

Mains 2026

Test 5

[Paper II – Sectional Test 1]

Perspectives on the study of Indian society
Impact of colonial rule on Indian society
Rural and Agrarian Social Structure
Caste System

Time allowed: **Three** Hours

Maximum Marks: **250**

Question Paper Specific Instructions

- ❖ There are **EIGHT** questions divided in two **SECTIONS**.
- ❖ Candidate has to attempt **FIVE** questions in all.
- ❖ Questions no. **1** and **5** are compulsory and out of the remaining, **THREE** are to be attempted choosing at least **ONE** from each section.

SECTION A

Q1. Write short notes on the following: (10×5=50)

- a) *Gulamgiri*
- b) In your opinion, do village studies still serve any purpose in modern digital age? Suitably substantiate your arguments.
- c) Westernization and institutional changes in India
- d) Trace the trajectory of protests and social movements from colonial era to contemporary India.
- e) Discuss how the study of interplay between 'Great Tradition' and 'Little Tradition' is essential for understanding social change in contemporary India.

Q2. (a) 'The Caste System is not merely a division of labour. It is also a division of labourers.' Comment. 20

(b) How far Srinivas' *Sanskritization* is modernizing force or traditionalizing force in understanding the changes in caste system? 20

(c) Is Indian village changing? Substantiate your answer with suitable examples. 10

Q3. (a) Discuss the changes that the agrarian social structure in India is undergoing. 20

(b) The main objectives of socio-religious movements during the colonial rule in India were reforming and synthesizing Hinduism. Write on any two such important movements. 20

(c) Write a short note on the racial theory of caste. 10

Q4. (a) "Tradition and modernity co-exist in contemporary Indian society". Discuss the factors responsible for this continuity and change. 20

(b) Describe the impact of land reforms on the peasants of Indian society. 20

(c) 'There are no all-India castes and there is no nationwide hierarchy of castes.' Comment. 10

SECTION B

- Q5. Write short notes on the following: (10×5=50)
- (a) *Caste, Class and Power*
 - (b) Elucidate the utility of the concept of 'dominant caste' in understanding rural social stratification in India
 - (c) Agrarian unrest in contemporary India
 - (d) Social background of Indian nationalism
 - (e) S.N.D.P. Movement
- Q6. (a) Explain how land reforms brought about desired agrarian transformation. 20
- (b) What are the changes in the cultural and structural aspects of the caste system since independence? 20
- (c) Highlight the achievements as well as failures of affirmative action in India. 10
- Q7. (a) How have the struggles against untouchability changed their forms and perspectives from Gandhian to Ambedkarite positions? 20
- (b) Critically examine Louis Dumont's contributions in understanding the caste system in India. 20
- (c) Examine the changing initiatives of the land tenure system in India. 10
- Q8. (a) Discuss the paradoxical nature of change in contemporary Indian society. Describe the factors responsible for it. 20
- (b) Compare and contrast Marxian and Ambedkarite views on caste system. 20
- (c) Write a short note on the book-view and field-view of caste system in India. 10

SECTION A

Q. 1(a) Gulamgiri

Gulamgiri is a famous work of Jyoti Basu, who compared the racial discrimination in USA with the caste system of India.

Thinkers like Risley and G.S. Ghurye have also noted origin of caste system in their racial theories.

Convergences in Caste and Race :-

- ① The Blacks and dalits both form the underclass for the privileged ones to formulate their status.

Like, number of slaves equalled to higher status. Similarly, Dumont noted in India, lower caste pollution is needed to maintain purity of higher castes.

- ② Both Black and dalits face social

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exclusion from better economic opportunities, education, political representation.

③ Latent bias still continue for both today. As study by Pat Gray and Brown showed how CVs of blacks were rejected with same qualifications of selected white candidates for jobs. Similar study was conducted by Marxist scholars in India, where those candidates with dalit surnames were rejected, with adequate qualification.

Divergences

however, caste is a ritually sanctioned (Rigveda, Manusmriti etc), but race based on colonial practices. Further untouchability in institution form is only in caste.

however, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar also agreed with the convergences and the dalit solidarity with Black Lives Matter movement show continued relevance.

