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Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

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Q1(d)

Horticulture.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Anthropology GS 1 · 10 marks · Economic Organization

3. Economic Organization: Meaning, scope and relevance of economic anthropology; Formalist and Substantivist debate; Principles governing production, distribution and exchange (reciprocity, redistribution and market), in communities, subsisting on hunting and gathering, fishing, swiddening, pastoralism, horticulture, and agriculture; globalization and indigenous economic systems.

Core demand of the question

- Write a note on Horticulture
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Horticulture uses hand tools and fallow, not the plough as the main engine.

Swidden and mixed gardens are typical.

Trobriand yam gardens show kinship claiming produce.

Boserup tied intensification to population pressure.

It is a skilled ecology, not a failed agriculture.

Introduction

Horticulture is small-plot plant cultivation with hand tools, often with fallow. It sits between foraging and plough agriculture.

Body**Features**

- Digging stick, hoe, and axe matter more than the plough and draught animal.
- **Swidden** or slash-and-burn, as in **Northeastern India** and **Melanesia**, uses ash, then long fallow.
- Gardens mix tubers, banana, and pulses. Surplus is modest. Land is often lineage-held, as **Malinowski** showed in Trobriand yam gardens.

Contrast

- **Esther Boserup** treated intensification as a response to population, not a one-way ladder.
- **Sahlins** placed horticulturalists in a domestic mode of production, with kinship claiming the harvest.
- It is not 'primitive farming'. It is a skilled ecology of soil rest and plot rotation.

Flow diagram

Horticulture -> Hoe stick fallow

Horticulture -> Kin tenure

Horticulture -> Swidden jhum

Conclusion

Horticulture is hoe-and-fallow cultivation inside kin tenure. Trobriand yams and Naga jhum are type cases, not failed ploughing.

Facts & figures

Malinowski

Coral Gardens and Their Magic tied Trobriand yams to rank, magic, and kinship.

Boserup

The Conditions of Agricultural Growth reversed the Malthusian order: technique follows population.

Jhum

Northeast Indian swidden under clan control, often misread as mere forest damage.

Sahlins

Domestic mode of production: household labour and kin claims, not wage farms.

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