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Q6(c)

Which measures would you suggest for preventing caste conflicts in India ? Justify your argument

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 marks · Challenges of Social Transformation

Challenges of Social Transformation: Crisis of development: displacement, environmental problems and sustainability; Poverty, deprivation and inequalities; Violence against women; Caste conflicts; Ethnic conflicts, communalism, religious revivalism; Illiteracy and disparities in education.

Core demand of the question

- **Suggest preventive measures for caste conflicts:** legal, educational, economic, political, cultural
- Justify sociologically with **Ambedkar**, Srinivas, Bêteille-not slogans only

Revision summary

Caste conflict is organised competition over honour, land, jobs and votes.

Prevention needs prosecution under atrocity law, not only peace meetings.

Common schooling, wages and land reduce the material fuse.

Panchayat reservation forces some sharing of dominant-caste power.

Anti-caste public culture and slow change in endogamy are the deep levers.

Introduction

Caste conflict is not a misunderstanding that a poster can cure. It is competition over **honour, women, land, jobs and the vote**, organised by ranked birth groups. Prevention must therefore change **interests and everyday contact**, not only preach harmony.

Body

What works, and why

- **Law:** swift PoA prosecution, witness protection, and action against social boycott reduce the payoff to public violence. Impunity is a cause. **Ambedkar** was right that political safeguards without social mixing fail; but law still raises the cost of atrocity.
- **Economy and education:** land to the landless, enforcement of minimum wages, and **common schools** (not caste-segregated hostels as destiny) shrink the material fuse. Bêteille's point that education can split caste from class is a preventive if access is real. **Reservation** lowers zero-sum street fights over the first clerk's post by routing claim into rules-while generating its own backlash, which must be politically managed, not denied.
- **Local institutions:** mixed panchayats, shared irrigation, and public dining in mid-day meals attack **untouchability as practice**. Srinivas's dominant caste will not vanish; rotating chairs and SC/ST/women seats force some sharing.
- **Culture:** Ambedkarite public (books, **Buddha** viharas, jalsas) and inter-caste association in unions and cities create **counter-honour**. Moral appeals to varna harmony reproduce the hierarchy that explodes. Police reform and social-media rumour control matter because many

recent clashes travel as **forwarded honour**.

- **Justify:** conflict falls when **exit and voice** exist-migration, parties, courts-and when **endogamy** slowly yields, which is the slowest lever. Bêteille's asymmetry thesis is practical here: if class, caste and power no longer coincide, cross-cutting ties can dampen total war. If they re-align in a riot, prevention has failed.

Flow diagram

PoA and courts -> Prevention
School land wages -> Prevention
Panchayat voice -> Prevention
Anti-caste culture -> Prevention

Conclusion

Prevent caste conflict by raising the legal cost of violence, spreading assets and common schooling, sharing local office, and building anti-caste public culture. Harmony without **annihilation of caste** is a truce, not a prevention.

Facts & figures

PoA Act

The principal criminal law against caste atrocity; prevention depends on charge-sheets and convictions, not notifications.

Mid-day meal

A rare everyday mixed-dining site; resistance to it is itself a caste-conflict signal.

Annihilation of Caste

Ambedkar's argument that political reform without social reform of endogamy and hierarchy will not secure peace.