Evaluate the impact of globalization on Indian youths with reference to social, political, economic and cultural spheres.



MAINS MASTERY 2026 · GS PAPER I · QUESTION 20 · STUDENT EDITION

Globalisation and the Indian Youth Experience

THE QUESTION, AS SET IN UPSC CSE MAINS 2026

Evaluate the impact of globalization on Indian youths with reference to social, political, economic and cultural spheres.

Directive: Evaluate | 15 marks | 250 words | Indian Society: Globalisation and Youth

1 **PYQ Deep Decode**
Four spheres, hidden inequality, evaluative form

2 **PYQ Intelligence**
2013 to 2026: identity, women, culture and youth

3 **Additional information**
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4 **Pitfalls and variations**
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8 **Write it yourself**
A seven-point evaluation checklist

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1 PYQ Deep Decode

Read the question the way the examiner set it: the demand, the hidden demand, the structure that follows from both, and how the answer should be presented, opened and closed.

1.1 The demand

The question asks for an **evaluation of what globalisation has done to Indian youths**, not a general account of economic liberalisation or Western influence. It identifies **four spheres, in a fixed order**: social, political, economic and cultural. Each needs an assessment of **opportunities gained and vulnerabilities created**. The directive **"Evaluate"** requires an overall judgement about the extent and character of change. A convincing answer therefore shows how global connections have expanded young Indians' choices in relationships, citizenship, work and identity, while also creating inequalities, insecurity and new forms of dependence.

Words in the question	What they ask you to do	What goes wrong if you miss them
Evaluate	Weigh benefits against costs in every sphere and reach a reasoned judgement about the net impact.	Writing eight positive effects followed by eight negative effects without assessing either.
Impact of globalization	Trace consequences of greater cross-border flows of goods, capital, services, technology, information, ideas and people, particularly since India's 1991 reforms.	Equating globalisation entirely with Westernisation, internet use or foreign investment.
Indian youths	Keep young Indians at the centre, including students, workers, migrants, young women and disadvantaged groups. The 15 to 29 age group is useful for PLFS evidence, but not a universal definition.	Writing about Indian society generally, without identifying youth-specific experiences.
Social sphere	Examine relationships, family expectations, gender roles, mobility, aspirations and identities, including changes in autonomy and social pressures.	Reducing social change to social media and online friendships.
Political sphere	Assess participation, civic outlook, transnational causes and digital mobilisation, alongside misinformation, polarisation and manipulation.	Assuming that political awareness, online expression and actual participation are identical.
Economic sphere	Evaluate education, skills, employment, entrepreneurship, migration and platform work, including unemployment and job insecurity.	Claiming that international economic integration automatically guarantees good jobs.
Cultural sphere	Examine language, consumption, lifestyles, creative expression and the interaction between global and indigenous cultural practices.	Claiming that Indian culture has either disappeared or remained completely unchanged.

THE DEMAND IN ONE LINE

Evaluate how globalisation has changed young Indians' relationships and identities, participation and civic outlook, work and opportunities, and cultural practices and values, balancing gains and costs in each sphere before reaching a judgement.

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1.2 The hidden demand

Four spheres make the question appear to be a straightforward classification exercise. Its deeper test is **whether globalisation's gains and costs reach all young Indians equally, and whether young people control the changes affecting them**. A connected metropolitan graduate may gain international employment, online education and public visibility. A young woman with restricted digital access, a rural worker with limited English proficiency or a platform delivery worker facing algorithmic control may encounter a very different global economy.

The stronger interpretation is therefore not simply **globalisation as liberation versus globalisation as cultural loss**. Young people can adopt, reject, reinterpret and combine global influences. Yet the choices available to them are shaped by **class, caste, gender, region, language, infrastructure, labour protections and platform power**. The small final part should make this distinction and deliver the overall assessment.

A useful way to test an impact is to separate the opportunity globalisation creates from the conditions that allow a young person to use it.

Global opportunity	Who may gain, and what limits the gain	The evaluative test
Global education and employment	A skilled graduate can pursue international courses or remote work; affordability, language, credentials and connectivity restrict access.	Has greater choice translated into **accessible, decent and secure opportunities**?
Digital civic participation	A connected young voter can discuss global and local issues; disinformation, harassment and unequal visibility constrain expression.	Does online voice become **informed and effective citizenship**?
Global cultural exchange	Young creators can reach audiences abroad; commercial algorithms and dominant languages influence what becomes visible.	Are youths **creative participants** or mainly dependent consumers?

WEAK

Globalisation has given Indian youth jobs, modern lifestyles and social media, but has also increased unemployment, Westernisation and cultural decline. Thus it has both advantages and disadvantages.

STRONG

NITI Aayog's 2022 study estimated 77 lakh gig workers in 2020-21 and projected 2.35 crore by 2029-30. Platform-linked work expands earning opportunities, but income uncertainty and limited social protection constrain autonomy. Globalisation's economic gains therefore depend on the quality and security of work, not access alone.

1.3 The structure

The question has **one explicit evaluation across four named spheres**. Their order should remain unchanged. The hidden demand becomes a **small final part**, rather than a fifth sphere or a detached essay on inequality. The shares refer to the body between the introduction and conclusion; they are a teaching guide, not a UPSC rule.

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Introduction	1. Four spheres: social, political, economic, cultural about four-fifths	2. Unequal gains and overall judgement about one-fifth	Conclusion

Part 1 **Impact across the four spheres** about four-fifths

Social: relationships and identities	Mobility, individual choice, gender autonomy and global peer networks; also social comparison, harassment, loneliness and intergenerational tensions.
Political: participation and civic outlook	Awareness of rights, online mobilisation and transnational causes; also misinformation, echo chambers and performative activism.
Economic: work and opportunities	Global education, IT-enabled services, entrepreneurship and remote work; also skill mismatch, youth unemployment, precarious gig work and unequal access.
Cultural: practices and values	Fusion in music, food, language and lifestyles; also commercialised identity, consumerism and pressures on local practices.

Part 2 **Unequal gains, vulnerabilities and overall judgement** about one-fifth

Distribution	Gender, caste, class, geography, disability and language shape the capacity to benefit.
Control	Workers face platform rules; creators face algorithmic visibility; young consumers face commercial persuasion.
Judgement	Globalisation expands possibilities but does not distribute capabilities or bargaining power equally.
Conditions	Inclusive education, decent work, digital literacy, social protection and cultural confidence determine whether opportunities become empowerment.

