



Mains Practice Question

Q. “India needs to address the challenge of engaging with modernity along with cultural preservation”. Discuss. (150 words)

29 Jun, 2020 GS Paper 1 Indian Society

Approach

- In Introduction, briefly explain the presence of both modernity and cultural preservation (traditionality) in Indian society.
- In body, discuss the challenges of achieving modernity along with cultural preservation.
- Also suggest what needs to be done to remove these challenges.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

- India with its long history and varied heritage is one of the societies deeply rooted in traditions.
- Besides, India is also making perceptible strides towards becoming a modern nation.
 - Since independence, modernization of India has been an integral part of the national strategy.
 - Also, conscious and sustained efforts are being made for the overall development of India's economy, polity, social framework and cultural matrix.

Body

Modernization signifies a transformation from **rudimentary traditional values to modern rationalist traditional values**. Thus, Modernity is not antithetical to Cultural preservation but a rational view of culture. So, achieving modernity should be the aim of society in order to thrive on modern and rational traditional values.

Challenges in engaging with modernity

- **Lack of understanding about the concept of Modernity:** One of the biggest challenges in engaging with modernity is lack of understanding about the concept of modernity among people.
 - They fail to understand that Modernization is not about leaving one's cultural practices. But opting for **rational traditional practices/rituals**.
- **Challenge by fundamentalism:** Religious fundamentalism and rudimentary religious practices is another big challenge to engaging with modernity.
 - Religious fundamentalism sometimes fails to promote rational thinking and adoption of rational cultural practices.
- **Lack of inclusive modern education:** Modern education has failed to reach every section of the society due to some structural obstacles, caste stratification or some negative elements of tradition or discriminatory attitudes of individuals in society.
- **Low status of women:** Although politically women enjoy equal rights in Indian society, their

social condition is not very pleasant.

- They are ill treated (issues such as Patriarchy, women's economic dependence on man still exist) and thus, it is one of the biggest challenges in achieving modernity.

Steps to be taken

- **Need for social movement:** Modernity does not amount to undermining our collective memories, our cultural traditions and indigenous knowledge systems.
 - Thus, people need to be made aware of this fact and motivate through social movements for building rational and modern thinking.
- **Bridging the gender gap:** There is a desperate need to bridge the gender gap in Indian social structure. Focus should be on increasing literacy and economic opportunity for women.
 - Modernity will usher in the Indian society when its women possess a modern rational view of culture and are not bound by rudimentary practices like Patriarchy.
- **Focus on Human development:** Modernity, further, implies the constant pursuit of improvement in human lives and of the pursuit of progress (social as well as economic).
 - Thus, focusing on overall human development will help in inculcating rationalistic attitude among individuals and societies.

Conclusion

We have to understand that the tradition occurs as part of a chain while handling down from one generation not another. Thus, there is no clear division between tradition and modernity. What is modern for the present civilization would be traditional for the civilization that exists a few decades later.

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