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Q8(a)

Analyze Gandhi as a moralist, ascetic and man of action through his Hind Swaraj.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Sociology GS 2 · 20 marks · Perspectives on the study of Indian society

Perspectives on the study of Indian society: Indology (G.S. Ghurye); Structural functionalism (M.N. Srinivas); Marxist sociology (A.R. Desai).

Core demand of the question

- Analyze **Gandhi** as a moralist, ascetic and man of action through his Hind Swaraj
- Keep the 1909 text as the spine

Revision summary

Hind Swaraj treats **modern civilisation** as a moral disease.

Swaraj begins as ascetic self-mastery and village duty.

Satyagraha is the form of action the text commends.

Khadi and national education are practical corollaries.

Caste and class critiques mark the book's democratic limit.

Introduction

Hind Swaraj (1909) shows **Gandhi** as a moralist of civilisation, an ascetic of self-rule, and a man of action who wanted a different swaraj, not a brown copy of the British state.

Body

Moralist

- He judged **modern civilisation as disease**: railways, lawyers, and mills that empty swaraj of the soul.
- True swaraj is rule over the self and the village, not parliamentary mimicry. A. R. Desai would call this an ethical cloak over a bourgeois movement; **Gandhi** meant it as the movement's test.

Ascetic

- Brahmacharya, **khadi**, and the rejection of luxury are political method. The body is the first colony to free.
- Hind Swaraj's editor-reader dialogue trains desire, not only opinion.

Man of action

- **Passive resistance** (later satyagraha) is action without hatred, aimed at converting the opponent.
- **The text is a programme**: national schools, spinning, and trusteeship-type economy against industrial India.

Tension

- **Ambedkar** later asked whether ascetic moralism left caste standing. Hind Swaraj's village can look harmonic in Beteille's sense while remaining ranked.

Flow diagram

Hind Swaraj -> Moral critique of civilisation

Hind Swaraj -> Ascetic self-rule

Hind Swaraj -> Satyagraha action

Conclusion

In Hind Swaraj **Gandhi** fuses moral judgement, ascetic discipline, and civil resistance. The book is a manual of action against **modern civilisation**, and a limit when social revolution is the measure.

Facts & figures

Hind Swaraj 1909

Gandhi's dialogue on true swaraj versus British-style modern India.

Modern civilisation

His name for industrial, legal, and medical machinery that steals self-rule.

Passive resistance

The 1909 term for soul-force as political action.

Khadi

The later mass form of the book's anti-industrial ethic.

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