

- Prevailing personal laws **place women at a disadvantaged position** and condemn them to subjugation and mistreatment. For example, inheritance rights, polygamy.
- A lot of **animosity** is caused by perceived preferential treatment by the law to certain religious communities, which hurts the cause of **national integration**.

In this context, implementation of UCC seems to be the much-needed step for India to move forward in 21st century as it holds following benefits:

- **Right to equality:** All the laws related to marriage, inheritance, family, land etc. would be equal for all Indians.
- **Women empowerment:** It will correct the gender discriminatory nature of family laws across religions.
- **Stemming vote bank politics:** If all religions are covered under the same laws, it will leave less room for politicization of issues based on religious differences.
- **Integration:** A UCC would eliminate the discourse on preferential treatment to certain religious communities and increase social solidarity.
- **Reduced Litigation:** The resources that are used in implementation of different laws and consequent litigation will be freed which will help the society move forward and take India towards its goal of becoming a developed nation.

However, the Law Commission of India in its consultation paper published in 2018 said that UCC is neither necessary nor desirable at this point of time. It is not mandatory requirement for our progress towards 21st century since:

- **Discrimination against women may be eliminated within communities** rather than looking for equality between communities in terms of family law.
- The mere existence of difference does not imply discrimination rather it should be ensured that personal laws **do not violate fundamental rights**.
- Personal laws pertain to **social aspects of communities** and in changing such behaviours, laws have not always been very effective. For example, prevalence of dowry despite Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961.

There has been a lack of consensus on the issue of UCC and till date, not even a draft UCC has been formulated. Therefore, till the time such a consensus is reached, it is imperative for a developed and democratic country of the 21st century that the spirit of UCC is achieved through amending personal laws. And, in the long run, all efforts should be taken to give force to the Article 44 of the Constitution which places constitutional duty on the state to implement UCC.

**12. In India, geography, identity and a sense of deprivation have historically combined to drive regionalism. Elaborate. (250 words) 15**

**Approach:**

- Give a brief introduction regarding regionalism in India.
- Provide arguments to bring out the way geography, identity and a sense of deprivation have historically combined to drive regionalism.
- Conclude accordingly.

**Answer:**

Regionalism refers to the conscious loyalty or attachment of people to their own region that is aimed to advance their causes. In India, regionalism has been driven by geography, identity and a sense of deprivation as discussed below:

- **Geography:** Geography is a crucial factor in the rise of regionalism as the topographic and climatic variations along with differences in the settlement pattern induce in people the concept of regionalism.
  - Example – States like Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand have distinct identity due to their hilly terrain. Over the course of history, the hill economy and culture diverged significantly from that of the flatlands.