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Spoken by
G. Srinivas,
N. Sankaran,
Vivek Kumar
etc.

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Q. 1(b) In your opinion, do village studies still serve any purpose in modern digital age? Suitably substantiate your arguments.

(10)

Village studies were pioneered by likes of SC Dube and MN Srinivas in 1950s, to understand the ground-realities and see the changes happening in villages, compared to textual perception.

But with digital age, it's purpose is questioned because :-

- ① Digital Ethnography is becoming more prominent than field study.
- ② The gap between rural and urban areas is reducing due to social media and migration.
- ③ Urban studies becoming more relevant due to fast "Urbanism" being spread through internet.

However, such changes make the village studies even more relevant

Today :-

① Urban-rural and rural-rural migration is increasing, changing the ~~native~~ nature of villages as migrants bring back "social remittances" in form of habits and attitudinal changes.

Further, its impact on demography is bringing changes like feminisation of Agriculture and also female migration as digital tool help them find opportunities.

② Further, social media is spreading information and cultures.

eg Village boy or girl today listen to K Pop (Korean music)

③ Digital tools and Technology are helping in "secular" social mobility.

eg Online courses, distance learning.

Thus, village studies find purpose in the digital age, more than ever.

poverty
unemployment
landlessness
social dynamics
conflict
migration
invest

also necessary for
social welfare
programmes
in rural areas

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Westernisation was considered by MN Srinivas as the social changes in Indian society brought due to 150yr rule of British. This made various changes to social institutions of India, which can be understood through following :-

① Family → due to increased geographical mobility in search of work, family started becoming nuclear in colonial period. Later studies by AM Shah and IP Desai showed to "functional jointness" in families, ^{despite} ~~rather than complete~~ nuclearisation like the west.

② Caste system → western education, new jobs like lawyer, doctor etc and British recruiting lower caste

values by
line of
values
institutions

evolution
↓
democracy
↓
nationalisation
↓
bureaucracy
↓
secularism
↓
secular state

new occupations
& professions
↓
middle class

in Army (e.g. Mahar regiment) provided secular mobility to the lower castes.

Further, Andre Beteille in study of Orissam showed how upper caste were first to westernise and leave village and sell land, with further deep decoupled class and power with caste (Asymmetry)

pls clarify

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③ At the Macro level, Yogendra Singh showed emergence of Pan Indian institutions like Bureaucracy, Judiciary, Railways etc created new classes. These also helped in emergence of middle class in India.

⑥ ~~These~~ However, Westernisation is different from modernisation in India, which means adoption of modern values and institutions.

as highlighted by
Arpankar Gupta - mistaken modernity

in terms of goals & means

Q. 1(d) Trace the trajectory of protests and social movements from colonial era to contemporary India.

(10)

Protest and social movements have been more than a political expression in India and shown social expression through the colonial era to contemporary India.

Trajectory

① Colonial period

① These started with isolated uprisings by tribals and peasants against changes brought by British to traditional practices.

eg) Santal uprising against land tenure and entry of money lender and zamindars.

② Later these were institutionalised by emergence of Indian National Congress. First the Moderates used petitions to raise issues, later

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the extremists started using boycotts and civil disobedience, during Swadeshi Movement.

With emergence of Gandhi, tool of Satyagraha became prominent and parallel to it ~~extremism~~ revolutionary activities also emerged.

All these advocated for both political and social changes.

eg) Gandhiji's Charkha for self reliance, highlighted social change.

② Post-Colonial

This period saw democratisation of social movement as women, OBC, dalit, minorities etc were parallel to each other with own separate issues. Ideologies of colonial movement were replaced by identities, like Mandal protest (OBC), Anti-Arrak (women) etc.

Thus, nature of protest and social movement has evolved.

Study by
M.S.D. Rao

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Good
Attempt

③

role of
social media
in
recent protest

Q. 1(c) Discuss how the study of interplay between 'Great Tradition' and 'Little Tradition' is essential for understanding social change in contemporary India.

(10)

Great Tradition are the social and cultural practices at macro level and mostly associated with the elites.

While little traditions are practices at micro level and mostly associated with non-elites.

