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Q7(a)

Technology has accelerated the process of development and dependency. Discuss.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2020 · Sociology GS 1 · 20 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

- Technology has accelerated the process of development and dependency. Discuss
- Keep the discussion within a 20-mark length

Revision summary

Technology can raise yields, health, and administrative capacity.

The same tools can deepen dependency through patents, platforms, and data rents.

Frank, Wallerstein, and Cardoso map dependent development.

Gig modernisation can be informalisation.

Gendered care is not automatically solved by apps.

Both processes accelerate; ownership decides the mix.

Introduction

Technology raises productivity and connects markets. That can look like development. The same tools can deepen dependency when patents, platforms, and standards sit in a core. A. G. Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein named the second process. Both can run together.

Body

Acceleration of development

- W. W. Rostow treated technique as a take-off lever. Green Revolution yields and digital public goods in India show real gains in output and delivery.
- **Max Weber's rationalisation:** calculation, records, and machines thicken modern organisation.
- Public health techniques cut some deaths. That is development as capability, after Amartya Sen.

Acceleration of dependency

- **Frank's development of underdevelopment:** technology arrives as a package with surplus drain.
- Patents, software stacks, and platform rents keep the periphery as a user. Cardoso's dependent development still fits some manufacturing.

- Labour platforms informalise work while looking modern, a capitalist shell Jan Breman would recognise.
- **Data colonialism:** Indian users feed models owned elsewhere.

How they couple

- A UPI rail can be developmental and still sit on hardware and chip dependencies.
- **Skill polarisation:** a few engineers, many gig riders. Class, not only nation, is the unit.
- **Gender:** care apps do not automatically end unpaid labour, as Ann Oakley would note.

Discuss

- Technology is not a neutral accelerator. It accelerates the path already structured by class and world-system.
- Delinking every chip is fantasy. Bargaining over standards and public tech is the political middle.

Flow diagram

Technology -> Productivity health delivery
Technology -> Patents platforms drain
World-system class -> Which arrow wins
Technology -> Which arrow wins

Conclusion

Technology has accelerated development as productivity, health, and state capacity. It has also accelerated dependency as patents, platforms, and informalised modern work. **Frank** and **Wallerstein** remain relevant; **Rostow**'s one-way machine does not. Discuss both arrows, and name who owns the tool.

Facts & figures

Frank

Metropolitan techniques can produce satellite underdevelopment, not automatic take-off.

Wallerstein

Technology sits inside a hierarchical world division of labour.

Rostow

Stages of growth that treat technique as a national take-off switch.

Sen

Development as capabilities; machines matter if people can use the gains.