1.4 How to present it

The directive **"Evaluate"** and the four specified spheres make a **compact evaluation table** especially effective. Use the columns **Sphere, gains, costs and assessment**. Each row demonstrates balanced reasoning without creating separate, repetitive lists of positives and negatives. Follow the table with two or three concise lines on unequal access and agency. A relevant statistic or concrete Indian example should support the most consequential point, especially employment.

Form	Fit here	Reason
Four-row evaluation table and final judgement	**Best**	Matches the question's order and makes the gain-cost assessment visible in every sphere.
Four short headed paragraphs	Good	Allows fuller examples and nuance, but requires disciplined balance in each paragraph.
Separate positives and negatives	Weak	
Unstructured essay on modernisation	Weak	The required four spheres disappear and the overall judgement becomes vague.

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1.5 The introduction and the conclusion

The introduction serves the whole question. Link the post-1991 opening of India's economy with the later spread of global information, work and culture. State that these connections have widened opportunities while altering social relationships, political engagement, livelihoods and identities. Do not begin with an isolated definition of globalisation.

The conclusion settles the evaluation. Globalisation has expanded young Indians' horizons, but its benefits depend on skills, connectivity, security and social position. End with a clear distinction between **exposure to the world** and **the power to shape one's place within it**.

2 PYQ Intelligence 2013 to 2026

The question's context in 2026, its relationship with earlier questions on globalisation, identities and social change, and what to prepare next.

2.1 Why the subject was topical in 2026

The significance of globalisation for Indian youths is rooted in the **economic reforms beginning in July 1991** and the subsequent growth of international trade, IT-enabled services, migration and cultural exchange. By 2026, the debate was increasingly about the quality of global opportunities, digital citizenship, platform work and uneven access. New official evidence on employment, internet subscriptions and gendered internet use was available before **GS Paper I on 22 August 2026**. UPSC does not disclose why it sets individual questions, so the developments below are **context, not cause**. All pre-exam evidence is distinguished from the year of the underlying survey.

When	What happened	Why it matters for this question
July 1991	India's industrial, trade and financial liberalisation accelerated. Licensing restrictions were relaxed and the economy became more open to international markets, capital and competition.	The historical turning point for the economic integration experienced by later generations of Indian youths.
June 2022	**NITI Aayog** published **India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy**. It estimated **77 lakh gig workers in 2020-21** and projected **2.35 crore by 2029-30**. These are estimates and projections, not a count of employed youths.	Flexible platform work creates income opportunities while raising questions about security and bargaining power.
7 November 2023	The **UGC** notified regulations for the setting up and operation of campuses of foreign higher educational institutions in India. Prior UGC approval is required.	Internationalisation of higher education involves more than students travelling abroad, but regulations do not prove equitable access or completed campuses.
25 January 2024	The Ministry of Education released **AISHE 2021-22**: higher education enrolment reached **4.33 crore**, while gross enrolment ratio for ages 18 to 23 rose to **28.4%**. The survey period is 2021-22, not 2024.	The growing educational base from which young Indians seek international skills, credentials and employment.
27 March 2024	A **PIB Research Unit** factsheet on the general election reported over **1.84 crore registered first-time electors aged 18 to 19**, compared with about 1.5 crore in 2019.	Young people form a significant electoral constituency; registration is not proof of voting or digital political engagement.

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When	What happened	Why it matters for this question
29 March 2024	The **ILO and Institute for Human Development** published **India Employment Report 2024**. Using 2022 data, it found that youths comprised **82.9% of all unemployed people**.	Employment remains a central test of whether education and integration translate into opportunity. The 82.9% figure is a share of the unemployed, not the youth unemployment rate.
June to July 2024	**UNICEF India's U-Report** collected **25,626 responses** in an online-safety poll. Respondents raised concerns about stalking, bullying and online threats. It was a voluntary poll, not a nationally representative prevalence survey.	Digital exposure carries social risks; a sample's experience must not be generalised to all Indian youths.
1 February 2025	**Union Budget 2025-26** announced identity cards, e-Shram registration and proposed healthcare coverage under PM-JAY for online platform workers. It also announced a ₹500 crore Centre of Excellence in AI for Education and five National Centres of Excellence for Skilling.	Government recognition of platform-worker vulnerabilities and changing skills. A budget announcement must not be described as universal benefits already delivered.
29 January to 5 February 2026	Government replies on **BharatNet** reported **2,14,904 Gram Panchayats service-ready** as at 31 December 2025, while further expansion remained under implementation.	Rural connectivity can widen access, but service-ready infrastructure is not the same as household adoption or digital competence.
27 March 2026	**MoSPI's PLFS Annual Report 2025** reported a **9.9% unemployment rate among youths aged 15 to 29** in usual status (principal and subsidiary), compared with 10.3% in calendar year 2024. Urban youth unemployment was 13.6% in 2025, against 8.3% for rural youth. PLFS sampling and survey design changed in January 2025.	A verified, contemporary measure of the employment challenge; the rate and survey methodology must be specified.
29 May 2026	The Health Ministry released **NFHS-6 (2023-24)** national and State factsheets. Among persons aged 15 to 49 who had ever used the internet, the national figures were **64.3% for women and 80.5% for men**, compared with 33.3% and 51.2% in NFHS-5.	Digital access expanded substantially but a gender gap persisted. This is a 15 to 49 population indicator, not a youth-specific rate.
22 June 2026	**TRAI** released its January to March 2026 telecom indicators. India recorded **1,092.79 million internet subscriptions** at 31 March 2026, compared with 1,028.61 million at 31 December 2025.	Digital infrastructure's scale enables global contact. Subscriptions cannot be interpreted as unique people or young users.
22 August 2026	UPSC's GS Paper I posed the question on globalisation's impact on youths in the social, political, economic and cultural spheres.	Compared with earlier culture-focused questions, the demand combines four dimensions and requires a distributional judgement.

2.2 The skill UPSC keeps testing

UPSC has repeatedly examined globalisation through **specific affected groups** (the aged, women and migrants), **cultural outcomes** (diversity, homogenisation and identities), and **competing interpretations** (loss of identity versus cultural strengthening). In 2026, the skill is broader: evaluate how young people experience global connections across four spheres and distinguish gains in opportunity from actual empowerment. The previous questions below are reproduced **verbatim**, with their original question numbers.

