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Q2(c)

Explain democracy as an order of society. What are the factors preventing people's participation in politics?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2020 · Sociology GS 1 · 15 marks · Politics and Society

Politics and Society: Sociological theories of power; Power elite, bureaucracy, pressure groups, and political parties; Nation, state, citizenship, democracy, civil society, ideology; Protest, agitation, social movements, collective action, revolution.

Core demand of the question

- Explain democracy as an order of society. What are the factors preventing people's participation in politics?
- Keep the explanation within a 15-mark length

Revision summary

- **Democracy as social order:** voice, contest, accountability in the structure of society.

Tocqueville, **Marshall**, Habermas, and Gramsci frame soil and hegemony.

Participation is blocked by informal labour time, caste, gendered care, cultural capital, and party oligarchy.

Mills's mass society and **Michels**'s iron law remain current.

Legal polls without social entry are a thin order.

Introduction

Democracy as an order of society is more than an election calendar. It is a way of distributing legitimate voice, contest, and accountability through the social structure. **Max Weber**'s legal-rational domination and T. H. **Marshall**'s citizenship are its institutional face. Participation still fails for many.

Body

Democracy as social order

- Alexis de **Tocqueville** saw associations and equality of condition as the social soil of democracy.
- Jürgen Habermas pictured a public sphere of argument. **Antonio Gramsci** warned that hegemony can make consent without voice.
- C. Wright Mills feared a mass society where institutions dwarf the citizen.
- In India, the Constitution, parties, and panchayats are the order; caste sabhas are a rival order.

Factors preventing participation

- **Class:** informal labour lacks time, papers, and union cover. **Karl Marx**'s long working day still applies.
- **Caste and ethnicity:** intimidation and vote-bank brokerage substitute for deliberation.

- **Gender:** unpaid care and honour codes keep women from meetings, as **NFHS** mobility and decision indicators show.
- **Education and language:** bureaucratic forms exclude, which Pierre Bourdieu called cultural capital.
- Robert **Michels**'s oligarchy inside parties. Money and media concentration.
- Fear, clientelism, and a thin civil society.

Link

- When these factors bite, democracy remains a legal order with a hollow social order.

Flow diagram

Democracy as order -> Citizenship contest associations
Class caste gender oligarchy -> Low participation
Citizenship contest associations -> PART People's participation
Low participation -> Hollow legal order

Conclusion

Democracy as a social order is citizenship, contest, and associative life, not only a poll. Class, caste, gender, cultural capital, and party oligarchy prevent people's participation. **Tocqueville** and Habermas name the hope. Mills, **Michels**, and Indian informal labour name the block.

Facts & figures

Tocqueville

Associations and habits of equality as the social basis of democracy.

Marshall

Civil, political, and social citizenship as a historical sequence of rights.

Michels

Oligarchy in organisations that should have been schools of participation.

NFHS

Gendered mobility and decision-making that predict political absence.