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Q5(a)

Differentiate between 'Life-chances' and 'Life-style' with suitable examples

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2019 · Sociology GS 1 · 10 marks · Sociology

Sociology - The Discipline: Modernity and social changes in Europe and emergence of sociology; Scope of the subject and comparison with other social sciences; Sociology and common sense.

Core demand of the question

- Differentiate between 'Life-chances' and 'Life-style' with suitable examples
- Keep the differentiation within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

- **Life-chances:** typical probabilities of goods and work from class (**Weber**).
- **Life-style:** honourable conduct that marks status groups.

Veblen and **Bourdieu** show style as display and habitus.

Indian diet, English, and gates illustrate style; **NFHS** and NSSO illustrate chances.

Money and honour do not move on the same clock.

Introduction

Max Weber used life-chances for the typical probabilities of goods, work, and satisfaction that follow from class situation. Life-style is the honourable way of living that marks a status group. One is a market probability. The other is a display and a closure.

Body

Life-chances

- Class situation shapes chances of housing, health, and school. A casual construction worker and a software employee do not share those probabilities.
- NSSO consumption and **NFHS** nutrition track life-chances as measurable odds, not as taste.
- **Karl Marx**'s exploitation sits under many of those odds, though **Weber** did not use surplus value.

Life-style

- Status groups restrict marriage, food, and dress. Thorstein **Veblen**'s conspicuous consumption is life-style as honour.
- Pierre **Bourdieu**'s habitus and taste make life-style a class weapon, closer to **Weber** than to a free hobby.
- Vegetarian marking, English schooling, and gated colonies in India are life-style closures that also protect chances.

Difference with examples

- Two clerks may share life-chances yet split by caste diet and wedding circle.

- A newly rich trader may buy a car (chance) before the old elite accept his table (style).
- **Census** work status speaks to chances; marriage ads speak to style.

Flow diagram

Status group -> Life-style

Life-chances -> Health school work

Life-style -> Honour closure

Conclusion

Life-chances are **Weber's** class probabilities of goods and survival. Life-style is status honour in everyday practice. They interact: style can lock chances, and money can buy a new style only slowly. Keep the pair; do not collapse them into income.

Facts & figures

Weber

Class as life-chances in the market; status as honour and life-style.

Veblen

Conspicuous consumption as status display rather than need.

Bourdieu

Taste as cultural capital that looks like personal style.

NFHS

Health and nutrition probabilities that map life-chances across groups.

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