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Q8(c)

Identify the causes of tribal unrest with special reference to North-East India

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · Anthropology GS 2 · 15 marks · Palaeo-Anthropological evidences from India with special reference to Siwaliks and Narmada basin (Ramapithecus, Sivapithecus and Narmada Man).

1.2 Palaeo-Anthropological evidences from India with special reference to Siwaliks and Narmada basin (Ramapithecus, Sivapithecus and Narmada Man).

Core demand of the question

- Analyse the causes of tribal unrest with special reference to North-East India
- Keep the answer to a 15-mark length of about 200 words

Revision summary

Unrest follows land loss, migration, and recognition gaps.

North-East cases add treaty memory and hill autonomy claims.

Sixth Schedule and ILP are institutional bargains over settlement and rule.

AFSPA has been a legal fact in notified areas and a source of alienation there.

Accords treat the conflict as a federal place, not a single crime wave.

Introduction

Tribal unrest is organised protest or armed conflict when land, identity, and rule are felt as stolen. In North-East India the causes are historical sovereignty claims plus the same development shocks seen elsewhere, inside a sensitive border region.

Body

Shared tribal causes

- Land alienation, forest reservation, and mines break **Vidyarathi's** nature-man-spirit base and **Roy's** customary title.
- In-migration and job competition produce sons-of-the-soil politics.
- Recognition gaps—who is ST, whose language counts—feed the politics of deprivation.

North-East specifics

- Many hill societies entered the Union with treaties, inner lines, and a memory of not being a caste village of the plains.
- **Sixth Schedule** councils house some autonomy. Groups left out demand the same or a state.
- **Inner Line Permit** regimes try to control settlement. Leakage and exception keep the grievance alive.
- National security law, including **AFSPA** where it has been in force, is a documented fact of militarised everyday life. It is a cause of alienation in affected districts, not a slogan about the

whole region.

- Naga political talks, and other accords, show unrest as a bargain over federal place, not only as crime.

Caution

- The North-East is many states and many tribes. One unrest story is a teaching error.
- Christianity, student unions, and ethnic media shape mobilisation without being the root land cause.

Flow diagram

Land identity -> Unrest

Sixth Schedule ILP -> Autonomy bargain

Migration mines -> Unrest

AFSPA in notified areas -> Alienation fact

Conclusion

Tribal unrest joins land loss to a demand for recognised rule. In the North-East that demand is territorial and federal, through **Sixth Schedule**, ILP, and political talks, under a border-security state that has used extraordinary law in named areas.

Facts & figures

Sixth Schedule

Constitutional autonomous councils in listed North-East areas.

Inner Line Permit

Colonial-origin control on entry and settlement in some hill states.

Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)

Extraordinary armed-forces law applied in notified disturbed areas; a documented civilian grievance where used.

Naga talks

Long political process over Naga federal place, the type case of unrest as negotiation.