

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q4(a)

Discuss the contributions of N. K. Bose in understanding tribal communities and their place in Indian civilization

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · Anthropology GS 2 · 20 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

- Discuss **N. K. Bose's** views on tribal communities and **Indian civilization**
- Keep the answer to a 20-mark length of about 250 words

Revision summary

Bose placed tribes inside **Indian civilisation**, not outside it.

The Hindu method absorbs them as ranked occupational groups.

Festival and local gods mark ritual entry without deleting the group.

Elwin's protection thesis is the usual contrast.

Schedule law exists because absorption did not equalise land and dignity.

Introduction

N. K. Bose placed Indian tribes inside **Indian civilisation**, not outside it as a separate race world. His **Hindu method of tribal absorption** is the teaching core, and it needs a rights critique.

Body

Civilisation as a sponge

- Bose argued that Hindu society absorbs tribes by giving them a caste-like occupation, a festival share, and a rank on the village ladder.
- **Absorption is economic and ritual:** a hill group becomes a specialised jati supplying bamboo, salt, or labour, then takes Hindu gods in a local form.
- He contrasted this with a Western melting-pot. India keeps groups as groups, ranked, which is why tribe becomes caste rather than disappearing.

Against isolation as destiny

- Where **Verrier Elwin** stressed protection and a national park of culture, Bose stressed long contact, trade, and civilisational pull.
- **G. S. Ghurye's** backward Hindus thesis is a harsher cousin. Bose is closer to a civilisational process than to a racial insult.

- **Surajit Sinha's** continuum and **Bailey's** political gradient operationalise the same intuition in the field.

Critical appraisal

- The model explains Sanskritisation of many central Indian communities and the thin wall between some ST and neighbouring jatis.
- It underplays conquest, forest reservation, and land alienation. Absorption can be a polite word for dispossession.
- **Fifth Schedule**, **PESA**, and **FRA** exist because absorption did not deliver equal civilisation. They defend a tribal pole Bose tended to see as temporary.
- Bose remains essential for Paper II as the civilisation thesis. Policy must add Elwin's caution and **Ambedkar's** equality.

Flow diagram

Tribal community -> Hindu method absorption
Hindu method absorption -> Occupation festival rank
Elwin protection -> Tribal community
Bose -> Hindu method absorption

Conclusion

Bose read tribes as communities being drawn into **Hindu civilisation** by occupation and rite. The process is historically real. It is not a sufficient ethics for land and forest rights.

Facts & figures

Hindu method of tribal absorption

Bose's phrase for drawing tribes into caste society through occupation and rite.

N. K. Bose

Anthropologist who treated **Indian civilisation** as a grouping of groups, including tribes in process.

Verrier Elwin

The protectionist counter-voice who feared that contact meant cultural death.

Surajit Sinha

Developed tribe-caste continuum language that field-tests Bose's civilisational slope.