Study by McKim Marriott showed interplay between the 2 through Universalisation (practices of little tradition becoming part of great) and Particularisation (vice-versa).

Such studies are essential to understand social changes in contemporary India as:—

- ① Internet and social media ~~and~~ has increased the exchange of traditions at all level.

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1) a village boy watching Youtube video of urban corporate boy and vice versa, lead to gradual adoption of lifestyles of other.

② Ritual exchanges are happening through movies, TV serials etc.

1) practice of sing ceremony and reception in marriages and Kauwa Chautt, has become common now in ~~East~~ Bihar and West Bengal.

Urban centers have become arena of exchange of traditions, creating new cosmopolitan traditions.

1) Chatt Puja and Gangott Puja both on beaches of Mumbai.

④ Across region, religion and caste marriages ~~has~~ is leading to exchange of traditions.

Thus, these make such studies essential even today.

reflects adaptation of traditional social practices & customs in contemporary context.

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Q. 2(a) 'The Caste System is not merely a division of labour. It is also a division of labourers.' Comment.

(20)

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

Caste system was justified by indologists like Guha and functionalist like MN Srinivas as division of labour and adding in social solidarity.

Also, scriptures like Rig Veda Pinushukta hymns are used to show how varna is division of labour based on occupations.

However, as Louis Dumont's "Purity and Pollution" concept shows this has created division of labourers based on attaching notion of pollution to certain occupation like leather work, handling the dead, washing clothes etc. This coupled with hereditary rigidity of occupations

Varma
vs
Jati

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Gandhi
vs
Ambedkar

Ambedkar
vs
Caste

has ensured that caste become division of labourers.

This is manifested in following ways:—

① Manual scavenging is still predominantly carried out by the dalits.

Sudanshu Jodha noted 95% of manual scavengers are dalit.

② Practice of untouchability based on purity of ~~own~~ tradition occupation still continue even if person do not perform them.

Ref) ex Bithan Car Manjhi when visited a Madhubani Temple, it was purified.

③ Inequality in ownership of

resources restrict the mobility of the lower castes.

✓ SC own just 9% of agricultural land (Agricultural Census 2015-16)

④ Practice of Endogamy and purity of women and lineage (Brahminical Patriarchy - Uma Chabravati) is beyond just ~~diff~~ division of labour.

⑤ Spatial segregation of lower caste continue from rural to urban areas, as slums are predominantly represented by dalits (Ghoshyama Shah), showing spatial division of labourers.

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Today, division of labour

is no more based on caste rules
but modern achievements and merit,

however caste continues thus re-forming to

~~division of labour alone will not manifest and~~
~~remove caste inequality.~~ reproduce itself in
different forms.

Q. 2(b) How far Srinivas' Sanskritization is modernizing force or traditionalizing force in understanding the changes in caste system?

(20)

In response to the book view of caste system

MN Srinivas gave the concept of Sanskritization in his study of Corg. Sanskritization is process of ~~low~~ ~~and~~ emulation of practices of upper castes by lower caste and tribals in order to gain social mobility.

(locally dominant castes)

Modernizing force

or act as a modernizing force in following ways:—

① Dominant caste legitimize control through Sanskritization and rise up in ~~varna~~ hierarchy.

not based on ritual / ascriptive basis but on secular criteria
eg. land, number, etc.

(M. Srinivas study) claimed Kshatriya status.

② Sanskritization enables reformation

In a limited sense,

in practices of lower caste like giving up alcohol, consideration for hygiene etc.

Gandhi ji Harjiam movement called for these reforms in Harjams.

- ③ Sanskritisation is first step to Westernisation. To upper caste got Westernised first and lower caste emulated them.

This way it helped in adoption of modern practices.

However it is also traditionalism.

Traditionalism for

- ① It solidify and legitimise the caste system as lower caste try to climb up latter rather than giving it up altogether.

Like Gansfinkle in 'Reflexivity' showed social order is maintained by practicing them, same way

examples?

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reinforcing
the
hierarchy

caste is maintained as lower caste practice it.

- ② It led to spread of traditional non-progressive practice.

By Amartya Sen study in UP showed lower caste practicing dowry and female foeticide, which was not done before.

