

- Further, the **middle class**, which was almost exclusively constituted at the time of Independence by English educated members of the upper castes, had expanded to include the upwardly mobile dominant castes through **sanskritisation**. Some among the hitherto lower castes have started claiming higher positions in the caste hierarchy and have started practicing a new form of casteism within their castes.
- **Affirmative actions**, through policy of **reservations**, has aggravated the caste system in India. Demand for reservations for government jobs has become more vocal and aggressive in current time as seen in Jat Andolan. The traditional occupations are not meeting the basic requirements of the individuals as well as societies and they have to search for new avenues like government jobs.
- It is argued that India has become a **caste democracy**. Political parties are using caste as a means of mobilization very aggressively during elections for their gains thus not allowing the required changes to take place effectively.
- Even though there are increasing instances of **inter caste marriages**, but caste violence like, honour killing is also increasing and is witnessed not only in Northern India but also in Southern India where literacy rate is on the higher side.

Thus, it can be seen that while the **link of caste system with Hinduism has diluted over time**, it has **taken new forms through various adaptations**.

**16. It is argued by some that regionalism is a threat to national integrity while others consider it as a highly impactful tool in facilitating political participation. Discuss. (250 words) 15**

**Approach:**

- Briefly introduce the term Regionalism.
- With the help of examples show that regionalism can be a national threat.
- With the help of examples show that it has been used as a tool to generate political participation.
- Briefly give your opinion with a way forward.

**Answer:**

Regionalism is a political ideology that focuses on the normative interests of a particular region, group of regions or other subnational entity. Regionalism in India is rooted in India's diversity of languages, cultures, tribes, and religions. It is also encouraged by the geographical concentration of these identity markers in particular regions, and fuelled by a sense of regional deprivation.

Thus, in Indian context, some scholars believe **regionalism as something that is anti-system, anti-federal** and against basic interest of a well-integrated nation because:

- It **creates a feeling that the region is being neglected and treated as inferior** to the rest of the nation. For e.g. observed in North-East India, which faces economic deprivation due to geographical isolation.
- Militant and aggressive regionalism leads to **secessionist tendencies** i.e. demand of a state outside the Union. Its classic examples are Khalistan movement and Kashmir issue.
- Regionalism can become a **shield for militancy and creates internal security threat** for the nation as the insurgent groups or extremists often fan the feeling of regionalism against politico-administrative set up of the country.
- Rise of regional political parties sometimes **weakens the authority of the Union government** especially when a coalition government is formed at centre. For example, demands of particular region are often portrayed as national demand. Similarly, several regions create hurdle in international diplomacy e.g. the Prime Minister could not attend the meetings of Commonwealth (CHOGM) held in Sri Lanka in 2013 due to pressure from regional political parties of Tamil Nadu.
- Regionalism such as anti-migrant or anti-Bihari attitude in some states poses a **threat to social harmony** which undermines its citizen a fundamental right to move and settle freely throughout the territory of India.