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Year	The question as UPSC set it	What it asked of you	What changed in 2026
2013 GS I, Q17	Critically examine the effect of globalization on the aged population in India.	Weigh effects on one age group, including benefits and vulnerabilities.	From older people to youths, with four explicitly named spheres.
2015 GS I, Q12	Discuss the positive and negative effects of globalization on women in India.	Balance opportunities and costs for a particular group.	Gender inequality becomes one dimension of the wider youth experience.
2016 GS I, Q8	To what extent globalization has influenced the core of cultural diversity in India? Explain.	Assess the extent of cultural transformation.	Culture becomes one of four spheres, not the entire answer.
2018 GS I, Q19	'Globalization is generally said to promote cultural homogenization but due to this cultural specificities appear to be strengthened in the Indian Society.' Elucidate.	Explain how global forces can homogenise and reinforce local difference simultaneously.	Young Indians actively mix and reinterpret influences, including through digital media.
2019 GS I, Q20	Are we losing our local identity for the global identity ? Discuss.	Consider the tension between local and global belonging.	Identity remains relevant but must be situated among social, political and economic changes.
2020 GS I, Q18	Is diversity and pluralism in India under threat due to globalisation ? Justify your answer.	Defend a judgement about the effects on diversity and pluralism.	Requires similar evaluation of cultural effects, alongside civic and employment outcomes.
2024 GS I, Q19	Globalization has increased urban migration by skilled, young, unmarried women from various classes. How has this trend impacted upon their personal freedom and relationship with family?	Connect globalisation and migration to autonomy and family relationships.	Migration and gendered freedom sit within social and economic impacts on youths generally.
2025 GS I, Q10	Do you think that globalization results in only an aggressive consumer culture ? Justify your answer.	Test a one-sided characterisation of globalisation.	Consumerism is only one cost among wider changes in work, politics, relationships and culture.

Also related, verbatim: 2022 GS I, Q20: "Elucidate the relationship between globalization and new technology in a world of scarce resources, with special reference to India." 2026 GS I, Q10: "Do you think digital technology promotes social empowerment? Explain with examples."

CARRY THIS METHOD TO ANY "EVALUATE SOCIAL CHANGE" QUESTION

1. **Identify** the affected group and the specified dimensions of change.
2. **Separate** the driver, such as globalisation, from the mechanisms, such as migration, trade or digital platforms.
3. **Match** one significant gain with one important cost in each dimension.
4. **Substantiate** the assessment with an appropriately defined Indian example or reliable statistic.
5. **Test** whose opportunities increase, whose remain constrained and who controls the terms of participation.
6. **Conclude** with a defensible judgement about the overall effect, not the formula "both positive and negative".

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2.3 What to prepare next

EVIDENCE, POLICY AND INSTITUTIONS

1991 economic reforms	Liberalisation of industry, trade and finance; subsequent growth of globally integrated services and investment.
PLFS, MoSPI	Youth unemployment, workforce participation and employment status. Specify age, year, geography and usual status versus current weekly status.
ILO-IHD, 2024	Educated youth employment, job quality and the concentration of unemployment among youths.
NITI Aayog, 2022	Estimated gig workforce, future projections and recommendations for platform workers.
UGC regulations, 2023	Approved framework for foreign higher education institutions establishing Indian campuses.
AISHE 2021-22	Higher education participation and changing educational aspirations.
ECI and PIB, 2024	First-time electors aged 18 to 19; distinguish voter registration, turnout and digital participation.
NFHS-6 and TRAI, 2026	Gendered internet experience and telecom subscriptions; different populations and units.
Union Budget 2025-26	Announced platform-worker registration and health coverage, alongside AI education and skilling initiatives.

CONCEPTS AND ANALYTICAL DISTINCTIONS

Globalisation versus Westernisation	Worldwide integration is wider than adopting Western lifestyles or values.
Globalisation versus digitalisation	Technology enables global flows, but globalisation also involves labour, capital, trade and mobility.
Homogenisation and glocalisation	Shared global products can coexist with local reinterpretations and strengthened identities.
Individualisation	More choice over work, relationships and lifestyle, sometimes accompanied by weaker support or higher individual risk.
Transnational civic networks	Political learning and solidarity beyond national borders, without assuming direct institutional influence.
Platform economy	App-mediated earning and service delivery, distinct from all gig work and all informal work.
Digital divide	Differences in affordable connectivity, device ownership, skills, accessibility and safe use.
Agency and bargaining power	The capacity to choose, contest and shape global influences, not merely experience them.
Decent work	Earnings, security, rights, protection and voice, rather than job creation alone.

3 Additional information

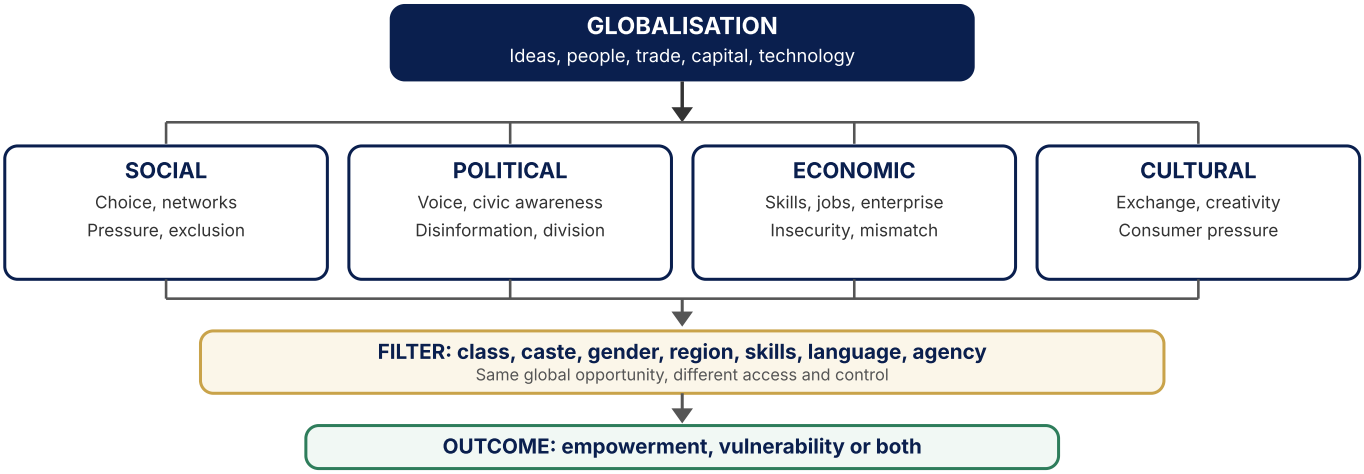
Everything needed to answer this question well. Tier 1 contains the four spheres, the necessary evidence and the distributional judgement. Tier 2 locates these impacts in the wider transformation of Indian society since 1991.

