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Q7(c)

Is social democracy a precondition for political democracy ? Comment

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 marks · Politics and Society

Politics and Society: Nation, democracy and citizenship; Political parties, pressure groups, social and political elite; Regionalism and decentralization of politics; Secularization.

Core demand of the question

- Is social democracy a precondition for political democracy? Comment
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Ambedkar tied political democracy to social democracy as fraternity and equal dignity.

India adopted the vote before destroying caste and class unfreedom.

The republic works in that contradiction, with recurring violence and exclusion.

The vote should build social equality, not wait for it.

Without social democracy, majority rule can become graded domination.

Introduction

B. R. **Ambedkar** argued that political democracy-votes and offices-cannot last if social life remains a hierarchy of caste and class. Social democracy is that missing equality of dignity and livelihood. The comment is: yes, as a condition of durability, not as a delay of the vote.

Body

The Ambedkarite claim

- One person, one vote, in a village of untouchability is a contradiction, which Beteille later named disharmonic.
- Fraternity is the social content of the republic; without it, majority rule can become caste or communal domination.

Comment

- India began political democracy before social equality, so the precondition was not met in sequence. The republic still functions, but with riots, atrocity, and elite capture.
- Social democracy here means annihilation of caste disabilities, labour rights, and gender equality, not a party label.
- **Shah Bano**-type contests show that personal-law community can be used against women's equal citizenship; political democracy then speaks in two voices.
- Without social democracy, reverse migration and slum exclusion show citizens who vote and still walk home without rights.

Caution

- Waiting for social equality before elections would freeze unfreedom. The vote is a tool to build social democracy, not a prize after it.

Flow diagram

Political democracy vote -> Disharmonic republic

Social democracy dignity livelihood -> Durable democracy

Caste gender class -> Disharmonic republic

Conclusion

Social democracy is a precondition for a stable and truthful political democracy. India has the second while still building the first. That gap is the republic's central sociological fact.

Facts & figures

Ambedkar

Political democracy without social democracy is a house on sand.

Disharmonic structure

Beteille's name for equal votes beside unequal honour.

PoA and rights law

Attempts to legislate social democracy after the franchise.

Shah Bano

Showed how community identity can stall women's equal civil standing inside a democracy.

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