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Q8(b)

Critically examine the role of NGOs and missionaries in transformation of scheduled tribes in Central India

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Anthropology GS 2 · 15 marks · Problems of exploitation and deprivation of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. Constitutional safeguards for Scheduled Tribes and...

7.1 Problems of exploitation and deprivation of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. Constitutional safeguards for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes.

Core demand of the question

- Critically examine the role of NGOs and missionaries in transformation of scheduled tribes in Central India
- Keep the answer to a 15-mark length of about 200 words

Revision summary

Missions schooled a Central Indian ST layer and changed rite and marriage.

Elwin and Ghurye criticised cultural loss and national split.

NGOs now file FRA and health; some become new brokers.

Transformation is uneven beside mining displacement.

Panchsheel remains the test of whether genius and land survive.

Introduction

NGOs and missionaries have been schoolmasters, healers, and political brokers in Central Indian tribal belts. Transformation through them is literacy and a new split of faith and faction.

Body

Missionaries

- Mission schools in Chotanagpur and neighbouring Gond-Bhil country produced clerks and a Christian ST middle class.
- **Elwin** feared cultural loss; **Ghurye** feared a nation split. Both named a real transformation of marriage, drink, and festival.
- Missions also documented language and opposed some bonded labour, a reform role.

NGOs

- Post-1980 NGOs run FRA files, health, and sometimes anti-mine legal aid in **Fifth Schedule** Jharkhand, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh.
- They can strengthen the gram sabha or replace it as a new patron, the interference charge of 2015 still alive.

Critical balance

- **Transformation is partial:** a schooled layer, converted hamlets, and a majority still on the mine's edge.
- **Vidyarthi's** cosmos may be translated into church or NGO project, not always destroyed.
- **The fair test remains** Panchsheel: own genius and land, not the donor's log-frame.

Flow diagram

Missions -> School new faith
NGOs -> FRA health
Transformation -> Split layer vs land loss

Conclusion

Missionaries and NGOs transformed Central Indian STs through school, creed, and paralegal help. They also created new dependence. Land law, not the mission compound, must remain the core of change.

Facts & figures

Chotanagpur missions

Historic school-and-church transformation among Munda, Oraon, and neighbours.

Verrier Elwin

Protectionist critic of rapid missionary cultural replacement.

G. S. Ghurye

National-integration critic of missionary separatism.

FRA paralegals

NGO role that the state sometimes files as interference.

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