

UPSCprep Free Daily Answer Writing Initiative

Subject: Sociology

Questions

Q1. “Village in India is not merely a spatial unit, but it is a miniature Indian society in miniature”. In light of this statement, discuss the idea of the ‘Indian Village’. (10 Marks)

Q2. “Caste is not a form of stratification, but a special form of inequality and hierarchy is the central tenet of this system.” Examine Louis Dumont’s notion of caste in light of this statement. (20 Marks)

Model Structures

Q1. “Village in India is not merely a spatial unit, but it is a miniature Indian society in miniature”. In light of this statement, discuss the idea of the ‘Indian Village’. (10 Marks)

Introduction

- Reference to Indian villages is found in many Indian texts since Vedic times, but during British rule, a systematic attempt was made to create the unique image of an Indian village.

Main Body

- Charles Metcalf treated the Indian Village community as an autonomous sociological isolate. He treated the village community as a little republic, a self-sufficient community.
- The idea of colonial administrators about Indian villages was of an inner world with communal ownership of land, social harmony, patriarchal governance and being surrounded by hostile other villages.
- Indian villages were described as closed, isolated systems and unchanging entities.

- The orientalist (Book view) described the Indian village as an Idyllic social reality with a Varna system of caste hierarchy and complete functional integration between different occupational groups (castes).
- The stereotypical image of the Indian village as a self-sufficient community was contested by Anthropological studies in the 1950s and 1960s. The findings of these village studies based on extensive fieldwork concluded that the Indian village was never self-sufficient; rather it always maintained links with the larger society and centres of Indian civilization.

Migration and movement for work and trade, village exogamy, administrative linkages, inter-regional markets, inter-village economic ties, caste networks, fairs, festivals and other activities always served as the bridge with neighbouring villages and the larger society.

- Scholars like M N Srinivas (Indian Villages), Mckim Marriott (Village India), D N Majumdar (Rural profiles), S C Dube (shamirpet) etc carried out field study. M N Srinivas advocated that Indian Villages were always a part of a wider entity and maintained social, political, economic ties at the regional level.
- S C Dube argued that social differentiation was observed in village structure and hence they do not have a monolithic structure .

Conclusion

- Though some feminist like Uma Chakravarty criticized village study for not including gender angle, field view of village study reflected empirical reality in contrast to ideological category propounded by colonial administrators and orientalists.

Q2. “Caste is not a form of stratification, but a special form of inequality and hierarchy is the central tenet of this system.” Examine Louis Dumont’s notion of caste in light of this statement. (20 Marks)

Introduction

- Louis Dumont in 'Homo Hierarchicus' Caste system and its implications formulated theory on caste system.

Main Body

- In his seminal work he argues that ideology/values are basic principles of social organization. Also, he stated that traditional values are fundamentally different from modern values.
- Traditional values like collectivism and hierarchy are different from modern values like individualism and equality.
- According to him hierarchy present in society leads to religious ranking
- And these hierarchies are ritual hierarchy and are considered as purest type of hierarchy
- Further hierarchy is based on division of society based on purity and pollution. This division further results in separateness, and division of labour.
- Some occupations were considered as pure and were reserved for upper castes on the other hand polluted occupations are restricted to lower castes.
- **Criticism:**
 - **Biased Views:** His concept was largely derived from the classical Hindu texts which were produced by the upper caste Brahmins. His views are proponents of the views of the upper caste.
 - **Faulty Rank System:** He established a definite rank of individual caste groups on an all-India basis. But practically these ranks were the result of Stereotype. The actual status of a particular caste differs according to local rules of pollution. The notion of 'who pollutes and when it pollutes' are highly variable from region to region.
 - His view has been criticised as a deterministic view of caste as per Andre Beteille. According to Beteille, the caste system is dynamic and continually changing.
 - Further his theory has been criticized as a Brahmanical view of the caste system. Few scholars considered his work an ideal theory.
 - According to Mckim Marriott ritual hierarchy is indirectly influenced by political and economic hierarchy. Hence his theory is away from empirical reality.

Conclusion

- But in spite of all these criticisms his theory has enriched the village study and caste system in India. Later researchers have used his theory in studying the Indian caste system.

A promotional banner for a sociology course. The background is a vibrant purple and blue gradient with abstract geometric patterns and icons of people. The word 'Sociology' is written in a stylized font in the top left. The main title 'SOCIOLOGY COMPREHENSIVE COURSE' is in large, bold, white letters. Below it, 'With Mentorship' is written in a smaller, italicized font. A white rounded rectangle contains the text 'Including Test Series'. In the bottom left, it says 'Access for 3 years'.

Sociology

SOCIOLOGY COMPREHENSIVE COURSE

With Mentorship

Including Test Series

Access for 3 years

Course Link: [JOIN NOW](#)