

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2021 · 10 marks

“The Constitution makers faced the great task of forging a common national identity in the face of unparalleled social and cultural diversity in India.”
Comment.

• FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 diversity unmatched at once (language, religion, caste, tribe, region) → Partition + violence + 500+ princely states → fear of fragmentation → identity a “great task” → stake: unity by accommodation, not uniformity **R2** makers’ real choice: crush difference or constitutionalise it → they chose a plural, constitutional identity → diversity made the basis, not the enemy, of unity

Body flow

shared constitutional values = common ground → Preamble values + Arts 14–18 (equality) + Art 17 (untouchability abolished) → one equal civic identity → diversity protected directly → Arts 29–30 (minorities) + Fifth/Sixth Schedules (tribal) + linguistic reorganisation (regional) → federalism binds both (Union / States / local)

Counter-view

fear that unparalleled diversity threatens unity → answered by **Manor**: cross-cutting heterogeneity (caste, class, sub-region) strengthens rather than weakens unity

Conclusion routes

R1 identity forged was plural and constitutional, not uniform or coercive **R2** unity by accommodation, not assimilation → diversity turned into unity’s strength

India entered freedom with a diversity of language, religion, caste, tribe and region that few nations faced at once.

Partition, communal violence and the integration of over five hundred princely states raised real fears of fragmentation, making a common identity an urgent task.

The makers built unity through accommodation, not uniformity. Shared constitutional values supplied the common ground. The Preamble's justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, the equality guarantees of Articles 14-18, and the abolition of untouchability under Article 17 gave every citizen one equal civic identity.

Diversity itself was protected directly. Articles 29 and 30 secured the cultural and educational rights of minorities; the fifth and sixth schedules accommodated tribal life.

Linguistic reorganisation allowed regional identities to live within the national one. Federalism held both together through Union, States and local institutions.

According to James Manor, this heterogeneity cut across by caste, clan and sub-region. It strengthens rather than weakens national unity. The makers therefore forged an identity that was plural and constitutional, not uniform or coercive.