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Q8(b)

What, according to you are the two fundamental axes of social discrimination in Indian society ? Are they changing ?

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

- What, according to you, are the two fundamental axes of social discrimination in Indian society? Are they changing?
- Treat as a 20-mark answer

Revision summary

Caste and gender are the two fundamental discrimination axes in India.

Caste grades touch, marriage, and work; gender grades property and the body.

Law and politics have changed their public legitimacy.

Endogamy, atrocity, unpaid care, and violence persist.

Class, faith, and tribe matter, often through these two axes.

Introduction

The two fundamental axes of social discrimination in India are caste, including its untouchability pole, and gender as organised by kinship. Class, religion, and tribe cut across them. They are changing in form more than they are ending as structures.

Body

Axis one: caste

- Graded inequality, endogamy, and disability, as **Ambedkar** and G. S. Ghurye's feature lists both underline in different ways.
- M. N. Srinivas showed local dominance can outweigh ritual rank, yet labour and marriage still discriminate.
- **Change:** law, vote, and a reserved middle class. Persistence: atrocity, segregated work, and marriage ads.

Axis two: gender

- Seed and Earth, property, and honour make women a discriminated sex-class inside every caste.
- Public violence and unpaid care are the everyday form.
- **Change:** schooling, law, and some office. Persistence: sex ratio, domestic violence, and proxy politics.

Why these two are fundamental

- They organise who may marry, inherit, and be touched, which class alone does not explain.
- Religion and ethnicity matter, as do Adivasi land losses. They often work through caste-like ranking and gendered honour.

Are they changing?

- **Andre Beteille's disharmonic structure:** equality is the official axis, discrimination the practical one.
- **Yogendra Singh:** recombination, not disappearance.
- **A. R. Desai:** class change without a full end to ascriptive labour.
- Urban anonymity and markets muddle everyday rank; they do not dissolve the two axes.

Interaction

- **Dalit women show the intersection:** two axes at once, not an average of both.

Flow diagram

Caste endogamy labour -> Discrimination
Gender property honour -> Discrimination
Law vote school -> Change of form
Discrimination -> Change of form

Conclusion

Caste and gender are the two fundamental axes of Indian discrimination because they structure intimacy, labour, and honour. They are changing: more public equality, more identity politics, more law. They are not finished: endogamy and patriarchy still sort life chances.

Facts & figures

Ambedkar

Caste as graded inequality reproduced by endogamy.

Leela Dube

Gender discrimination as kinship ideology, not a side topic.

Beteille

Disharmony: official equality with ranked practice.

Intersection

Dalit women's labour and violence show both axes together.