

UNIT – I

Indian society: nature, unity, diversity

Nature · Geography / history · Unity in diversity · Why study

Explanatory Lecture Slides

Indian Society: Continuity and Change · Minor-II-2 · Semester II

INDIAN SOCIETY: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Topics covered in this unit

01

State the nature of Indian society

02

Explain geographical and historical features

03

Examine unity in diversity

04

Note threats to unity

05

Place the Indological gaze

06

Say why a lawyer studies this

How this unit is organised

01

Nature

02

Geographical
features

03

Historical features

04

Unity in diversity

05

Threats

06

Why study

Nature of Indian society

A plural, stratified, old civilisation-society with a modern republican State sitting on it.

- PYQ: nature and importance of Indian society (2021, 2024, 2025).
- Plural: language, religion, kin, region. Stratified: caste, class, tribe, gender.
- Civilisation-society (Dumont / Indology): not only a 'nation-State of 1947'.
- Importance: every Indian statute meets this society, not a textbook Britain.

Nature of Indian society

PLURAL

- Languages.
- Religions.
- Regions.
- Tribes.

STRATIFIED

- Caste.
- Class.
- Gender.
- Rural-urban.

Geographical and historical features

PYQ pair (2021, 2022, 2023): geography and history as makers of society.

- Geography: subcontinent, monsoons, river cores, Deccan, Himalayan wall, long coast — variety of ecology, therefore of livelihood and kin.
- History: Indus, Vedic, states and empires, bhakti and Islam, colonial census and railways, 1947, the Constitution.
- Do not write a history textbook; name four layers and stop.

Geographical and historical features

GEO

- Monsoon agriculture.
- Regional isolation + pilgrimage networks.

HISTORY

- Deep agrarian caste.
- Colonial enumeration.
- Constitutional modern.

Unity in diversity

The most-set question of this paper. Treat it as a thesis, not a slogan.

- PYQ: almost every sitting 2021–25.
- Unity: civilisational (sacred geography, Sanskrit/Persianate literatures, shared epics), political (Republic, single citizenship, SC/ST, IPC/BNS), economic (one market, GST), legal (one Constitution).
- Diversity: language (Sch. VIII), religion, caste, tribe, kinship (north/south), law (personal laws).
- The Constitution is a unity-machine that refuses to flatten diversity (Arts. 25–30, 370 historically, Fifth/Sixth Schedules).

Unity in diversity

UNITY DEVICES

- Constitution.
- Single citizenship.
- Rail and market.
- Cricket and cinema — if you must.

DIVERSITY DEVICES

- Federalism.
- Personal law.
- Official languages.
- Schedules V–VI.

Threats to unity

PYQ 6-mark (2022): threats of unity in diversity.

- Communal violence, secessionist nationalism, language chauvinism, caste atrocity, fake news, inequality so sharp that citizenship feels dual.
- Legal replies: Art. 19(2), criminal law against hate, NIA in some facts, but also Art. 19(1)(a) so that unity is not a police slogan.
- Bommai: secularism as a working glue.

Threats to unity

THREATS

- Communalism.
- Secession.
- Caste violence.
- Economic dualism.

REPLIES

- Part III.
- ECI.
- Federal bargaining.
- Criminal law — used with care.

Indological perspective — a first look

PYQ often parks Ghurye here or in Unit III. Indology: India is to be understood through her texts and civilisational categories.

- Ghurye: caste, Sanskritisation (later Srinivas's word), tribes as backward Hindus (contested).
- Merit: takes India seriously as a civilisation. Defect: brahmanical texts ≠ lived India (Ambedkar, Dumont's critics, subalterns).
- Plant: native categories, contextualisation, indigenisation — Unit III words.

Indological perspective — a first look

KEEP

- Texts matter.
- Caste is not just class.

DROP

- India as only the Manusmriti.

Why a law student studies Indian society

Because Art. 15, 17, 25, family law, tribal law, secularism, reservations, and every riot trial are sociological facts with sections attached.

- A lawyer who only knows CPC will not understand why a compromise fails in a caste village.
- This paper is the facts-in-issue of Indian constitutional law.

Why a law student studies Indian society

DOCKETS

- Family.
- Caste atrocity.
- Temple.
- Reservation.
- Language.

METHOD

- One concept + one Article + one case.

Threats to unity

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- Bommai: secularism as a working glue.

Cases a KSLU answer should name

CASE

S.R. Bommai v Union of India

(1994) 3 SCC 1

Secularism as a working condition of unity.

CASE

SR Bommai / Ismail Faruqui / recent temple cases — pick Bommai

(1994) 3 SCC 1

Use Bommai, not a newspaper, for unity-and-secularism.

CASE

State of Karnataka v Praveen Bhai Thogadia

(2004) 4 SCC 684

Hate speech as a threat to the public order that unity needs.

Provisions & materials to quote

Preamble

Unity and integrity of the nation; fraternity.

Art. 1

Union of States.

Arts. 25–30

Religious and minority diversity as rights.

Sch. VIII

Languages.

Sch. V & VI

Tribal difference inside the Republic.

10 / 16-mark frames from this unit

Q1

Unity in diversity is the unique feature of Indian society — discuss.

Q2

Explain the nature and importance of the study of Indian society.

Q3

Explain the geographical and historical features of Indian society.

Q4

What threatens unity in diversity? What does the Constitution do about it?

Unit recap

- 1 Plural + stratified + old civilisation + new Republic.
- 2 Unity in diversity is a thesis: give devices of both.
- 3 Bommai is the unity case.
- 4 Geography and history are setters of caste and kin, not GK.
- 5 A lawyer studies this because the docket is caste, family, temple, language.