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Q6(b)

"Social change can be brought about through development." Illustrate. from the contemporary situation of India.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Sociology GS 1 · 15 marks · Social Change in Modern Society

Social Change in Modern Society: Sociological theories of social change; Development and dependency; Agents of social change; Education and social change; Science, technology and social change.

Core demand of the question

- "Social change can be brought about through development." Illustrate. from the contemporary situation of India
- Keep the illustration within a 15-mark length

Revision summary

Development can rewrite production, welfare, and everyday roles.

- **India:** growth, schemes, SHGs, digital state, NFHS fertility and schooling.

Marx, Parsons, and Mead explain structural and self change.

Weber, **Durkheim**, and Merton explain surviving status, anomie, and latent inequality.

- **Illustration:** real change, not automatic equality.

Introduction

Development is planned improvement of production, welfare, and capabilities, usually by the state and market. It can bring social change. In contemporary India it also reproduces caste, class, and gender unless those are named as targets.

Body

How development changes society

- **Karl Marx:** a shift in productive forces and relations is social change, whether called development or accumulation.
- **Talcott Parsons:** differentiation of economy, school, and law is a developmental path.
- Education, health, and infrastructure rewrite everyday time, mobility, and the self, in George Herbert Mead's sense of new generalised others.

Contemporary Indian illustrations

- Liberalisation and growth expanded a consumer middle class and urban work, a class change.
- Rural roads, **MGNREGA**, and mobiles changed women's public presence in some regions, still constrained by patriarchy.
- **SHGs** and microcredit made women visible as economic actors, with mixed control over funds.
- Digital payments and Aadhaar reorganised the state's reach, a Weberian intensification of files.
- **NFHS shows fertility decline and schooling gains:** demographic and gender change tied to development services.

Limits of the slogan

- Development without land and labour rights can be dispossession, which **Marx** would not call emancipation.
- Caste remains in hiring and marriage despite GDP. **Max Weber**'s status outlasts income.
- **Emile Durkheim**'s **anomie appears in boom cities**: more division of labour, weaker regulation.
- **Robert K. Merton**: manifest growth, latent inequality and cultural lag in Ogburn's sense.
- Environmental harm and informal work show change that is not simply "up".

Illustration judged

- Yes, development has brought occupational, demographic, and state-capacity change in India.
- It is not an automatic solvent of hierarchy.

Flow diagram

Development -> Occupational demographic state change

Development -> Latent inequality

India growth schemes NFHS -> Occupational demographic state change

Caste gender land -> Latent inequality

Conclusion

Development can bring social change, and contemporary India shows that in work, fertility, schooling, and state files. **Marx**, **Parsons**, **Weber**, and **Durkheim** warn that growth, differentiation, and anomie travel together. Illustrate with gains and with persistent caste-gender closure.

Facts & figures

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

Rural employment guarantee that altered local labour bargaining in many districts.

NFHS fertility decline

A development-linked demographic change with large gender implications.

SHGs

Women's groups as a development instrument with mixed empowerment outcomes.

Aadhaar files

Weberian intensification of identification as a developmental state tool.