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Q5(a)

The role that regionalism plays in demand for autonomy among Indian tribes

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Anthropology GS 2 · 10 marks · The concept of ethnicity

7.3 The concept of ethnicity; Ethnic conflicts and political developments; Unrest among tribal communities; Regionalism and demand for autonomy; Pseudo-tribalism. Social change among the tribes during colonial and post-Independent India.

Core demand of the question

- Write a note on the role that regionalism plays in demand for autonomy among Indian tribes
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Tribal regionalism is homeland loyalty used as a political claim.

North-Eastern movements sought councils and states; Jharkhand fused tribe and region.

Sixth and Fifth Schedules can house that demand.

Armed exit is the failed form of the same energy.

Haimendorf and Elwin already treated tribes as regional polities.

Introduction

Regionalism among Indian tribes is loyalty to a hill, plateau, or language homeland. It turns cultural difference into a demand for autonomy inside, or sometimes against, the Union.

Body

How it works

- Naga, Mizo, and other North-Eastern movements used region as a people and a map, later housed in states and **Sixth Schedule** councils.
- Jharkhand and similar Central Indian demands fused tribe, language, and mining grievance into a state claim.
- **Elwin** and **Haimendorf** had already described these as political societies, not stray castes.

Autonomy, not only secession

- Hill councils, inner lines, and **Fifth Schedule** reports are regionalism as a constitutional share.
- When region fuses with armed exit, the same energy becomes a security file.
- Regionalism is therefore the political language of tribal autonomy, for better or worse.

Flow diagram

Tribal regionalism -> Autonomy councils states

Tribal regionalism -> Secession risk

Sixth Schedule -> Autonomy councils states

Conclusion

Tribal regionalism drives autonomy demands by naming a homeland. The republic answers with states and schedules when it listens, and with force when it does not.

Facts & figures

Sixth Schedule

Autonomous councils that convert tribal region into government.

Jharkhand movement

Central Indian regional-tribal demand that became a state.

Naga hills

Type case of tribal regionalism as a national question.

Fifth Schedule

Weaker territorial house for Central Indian tribal regions.

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