

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q5(c)

Give an account of the problems relating to the "creamy layer".

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · 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

- Give an account of the problems relating to the "creamy layer"
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Creamy layer is the relatively well-off slice inside a reserved category.

It was meant to stop quota capture by the already mobile.

Measurement of income and assets is crude and contested.

The phrase is also a political weapon against reservation.

Class split inside caste is real; it does not end caste.

Introduction

Creamy layer names the better-off slice inside a reserved backward class that can capture quotas meant for the more excluded. The problem is both justice inside the group and the political use of the phrase to attack reservation itself.

Body**What the idea does**

- The Supreme Court's **Indra Sawhney** line treated creamy layer as a filter for OBCs, so reservation would not become a hereditary office for the already mobile.
- **It assumes class can be measured inside caste:** income, farm size, and parental posts.

Problems of justice

- A small OBC or Dalit middle class may monopolise seats while landless kin remain outside colleges, which A. R. Desai's class eye would predict.
- Cut-offs and certificates are blunt. Rural assets hide; urban salaries show.
- **Sub-quota** and caste census debates arise because creamy layer does not by itself rank the most backward jatis.

Problems of politics

- The phrase is used to say reservation has 'done its job', which ignores continuing endogamy and atrocity.
- **Andre Beteille's disharmony remains:** a creamy-layer officer still faces ranked honour in marriage.

- Excluding the creamy layer without expanding quality education can simply return seats to historically forward groups.

Usable account

- Creamy layer is a real **intra-group class** split. It is not proof that caste has ended.

Flow diagram

Creamy layer -> Quota capture
Creamy layer -> Measurement disputes
Creamy layer -> Political attack on reservation
Caste persists -> Creamy layer

Conclusion

The creamy-layer problem is capture of quota by the mobile few, crude measurement, and bad-faith use against reservation. An account that keeps class inside caste is sociological. An account that treats caste as finished is not.

Facts & figures

Indra Sawhney

Judgment that accepted OBC reservation and a creamy-layer filter.

Intra-group class

Mobile professionals versus landless labour inside the same OBC list.

Sub-quota

A further device when creamy-layer exclusion still leaves dominant OBCs ahead.

Beteille

Status humiliation can survive a class rise, so creamy layer is not full equality.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/sociology-gs-2/2017/give-an-account-of-the-problems-relating-to-the-creamy-layer/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com