- ③ It legitimise the dominance of upper and dominant caste as their practices are considered superior.

These dialectical role of Samkritisation was also highlighted by Yogendra Singh in "Modernisation of Indian Traditions".

However, after Reservation and dalit and OBC movements, Samkritisation has started losing relevance. But still visible in rural and poor areas.

highly mention Singh's observation

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Q. 2(c) Is Indian village changing? Substantiate your answer with suitable examples.

(10)

Indian villages were considered as manifestation of Indian culture by Gandhi ji.

Further, scholars like Metcal called it "Little Republic" — isolated and unchanging.

However, Indian villages are changing, as shown below:—

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- ① Dominance of upper caste in villages is changing due to land coming in market, as studied by Andie Betelle in Bipuran.
- ② ~~After~~ Idealised village solidarity has given way to factionalism for control on resources and political office, as shown by SC Dube in his village studies.

③ Urban migration, especially of male and that too landless labourer is creating "footloose labourer" (Jm borom) who lack base in both village and cities.

Further, it is leading to "feminisation of Agriculture" where women are becoming landless wage labourer, but with cheaper wages and sexual exploitation.

④ On positive note, some villages are becoming "urbanised" due to adopting urban practices or spread of urban areas near to them.

Further, better facilities like electricity, road, water etc improving "life-changes".

⑤ Also, villages are disappearing due to urbanisation. E.g. Gungram and Nolda built on village lands.

Thus, villages are transforming and ~~disappearing~~ today.

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Information
Tech,
social media
largely reduce the
gap between
rural-urban

Impact of
urbanisation
- Impact of
panchayat
raj
- Impact of
social
welfare
schemes

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Q. 4(a) "Tradition and modernity co-exist in contemporary Indian society". Discuss the factors responsible for this continuity and change.

(20)

Early evolutionary theories saw modernity and tradition as dichotomous. However, in India the modernity is using the traditional structures to box it and traditions are adapting to modernity to survive.

This was studied by Yogenendra Singh in his "Modernisation of Indian Traditions".

Factors responsible for continuity of Tradition

① for continuity:—

① Compartmentalisation of rituals, as shown by Milton Singer in study of Madras tanneries owned by Brahmins, who separated

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their ritual obligations with the economic ones.

- (2) Institutions are changing but with adhering to traditional obligations.

(P) IP Desai study of Mahuva village, showed family becoming nuclear but maintain mutual obligations of rituals and major decision making.

- (3) Sanskritisation lead to modernisation of lower caste practices but still maintain the traditional caste based ritual practices like thread ceremony, women chastity etc.

Along with these there are also changes :-

- (1) New institutions like Bureaucracy,

Prevalence of
gender &
caste based
discrimination

Not
allowed for
women to work
in a house

social mobility

caste associations
continue to
extra political
bodies

Caste identities
reinforced
through
caste politics,
caste based
discrimination
policy,
caste is declining
as a system
but
caste consciousness
is increasing

Judiciary, colleges etc have replaced traditional Khap Panchayat Gaurav etc.

② Tajmami system has been replaced by Market economy, however Andie Beteille noted role of caste social networks in getting job, loan etc.

③ Identity politics and caste based associations has changed previous traditional identities into political tools.

Thus, while traditional practices are changing, they still continue in new forms, which Yogendra Singh called "Neo-traditionalism".

line of argument would have been better if modernisation aspects like equality, democracy, law, social justice, etc.

were discussed in terms

and continuity of traditional elements were discussed in anti-terms

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Dipankar Gupta
wrote modernity

10

Q. 4(b) Describe the impact of land reforms on the peasants of Indian society.

(20)

to address
the inequality

Land reform was brought
to ensure social justice of the
peasants. However it has led
to both positive and negative
impacts.

Positive impacts

① Land ceiling abolition brought
20 million peasants in direct
contact with the state.

② Peasants and share croppers got
tenancy right which provided
security to them.

③ Reduced the speed of "proletariani-
sation of peasants" through gaining
land rights.

④ Right to land helped in better

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investment and better yield for the peasants as noted by Hanumantha Rao committee.

