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Q1(d)

How far Gandhiji was trusted by the untouchables

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

- How far Gandhiji was trusted by the untouchables
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Gandhi's anti-untouchability work created moral trust among many Harijans.

Ambedkar rejected **Gandhi's** varna frame and Congress tutelage.

The Poona Pact is the hinge of political mistrust.

Temple entry without structural power did not satisfy Dalit radicals.

Trust was partial, moral more than constitutional.

Introduction

Gandhi won wide **Harijan** sympathy as a moral campaigner against untouchability. He did not win full political trust from Ambedkarite Dalits, who wanted rights, separate electorates, and annihilation of caste, not only **temple entry**.

Body

Where trust existed

- Village constructive work, the **Harijan** tour, and the fast against separate electorates made **Gandhi** a protector in many Congress and bhakti milieus.
- He called untouchability a sin. That language moved caste Hindus more than legalism alone.

Where trust broke

- **Ambedkar's** What Congress and **Gandhi** Have Done to the Untouchables charged that **Gandhi** kept caste as varna duty and blocked independent Dalit power.
- The Poona Pact replaced reserved electorates with reserved seats under a joint vote, which **Ambedkar** later treated as a loss of autonomy.
- **Temple entry** without property, army, and law looked to Dalit radicals like a change of heart, not of structure.

Sociological close

- **Beteille's disharmony fits:** **Gandhi** preached equality of souls inside a ranked society. Trust followed that split.

Flow diagram

Gandhi Harijan work -> Moral trust
Ambedkar -> Rights separate power
Poona Pact -> Gandhi Harijan work
Poona Pact -> Rights separate power

Conclusion

Untouchables trusted **Gandhi** as a saint against the practice of untouchability. Many did not trust him as the architect of their political freedom. **Ambedkar** remains the measure of that gap.

Facts & figures

Harijan

Gandhi's name for 'children of God', refused by many Ambedkarites as paternal.

Poona Pact 1932

Joint electorates with reserved seats after **Gandhi**'s fast against the Communal Award.

Ambedkar

Argued that **Gandhi** and Congress did not transfer real power to the Depressed Classes.

Temple entry

Symbolic reform that did not by itself end disability in land, well, and office.

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