

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q5(e)

Assess the role of mass media as an agent of social change

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · 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

- Assess the role of mass media as an agent of social change
- Keep the assessment within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Mass media spread messages across large publics.

They can change nations, consumption, and mobilisation.

Ownership, stereotypes, and rumour limit a progress story.

Anderson, Weber, and agenda-setting help the assessment.

Indian press, TV, and platforms show both literacy and polarisation.

Introduction

- **Mass media carry messages across large publics:** print, broadcast, and now platforms. They can spread new norms, markets, and protests. They can also freeze stereotypes and concentrate ownership. Assessment must hold both.

Body**As an agent of change**

- Benedict Anderson linked print capitalism to imagined nations. Indian language presses did similar work.
- Development communication once promised family planning and literacy. Satellite television later remade consumption and celebrity.
- Social media can speed mobilisation, as in some rights campaigns and disaster help.

Limits and reverse effects

- Max Weber already saw the press as a business with staff interests.
- Agenda-setting and cultivation research show media shape what is thinkable, not a simple hypodermic of progress.
- Caste and gender stereotypes travel as fast as reform talk. Paid news and platform bubbles fragment the public.

Indian file

- Doordarshan's earlier monopoly versus cable and phones changed who speaks.
- Media can aid legal literacy and also communal rumour.

Flow diagram

Mass media -> Norms markets protest
Mass media -> Ownership stereotype rumour
Norms markets protest -> Ambiguous change
Ownership stereotype rumour -> Ambiguous change

Conclusion

Mass media are a powerful agent of change in scale and speed, not a guaranteed agent of emancipation. They remake nation, market, and protest while remaining owned, gendered, and caste-coded channels.

Facts & figures

Anderson

Print capitalism and the imagined national community.

Agenda-setting

Media may not tell people what to think, but they strongly shape what is thought about.

Doordarshan

Earlier state broadcast monopoly in India, later broken by cable and private news.

Platforms

Phone-based media that speed both civic help and rumour.