But it also led to various negative impacts!—

① Wopholes were used by landlords to displace the peasants, to protect their control over land, leading to further "proletarianisation of peasants" as noted by AR Desai.

② Benami transaction, use of woporative clause etc.

② AR Desai in "Path to development" noted how the state is controlled by Bourgeoisie and landlords, ~~on to~~ this weakened the political will.

—This resulted in Naxalbari incident that led to Naxalism.

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③ Due to lack of resources, the peasants sold land gained in land reform to rich farmers and money lenders and became "foot loose labourers" (Jame Brehm) and landless labourers.

④ Inequal implementation led to regional disparities, as noted by Gail Omvedt, who showed pure capitalism (Punjab), semi capitalism (Andhra Pradesh), semi feudal (Rajasthan) feudal (Bihar) modes of production leading to disproportionate conditions of peasants.

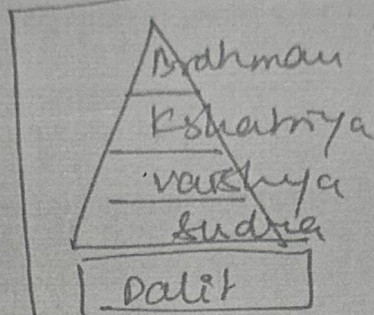
Thus Land Reform 2.0 is needed based on these learnings

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Q. 4(c) 'There are no all-India castes and there is no nationwide hierarchy of castes. Comment. (10)

Andologists like As G. Ghurye and Louis Dumont considered a all India caste system based on the hierarchy of varna system as given in the scriptures.



From Andla caste

However, scholars like MN Srinivas, Andre Betelle, Dipankar Gupta etc through their field studies showed truth of "jaati" or different hierarchies at ground.

MN Srinivas concepts of sanskritization and dominant caste showed how dominance is built on local hierarchy and social mobility is present at ground.

*varnashrama
in
Karnataka*

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Similarly, Andre Beteille
in Sripuram study showed ~~the~~
dispersed inequality in contemporary
times into caste, class and power.

☆ [Further, Dipankar Gupta
showed discrete caste and muddled
hierarchy in reality. Various
caste compete with each other
rather than follow a hierarchy.

⑨ Identity politics and
dalit social movement show various
caste compete among each other.

Also, hierarchy is not followed
as per scriptures as shown in
practices of untouchability. ⑨ Kurmis
take food from only their guru and
no other Brahmin.

Thus, in reality caste
practices show variance from the
one in scriptures and thus require
field studies.

SECTION B

Q. 5(a) Caste, Class and Power

(10)

Andre Beteille conducted study of Sripuram village in Tanjore where he gave his work "caste, class and power".

Before Beteille, scholars saw cumulative inequality in Indian society in form of caste only. Like Louis Dumont in "Homo Hierarchicus" showed centrality of ideology of 'purity and pollution' based on caste as defining factor in India.

But, Beteille through his study showed dispersed inequality in contemporary India. He showed that class and power has been decoupled from caste due to following:-

① As Brahmans sold land and owned

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to cities, the non-Brahmins and some Adi-draavidians got the ownership of land, which created asymmetry in caste and class, as they climbed up in class but stay low on caste.

Further, land reforms also democratised ownership of land.

② Political Democratic control of political institutions displaced Brahman absolute control on Panchayats and local political leadership, decoupling power from caste.

Even today, this can be seen in a dalit CM, who has asymmetry in power and caste.

However, he was criticised by feminists for ignoring gender as separate strata with separate reality.

Overall, his study reflected the ground reality better than ~~the~~ previous scholars.

can
study
example?

Q. 5(b) Elucidate the utility of the concept of 'dominant caste' in understanding rural social stratification in India

(10)

M N Srinivas in his work "Remembered Village" (Kamapur) gave the concept of 'dominant caste'.

It is important in understanding rural social stratification, as unlike GS Ghurye understanding of pan-India applicability of varna system, dominant caste shows how ritual and secular hierarchies vary at rural level.

Dominant castes are not always Brahman, who are top in varna hierarchy, ~~rather~~ rather they can be ritually below Brahman but possessing assets like land, higher in numerical strength, not too low on local hierarchy, possessing political control in local institution etc.

