

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2023 · 10 marks

Comment on the multicultural perspective on Rights

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 difference-blind equality is insufficient → uniform treatment ignores cultural location

R2 universal citizenship vs social / cultural diversity → real equality needs recognition, not sameness

Body flow

recognition + accommodation premise → **Kymlicka**: group-differentiated rights (autonomy, language, representation), freedom depends on a societal culture → **Parekh** broadens it to immigrants / non-citizens → **Taylor**: a politics of recognition

Counter-view

Barry: illiberal, anti-Enlightenment → **Okin**: group rights reinforce gender inequality

Conclusion routes

R1 exposes majority bias, but must stay bounded by fundamental rights

R2 dialogical multiculturalism = recognition + individual liberty + gender equality

Multiculturalism challenges the liberal assumption that uniform, difference-blind treatment secures equality. It argues that universal citizenship, by applying rights identically ignores the social and cultural location of minorities.

Will Kymlicka defends group-differentiated rights, territorial autonomy, language rights, guaranteed representation to protect minority societal cultures, since freedom itself depends on a secure cultural context. Bhiku Parekh widens this to immigrants and non-citizen minorities, while Charles Taylor grounds it in a politics of recognition.

The perspective also draws strong criticism. Brian Barry sees it as illiberal, rejecting enlightenment values of individual freedom. Susan Moller Okin objects that group rights can reinforce gender inequality, since many cultures discriminate against women.

Multiculturalism rightly exposes the majority bias within liberal democracies. Yes its claims must stay bounded by fundamental rights. A dialogical approach combining cultural recognition with individual liberty and gender equality is the soundest position.