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Q2(a)

Examine the social implications of media and communication technology

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Anthropology GS 2 · 20 marks · Indigenous and exogenous processes of socio-cultural change in Indian society

5.3 Indigenous and exogenous processes of socio-cultural change in Indian society: Sanskritization, Westernization, Modernization; Inter-play of little and great traditions; Panchayati Raj and social change; Media and Social change.

Core demand of the question

- Examine the social implications of media and communication technology
- Keep the answer to a 20-mark length of about 250 words

Revision summary

Media and phones create national and caste publics beyond the village square.

Srinivas linked earlier mass media to Westernisation and politics.

Little and great traditions both travel on screens.

Dalit and Adivasi voices gain channels; hate and honour policing also gain speed.

Technology reorganises Indian society; it does not delete caste or tribe.

Introduction

Media and communication technology reorganise who speaks, who is seen, and which tradition travels. In India the village, caste, and tribe now sit inside a national and global circuit of screens.

Body

New publics

- Print, radio, and television first made a Hindi and regional public sphere that **M. N. Srinivas** already linked to Westernisation and political mobilisation.
- Mobile phones and internet carry the same village into WhatsApp kin groups, caste pages, and job news. Distance shrinks; rumour also speeds.
- **Yogendra Singh** treated modernisation as structural. Cheap media is one such structure: it differentiates youth taste from elder control.

Caste, gender, and little tradition

- Televised myth and temple live-streams intensify **Marriott's** great tradition, while local jati YouTube keeps little tradition alive.
- Dalit and Adivasi channels claim dignity that the old village square denied. The same platforms host honour videos and hate speech.

- Women's phones can mean safety and surveillance at once. The household still tries to police the screen.

Tribe and market

- Tribal belts receive state schemes and mining ads on the same handset that carries FRA news and gospel or Hindu reform songs.
- **N. K. Bose's** civilisational web now has a digital layer. Integration is thicker; so is extraction of attention and data.
- Communication technology does not abolish caste. It relocates rank, rumour, and resistance onto a faster medium.

Flow diagram

Media tech -> New publics

Media tech -> Caste gender online

Media tech -> Tribe market rumour

Conclusion

Media technology expands publics and weakens some village monopolies of news. It also scales caste, gender control, and market reach. The implication is reorganisation, not the end of Indian social structure.

Facts & figures

M. N. Srinivas

Tied modern media and English publics to Westernisation and democratic politics.

Yogendra Singh

Read modernisation as institutional change, of which mass communication is a driver.

Little and great tradition

Marriott-Redfield pair now visible in local streams and national myth television.

FRA news on mobiles

Forest-rights campaigns and rumours both move through tribal-belt phones.