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Q8(b)

What is the impact of gender division of labour on the development of society?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2020 · Sociology GS 1 · 15 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 is the impact of gender division of labour on the development of society?
- Keep the discussion within a 15-mark length

Revision summary

Gendered work splits unpaid care from paid public labour.

It subsidises capitalist growth and human development of children.

It also blocks women's capabilities, skills, and voice.

Oakley, Walby, **Hartmann**, and **Sen** frame the impact.

NFHS and PLFS are the Indian files.

Development that ignores time-use is a male public account.

Introduction

The gender division of labour assigns men and women different work, especially unpaid care versus paid public work. Development as growth and capability is shaped by that split. A GDP story that ignores it misreads both progress and stagnation.

Body

The division

- Ann **Oakley** made housework visible as labour. Sylvia Walby placed the household as a patriarchal structure.
- PLFS low female labour-force rates often hide home-based and care work.
- R. W. Connell's gender order organises masculinities around the breadwinner ideal.

Impacts on development

- Unpaid care subsidises the wage, which Marxist feminists after Heidi **Hartmann** named. Capitalist development rides that subsidy.
- **Human development:** children's nutrition and schooling depend on that labour, as NFHS health files imply.

- Growth can rise while women's time poverty deepens. **Amartya Sen**'s capabilities then diverge by sex.
- Informalisation often feminises the cheap shell of the economy.

Impacts that block development

- Exclusion from skills and assets slows the talent pool, against even Davis-Moore sorting.
- Violence and restricted mobility, in NFHS, cut public participation and entrepreneurship.
- Development policy that only adds microcredit without cutting care loads reproduces the split.

Reciprocal note

- Some development, such as public childcare, can re-divide labour. That is rare and fought for.

Flow diagram

Gender division of labour -> Unpaid care subsidy
Gender division of labour -> Feminised informal wage
Unpaid care subsidy -> Development as growth
Gender division of labour -> Lost capabilities
Lost capabilities -> Uneven development

Conclusion

The gender division of labour underwrites development by supplying unpaid care and cheap feminised work, and it blocks development by wasting capabilities and voice. **Oakley**, Walby, **Hartmann**, and **Sen** are the measures. Count GDP, then count time.

Facts & figures

Oakley

Housework as work; the division of labour is socially made.

Hartmann

Patriarchy and capital jointly use the gender split.

Sen

Development as freedom and capability, which the split distributes unequally.

NFHS / PLFS

Health, mobility, and work-status files that reveal the split's yield.