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Q8(c)

Describe how anthropological knowledge and methods are useful in rural development

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Anthropology GS 2 · 15 marks · Role of anthropology in tribal and rural development.

9.2 Role of anthropology in tribal and rural development.

Core demand of the question

- Describe how anthropological knowledge and methods are useful in rural development
- Keep the answer to a 15-mark length of about 200 words

Revision summary

Village studies tell rural development who holds land and the panchayat.

Methods are long field, calendars, and networks, not only questionnaires.

FRA and PESA need that method in tribal rural belts.

Karve, Srinivas, Dube, and Vidyarthi are the teaching toolkit.

The use is to stop schemes from feeding only the dominant caste.

Introduction

Rural development fails when it meets a paper village. Anthropology supplies the real village: caste, faction, gender, and forest. That knowledge is a method, not a decoration.

Body

Knowledge that matters

- **Srinivas** and **Dube** show who will capture a well, a panchayat, or a self-help group.
- **Vidyarthi** shows why a grove is not wasteland. **Elwin** shows why jhum is not laziness.
- Kinship from **Karve** tells who actually shares a loan.

Methods

- Participant observation, seasonal calendars, and network maps beat a one-day baseline survey.
- Participatory rural appraisal, used carefully, is anthropology in a project hat.
- Impact assessment for mines and dams in **Fifth Schedule** areas is the same method with legal teeth via **PESA** and **FRA**.

Use

- Targeting, language of extension, and women's groups all improve when jati and clan are seen.
- **Anthropology also warns:** development can be Sanskritisation of the poor or displacement with a clinic.
- **Nehru's Panchsheel** is the tribal special case of the same rural ethic.

Flow diagram

Village ethnography -> Rural development
Field methods -> Rural development
Rural development -> Who captures the well

Conclusion

Anthropological knowledge and methods make rural development fit the social system it claims to lift. Without them the scheme feeds the already dominant.

Facts & figures

S. C. Dube

Shamirpet as a lesson that planned change meets caste and faction.

M. N. Srinivas

Dominant caste as the first filter of any rural scheme.

PESA and FRA

Laws that require community knowledge, not only engineer maps.

Nehru Panchsheel

Rural-tribal ethic that anthropological method tries to operationalise.

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