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Q6(b)

Has Green Revolution led to the formation of new power elite in rural India? Elaborate your answer.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2018 · Sociology GS 2 · 15 marks · Rural and Agrarian transformation in India

Rural and Agrarian transformation in India: Programmes of rural development, Community Development Programme, cooperatives, poverty alleviation schemes; Green revolution and social change; Changing modes of production in Indian agriculture; Problems of rural labour, bondage, migration.

Core demand of the question

- Has Green Revolution led to the formation of a new power elite in rural India? Elaborate your answer
- Keep to a 15-mark length

Revision summary

Irrigated HYV regions grew a commercial rich-peasant elite.

Dominant caste and machines fused into rural power.

Neo-farmers' unions are this elite's politics.

Rainfed and landless India were not included.

Elite formation is regional, not all-India.

Introduction

Yes, with regional limits. The Green Revolution formed a commercially armed rich-peasant elite in irrigated belts. It did not create the same elite in rainfed and tribal India. The new power is input capital, surplus grain, and unions, often riding **dominant caste**.

Body

What the new elite is

- Farmers who own or control irrigated land, machines, and market links, hiring labour rather than only family hands.
- **They overlap with M. N. Srinivas's dominant caste:** Jats, Yadavs in some tracts, Okkaligas, and similar peasant groups.
- **A. R. Desai** read them as the class that incomplete land reform strengthened.

How Green Revolution produced them

- HYV seed, fertiliser, credit, and procurement in Punjab, Haryana, and western UP turned surplus into political voice.
- Tractor and tube well are status as well as tools.
- Neo-farmers' movements are this elite in the street, demanding MSP and power subsidy.

Limits of the claim

- Eastern and dryland India did not get the same package; labour-export villages did not grow this elite.
- Landless Dalits and women did not join the elite; they joined the hired gang.
- Urban traders, politicians, and agribusiness now share power, so the village elite is not closed.

Swaminathan's later diagnosis

- The Commission treated this commercial farmer as both a food producer to secure and a distressed debtor, which shows elite and squeeze can coexist.

Flow diagram

Green Revolution inputs MSP -> Rich peasant elite
Dominant caste land -> Rich peasant elite
Rich peasant elite -> Neo-farmers unions
Rainfed tribal -> No same elite

Conclusion

- **The Green Revolution did form a new rural power elite in surplus belts:** a machine-and-market peasantry on a dominant-caste base. It did not nationalise that elite. Rural power elsewhere still runs on older landlords, mines, or out-migration.

Facts & figures

Punjab-Haryana-western UP

Core geography of the new agrarian elite.

Dominant caste

Srinivas's local power that Green Revolution capital thickened.

A. R. Desai

Incomplete reform plus commercial farming as a class outcome.

MSP / unions

Political instruments of the new elite.