



## Mains Practice Question

**Q.** Diversity of religion is both India's strength and weakness. Examine. (150 words)

20 Aug, 2021 GS Paper 1 Indian Society

### Approach

- Mention about Indian values and its religious diversity in introduction.
- Explain how religious diversity is India's strength.
- Mention how religious diversity creates problems and can prove to be its weakness.
- Conclude how India can achieve constitutional goals by utilizing its religious diversity.

### Introduction

Indian civilization values of **tolerance, cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism** gives a unique character to Indian culture. We have people belonging to a variety of ethnicities and religions. While 94% of the world's Hindus live in India, there are also substantial populations of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and adherents of folk religions.

They all have the fundamental right to freedom of religion (Article 25-28) as well, making India a secular country.

### Body

This religious diversity is India's strength in the following manner:

- It **adds to India's rich cultural heritage**. Diverse traditions and festivals like Holi, Diwali, Christmas, Eid give India a unique way of life. This diversity leads to rich music, dance, art and literature as well.
- It leads to **diversity in intellectual viewpoints** which helps to make laws more adaptable to societal values.
- India represents a model for international society in the current era marked with religious intolerance. Indian value of '**Vasudeva Kutumbhcam**' can lead the world to peace and prosperity.
- Religious diversity gives opportunity for India to **increase people-to-people contacts** across the globe. This not only helps in expanding India's trade frontiers but also acts as backchannel diplomacy in crisis situations.

However, religious diversity creates a lot of challenges as well. Few of them are:

- It **increases the chances of communal disharmony**. Few people use hate speech to spread communal hatred which may lead to riots and tensions among people of different religions.
- Certain anti-national elements use **religion for illegitimate interests like radicalizing** youth to indulge in terrorist activities in the name of religion.
- Accommodating diverse religious practices that may not be suitable for the rest of the country. It may open a Pandora's Box to legitimize different religious practices.
- State interference in religious practices of minorities may disturb their autonomy and may hamper

their belief in constitutional principles. Thus, the **conflict between constitutional morality and religious morality** poses difficult questions for the judiciary.

## Conclusion

India represents the most complex amalgamation of various cultural identities. Religious diversity can be a boon or a bane depending upon the maturity of the society. If the citizens adhere to the constitutional principles of fraternity and brotherhood, only then India can truly achieve 'unity in diversity'.

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