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Q5(e)

How far Srinivas Sanskritization is modernizing force or traditionalizing force in understanding the changes in caste system?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 marks · Caste System

Caste System: Perspectives (G.S. Ghurye, M.N. Srinivas, Louis Dumont, Andre Beteille); Features of caste system; Untouchability - forms and perspectives.

Core demand of the question

- How far **Srinivas** Sanskritization is modernizing force or traditionalizing force in understanding the changes in caste system?
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Sanskritization seeks better rank by copying a Sanskritic model.

- **That is traditionalizing:** the ladder remains the goal.

It is modernizing when new wealth, school, and votes fund the claim.

Singh's paradigm absorbs it as **orthogenetic change**.

Dalit exit and class politics mark its limits.

Introduction

Sanskritization is both a modernizing and a traditionalizing force. It modernises by using new wealth and politics to claim rank. It traditionalises by seeking that rank inside the old ladder, not outside caste.

Body

Traditionalizing

- A jati copies the diet, ritual, and myth of a locally higher model. The reference is Sanskritic tradition, not citizenship.
- Endogamy and hierarchy stay. **Ambedkar** would say this is movement within graded inequality.
- Dumont could read it as the ideology of purity still organising ambition.

Modernizing

- **Srinivas** tied it to land, education, and the vote. **Dominant caste** and new income make the claim possible.
- Yogendra Singh treats it as orthogenetic modernization of tradition.
- **It can precede Westernization:** oil mill and college sit with a new gotra story.

How far

- It explains much twentieth-century caste change. It does not explain Dalit conversion, reservation politics, or class that Beteille split from caste in Sripuram.

Flow diagram

Sanskritization -> Copy higher ritual
Sanskritization -> New land vote money
Copy higher ritual -> Caste continues
New land vote money -> Caste continues

Conclusion

Sanskritization is a traditionalizing path to modern resources. It modernises caste as a competitive identity and traditionalises society by refusing exit from hierarchy.

Facts & figures

Srinivas

Defined Sanskritization from field view, especially Rampura and Coorg.

Orthogenetic change

Singh's term for change from inside tradition, which Sanskritization exemplifies.

Dominant caste

Local power that often supplies the model or the resources to copy one.

Ambedkar contrast

Annihilation, not a better rung, is the opposite strategy.

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