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initially
Srinivas had used
"Brahmanisation"

In ~~the~~ Rampur, Okhalingas were the dominant caste. Further, Sanskritisation, at most times, precedes the claim of dominant castes. Like the Okhalingas claimed Kshatriya status. Thus, while local hierarchy are pre dominant, pan India varna structure still stay relevant.

Also, the dominant caste help maintain ~~to~~ rural stratification through political dominance and even violence to maintain the existing hierarchical structure.

~~the~~ In contemporary society, Jats in Haryana, Yadav in UP, Reddy in ~~the~~ Andhra Pradesh are the dominant castes. Today they enjoy control over Panchayat to cooperatives to even state level elections.

Thus, the concept continue to be relevant today.

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45% of Indian manpower is still engaged in Agriculture, which contributes only 15% to the GDP. This dichotomy shows the situation of discontent and distress in agrarian society in India, which leads to Agrarian unrests.

These are manifested in multiple forms:—

- ① Agrarian class conflicts between the rich farmers and marginal peasants due to inequal access to APMC Mandis, government benefits etc.

For instance, Shamta Kumar Committee showed only 6% farmers get benefit of MSP.

- ② Caste inequalities also turn into agrarian unrest as dalit form largest share of landless labourer.

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(ST own 9% of agri-land as per Agri census 2015-16), leading to caste conflicts between dominant land owning caste and dalit labourers.

- ③ Also; agrarian classes come together to resist changes by government or demand for changes based on social movements.

Yet Farmer Protest 2020 against 3 farm laws, joined by nearly all agrarian classes, from Green Revolution region.

- ④ New phenomena of feminisation of Agriculture due to Male Migration, is creating unrest due to exploitation and low wages coupled with low land ownership (women own 14% of Agri land only).

Thus, the underlying social issues need to be addressed to address the agrarian unrest.

incomes ?

Indian nationalism has been different from western nationalism, which was based on cultural homogeneity, as Indian nationalism is layered and heterogeneous.

Indian Nationalism is claimed to be present since ancient period and manifested through Mauryan empire, spread of Buddhism, the Bhakti movement etc. GS Ghurye through his diffusionist approach showed social background of Indian nationalism through spread of vedic tradition from Ganga plains.

However, thinkers like AK Desai considered colonial period as the time when Indian nationalism emerged, as noted in his work "Social Background of Indian Nationalism", where he considered

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elaborate

It is a bourgeois phenomena based on ~~the~~ marxist dialectism of economic base shaping the social super structure.

main
demand
of the
Q?

However, other scholars have taken wider view and enumerated following causes:—

① Modern education created intellectuals like Raja Rammohan Roy whose reforms united different strata based on equality and also created many nationalism leaders.

② Cultural pride was instilled by religious movements like Vivekananda, Neo-Vedanta and Arya Samaj.

③ Ramajit Guha showed parallel subaltern nationalism during colonial period.

Thus, Indian Nationalism is not a linear phenomena but culmination of various social factors.

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SNDP Movement was started by Narayana Guru, who belonged to Echava community. He worked towards 'One caste, One religion, One God' philosophy to remove caste based discrimination in India.

The Movement can be viewed from sociological lenses as following:—

- ① It was led by a charismatic leader, having authority over the community of lower caste and later expanded further by legitimacy provided by participation of Gounder and Pillayar (in line with Max Weber Authority Ideal type)
- ② It was not a social mobility based movement rather advocated

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for flattening the hierarchy
and creating equality for all.

③ They made use of social movement
and protest methods of satyagraha
in Vaikom satyagraha.

④ They advocated for religious
reform rather than secularism,
as they established temples
open to all castes and creeds.

⑤ The movement created
collective consciousness and
solidarity among the lower
caste, who started to demand
for their right, which led to
various reforms in Travancore
state and also inspired Indian
constitution later.

⑤ This way it brought
social change in Indian society.

Q. 6(a) Explain how land reforms brought about desired agrarian transformation.

(20)

Land reforms was changes made after independence to bring social justice in Indian society.

There were to remove social inequality based on ownership and control of land leading to poverty and caste discrimination.

