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Q5(a)

What do you understand by informalisation of labour '? Write your answer with special reference to India

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · Sociology GS 1 · 10 marks · Sociological Thinkers: Karl Marx

Sociological Thinkers: Karl Marx - Historical materialism, mode of production, alienation, class struggle; Emile Durkheim - Division of labour, social fact, suicide, religion and society; Max Weber - Social action, ideal types, authority, bureaucracy, protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism; Talcott Parsons - Social system, pattern variables; Robert K. Merton - Latent and manifest functions, conformity and deviance, reference groups; Mead - Self and identity.

Core demand of the question

- What do you understand by informalisation of labour? Write your answer with special reference to India
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Informalisation is work without secure contract and social security.

Hart named the sector; Breman showed Indian footloose labour as a system.

PLFS files record a large uncovered workforce.

Gender and caste sort who remains informal.

It is a capitalist form, not a pre-modern leftover.

Introduction

Informalisation is the spread of work without secure contract, social security, or recognised union rights. In India it is not a leftover of tradition. It is how much of capitalism actually hires.

Body

The meaning

- Keith Hart named the informal sector in African cities. Jan Breman showed footloose labour in India as a system, not a waiting room for factories.
- Informalisation can mean never-formal work, or the stripping of once-formal mills and public jobs.

Indian reference

- PLFS and earlier NSSO files show a large majority of workers outside formal social security.
- Construction, home-based garments, domestic work, and gig platforms extend the pattern into cities.
- **Caste and gender organise who stays informal:** Dalit and Adivasi bodies in hazardous tasks, women in unpaid and piece-rate care-linked work.

Relation to capital

- **Karl Marx's** reserve army and Harry Braverman's deskilling help, but Indian informality also uses putting-out and labour contractors.
- The state may celebrate ease of business while the Factories Act circle shrinks.

Flow diagram

Informalisation -> No contract security union
Informalisation -> India majority PLFS
India majority PLFS -> Contractor caste gender
Capital -> Informalisation

Conclusion

Informalisation is insecure, uncovered labour as a durable form. In India it is majority practice, shaped by contractors, caste, and gender, not a brief stop on the way to Fordist jobs.

Facts & figures

Hart

Anthropological naming of the informal sector in urban Ghana.

Breman

Footloose labour: circulation and contractors as the Indian labour regime.

PLFS

Official labour-force survey showing high informality of employment.

Gig work

Platform hiring that extends informalisation with an app as the new contractor.