TIER 1 · ESSENTIAL: THE FOUR SPHERES, EVIDENCE AND JUDGEMENT

A simple framework: from global exposure to youth empowerment

The diagram makes the distinction central to this question: globalisation creates opportunities and pressures, but **access, capabilities and bargaining power** determine what young people can actually achieve. It can be reproduced in a few boxes by hand.

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A conceptual teaching framework, not an official statistical model. The four spheres interact; the filter explains why exposure alone does not guarantee empowerment.

1. Social sphere: relationships and identities

Channel of change	Gains and costs for young Indians	Assessment and Indian illustration
Individual autonomy	**Gain:** exposure to alternative lifestyles and gender norms can widen choices about education, careers, marriage and residence. **Cost:** new aspirations can clash with family expectations and unequal household power.	UPSC's 2024 question on skilled, young, unmarried women's urban migration provides the exact social lens: greater freedom may coexist with family negotiation, surveillance and care obligations.
Family and kinship	**Gain:** international and internal migrants can sustain relationships through communication technologies and remittances. **Cost:** geographical separation may redistribute care responsibilities and weaken everyday support.	Do not claim that globalisation necessarily destroys joint families; family structures adapt differently across class and region.
Peer networks and belonging	**Gain:** young people can find educational communities, professional mentors and peers sharing otherwise marginalised interests. **Cost:** online comparison, exclusion, harassment and pressure to maintain a public identity can undermine well-being.	UNICEF India's June to July 2024 voluntary online-safety poll identifies bullying and stalking as concerns. It illustrates risks, but cannot establish national prevalence.
Gender and social norms	**Gain:** international rights discourses may reinforce demands for dignity, educational access and equality. **Cost:** unequal access to technology and exposure to online abuse may reproduce older gender hierarchies.	NFHS-6 found internet experience among 64.3% of women and 80.5% of men aged 15 to 49. This supports a gendered-access argument, not a youth-only claim.
Mobility and aspirations	**Gain:** possibilities of studying or working elsewhere can expand imagined life paths. **Cost:** migration costs, credential barriers, uncertain employment and separation can create new pressures.	Migration can enhance autonomy while transferring the costs of relocation, accommodation and family separation to individuals.

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2. Political sphere: participation and civic outlook

Channel of change	Gains and costs for young Indians	Assessment and Indian illustration
Political information	**Gain:** young citizens can follow domestic affairs alongside international debates on climate, equality and rights. **Cost:** manipulated information, misleading translations and algorithmic amplification can distort political knowledge.	Access to global information enlarges the civic horizon, but information abundance is not equivalent to reliable understanding.
Digital mobilisation	**Gain:** petitions, issue campaigns and social-media organising can lower the initial cost of collective expression. **Cost:** visibility may favour sensational messages, while online activity need not result in sustained organisation.	Climate-awareness campaigns and gender-justice discussions are illustrations of transnational issue diffusion, not evidence that every digital campaign changes policy.
Electoral engagement	**Gain:** online political information and youth-focused campaigns can facilitate discussion of public choices. **Cost:** polarisation, coordinated misinformation and hostile exchanges may discourage deliberation.	Over 1.84 crore registered first-time electors aged 18 to 19 were identified for the 2024 election. Registration indicates electoral eligibility, not turnout or political attitudes.
Transnational solidarity	**Gain:** youths can identify with international debates on environmental protection, equality and humanitarian issues. **Cost:** imported narratives may oversimplify Indian social and institutional realities.	The evaluative question is whether global concerns produce informed, locally grounded civic engagement.
Platform power	**Gain:** digital channels reduce dependence on traditional gatekeepers for public expression. **Cost:** moderation systems, commercial algorithms, harassment and concentrated platform ownership shape who is heard.	Public visibility is not identical to political power. Democratic institutions, media literacy and accountability still matter.

3. Economic sphere: work and opportunities

Channel of change	Gains and costs for young Indians	Assessment and Indian illustration
Global production and services	**Gain:** international trade, investment and outsourcing have created openings in IT-enabled services, customer support, manufacturing supply chains and professional services. **Cost:** exposure to global business cycles and changing technologies introduces competition and insecurity.	Post-1991 integration created new occupational pathways, especially for educated, urban and mobile workers, but gains vary by qualification and sector.
Education and skills	**Gain:** access to international curricula, research, professional networks and online learning can improve skills. **Cost:** language barriers, unequal fees and employer demands can widen the advantage of already privileged students.	AISHE 2021-22 recorded 4.33 crore enrolments and a 28.4% GER for ages 18 to 23. These describe higher education participation, not the direct effect of globalisation.
Graduate and youth employment	**Gain:** expanded education and service-sector employment can improve occupational choice. **Cost:** mismatch between qualifications and available jobs, graduate unemployment and uneven job quality can persist.	**PLFS 2025:** 9.9% youth unemployment, usual status, ages 15 to 29; 13.6% urban and 8.3% rural. It measures unemployment, not globalisation's causal contribution.

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Channel of change	Gains and costs for young Indians	Assessment and Indian illustration
Gig and platform work	**Gain:** app-mediated work can lower entry barriers and offer flexibility or supplementary earnings. **Cost:** unstable earnings, weak worker voice, algorithmic allocation of tasks and social-protection gaps.	**NITI Aayog, 2022:** estimated 77 lakh gig workers in 2020-21, projected 2.35 crore by 2029-30. Gig work is not necessarily platform work, and neither category consists only of youths.
Enterprise and creativity	**Gain:** e-commerce, digital payments and global audiences let small entrepreneurs, developers and creators reach customers beyond their locality. **Cost:** platform fees, discoverability rules and dependence on international markets can restrict independence.	Opportunity is most meaningful when a young producer retains income, intellectual property and bargaining power.
Labour mobility	**Gain:** overseas study, international work and migration may provide skills, remittances and professional networks. **Cost:** recruitment expenses, qualification recognition, discrimination and family separation can offset gains.	Avoid calling all migration a result of 1991 reforms; mobility responds to education, domestic labour markets and receiving-country policy as well.

