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Q8(a)

Examine how structural transformation in economy is affecting traditional social relationships in agrarian society

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · Anthropology GS 2 · 20 marks · Indian Village

5.1 Indian Village-Significance of village study in India; Indian village as a social system; Traditional and changing patterns of settlement and inter-caste relations; Agrarian relations in Indian villages; Impact of globalization on Indian villages.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss the structural transformation of the Indian economy and its impact on traditional agrarian social relationships
- Keep the answer to a 20-mark length of about 250 words

Revision summary

Structural transformation moves work toward industry and services.

In India it is partial; many still live by the farm.

Jajmani becomes cash contract, not a vanished caste.

Migration and machines remake attached labour as gangs.

Dominant-caste land and panchayat brokerage persist.

Introduction

Structural transformation is the shift of labour and output from agriculture toward industry and services. In India it has been incomplete, so agrarian social relationships change without fully disappearing.

Body

What transformed

- **Green Revolution** belts produced surplus, machines, and hired labour. **Jajmani** grain shares thinned where cash wages paid the harvest.
- Urban services and construction pull circular migrants, as **Jan Breman** showed, so the attached farm servant becomes a seasonal gang worker.
- Land ceiling and tenancy laws weakened some landlords. Dominant-caste land often remained, now farmed with machines and migrants.

Impact on relationships

- **Jajmani** hereditary service gives way to contract. The carpenter may still be a caste neighbour, but the tie is a bill.
- Caste hierarchy does not vanish. It reappears in who owns the harvester, who migrates, and who sits in the **73rd Amendment** chair.
- Women take more field work as men leave, without equal land title.

- Tribal agrarian ties break faster where mines and forests replace the plough, a harsher transformation than Punjab's wage harvest.

Incomplete shift

- A large workforce still depends on agriculture. That is why faction, kin, and village remain political facts, as **Dube** already saw under Community Development.
- **N. K. Bose's** civilisation of ranked occupations meets a labour market that ranks by education and network, still caste-shaped social capital.

Reading

- Structural change commodifies labour. It does not automatically produce class without caste. Traditional relationships are monetised more than they are abolished.

Flow diagram

Agrarian order -> Green Revolution cash wage
Agrarian order -> Migration services
Jajmani -> Contract
Caste land -> Caste land

Conclusion

India's structural transformation monetised agrarian ties and sent labour to town. **Jajmani** thinned. Caste land and brokerage remain the rural social structure under a new wage skin.

Facts & figures

Jajmani

Hereditary village service-and-grain ties that cash wages have thinned.

Green Revolution

Intensive agriculture that expanded hired labour and machines in surplus belts.

Jan Breman

Showed circular migration and unfree labour inside rural capitalism.

73rd Amendment

New rural offices through which agrarian elites reorganise after the economic shift.