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Q7(b)

Discuss the issues and solutions related to the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribe populations in India

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · Anthropology GS 2 · 15 marks · Caste system in India

3.2 Caste system in India-Structure and characteristics, Varna and caste, Theories of origin of caste system, Dominant caste, Caste mobility, Future of caste system, Jajmani system. Tribe-caste continuum.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss the issues and solutions related to the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribe populations in India
- Keep the answer to a 15-mark length of about 200 words

Revision summary

SCs face untouchability, atrocity, and landless labour.

STs face alienation, forest loss, and mining.

Article 17 and the Atrocities Act are SC-centred legal tools.

PESA and FRA are ST-centred resource tools.

Reservation is shared; it does not replace either legal file.

Introduction

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes share constitutional lists and reservation, but their issues are not the same. Caste humiliation and tribal resource loss are the two cores.

Body

Scheduled Caste issues

- Untouchability, atrocity, and labour bondage persist despite **Article 17** and the **Prevention of Atrocities Act**.
- Landlessness and farm wage work, not forest title, dominate many SC livelihoods.
- **Ambedkar's** graded inequality still describes intra-Hindu rank that reservation alone does not erase.

Scheduled Tribe issues

- Land alienation, forest eviction, and mining in **Fifth Schedule** areas.
- Language and boarding schools that strip **Austroasiatic** and other mother tongues.
- Displacement and weak **ITDP** capture, as **Xaxa** recorded.

Shared and distinct solutions

- **Shared:** reservation in legislature, services, and schools; legal aid; targeted hostels.
- **SC-specific:** atrocity prosecution, land to the landless, enforcement against manual scavenging.

- **ST-specific: PESA, 1996, FRA, 2006**, Governor's regulations, and Gram Sabha consent, as at **Niyamgiri**.
- **Political:** SC movements use Ambedkarite law and conversion. ST movements use council, hill, and forest rights.

Caution

- Clubbing SC and ST in one welfare sentence hides the forest-versus-jati difference. Solutions must split.

Flow diagram

Scheduled Caste -> Atrocity landless labour
Scheduled Tribe -> Land forest PESA FRA
Reservation -> Scheduled Caste
Reservation -> Scheduled Tribe

Conclusion

SC issues centre on caste violence and landless labour. ST issues centre on land, forest, and autonomy. Lists and reservation are shared tools; PESA and FRA are not.

Facts & figures

Article 17

Abolishes untouchability; a core SC constitutional remedy.

PoA Act

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act against caste and tribal violence.

FRA 2006

Forest rights for ST and other traditional forest dwellers, not a general SC land reform.

Ambedkar

Analysed caste as graded inequality and built the constitutional reservation path.