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Q8(b)

Western patriarchy which surrenders feminine principles is the development project in India. Do you agree with this view? Why?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2018 · Sociology GS 2 · 15 marks · Systems of Kinship in India

Systems of Kinship in India: Lineage and descent in India; Types of kinship systems; Family and marriage in India; Household dimensions of the family; Patriarchy, entitlements and sexual division of labour.

Core demand of the question

- Western patriarchy which surrenders feminine principles is the development project in India. Do you agree with this view? Why?
- Keep to a 15-mark length

Revision summary

Dams, mines, and productivist farming have been masculinist and often Western-technocratic.

That part of the view is fair.

Indian kinship patriarchy predates and partners that project.

Class and caste cannot be reduced to lost feminine principles.

Remedy is rights, care, and ecology, not a romance of the pre-colonial.

Introduction

The view is partly right as a critique of a certain development model, and too simple as a full sociology of India. Large dams, mines, and Green Revolution packages did privilege control, extraction, and male property. India also has its own Seed-and-Earth patriarchy that did not wait for the West.

Body**Where I agree**

- Colonial and Nehruvian high modernism treated nature and village as resources to command, a masculine engineer ethic.
- **Displacement in Narmada-type projects drowned feminine-coded commons:** grove, water, seed diversity.
- Formal jobs and the 1991 office often copied a Western male breadwinner while dumping care on women.
- Ecofeminist readings of Chipko and similar struggles name this well.

Where I disagree or qualify

- Leela Dube's **Seed and Earth** is an Indian kinship patriarchy, not a Western import.
- Champaran peasants fought a colonial planter; the gender order of the peasant household was still local.
- **A. R. Desai's** class path explains surplus and the state without reducing all of it to 'the West'.

- Dalit and Adivasi women face caste and tribal patriarchies that a single 'Western feminine principle' misses.
- Women's movements, Me Too in 2018, and girl-education schemes are also modern, not a return to a lost goddess order.

My position

- Agree that development has been patriarchal and often Western-technocratic.
- Do not agree that surrendering 'feminine principles' is the whole project, or that the remedy is a romantic pre-colonial feminine.

Flow diagram

Development project -> Masculinist extraction
Western technocracy -> Masculinist extraction
Indian Seed Earth -> Masculinist extraction
Ecofeminist critique -> Masculinist extraction
Caste class -> Qualify the view

Conclusion

- **I partly agree:** India's development project has often been a masculinist, Western-styled conquest of land and care. I do not agree that indigenous patriarchy is innocent, or that feminine principle language can replace class, caste, and constitutional equality as the full critique.

Facts & figures

Narmada

Development as drowning of commons, a core illustration for the critique.

Seed and Earth

Indigenous patriarchy that the 'Western-only' thesis underplays.

Chipko-type struggles

Women's ecology politics used to support the feminine-principle reading.

A. R. Desai

Class-state development path that is patriarchal without being only 'Western culture'.

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