International Relations · GS - II

How should India balance its commitment to the protection of human rights abroad with the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in international relations?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Human rights, sovereignty, non-interference, diplomatic engagement, minority protection, neighbourhood policy, international law

Model Answer

Introduction

Human-rights concerns in neighbouring countries can have humanitarian, political and security implications for India. Addressing them requires balancing moral commitments with international law and diplomatic prudence.

The Competing Considerations

1. **Humanitarian responsibility:** Violence against religious minorities raises legitimate concerns regarding human dignity, equality and freedom of religion.

2. **Sovereign equality:** Article 2(1) of the UN Charter recognises the sovereign equality of States. External responses must respect the independence and territorial integrity of other countries.

3. **Regional stability:** Inflammatory political statements can aggravate bilateral tensions, encourage retaliation and complicate regional cooperation.

4. **Domestic implications:** Minority-related developments across borders can influence public sentiment and create pressure on governments to respond.

India's Diplomatic Options

1. **Quiet diplomacy:** Raise concerns through bilateral channels and seek credible investigations and protection of affected communities.

2. **Multilateral engagement:** Use appropriate international platforms to encourage accountability and adherence to human-rights commitments.

3. **Consular and humanitarian support:** Provide assistance to affected Indian nationals and cooperate on legitimate humanitarian measures.

4. **Constructive neighbourhood policy:** Maintain communication with neighbouring governments while encouraging minority protection and social harmony.

5. **Responsible public communication:** Political leaders should avoid threats or statements that may be interpreted as challenging another country's territorial sovereignty.

Conclusion

India's regional influence is strengthened through principled diplomacy, not coercive rhetoric. A consistent approach combining human-rights advocacy, respect for sovereignty and peaceful engagement can protect humanitarian interests while maintaining regional stability.

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