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Q7(a)

Discuss the views of G. S. Ghurye and Verrier Elwin on the approach towards tribal populations. What are the policies of the Government of India towards Indian tribal populations?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · Anthropology GS 2 · 20 marks · Emergence, growth and development of Anthropology in India

4. Emergence, growth and development of Anthropology in India-Contributions of the 18th, 19th and early 20th Century scholar-administrators. Contributions of Indian anthropologists to tribal and caste studies.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss the views of **G. S. Ghurye** and **Verrier Elwin** on the approach towards tribal populations. What are the policies of the Government of India towards Indian tribal populations?
- Keep the answer to a 20-mark length of about 250 words

Revision summary

Ghurye treated tribes as backward Hindus and favoured assimilation.

Elwin favoured protection of land, language, and custom, with limited isolation.

Nehru's Panchsheel and the Schedules adopted integration, not either pole alone.

ITDP, PESA, and FRA are the programme face of that middle path.

Mining and leakage still undercut the protective half.

Introduction

- **G. S. Ghurye and Verrier Elwin named the two poles of tribal policy:** assimilation into Hindu society and protection of a distinct tribal world. The Union later wrote a middle path of integration.

Body

Ghurye

- In **The Aborigines - So-Called - and Their Future**, **G. S. Ghurye** treated tribes as backward Hindus. Isolation, he said, was a missionary and anthropologist romance.
- **The approach is assimilation:** roads, Hindu social reform, and an end to a separate museum people.
- He feared **Elwin's** protection as a freeze that served the outsider expert more than the Adivasi.

Elwin

- **Verrier Elwin** argued for a measure of isolation and for protecting land, language, and shifting cultivation from diku and contractor.
- National Parks of the tribal kind, and later a gentler integration, were his policy words. Baiga and NEFA notes are the cases.
- He influenced **Nehru's** thinking more than Ghurye did, even after Elwin entered state service.

Government of India policies

- **Constitutional:** **Articles 342, 244, Fifth and Sixth Schedules**, reservation, and the **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes**.
- **Nehruvian Tribal Panchsheel:** no imposition, respect for land and culture, develop through their own institutions, simple administration, and judgement by quality of human life.
- **Programmes:** Tribal Sub-Plan, **ITDPs/ITDAs**, **PESA, 1996**, **FRA, 2006**, and special schemes for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.
- Practice mixes Ghurye's schools and markets with Elwin's protective law. Mining and dams often betray both.

Limit

- Policy on paper is integration. Policy on the ground is still extraction plus welfare offices.

Flow diagram

Ghurye assimilation -> Backward Hindus
Elwin protection -> Land culture isolate
GOI integration integration -> Schedule PESA FRA ITDP

Conclusion

Ghurye wanted assimilation as Hindus. Elwin wanted protection of a tribal world. Official India chose integration through Schedule, PESA, FRA, and Sub-Plan, and still leaks that choice in the mine belt.

Facts & figures

G. S. Ghurye

Sociologist who rejected isolation and called many tribes backward Hindus.

Verrier Elwin

Anthropologist-administrator who argued for protection of tribal land and culture, especially in central India and NEFA.

Tribal Panchsheel

Nehru's five principles of non-imposition and development through tribal institutions.

PESA 1996

Statutory self-rule device in **Fifth Schedule** areas, closer to Elwin's institutional respect than to blunt assimilation.

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