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Q8(b)

The making of the Indian Constitution is described as an attempt towards a 'social revolution'. Comment

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · PSIR GS 1 · 15 marks · Making of the Indian Constitution

Making of the Indian Constitution: Legacies of the British rule; different social and political perspectives.

Core demand of the question

- The making of the Indian Constitution is described as an attempt towards a 'social revolution'. Comment. (15 marks)

Revision summary

Austin named social revolution as a strand of the constitutional web beside democracy and unity.

Ambedkar drafted justiciable equality, including abolition of untouchability, as the legal engine.

Directive Principles state economic democracy as a continuing duty.

Land reform and reservations extend the attempt against estates and caste monopoly.

The making is an attempt; social facts still lag the text.

Introduction

Granville Austin described the Indian Constitution as a seamless web whose one strand is social revolution. The making of the text was an attempt to use higher law to undo caste, landlordism, and unfreedom, not only to transfer the colonial state to Indian ministers.

Body

Austin's meaning

- Political revolution was Independence and adult franchise. Social revolution was equality of status and opportunity against a hierarchical society.
- **Ambedkar**'s chairmanship of the **Drafting Committee** put that aim into **Articles 15, 16, 17, 23, 24**, and the Directive Principles.
- Abolition of untouchability, common citizenship, and the promise of economic democracy in **Articles 38 and 39** are the revolutionary core.
- The Assembly rejected **Gandhi**'s village constitution as the primary text, but it kept village panchayats in **Article 40** as a directive, a compromise of methods.

How the making attempted it

- Fundamental rights against the state and against some private custom (**Article 17**) were to be justiciable engines of social change.
- Reservations, later expanded after **Mandal**, were built as exceptions that serve equality, not as a denial of **Rawlsian** fair opportunity in **Ambedkar**'s own view of substance.

- Land-reform permission, the First Amendment, and later property's exit from Part III show the Assembly and early Parliament treating estates of power, in **Harrington's** sense, as a constitutional problem.
- Uniform civil code as a directive, not an immediate right, shows the revolution as sequenced, under **Nehru's** political caution and against **Ambedkar's** faster civil-law hope.

Comment on "attempt"

- Attempt is the right word. **Kesavananda** later saved both democracy and the social-revolution reading from a purely procedural Parliament.
- **Implementation lagged:** land reform was captured, caste violence continued, and women's rights inside the family remain uneven.
- **Foucault** would note that a rights text can coexist with disciplinary institutions. The revolution is legal-political, not automatic.
- **Compared with a Trotskyist permanent revolution, this was a constitutional path:** law as the revolution's form, courts and legislatures as its organs.

Balance

- Calling the making a social revolution is fair as intention and design.
- Calling it a completed social revolution is false. **Austin** himself treated the web as a task for later generations.

Flow diagram

Austin social revolution -> Ambedkar Parts III-IV
 Austin social revolution -> Article 17 equality
 Austin social revolution -> Directive Principles
 Political revolution -> Franchise republic

Conclusion

The Constitution's making was an attempted social revolution in **Austin's** and **Ambedkar's** sense: higher law against graded inequality and economic domination. The attempt is in Parts III and IV. The completion remains political, which is why the phrase is an aim, not a trophy.

Facts & figures

Austin

The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation describes democracy, social revolution, and unity as a seamless web.

Article 17

Abolishes untouchability; a direct constitutional strike at social hierarchy.

Articles 38 and 39

Directives to minimise inequality and to distribute material resources for the common good.

First Amendment, 1951

Protected land reform and some speech limits, showing early use of amendment for the social-revolution strand.

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