4. Cultural sphere: practices and values

Channel of change	Gains and costs for young Indians	Assessment and Indian illustration
Hybrid cultural expression	**Gain:** Indian youths combine global and regional influences in music, cinema, dress, cuisine and language. **Cost:** commercially dominant formats can overshadow less visible local traditions.	A regional-language music creator using global production methods illustrates **glocalisation**, not necessarily cultural replacement.
Global audiences for Indian culture	**Gain:** digital distribution allows regional performers, independent musicians and craft entrepreneurs to reach distant audiences. **Cost:** platform ranking and monetisation systems may reward commercial appeal over diversity.	Global cultural flows are not one-directional. Young Indians can export culture as well as consume it.
Language and identity	**Gain:** English and other international languages can enhance access to education, science and employment. **Cost:** language hierarchies may undervalue regional and indigenous knowledge.	Multilingual expression, translation and regional digital content can mediate the tension rather than requiring one language to replace another.
Consumer culture	**Gain:** diverse goods, services, leisure choices and aesthetic styles expand consumption possibilities. **Cost:** status competition, brand dependence, debt-funded spending and unrealistic ideals of beauty or success may intensify.	UPSC's 2025 question specifically rejected reducing globalisation to consumer culture alone. Consumption is a channel, not the total impact.
Values and continuity	**Gain:** intercultural contact can encourage pluralism, dialogue and criticism of restrictive practices. **Cost:** rapid lifestyle change may deepen generational disagreements and anxieties about local identity.	The 2018, 2019 and 2020 PYQs establish the crucial distinction between homogenisation, cultural reaffirmation and pluralism.

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The evidence bank: what the figures establish and what they do not

Verified evidence	Correct interpretation	Misinterpretation to avoid
1991 reforms Government accounts of industrial and trade liberalisation	Opening of the Indian economy and increasing integration with international markets.	All subsequent social and cultural changes were caused exclusively by the reforms.
77 lakh, 2020-21 NITI Aayog, 2022	Indicative estimate of people engaged in gig work.	77 lakh Indian youths employed by digital platforms.
2.35 crore, 2029-30 NITI Aayog, 2022	Projection of future gig employment, subject to underlying assumptions.	Workers already employed by platforms in 2026.
28.4% AISHE 2021-22	Higher education gross enrolment ratio for ages 18 to 23.	Share of Indian youths studying abroad or in foreign universities.
82.9%, 2022 ILO-IHD, 2024	Share of all unemployed persons who were youths in the report's analysis.	Unemployment rate among Indian youths.
1.84 crore, 2024 PIB Research Unit	Approximate number of first-time registered electors aged 18 to 19.	Number who actually voted or participated in online campaigns.
9.9%, 2025 PLFS Annual Report 2025	Unemployment rate among 15 to 29-year-olds in usual status, rural and urban combined.	Unemployment among all Indians, all graduates or all global-sector workers.
64.3% women, 80.5% men NFHS-6, 2023-24	People aged 15 to 49 who had ever used the internet, reported in May 2026.	Youth-only internet use, daily internet use or ownership of a device.
1,092.79 million TRAI, March 2026	Internet subscriptions at the quarter's end.	Number of distinct internet users, especially young users.
25,626 responses UNICEF U-Report, 2024	Voluntary online-safety poll showing respondent concerns.	Representative national estimate of cyberbullying among Indian youths.

The central judgement: opportunity is not the same as empowerment

Across the four spheres, three distinctions prevent superficial evaluation.

Distinction	Why it matters	Application to Indian youths
Access versus capability	Available technology or a global market does not guarantee the skills, resources or freedom to benefit.	Connectivity without affordable devices, language support and digital literacy may yield little educational advantage.
Choice versus security	More options can coexist with individualised risk, volatile earnings and weak protection.	A platform worker may value flexibility but face uncertain pay, unsafe working conditions and limited recourse.
Visibility versus voice	Being visible online does not necessarily confer control over decisions, platforms or institutions.	Viral civic content may attract attention without resulting in deliberation, representation or policy change.
Consumption versus creation	Global cultural influence is not confined to purchasing imported products.	Regional-language creators and independent artists can adapt global formats and reach international audiences.

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Why a wholly positive answer fails. Global integration can expand educational and occupational aspirations faster than secure work becomes available. PLFS, the ILO-IHD report and NITI Aayog's gig-economy study help identify employment quality, not simply employment quantity, as a constraint on economic empowerment.

Why a wholly negative answer fails. More interconnected markets and communications also expand learning, public discussion, migrant ties and creative possibilities. Indian youths are not passive recipients of imported culture; many reinterpret and circulate local cultural forms globally.

TIER 2 · EXTENDED UNDERSTANDING: THE WHOLE TOPIC AROUND IT

How globalisation reached young Indians

1. **1991 liberalisation:** reduced controls on trade, investment and industry; increased exposure to international firms and markets.
2. **Services integration:** globally traded IT and business services expanded internationally oriented occupational pathways.
3. **Higher education and mobility:** international study, professional qualifications and migration linked individual aspirations to overseas institutions and labour markets.
4. **Digital communications:** affordable internet services, smartphones and online platforms accelerated contact with global information and entertainment.
5. **Platform-mediated activity:** e-commerce, remote tasks and gig platforms connected workers and consumers through digitally organised markets.
6. **Transnational culture:** streaming, music, sports, games and social media increased the circulation of tastes, values and symbolic identities.

Why the gains remain uneven

1. **Educational inequality:** school quality, higher education access, language and credentials shape the ability to compete.
2. **Gendered restrictions:** mobility, unpaid care, internet access and online harassment can limit young women's autonomy.
3. **Rural and regional gaps:** connectivity, reliable services and proximity to employment centres influence opportunity.
4. **Caste and class:** inherited networks and material resources affect access to education, migration and desirable jobs.
5. **Disability and accessibility:** inaccessible learning platforms and workplaces can reproduce exclusion despite digital delivery.
6. **Platform dependence:** commercial intermediaries control visibility, payments, rules and dispute processes.

