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Q1(e)

Feminization of poverty.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 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

- Feminization of poverty
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Feminization of poverty is the greater depth and duration of women's poverty.

Indian kinship often withholds land and line from women.

Informal and unpaid work keep them at the bottom of the labour market.

Caste multiplies the effect for Dalit and Adivasi women.

Rights in wage and title are the counter, not charity alone.

Introduction

Feminization of poverty means women, especially widows, single mothers, and informal workers, are poorer and stay poor longer than men in the same class. In India it is caste, kinship, and labour market together, not a Western single-mother story alone.

Body**How it appears**

- Leela Dube's **Seed and Earth** denies women the line and often the field, so widow and daughter poverty is built into kinship.
- **Female-headed households**, unpaid farm work, and urban domestic and home-based labour keep women in low, insecure pay.
- NFHS and labour counts show thinner asset title, worse nutrition, and higher informal share for women.

Indian shape

- Dalit and Adivasi women face landlessness plus stigma. Upper-caste seclusion can hide unpaid dependence.
- Feminization is not only more poor women. It is poverty reproduced through marriage, dowry, and care work.

Policy

- SHGs, **MGNREGA**, and succession reform help when wages and titles actually reach women, not only household males.

Flow diagram

Seed Earth kinship -> Women without title
Informal care work -> Women without title
Women without title -> Feminization of poverty

Conclusion

Feminization of poverty in India is the gendered face of land, caste, and informal work. Counting poor women is not enough; title, wage, and kinship ideology must change.

Facts & figures

Seed and Earth

Dube's idiom that makes women the field, not the heir, and so structures female poverty.

Female-headed households

Widows and separated women who often lack land, pension, and steady wage.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

Rural wage work that can put cash in women's hands when implementation is fair.

Informal labour

Domestic, home-based, and farm work outside most labour security.

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