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Q6(a)

"Globalization has pushed the labour into informal organization of work." Substantiate your answer with suitable examples.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Sociology GS 1 · 20 marks · Works and Economic Life

Works and Economic Life: Social organization of work in different types of society; Formal and informal organization of work; Labour and society.

Core demand of the question

- "Globalization has pushed the labour into informal organization of work." Substantiate your answer with suitable examples
- Keep the substantiation within a 20-mark length

Revision summary

Globalisation searches for flexible labour through subcontract and platforms.

- **Informal work:** weak contracts and social security, strong task control.
- **Examples:** garments, migrant construction, BPO margins, gig apps, care chains.

Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Merton, and Oakley explain core/margin, anomie, cost-shifting, and gender.

India's informal majority was old; global value chains intensified it.

Introduction

Globalisation is the intensified cross-border movement of capital, goods, images, and some people. Informal organisation of work means weak contracts, little social security, and blurred firms. The statement is well supported for a mass of labour, especially in the Global South, and overstated for a protected core.

Body**Mechanisms that informalise**

- **Karl Marx's** world market lets capital search for cheaper, more flexible labour. Subcontract is the organisational form.
- **Max Weber's** bureaucratic core remains in headquarters; the margin is a chain of vendors without files.
- Trade liberalisation and export zones demand just-in-time labour, often women in garments, which Ann Oakley-type analysis reads as feminised flexibility.
- Platforms are global in ownership and local in the rider's body, with algorithm command and no tenure.

Examples

- **Garment and electronics supply chains:** a brand in one country, workshops and homeworkers in another, as in Indian Tiruppur or Noida-type clusters.

- **Construction and circular migrants:** global real-estate money, informal mastery systems, no union of the classic mill type.
- **IT and BPOs:** global clients, formal campuses, and a periphery of contract and night work.
- **Gig delivery and ride-hail:** global apps, informal self-employment in law, industrial control in practice.
- **Care chains:** nurses and domestic workers abroad; households at home informalise leftover care.

What the statement must not erase

- Some global firms run highly formal internal labour markets.
- **Emile Durkheim's** occupational groups are weak at the informal margin, producing anomic flexibility.
- Robert K. Merton's latent function of "flexibility" is cost-shifting onto workers.
- The Indian **PLFS** still shows a large informal majority that predates 1990s liberalisation; globalisation intensified and rebranded it, including in services.
- Talcott Parsons's adaptive economy grew; the integrative union lagged, a cultural lag in Ogburn's sense.

Substantiation, judged

- Push is real through subcontract, export discipline, and platforms.
- Not every worker was previously a mill hand. Agrarian and caste labour were already extra-contractual.
- The new fact is informalisation inside globally linked value chains.

Flow diagram

Global capital brands apps -> Subcontract platforms
 Subcontract platforms -> Informal labour
 HQ bureaucracy -> Formal core
 Informal labour -> Risk shifted to workers

Conclusion

Globalisation has pushed much labour into informal organisation by stretching the firm into chains and apps. **Marx** and **Weber** explain core and margin. Garments, migrants, BPOs, **gig work**, and care chains are the examples. A formal core remains; it does not cancel the push.

Facts & figures

Value chain

Production split across firms and countries, with informality concentrated at lower tiers.

Gig work

App-mediated tasks billed as self-employment with digital Taylorism.

Care chain

Migrant paid care abroad that informalises care in sending households.

PLFS

Indian labour survey evidence of persistent informal employment.

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