Five analytical lenses for deeper understanding

Lens	What it explains	Use in this question
Glocalisation	Global ideas and formats are adapted to local needs and cultural meanings rather than simply copied.	Regional-language digital content, fusion music, local food and fashion reinterpretations.
Individualisation	Individuals increasingly construct educational, occupational and personal biographies through choices that may carry private risks.	Migration, marriage preferences, career changes and insecurity outside familiar support networks.
Networked public sphere	Digital networks reduce some barriers to expression while introducing commercial mediation and unequal reach.	Online youth debates, civic campaigns, misinformation and platform control.
Global value chains	Production and services are organised across borders, generating specialised opportunities and external dependencies.	IT-enabled services, export-oriented industry, changing skills and exposure to demand shocks.
Intersectionality	Gender, caste, class, region and other inequalities combine, rather than acting as isolated disadvantages.	Why two young people with internet access can have radically different employment, safety and cultural opportunities.

Evaluate the impact of globalization on Indian youths with reference to social, political, economic and cultural spheres.

Education, aspiration and the employment paradox

Global economic integration creates demand for specialised qualifications and opens new channels of education. It also raises aspirations about white-collar employment and international careers. Yet educational expansion and employment growth do not necessarily proceed at the same pace. **AISHE 2021-22** documents the scale of higher education; **PLFS 2025** shows continuing youth unemployment; and the **ILO-IHD India Employment Report 2024** emphasises educated unemployment and job quality.

These sources answer different questions. AISHE measures education participation; PLFS measures labour market outcomes; ILO-IHD analyses longer-term employment patterns. They should be combined analytically, not treated as interchangeable evidence that globalisation causes unemployment. Appropriate policy responses include **employability, diversified job creation, apprenticeships, transferable skills and decent-work protections**.

Political globalisation is more than social media

Young Indians encounter international debates about rights, democratic practices, environmental responsibility and identity through education, migration, entertainment and digital networks. Such encounters can support informed citizenship, cross-border solidarity and criticism of discriminatory practices. However, **political participation is multidimensional**: information exposure, opinion expression, collective organisation, voter registration, turnout and influence on public decisions are distinct. Political effects can also run in competing directions, from pluralist engagement to polarisation or simplified identity narratives.

Migration and the transformation of social relationships

Education and employment opportunities may take young people away from their places of origin, within India or overseas. Independent earnings and residence can expand autonomy, especially for young women whose choices were previously constrained. At the same time, urban housing costs, isolation, insecure employment, caregiving at a distance and family disagreement can complicate freedom. The **2024 GS I question on skilled, young, unmarried women's urban migration** is especially relevant here. Mobility must be assessed through both **resources gained** and **relationships renegotiated**.

Policy responses: enabling choice without shifting all risks to youths

Area	Relevant policy instrument or direction	Limit of the claim
Education and skills	NEP 2020's internationalisation emphasis; UGC's 2023 foreign-campus regulations; skilling and AI-education initiatives announced in Budget 2025-26.	Legal permission or budget provision does not demonstrate equal educational outcomes.
Rural digital access	BharatNet's expansion of service-ready Gram Panchayats and the proposed broadband connections for government secondary schools in rural areas.	Network readiness does not establish household ownership, affordability or regular use.
Platform-worker protection	NITI Aayog's 2022 recommendations and Budget 2025-26 announcements on identity cards, e-Shram registration and healthcare.	Recommendations and announcements must be distinguished from benefits actually implemented.
Civic and media literacy	Source verification, safe online participation, privacy awareness, respectful discussion and opportunities for offline civic engagement.	Educational priorities, not evidence that any particular programme has eliminated misinformation.
Cultural plurality	Regional-language learning, accessible digital publication, protection of local creative traditions and fair terms for creators.	Global exposure and the survival of local identities are not inherently mutually exclusive.

Evaluate the impact of globalization on Indian youths with reference to social, political, economic and cultural spheres.

Two debates worth knowing

Does globalisation homogenise culture or strengthen diversity?

One view holds that transnational brands, commercial entertainment and dominant languages make aspirations and consumption more alike. Another emphasises **glocalisation**: local artists and communities use international technologies and markets to renew, publicise and reshape distinctive practices. The balanced reading is that **standardisation and cultural differentiation can occur simultaneously**. Distribution platforms, language hierarchies, access and creative ownership determine which tendencies become stronger.

Does greater choice give young people greater control?

The optimistic view emphasises new educational pathways, migration, flexible work and direct public expression. The critical view observes that choices are structured by employers, families, unequal resources and platform algorithms. A young person may have more services to use but little influence over the rules governing them. The balanced reading is that **opportunity becomes empowerment when accompanied by capability, security, rights and voice**, rather than exposure alone.

4 Pitfalls and variations

The mistakes that cost marks, the inaccurate claims never to make, and how the answer should change when the wording changes.

4.1 Six pitfalls, each with its correction

Four spheres become one

~~Globalisation has increased internet access, jobs, migration and social media, followed by a general conclusion.~~

Keep the order social, political, economic, cultural. Explain a distinct mechanism and evaluate gains and costs in each.

Only positives, then only negatives

~~Five advantages in one paragraph, five disadvantages in another, with no relationship between them.~~

Use a four-row evaluation table: opportunity, corresponding vulnerability and assessment in the same row.

Globalisation reduced to Westernisation

~~Indian youth now wear Western clothes, eat fast food and celebrate foreign festivals.~~

Include global education, jobs, migration, political awareness, cultural creation and economic dependence. Westernisation is not the whole process.

Employment without job quality

~~IT companies and gig platforms give unlimited jobs to Indian youths.~~

Show opportunities alongside PLFS youth unemployment, skills mismatch and the difference between flexible work and secure work.

Statistics applied to the wrong population

~~82.9% of youths are unemployed; 1.09 billion youths use the internet.~~

Identify each denominator: ILO-IHD's share of unemployed persons, PLFS's youth unemployment rate and TRAI's subscriptions.

No unequal-impact judgement

~~Globalisation has both good and bad effects and India must maintain balance.~~

Judge whether youths gain real capabilities and control; name the barriers of gender, class, caste, language, region, skills and worker protection.

Evaluate the impact of globalization on Indian youths with reference to social, political, economic and cultural spheres.

