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Q2(b)

Discuss Yogendra singh's thesis on Modernization of Indian Tradition. And evaluate its applicability in the present day context

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · Sociology GS 2 · 20 marks · Impact of colonial rule on Indian society

Impact of colonial rule on Indian society: Social background of Indian nationalism; Modernization of Indian tradition; Protests and movements during the colonial period; Social reforms.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss Yogendra Singh's thesis on **Modernization of Indian Tradition**. And evaluate its applicability in the present day context
- Treat as a 20-mark answer

Revision summary

Singh sees Indian tradition as modernising from inside and through contact.

Orthogenetic and heterogenetic sources produce recombination, not replacement.

Present work, media, and law beside endogamy still fit the map.

Desai, Beteille, and **Ambedkar** show class, disharmony, and Dalit rupture.

Use the thesis as culture theory, not as complete political economy.

Introduction

Yogendra Singh argued that Indian tradition modernises rather than dies. Orthogenetic change from within the civilisation and heterogenetic change from Islam, the West, and the modern state recombine. The thesis still maps much cultural life. It is weaker as a full account of class, caste annihilation, and majoritarian politics today.

Body

The thesis

- Tradition is a structure of values and roles, not a frozen past. Modernisation is differentiation of law, science, and office, plus new universalistic norms.
- Orthogenetic sources include **Sanskritization**, bhakti, and reform samajs. Heterogenetic sources include colonial law, Christianity, Islam, and industrial work.
- **Little and great traditions** interact. The village does not simply become the West.
- Caste associations, a secular Constitution, and a new middle class are illustrations of recombination.

Applicability now

- IT work, malls, and English still sit beside arranged endogamy and ritual, which fits recombination better than a decline-of-religion story.

- Television piety, yoga markets, and temple trusts show sacred forms using modern organisation.
- M. N. Srinivas's **Sanskritization** still travels as a mobility idiom inside tradition.

Limits in the present

- **A. R. Desai's path-of-development critique:** land, capital, and the state are not only cultural codes.
- **Andre Beteille's disharmony:** equality is a public creed while hierarchy continues; synthesis language can soften that clash.
- Ambedkarite and Adivasi politics treat parts of 'tradition' as domination, not as a resource to modernise.
- Communal polarisation and digital rumour are not gentle recombination. They are organised conflict over who owns the nation.

Verdict

- Use the thesis for family, ritual, and institutional mixing.
- Do not use it as a lullaby that India always synthesises.

Flow diagram

Singh modernisation of tradition -> Orthogenetic
 Singh modernisation of tradition -> Heterogenetic
 Orthogenetic -> Recombination
 Heterogenetic -> Recombination
 Class caste conflict -> Limit of thesis

Conclusion

Singh's modernisation of Indian tradition remains a strong cultural map of recombination. Present-day applicability holds for work, media, and law beside kinship. It thins where class, annihilation of caste, and majoritarian conflict organise the field.

Facts & figures

Modernization of Indian Tradition

Singh's book that frames cultural change as recombination of old and new.

Orthogenetic / heterogenetic

Change from within the civilisation versus change through Islam, the West, and the state.

Little and great traditions

Village and textual cultures interact rather than one killing the other.

Sanskritization

Srinivas's process that Singh can read as orthogenetic mobility inside caste.

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