

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2021 · 15 marks

What is globalisation? Why is there an intense debate about globalisation and its consequences?

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 define via **Giddens** → intensification of worldwide social relations / time-space compression → theme is interdependence **R2** globalisation = overlapping, contradictory processes → resists a single definition → the contest starts with "what it even is"

Body flow

definition (integration + interdependence) → disagreement over the state → **Ohmae** (real, borders/sovereignty erode) → **Gilpin** (buzzword, states in command) → **Held** (reshapes, states remain) → shift to consequences → **O'Neill** gains (inequality down, poverty halved, fewer battle deaths) → **Mehta** (Western stagnation, xenophobia) → **Thakur** (soft imperialism, uncivil society)

Counter-view

liberal optimism (O'Neill's gains) set against the Marxist-postcolonial charge of neo-imperialism and the dark side (**Thakur**) — one process, opposite readings

Conclusion routes

R1 intense because it is a double-edged sword with unevenly shared gains → contested across rival lenses **R2** prosperity for the liberal, new imperialism for the Marxist → hence the call for a humane, inclusive Globalisation 4.0

Globalisation is the process by which people, goods and ideas spread worldwide, deepening the integration of cultures, governments and economies. Anthony Giddens describes it as the intensification of worldwide social relations, distant events shape local life and the reverse, compressing time and space.

Hyperglobalists like Kenichi Ohmae see a real and transformative force, a world where political borders matter less & sovereignty erodes. Sceptics like Robert Gilpin treat it as more a buzzword than a reality, one that still remains within the command of states. Transformationalists such as David Held take a middle path: globalisation reshapes societies and governance while states remain central.

Jim O'Neill points to inequality falling between countries, global poverty halving and fewer people dying in war.

For Pratap Bhanu Mehta, the reality is stagnant living standards in the west and rising anti-immigrant sentiment. Ramesh Thakur calls globalisation a soft form of imperialism that breeds a global uncivil society of terrorism, crime & trafficking.

This is why the debate stays intense. Globalisation is a double-edged sword whose gains are unevenly shared. The same process is prosperity to a liberal and a new form of imperialism to a Marxist, feeding today's demand for a humane and inclusive Globalisation 4.0.