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Q1(b)

Sacred complex as a dimension of Indian civilization

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Anthropology GS 2 · 10 marks · Evolution of the Indian Culture and Civilization

1.1 Evolution of the Indian Culture and Civilization-Prehistoric (Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Neolithic-Chalcolithic), Protohistoric (Indus Civilization). Pre-Harappan, Harappan and post-Harappan cultures. Contributions of the tribal cultures to Indian civilization.

Core demand of the question

- Write a note on sacred complex as a dimension of **Indian civilization**
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Vidyarthi's sacred complex is geography, specialists, and performances at a tirtha.

Gaya is the type study of sraddha and pilgrimage.

It operationalises **little and great tradition** at a Hindu centre.

Bose's civilisational unity is visible in shared shrine maps.

The model is a dimension of **Indian civilisation**, not only temple architecture.

Introduction

The sacred complex is **L. P. Vidyarthi**'s model of a Hindu pilgrimage centre as a living unit of **Indian civilisation**. It joins place, specialist, and performance.

Body**The three strands**

- **Sacred geography** is the temple, river, tank, and route, as at **Gaya**, Vidyarthi's type site.
- **Sacred specialists** are pandas, priests, and service jatis who live by the shrine.
- **Sacred performances** are pilgrimage, sraddha, and festival that move villagers into a civilisational centre.

Civilisation, not only a temple

- **McKim Marriott** and **Robert Redfield** supplied **little and great tradition**. Vidyarthi showed how a tirtha knits them.
- **N. K. Bose** saw Indian unity as a civilisational web. The sacred complex is one knot in that web.
- Local jati and tribal clients use the same **Gaya** or Kashi map, so the complex is a dimension of the whole, not a city hobby.

Flow diagram

Vidyarthi -> Sacred geography

Vidyarthi -> Specialists

Vidyarthi -> Performances

Conclusion

- **Sacred complex names how Indian civilisation is practised at a tirtha:** geography, specialists, and rites that pull little traditions upward.

Facts & figures

L. P. Vidyarthi

Formulated the sacred complex from fieldwork at Gaya.

Gaya

Pilgrimage town of sraddha where the three strands were first mapped together.

Little and great tradition

Redfield-Marriott pair that Vidyarthi made concrete at the tirtha.

N. K. Bose

Read Indian unity as a civilisational network of which sacred centres are nodes.

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