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Q2(a)

Write about the contribution made by Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf to tribal anthropology in India

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Anthropology GS 2 · 20 marks · Emergence, growth and development of Anthropology in India

4. Emergence, growth and development of Anthropology in India-Contributions of the 18th, 19th and early 20th Century scholar-administrators. Contributions of Indian anthropologists to tribal and caste studies.

Core demand of the question

- Write about the contribution made by Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf to tribal anthropology in India
- Keep the answer to a 20-mark length of about 250 words

Revision summary

Haimendorf wrote major ethnographies of Nagas, Chenchus, and Gonds.

He treated tribes as political and legal societies, not racial leftovers.

Forest and land loss were his applied theme, near Elwin and Panchsheel.

Ghurye's assimilation was the foil to that caution.

The archive remains a backbone of Paper II tribal anthropology.

Introduction

Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf built a field archive of Indian tribes from the Naga hills to Hyderabad Agency. He joined ethnography with a practical worry about land and forest.

Body**Monographs and regions**

- Naga work recorded village republics, morung, and feud in the North-East before they were only a security file.
- **Chenchu** hunting life in Andhra became a type study of Indian foragers.
- **Gonds of Adilabad** and other Deccan groups showed shifting cultivation, clan, and the shock of new administration.

Themes of contribution

- He treated tribes as political societies with law, not as **Risley** types.
- Like **Elwin**, he warned that forest reservation and money-lenders destroy the base of those societies.
- He wrote for administrators as well as universities, a Hyderabad and later SOAS habit that fed applied anthropology.

Relation to Indian debates

- Against **Ghurye's** fast assimilation, his detailed custom argued for time and protection, closer to **Nehru's Panchsheel**.
- He did not invent the **Fifth Schedule**, but his Agency ethnography shows why land law must be special.
- Later critics note a romantic eye. The contribution still stands as unmatched regional coverage.

Flow diagram

Haimendorf -> Naga polities
Haimendorf -> Chenchu foragers
Haimendorf -> Gond Deccan
Haimendorf -> Protection ethic

Conclusion

Haimendorf contributed comparative tribal ethnography and a land-forest ethic. Indian tribal anthropology still walks his Naga, **Chenchu**, and Gond paths.

Facts & figures

Naga ethnography

Village, morung, and customary law recorded as a political system.

Chenchu

Classic Indian hunter-gatherer monograph from the Deccan forests.

Gonds of Adilabad

Study of Deccan tribal agrarian and clan life under expanding state.

Verrier Elwin

Fellow protectionist; together they fed the post-Independence tribal ethic.

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