4.2 Never write these

- "Globalisation in India began with the internet."
  India's 1991 reforms accelerated economic integration well before the mass internet era; global connections also predate 1991.
- "Globalisation and Westernisation are the same."
  Globalisation encompasses flows of goods, capital, people, services, information and ideas across many societies, not only Western cultural influence.
- "82.9% of Indian youths were unemployed in 2022."
  The ILO-IHD report states that youths constituted 82.9% of all unemployed persons in 2022. It is not a youth unemployment rate.
- "The PLFS youth unemployment rate was 3.1% in 2025."
  3.1% is the overall unemployment rate for persons aged 15 and above in usual status. The 15 to 29 youth rate was 9.9%.
- "Youth unemployment increased from 10.3% in 2024 to 9.9% in 2025."
  That is a decline. In addition, PLFS changed its survey design in January 2025, requiring care in comparisons.
- "NITI Aayog found 2.35 crore young platform workers in 2026."
  2.35 crore was its projection for gig workers in 2029-30, made in 2022. Gig workers are not all platform workers or all youths.
- "India had 1.09 billion young internet users in March 2026."
  TRAI reported 1,092.79 million internet subscriptions, not distinct persons or youths.
- "NFHS-6 shows that 64.3% of young Indian women use the internet daily."
  The 64.3% indicator concerns women aged 15 to 49 who had ever used the internet; it is neither a youth-only nor a daily-use measure.
- "More than 1.84 crore young voters cast their votes in 2024."
  The cited figure describes registered first-time electors aged 18 to 19, not actual turnout.
- "The 2025 Union Budget gave all gig workers free healthcare."
  The Budget announced a proposed arrangement for registration, identification and healthcare coverage. Announcement and implementation must be distinguished.
- "Globalisation has destroyed India's cultural diversity."
  Earlier UPSC questions explicitly test the coexistence of homogenisation, hybridisation and renewed cultural specificities.
- "Social media has made all Indian youths politically active."
  Internet access, political awareness, online posting, voter registration, turnout and effective participation are different indicators.
- "Cyberbullying affects 70% of all Indian youths."
  UNICEF's voluntary 2024 U-Report poll cannot be used as a representative national prevalence estimate, and its perpetrator-related percentages do not state the prevalence of cyberbullying among all youths.

Evaluate the impact of globalization on Indian youths with reference to social, political, economic and cultural spheres.

4.3 If the question changes

If it asks	The structure becomes	What must change
Critically examine globalisation's effects on Indian youths	Principal gains; principal limitations; comparative evidence; overall assessment.	More scrutiny of assumptions, unequal effects and unintended consequences; four spheres need not receive equal space unless specified.
Globalisation and **young women's autonomy**	Education and work; mobility; relationships and family; digital agency; gendered constraints.	Gender, care, safety, family negotiation and intersectional inequality move to the centre.
Globalisation and **youth employment**	Global services and trade; skills; migration; gig work; unemployment; decent-work reforms.	Economic outcomes dominate. Use PLFS, ILO-IHD and NITI Aayog with exact denominators.
Cultural homogenisation among youths	Global brands and media; homogenising pressures; glocalisation and cultural revival; judgement.	The debate is cultural; politics and employment appear only if directly relevant.
Influence of **social media** on youth politics	Access and awareness; collective mobilisation; misinformation and polarisation; platform power; safeguards.	Digital political mechanisms become central. Do not equate online expression with voting or policy influence.
Digital divide and globalisation	Access; affordability; skills; gender and regional gaps; opportunities missed; inclusion measures.	Distribution replaces a general survey of four spheres. NFHS-6 and telecom data require careful interpretation.
The same four-sphere question for **10 marks**	One holistic introduction; four concise headed evaluations; one inequality line; judgement.	Compress examples and use a 150 to 153-word answer.
Globalisation and **national identity**	Global cultural exposure; cosmopolitan values; local cultural reaffirmation; pluralism and competing identities.	Concentrate on the relationship between local, national and global belonging, not the entire youth labour market.

Evaluate the impact of globalization on Indian youths with reference to social, political, economic and cultural spheres.

5

The model answer

One model answer, written to the UPSC Gurus house range of 250 to 253 words (252 words including headings, table headers and table cells; UPSC's printed limit is 250 words). The form follows the question: a four-row evaluation table covering social, political, economic and cultural spheres in order, followed by a short assessment of unequal gains and agency. The introduction covers the whole question; the conclusion delivers the overall judgement.

Model answer ## Four-sphere evaluation and overall judgement

252 words

Since the 1991 reforms, cross-border flows of capital, ideas, technology and people have widened Indian youths' horizons while reshaping their relationships, civic participation, livelihoods and culture.

1. Impact across four spheres

Sphere	Opportunities	Costs and evaluation
Social	Global networks and migration widen friendships, educational aspirations, gender-role choices and independence from inherited expectations.	Yet online harassment, social comparison and family tensions constrain autonomy, especially where young women lack private digital access.
Political	Digital media open transnational discussions on climate, rights and democracy; young citizens can mobilise across borders and share local concerns internationally.	But misinformation, echo chambers and platform algorithms amplify polarisation; online visibility alone does not establish effective civic influence.
Economic	Global services, international education, entrepreneurship and platform work enlarge occupational choice, mobility and income possibilities.	However, skills gaps and precarious work persist: PLFS recorded 9.9% unemployment among 15 to 29-year-olds in 2025, usual status.
Cultural	Streaming and social media encourage fusion in languages, music, food and fashion, while helping regional creators find global audiences.	Commercial standardisation and brand-led consumerism threaten diversity, yet hybridisation shows local identities can adapt rather than disappear.

2. Unequal gains and overall judgement

A connected graduate may profit from transnational networks, whereas rural, disadvantaged or digitally excluded youths face barriers of class, caste, gender and language. Gig workers also confront algorithmic control and uncertain protections. Exposure does not ensure bargaining power.

Overall, globalisation expands choice more consistently than security or equality. Its promise becomes genuine empowerment through inclusive skills, decent employment, digital literacy and culturally confident participation.

DEMAND
Evaluate globalisation's gains and costs for Indian youths in social, political, economic and cultural spheres, in that order, and reach an overall judgement

HIDDEN DEMAND
Ask whether gains and vulnerabilities are distributed equally among young Indians and how much agency they retain over global influences

STRUCTURE
About four-fifths on the four spheres in the question's order, followed by about one-fifth on unequal gains, vulnerabilities and overall judgement

BALANCE
Introduction 26 words, conclusion 26 words; 252 words in all

Evaluate the impact of globalization on Indian youths with reference to social, political, economic and cultural spheres.

