honour violence - change and backlash together.
- **New religiosity**: televangelism and public festivals grow even as scientific education grows.

Enumeration for the answer sheet

- **Continuity**: family duty, ritual, endogamy, pilgrimage, personal law.
- **Change**: fertility, gender law, urban work, digital matchmaking, caste democracy, consumer self.

Flow diagram

Family ritual endogamy -> Continuity
Law market media -> Change
Continuity -> Modernisation of tradition
Change -> Modernisation of tradition

Conclusion

Indian society maintains traditional values through family, ritual, and marriage rules that adapted to the phone. It changes through law, women's education, fertility decline, and the market. The pattern is not replacement. It is tradition under new management.

Facts & figures

Yogendra Singh

Modernisation of Indian Tradition: change through orthogenetic and heterogenetic sources.

Sanskritisation

Srinivas's process: lower groups adopt upper customs - continuity of hierarchy in a new form.

NFHS fertility

Near-replacement TFR nationally, a deep change in the value of many children.

73rd Amendment

Women's reserved seats that shift village authority without ending kinship politics.

Personal laws

Community family law that carries traditional values under constitutional supremacy.

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