

**WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com**

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

**ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com**

Q5(c)

## **Agricultural practices of the Apatani**

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · Anthropology GS 2 · 10 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**

- Describe Apatani wet-rice and associated practices in the **Ziro valley**
- Show how irrigation, millet, fish, pine and ritual form one system
- Note ecological reputation and current pressures

### **Revision summary**

Apatani of Ziro practise bunded wet-rice with fish, millet on bunds, and bamboo-pine agroforestry.

Irrigation and water-sharing are community institutions.

**Haimendorf** contrasted this intensification with neighbouring shifting cultivation.

Ziro is often cited as agricultural heritage; roads and migration now press the labour system.

It is skilled tribal farming, not a primitive leftover.

### **Introduction**

The **Apatani** of the **Ziro** valley in Lower Subansiri, Arunachal Pradesh, practise a famous **wet-rice** agriculture on terraces without large draught animals. The system joins water, millet, fish, bamboo and pine in a tightly worked valley, which is why anthropologists treat it as a classic Himalayan intensive ecology.

### **Body**

#### **The agricultural system**

Apatani fields are **bunded wet paddies** fed by channels from streams. Households transplant rice and often raise **fish** in the same water. **Finger millet** and other dry crops occupy bunds and kitchen gardens. **Bamboo groves** and **pine** (*Pinus wallichiana* plantations in community woods) supply fuel, timber and leaf litter that returns to fields. Irrigation is a **community** duty: channels and weirs are repaired together, and water-sharing is a village political fact.

**Haimendorf**'s ethnography of the Apatani described this intensification next to neighbouring Nyishi and Hill Miri shifting cultivation. The contrast is the point: one plateau valley supports dense settlement through water control; surrounding hills used jhum. Ritual (**myoko** and other cycles), clan land, and bulyang or village authority historically regulated labour and conflict over water.

## Significance and change

The FAO has discussed Ziro as **Globally Important Agricultural Heritage**. That praise can freeze a living system. Roads, wet-rice commercialisation, tourism, and youth out-migration alter labour. Wetland conversion and climate irregularity stress channels. The Apatani remain a Scheduled Tribe of Arunachal; Inner Line and land custom still restrict outsider purchase, which has protected the valley more than many plains tribal tracts.

Agriculture here is **not** primitive. It is **skilled intensification**, the opposite of the old PTG stereotype.

## Flow diagram

Stream channels -> Wet rice

Wet rice -> Fish on field

Bamboo pine millet -> Wet rice

Village water law -> Stream channels

## Conclusion

Apatani agriculture is wet-rice with fish, millet, bamboo and pine, organised by village water law in Ziro. It shows tribal intensification, not backwardness. Tourism and labour change are the present tests of the system.

## Facts & figures

### Ziro valley

Lower Subansiri, Arunachal Pradesh; core Apatani wet-rice landscape.

### Haimendorf

Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf's ethnography documented Apatani agriculture and society.