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Q7(c)

Discuss the interventions made by the Non-Governmental Organizations for empowering tribal women

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · Anthropology GS 2 · 15 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 NGO interventions in empowering tribal women
- Keep the answer to a 15-mark length of about 200 words

Revision summary

NGOs use SHGs, literacy, health, and legal aid among tribal women.

Political empowerment means gram sabha and panchayat voice, not only crafts.

Witch-hunt and trafficking work names gendered violence.

Projects can end, indebt, or be captured by men.

State school, clinic, and forest title remain the durable base.

Introduction

NGO interventions among tribal women are organised efforts outside the line department to raise voice, income, and bodily security. They can empower, and they can also become a parallel patronage.

Body

Typical work

- Self-help groups, micro-credit, and forest-produce cooperatives put cash in women's hands, which weakens a purely male broker.
- Literacy, legal aid, and health camps address the same gaps that keep ST girls out of school.
- Campaigns on **witch accusation**, trafficking, and domestic violence name harms that custom and police both missed.

Empowerment test

- Empowerment is decision over land, vote, and body, not only a sewing machine.
- NGOs that train women for **PESA** gram sabhas and reserved panchayat chairs hit the political structure **Bailey** called a prize game.
- Church and missionary women's groups in the North-East historically combined literacy with a new public, a mixed empowerment.

Limits

- Donor projects end. SHGs can become debt. Men may capture the group account.
- Some NGOs speak a national gender script that ignores clan land rules. Others romanticise custom and leave girls unschooled.
- The state still owns school, clinic, and **FRA** title. NGOs fill gaps; they cannot replace **Articles 15 and 16** public duty.

Flow diagram

NGO -> SHG credit health
NGO -> Panchayat legal literacy
Panchayat legal literacy -> Voice land body
Donor capture -> NGO

Conclusion

NGOs empower tribal women when they add income, law, and a seat in the gram sabha. They fail when the group is a short project or a new broker. Public systems remain the lasting floor.

Facts & figures

Self-help group

Women's savings-credit cell, the most common NGO vehicle in tribal blocks.

PESA gram sabha

Forum where trained women can contest land and forest decisions.

Witch accusation

Gendered violence in some tribal tracts that NGOs and activists have documented.

Article 15

Allows special provision for women; NGOs often operationalise what the clause permits.