

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2016 · 10 marks

Cultural and Regional differences are the enduring bases on which politics is played out in India.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

**R1** Kothari: democracy works through society, not outside it → culture / region as durable ground, not mere survivals  
**R2** India a mosaic of language-culture-region → identities reshaped by elections, parties, federal bargaining → hence the standing bases of politics

Body flow

Kothari framing → Brass: regionalism long-term, nationalism short-term → language proof (Andhra reorganisation → Tamil anti-Hindi → three-language formula) → varied forms (Shiv Sena sons-of-soil → Bodoland / Gorkhaland statehood → Naga secession) → drivers: deprivation, uneven development, cultural anxiety, nativism

Counter-view

**Kohli**: mishandled movements turn secessionist (Punjab, J&K) → the danger is delayed accommodation, not diversity itself

Conclusion routes

**R1** federal-democratic accommodation converts differences into channels of representation  
**R2** institutionally accommodated, diversity strengthens rather than strains democracy

Rajni Kothari argued that Indian democracy does not work outside society but through it. Caste, language, region and ethnicity are not traditional survivals but reshaped by elections, parties and federal bargaining.

Cultural and regional differences are therefore the durable ground of Indian politics. Paul R. Brass argues that regionalism has been a long-term trend while nationalism has often been short-term. The reorganisation began with Andhra Pradesh and the Tamil anti-Hindi agitations turned cultural assertion into a federal demand the state absorbed through the three language formula.

Other examples include sons of the soil politics in the Shiv Sena, statehood demands like Bodoland and Gorkhaland. The secessionist Naga movement driven by deprivation, uneven development cultural anxiety and nativism.

Atul Kohli warns that mishandled regional movements can turn secessionist, as in Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir. The danger lies in delayed accommodation, not in diversity.

Federal and democratic accommodation has converted them into channels of representation. When institutionally accommodated, these differences strengthen rather than strain Indian democracy.