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Q5(e)

"Social conflict is both a cause and a consequence of social change." Explain.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Sociology GS 1 · 10 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 conflict is both a cause and a consequence of social change." Explain
- Keep the explanation within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Conflict causes change when it rewrites class, domination, or law (**Marx**, **Weber**, movements).

Change causes conflict when regulation lags and new claimants appear (**Durkheim**, Ogburn, Merton).

- **Coser**: conflict can also integrate.

Parsons's equilibrium underplays the causal arrow from conflict.

Explain both directions with Indian industrial and Mandal illustrations.

Introduction

Social conflict is a struggle over values, resources, or honour. Social change is a transformation of structure. Conflict produces change when it rewrites rules. Change produces conflict when new groups and strains appear.

Body**Conflict as cause of change**

- **Karl Marx**: class struggle is the motor that can transform a mode of production.
- **Max Weber**: charismatic rupture and party struggle recast legitimate domination.
- Social movements turn collective action into new law, as in labour and feminist gains after Ann Oakley made care public.

Change as cause of conflict

- **Emile Durkheim**: a new division of labour without moral regulation yields **anomie** and conflict.
- **William F. Ogburn's cultural lag**: technique outruns norms, then fights over law.
- **Robert K. Merton**: new goals and blocked means produce deviant conflict.
- Industrialisation and Mandal-type office change in India generated caste and class conflicts as consequences.

Both, not a circle empty of content

- Lewis **Coser**, after Georg Simmel, argued that conflict can integrate as well as split.
- Talcott Parsons underplayed conflict as a cause; the statement corrects that calm.

Flow diagram

Social conflict -> Social change
Social change -> Social conflict
Class struggle -> Social change
New strains anomie -> Social conflict

Conclusion

Conflict causes change when it reorganises production, domination, or law. Change causes conflict when new strains and claimants appear. **Marx**, **Weber**, **Durkheim**, and Merton explain the two arrows. Neither arrow is automatic success.

Facts & figures

Marx

Class struggle as a potential transformer of the mode of production.

Anomie

Durkheim: change without regulation produces conflictual strain.

Cultural lag

Ogburn: uneven change generates fights over adaptive rules.

Coser

Conflict can clarify boundaries and raise cohesion inside groups.