

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

Q1(a)

Write a critique of the structural and functional perspective used by M.N. Srinivas in the understanding of Indian society

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

- Write a critique of the structural and functional perspective used by M.N. Srinivas in the understanding of Indian society
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Srinivas studied India as an observed village structure, not a book of sacred rules.

Function explained how custom held groups together.

Desai's class reading and Beteille's disharmony expose the harmony bias.

The village monograph cannot stand for mill, city, and tribe.

Keep the field tools; refuse the closed-system claim.

Introduction

M. N. Srinivas's structural-functional view mapped Indian society as a living village system of caste, kinship, and faction. The critique is not that the field view was useless. It is that harmony language, village closure, and a weak class eye limited what the method could see.

Body**What the perspective did**

- Structure was the observed network of groups and statuses, not a varna chart. Function was what a custom did for order, as in **Rampura** festivals that tied patrons and clients.
- Dominant caste and **Sanskritization** put mobility inside the system, so change did not have to mean collapse.
- The method corrected G. S. Ghurye's book view with interaction.

Limits of function and harmony

- **A. R. Desai** argued that landlord, tenant, and labourer are class relations. Treating them as functions of village solidarity hides surplus extraction.
- **Andre Beteille's Sripuram kept structure but named disharmony:** equality as a public value beside ranked caste and class.
- **Sanskritization** explains ritual climbing. It does not explain annihilation of caste as **Ambedkar** demanded.

Village as the whole

- **Rampura** is a powerful case, not India. Town, mill, plantation, and tribe sit outside that frame.
- Women and Dalit labour were often under-seen when the informant was a headman.

Use after critique

- Keep field method, dominant caste, and **Sanskritization** as tools.
- Add class, gender, and extra-village power.

Flow diagram

Srinivas structure function -> Rampura field view
Rampura field view -> Dominant caste Sanskritization
Desai class -> Critique
Beteille disharmony -> Critique
Critique -> Srinivas structure function

Conclusion

Srinivas's structural functionalism is strongest as a field correction to Indology. It is weakest when Indian society is reduced to a self-balancing village. Critique means adding class, disharmony, and the Constitution, not throwing **Rampura** away.

Facts & figures

Rampura

Mysore village that supplied Srinivas's field view of caste, faction, and dominant caste.

Sanskritization

A jati copies a locally higher style and claims rank without leaving caste.

A. R. Desai

Marxist critic who read village harmony as a mask over agrarian class.

Sripuram

Beteille's Tanjore study that split caste, class, and power against a single functional whole.