Land Reforms brought desired agrarian transformation as follows:-

- ① It abolished the Tamindari system brought by the British and brought 20 million peasants in direct contact with the state.
- ② The land ceiling laws led to redistribution of land to landless labourers and marginal peasants from the rich landowners.
Annie Beville in his study

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of Sripuram showed how this led to the ~~dis~~ disrupting of class and power from caste.

③ Tenancy reforms gave rights and protections from the whips of landlords, to the tenants and sharecroppers.

④ This changed to local social hierarchy as "dominant castes" emerged in power with both numbers and now land ownership.

⑤ social movements like the Gramdan and Bhodan movement of Vinobha Bhave used social persuasion rather than legal tool for redistribution of land.

⑥ This later enabled the Green Revolution which created "Bullock capitalists" (Kudolph & Rudolph) of the

rich and middle farmers, who gained economic mobility by ~~set~~ producing for the market.

However, it also led to undesired agrarian transformation:-

① Families lost bonds and become nuclear as lands got fragmented and the "Karta" lost his dominance.

② son meta preference rose in land reform areas, to preserve the ownership of land, even leading to female foeticide (Ashish Bose — DEMARU states).

③ Incomplete land reform led to Naxalism and other agrarian unrests in India.

Thus, there is a need of Land Reform 2.0 with digital land records, consolidation and redistribution.

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Q. 6(b) What are the changes in the cultural and structural aspects of the caste system since independence?

(20)

Caste system was considered as inelonging and the basic identity of Indian society by thinkers like Cois Dumont. However, It has experienced changes, especially during post-independence era.

Cultural Changes

① Rule of commensality has been weakened faster than other cultural aspects of caste.

⇒ students of different background eating together in college hostel.

⇒ people of different caste eating together on some food cart.

② Inter caste marriages has increased especially due to secular laws like Special Marriage Act.

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③ Urbanisation has reduced spatial segregation of different castes, through residential societies, market based selling of houses etc.

④ Class and power have been decoupled from caste due to land coming to the market, as noted by Andre Beteille.

Structural changes

① Identity politics has improved status of lower caste based on numerical strength and ability to form vote bank.

Yes Dravidian politics of Tamil Nadu.

② Caste has become private from public.

Yes Harold Gould "unknown rich shawala" study showed how

Disrupter Caste

muddled hierarchy

rise of lower castes
dominant caste

effects of education & reservation policy

(Sudha Rai)

Mekshawallas of different caste worked together but followed all caste practices back at home.

③ Compar mentalisation of caste and work was studied by Milton Singer in Madras, where Brahmins owned tanneries.

④ Caste occupations have become liberalised as now Brahmins join army and Kshatriyas teach in colleges.

Further, new occupations like IT, lack categorisation in any caste.

However, there are also continuity in form of endogamy, surnames, etc.

Thus, while caste is changing, it is not disintegrating as aimed by Constitution makers.

Caste concludes.

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Q. 6(c) Highlight the achievements as well as failures of affirmative action in India.

(10)

Affirmative action refers to constitutional and legal actions for emancipation and equality for the marginalised sections of Indian society like lower caste, tribals, women etc.

Achievements

① Increase in representation of SC, ST, women and OBC in the political sphere through reservation.

eg) 19% for SC ~~and~~ in Parliament and state assembly and 33% for women in Panchayat.

② Helped in social mobility due to reservation in jobs and education for vulnerable sections.

eg) Article 16 and 15 provide for reservation for SC, ST and OBC in education and government jobs.

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- ③ created a legal check on any tendency to suppress the mobility or representation of these sections by dominant caste.

Failures

- ① led to elite capture of the benefit, leading to demand of sub-categorisation of caste.

(eg) Mala - Naddiga debate in

Andhra Pradesh.

- ② stigmatised the achievements of vulnerable section as not being based on merit.

- ③ led to conservative backlash in form of violence.

(eg) beating of dalit sanyamch, Ramvir Sena in Bihar.

- ④ Shyam Lal noted "Bhagiasakhen", where upper caste claim lower caste status for reservation.

Thus, affirmative action are just first step towards social reforms

continued discrimination
merit /
UGC protesting
debate

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