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Q5(b)

"Ideology is crucial for social transformation in a democracy." Discuss.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Sociology GS 1 · 10 marks · Politics and Society

Politics and Society: Sociological theories of power; Power elite, bureaucracy, pressure groups, and political parties; Nation, state, citizenship, democracy, civil society, ideology; Protest, agitation, social movements, collective action, revolution.

Core demand of the question

- "Ideology is crucial for social transformation in a democracy." Discuss
- Keep the discussion within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Ideology maps justice and possibility; democracy makes persuasion a condition of rule.

Marx, **Gramsci**, and **Weber** tie ideas to class, hegemony, and party.

Indian caste-OBC and feminist politics show ideology as a transformation tool.

It is crucial, not sufficient; organisation and production still bind outcomes.

Introduction

Ideology is a patterned account of what is just, possible, and ours. In a democracy, votes, parties, and movements need such accounts to turn private grievance into public transformation. Material force still matters; slogans without organisation do not.

Body

Why ideology is crucial

- **Karl Marx** treated ruling ideas as class ideas, yet also wrote of **class consciousness** as a condition of transformation.
- **Antonio Gramsci**'s hegemony names consent in civil society, which electoral democracy organises daily.
- **Max Weber**'s parties fight for world-images as well as for spoils. Charisma and programme both move masses.

Democracy as a special field

- Universal franchise makes persuasion a condition of rule. Caste associations, language movements, and **Mandal**-era OBC politics in India show ideology as a mobility project.
- **Emile Durkheim**'s civic morals and civic religion, later Robert Bellah, show that democracy still needs sacred-like commitments.
- Feminist ideology after Ann Oakley and Sylvia Walby made unpaid care a public issue, without which "development" left the household untouched.

Limits of the claim

- Ideology without resources is sermon. Transformation also needs organisation, law, and, in **Marx's** key, a shift in production.
- Ideology can block transformation when it naturalises inequality.

Flow diagram

Ideology -> Consent votes movements

Consent votes movements -> Democratic transformation

Organisation and production -> Democratic transformation

Conclusion

In a democracy, ideology is crucial because consent and vote must be organised as meaning. **Marx**, **Gramsci**, and **Weber** explain why. It is not sufficient: structure, organisation, and counter-ideology decide whether transformation occurs.

Facts & figures

Gramsci

Hegemony: domination through consent in civil society, not only through force.

Class consciousness

Marx: a class-for-itself needs an account of its interest, not only a shared misery.

Mandal

OBC reservation politics as an ideological and organisational transformation of Indian democracy.

Weber on party

Organised power seeks both material chances and the imposition of a world-view.