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Q7(a)

Bring out the impact of the declining significance of the agrarian economy.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · 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

- Bring out the impact of the declining significance of the agrarian economy
- On class, migration, family, and politics

Revision summary

Agriculture employs many and contributes less surplus.

Youth and labour leave; the village becomes a reserve.

Rich peasants diversify; smallholders squeeze.

Family and gender adapt through remittance and women's field work.

Politics defends farm identity while the economy urbanises.

Introduction

Agriculture's falling share of GDP, with still-large employment, means a declining significance of the agrarian economy as surplus and status. Impact is a squeezed village, a migrant labour force, and farmer politics of price rather than a peasant civilisation.

Body**Economic and class impact**

- Youth seek non-farm work. The village is a labour reserve, which Desai's class map now stretches to the city.
- Rich peasants diversify into trade and education. Smallholders face a cost-price squeeze after the Green Revolution's uneven gift.
- Land remains honour, as Srinivas's dominant caste still shows, even when it is not the main national surplus.

Social impact

- **Circular migration** and slums are the household form of agrarian decline.
- Family fission and delayed marriage follow remittance, yet Seed and Earth can survive the empty field.
- Women's farm work may rise as men leave, without title.

Political impact

- Farmer movements demand the state market. Landless politics is weaker.

- Food remains politically sacred; the economy has moved on.

Flow diagram

Agrarian GDP share down -> Migration informal
Agrarian GDP share down -> Smallholder squeeze
Agrarian GDP share down -> Price politics
Land as honour -> Price politics

Conclusion

- **Declining agrarian significance produces a hybrid India:** farm as identity and fallback, city as wage. The impact is transformation of rural class, not the end of the village.

Facts & figures

GDP-employment gap

The statistical sign of declining agrarian economic significance.

Circular migration

The household impact that links field and slum.

Farmer price movements

The political form of a commercial but squeezed agriculture.

Dominant caste land

Status that outlasts agriculture's national economic weight.

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