

Answer the following questions based on the above passage:

- 1) What does the author mean by “positive privilege”? How is it acquired? [5 marks]

Positive privilege is related to a) ownership of profitable property [1 mark] and b) access to higher education [1 mark] and other means of upward mobility such as technical skills [1 mark]. The latter [technical skills, education] can be acquired only when individuals/groups have the social capital and the potential/right to access the required institutions [2 marks].

- 2) Who, according to the passage, can become a labour contractor? What do you think is the social and economic profile of the labour contractor? [5 marks]

According to the passage, only those who are powerful in the rural economy can become labour contractors. In other words, the economic occupation of the contractor is directly connected to the social and political power in the area [2 marks]. The typical profile of the local labour contractor is – middle or upper caste, well-connected with local political power, belonging to the ruling party, having significant clout [3 marks].

- 3) How, according to the author, do contractors recruit workers? What is the implication of this system? [5 marks]

Local labour contractors recruit based on caste and kinship ties [2 marks]. So they pick up young men from their own caste and extended clans. Work in the economic sphere is mediated by non-economic factors such as caste and familial ties. Jobs opportunities are directly tied to the non-economic, rather than to skill, merit etc.

- 4) What is the analytical framework (Marxist, Weberian or Durkheimian) used by the author in the above passage? What tools of sociological analysis have been used? Identify and elaborate. [15 marks]

The author has used the Weberian framework [2 marks].

Why? The author is arguing that the “middle class” is characterised NOT JUST by purely economic factors. In other words, the middle class is not just a function of ownership of means of production and social relations of production. So, the author is NOT using the Marxist framework [3 marks].

How and why Weberian framework?

The author says that the following plays a role in class formation:

- a) Status/privilege: Only those with access to higher education and technical skills have ‘positive privilege’. This, given the Indian social conditions, is not a purely economic phenomenon. While money can help with access to education and skills, it is by no means a SUFFICIENT condition [5 marks].*
- b) Caste and kinship ties: Caste and blood/family related ties play a big role in class formation. Labour contractors use these ties to recruit. Therefore, class formation is connected to social/ethnic ties [5 marks].*