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Q6(a)

Discuss the impact of the Forest Rights Act (2006) on the livelihood and culture of tribal people in India

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · Anthropology GS 2 · 20 marks · Developmental projects and their impact on tribal displacement and problems of rehabilitation. Development of forest policy and tribals. Impact of...

6.3 Developmental projects and their impact on tribal displacement and problems of rehabilitation. Development of forest policy and tribals. Impact of urbanisation and industrialisation on tribal populations.

Core demand of the question

- Examine the impact of the **Forest Rights Act, 2006**, on tribal livelihood and culture
- Keep the answer to a 20-mark length of about 250 words

Revision summary

FRA 2006 recognises individual and community forest rights.

Livelihood gains when **nistar** and minor forest produce are legal.

Culture gains when groves sit under community title.

Weak **gram sabha** and rejected community claims blunt the Act.

Mining after a thin FRA process repeats dispossession.

Introduction

The **Forest Rights Act, 2006**, titles individual and community forest rights that colonial reservation had turned into trespass. Impact on livelihood and culture is real where claims are settled, and thin where the file stalls.

Body

Livelihood

- Individual titles can secure a plot for cultivation and house, reducing eviction as encroachment.
- **Community forest resource** rights can restore graze, **nistar**, and minor forest produce as a legal livelihood, not a concession.
- **PESA gram sabha** is meant to verify claims. Where it works, the contractor and the forest guard lose a silent veto.
- Delay, incomplete maps, and rejection of community claims leave many households still as alleged encroachers. Livelihood then stays wage and distress migration.

Culture

- The Act can house **Vidyarthi's** nature-man-spirit ethic by protecting sacred groves and seasonal use as community right.

- Title in one name can also privatise a clan grove, which is a cultural cost if the **gram sabha** is weak.
- Ritual hunt and brew rules still meet wildlife and excise law. FRA is land-and-forest tenure, not a full custom code.

Wider field

- Mining and linear projects still acquire forest after FRA process. Poor consultation repeats the old dispossession in a new form.
- **Comparison with N. K. Bose's absorption:** FRA is a statutory refusal to treat forest tribes as only a caste-in-waiting without land.

Balance

- Culture survives when community rights are actually granted. Livelihood improves when produce markets and credit follow title, which often they do not.

Flow diagram

FRA 2006 -> Individual title
FRA 2006 -> Community forest right
Community forest right -> Livelihood nistar MFP
Community forest right -> Grove culture
Delay mining -> FRA 2006

Conclusion

FRA 2006 can legalise tribal forest livelihood and protect grove culture. Impact tracks implementation: individual patches without community rights yield a thin, privatised forest citizen.

Facts & figures

FRA 2006

Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act.

Community forest resource

Collective right to protect and use a customary forest, the cultural core of the Act.

Gram sabha

Forum that should verify claims; the hinge of livelihood delivery.

Nistar

Customary household use of forest produce that reservation had criminalised.