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Q1(b)

What does Dr. B. R. Ambedkar mean by the concept of "Annihilation of caste" ?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · 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

- What does Dr. B. R. Ambedkar mean by the concept of "Annihilation of caste"?
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Ambedkar's annihilation is destruction of birth-based graded inequality.

Temple and dining reform are not enough if scripture still ranks people.

Intermarriage, equal law, education and power are the means.

Sanskritization is mobility inside caste, not annihilation.

Village harmony without equality is not his goal.

Introduction

Annihilation of caste, for B. R. Ambedkar, is not a plea to be kinder inside the ladder. It is the destruction of the religious and social system that grades human beings as high and low by birth.

Body

What must be destroyed

- Caste is a graded inequality, not a mere division of labour. Endogamy, untouchability, and the denial of knowledge hold it up.
- Reform of dining and temple entry is too thin if the shastras still sacralise rank.
- Hindu society, in his 1936 address, cannot be a nation while caste splits morality itself.

What annihilation requires

- Intermarriage and a common moral law, not only a common census label.
- Education, legal rights, and political power for the depressed classes so they are not clients of patrons.
- A turn from birth-dharma to liberty, equality, and fraternity as public creed.

Contrast

- Sanskritization climbs the ladder. Annihilation pulls the ladder down.
- Gandhi's village harmony and Ghurye's Hindu whole were, for Ambedkar, not the same as freedom.

Flow diagram

Graded inequality -> Annihilation
Annihilation -> Law education intermarriage
Sanskritization -> Climb the ladder
Annihilation -> Remove the ladder

Conclusion

Annihilation of caste means ending the sacred hierarchy and the social practices that reproduce it. It is a programme of law, mixing, and equal dignity, not a call to polish caste into a gentler custom.

Facts & figures

Annihilation of Caste

1936 undelivered address that treated caste as a religious social order to be destroyed.

Graded inequality

Each layer has someone below it, so the system recruits its own defenders.

Endogamy

Marriage rule that, for **Ambedkar**, is the mechanism that keeps caste alive.

Poona Pact context

Political representation was necessary but not the same as social annihilation.

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