Why it works: The introduction establishes globalisation as a multidimensional influence on Indian youths without reducing it to Westernisation or digitalisation. Part 1 follows the question's exact sequence: social relationships and identities; political participation and civic outlook; economic work and opportunities; cultural practices and values. Every row pairs opportunities with vulnerabilities and offers an assessment. The economic row includes a verified PLFS youth unemployment rate with its age group, year and employment-status measure, without attributing unemployment directly to globalisation. Part 2 answers the hidden demand by examining unequal access and limited bargaining power across class, caste, gender, geography and language. The conclusion delivers a qualified judgement: expanded possibilities become empowerment only when accompanied by capabilities, protection and meaningful choice. The introduction and conclusion are both 26 words.

6 Other ways to write it

The model answer above remains the answer. These outlines show alternative, equally defensible ways to organise an evaluation, depending on the examples, evidence and analytical strengths available.

Approach	How it is built	When it works
Four headed evaluations	Introduction; Social: autonomy versus pressure; Political: participation versus manipulation; Economic: opportunity versus insecurity; Cultural: hybridisation versus homogenisation; unequal gains; judgement.	When a compact table would make the writing cramped or when stronger examples require short explanatory paragraphs. The question's four-sphere order remains intact.
Gain, cost and verdict matrix	Four rows for the specified spheres, with one gain, one vulnerability and a short evaluative finding in each. Finish with access, agency and protection.	Best when precision, comparability and balanced reasoning matter more than lengthy illustration. This is the model answer's approach.
Evidence-led evaluation	Begin with the post-1991 transformation; assess the four spheres through specific illustrations: migration and family relations, digital citizenship, PLFS and gig work, and regional cultural expression. End with unequal capabilities.	When reliable evidence and concrete Indian illustrations are readily available. Use figures sparingly and preserve their denominators.
Freedom versus dependence	Within each sphere, ask what new choices youths gain and what new dependencies they face: family and digital platforms, information and algorithms, global employers and precarious work, cultural access and commercial gatekeeping.	When aiming for a sociologically sophisticated evaluation. Keep the conceptual contrast within the four required spheres rather than replacing them.
Two-generation comparison	Briefly contrast opportunities before and after liberalisation, then evaluate present-day social, political, economic and cultural consequences. End with differences among contemporary youths.	When historical perspective is useful, but only if the comparison remains short and does not imply that all present changes were caused exclusively by the 1991 reforms.
For 10 marks	One holistic introduction; four short headed gain-cost assessments in the specified order; a single sentence on unequal access; a reasoned conclusion.	When the same demand must be compressed to about 150 words without dropping a sphere or the overall judgement.

Evaluate the impact of globalization on Indian youths with reference to social, political, economic and cultural spheres.

7 Quick recall and Prelims crossover

Sixteen verified facts to retain for Mains and Prelims. Distinguish historical reforms, survey reference periods, publication dates, estimates, projections and administrative counts.

1. **New Industrial Policy**: **24 July 1991**; industrial deregulation and greater openness to foreign investment and technology.
2. **UGC foreign-campus regulations**: notified **7 November 2023**; prior Commission approval required for foreign institutions to establish and operate campuses.
3. **AISHE 2021-22**: higher education enrolment reached approximately **4.33 crore**; report released **25 January 2024**.
4. **AISHE 2021-22**: higher education gross enrolment ratio for ages **18 to 23** was **28.4%**.
5. **2024 general election**: over **1.84 crore** registered first-time electors aged **18 to 19**; registration is not turnout.
6. **ILO-IHD India Employment Report 2024**: youths constituted **82.9%** of all unemployed persons in **2022**; not a youth unemployment rate.
7. **NITI Aayog, June 2022**: approximately **77 lakh** gig workers estimated for **2020-21**; platform workers form a subset of gig workers.
8. **NITI Aayog, June 2022**: gig workforce projected to reach **2.35 crore by 2029-30**; a projection, not a realised count.
9. **PLFS 2025**: unemployment among youths aged **15 to 29** was **9.9%** in usual status (principal and subsidiary).
10. **PLFS 2025**: urban youth unemployment **13.6%**; rural youth unemployment **8.3%**, usual status. Sampling design changed in January 2025.
11. **NFHS-6**: **64.3%** of women aged 15 to 49 had ever used the internet, compared with **33.3%** in NFHS-5.
12. **NFHS-6**: **80.5%** of men aged 15 to 49 had ever used the internet, compared with **51.2%** in NFHS-5.
13. **TRAI, March 2026**: **1,092.79 million** internet subscriptions; subscriptions are not unique users.
14. **BharatNet**: **2,14,904** Gram Panchayats were service-ready as at **31 December 2025**; this does not establish household usage.
15. **Union Budget 2025-26**: announced e-Shram registration, identity cards and proposed PM-JAY healthcare coverage for online platform workers.
16. **UNICEF India U-Report**: online-safety poll collected **25,626 voluntary responses** in June to July 2024; not a nationally representative survey.

THE ONE SENTENCE TO CARRY OUT OF THIS DOCUMENT

Globalisation has widened the world available to Indian youths, but their empowerment depends on how equally they can access, negotiate and shape its opportunities.

Evaluate the impact of globalization on Indian youths with reference to social, political, economic and cultural spheres.

8 Write it yourself

Write the answer in 250 words without looking back, following the question's four-sphere sequence. Then check it against every line below.

	Check	Yes / No
1	Does the introduction address **globalisation's overall effect on Indian youths**, rather than merely define globalisation or describe liberalisation?	
2	Are the four spheres covered in the exact order: **social, political, economic and cultural**, with each addressing the relevant youth-specific experiences?	
3	Does **each sphere evaluate gains and costs**, rather than merely list changes or place all positives before all negatives?	
4	Is the economic evaluation supported by **relevant, correctly defined evidence**, such as PLFS youth unemployment or NITI Aayog's gig-work estimates?	
5	Does the smaller final part answer the hidden demand: **who gains, who remains vulnerable and how much agency youths retain**?	
6	Does the conclusion provide an **overall judgement**, at roughly the length of the introduction, rather than merely state that effects are both positive and negative?	
7	Is the answer **250 words or a little over**, counting headings and table cells, with no inaccurate statistical claim from section 4.2?	

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Evaluate the impact of globalization on Indian youths with reference to social, political, economic and cultural spheres.

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Evaluate the impact of globalization on Indian youths with reference to social, political, economic and cultural spheres.

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