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Q5(e)

In social mobility possible in closed systems of stratification ? Illustrate from research work.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2018 · Sociology GS 1 · 10 marks · Stratification and Mobility: Concepts

Stratification and Mobility: Concepts - equality, inequality, hierarchy, exclusion, poverty and deprivation; Theories of social stratification - Structural functionalist, Marxist, Weberian; Dimensions - Class, status groups, gender, ethnicity and race; Social mobility - open and closed systems, types, sources and causes.

Core demand of the question

- Is social mobility possible in closed systems of stratification? Illustrate from research work
- Keep the illustration within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Closed systems restrict mobility by birth and marriage.

Sanskritisation is group status mobility in caste research.

Mandal routes are political mobility.

Hypergamy can move women without opening the group.

Leaks do not equal an open class contest.

Introduction

Closed systems tie rank to birth and police marriage. Mobility is restricted, not always zero. Research shows group mimicry, political routes, and rare individual leaks rather than a free contest.

Body

Closure as the rule

- **Caste and estate approximate closed systems:** ascription, endogamy, and honour.
- **Max Weber's** status group is the mechanism of closure inside a market.

Research illustrations

- **M. N. Srinivas's Sanskritisation:** a caste group raises style and claim, which is collective status mobility, not open class circulation.
- **Mandal-era OBC politics:** mobility through the state, which Andre **Beteille** read as mixing class, status, and power.
- Louis Dumont stressed holism; empirical village studies still found some occupation shift at the edges.
- Gendered hypergamy moves women as persons without opening the caste for men of the lower group.

Answer

- Possible as limited, often group and political, mobility.
- Not possible as equal contest mobility of the liberal school myth.

Flow diagram

Closed ascription -> Limited mobility
Limited mobility -> Sanskritisation
Limited mobility -> Reservations party
Limited mobility -> Not contest of all

Conclusion

Closed systems allow some mobility of groups, styles, and political quotas. **Srinivas** and **Mandal** research illustrate that. They do not become open class systems by those leaks.

Facts & figures

Srinivas

Sanskritisation as empirically observed collective status mobility.

Weber

Status closure through restricted interaction and marriage.

Beteille

Caste, class, and power: mobility on one axis need not open the others.

Mandal

State-mediated OBC mobility in a still partly closed honour order.

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