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Q5(e)

Discuss the role of technology in agrarian change in India

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 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

- Discuss the role of technology in agrarian change in India
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Green Revolution technology raised yields and a commercial farmer class.

Labour became more hired and mobile.

Gains were regional and caste-land skewed.

Later machines and seeds continue differentiation.

Technology changes the farm; it does not by itself calm rural unrest.

Introduction

Agrarian technology in India has changed who grows what, who hires whom, and who captures surplus. The **Green Revolution** is the classic case; machines, seeds, and phones now extend that story.

Body**Green Revolution package**

- HYV seeds, fertiliser, irrigation, and later tractors raised yields in Punjab, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh.
- A rich-peasant class thickened; labour became more hired and seasonal, recasting Thorner's malik-kisan-mazdoor map.
- Dominant castes with land rode the technology; dryland and Adivasi tracts were left as another agrarian India.

Later technologies

- Tube wells, GM and hybrid seeds, and market apps change risk and information, but debt and procurement politics remain social facts.
- Mechanisation cuts some labour demand and feeds **circular migration**, which COVID reverse flows then revealed in reverse.

Sociological role

- Technology is not a neutral tool. It is a class and region sorter inside planned development.

- Unrest over prices and farm laws shows that technology without secure bargaining still leaves the countryside tense.

Flow diagram

HYV irrigation machines -> Yield surplus
Yield surplus -> Rich peasant mechanisation
Yield surplus -> Hired migrant labour
Irrigated vs dryland -> Uneven agrarian change

Conclusion

Technology's role in Indian agrarian change has been to raise surplus and differentiate classes and regions. It transformed the farm without equalising the village.

Facts & figures

Green Revolution

Seed-fertiliser-irrigation package that recast agrarian class in irrigated belts.

Tractor capital

Mechanisation that reduced some labour even as output rose.

Tube well

Groundwater technology that individualised irrigation and ecological risk.

Circular migration

Labour response to mechanised and seasonal farm demand.