

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(a)

B.K. Roy Burman's concept of 'Buffer Zone'

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

- State **B. K. Roy Burman**'s buffer zone concept
- Show what it was meant to do between tribal habitat and industrial or forest pressure
- Note later uses and limits

Revision summary

Roy Burman proposed a buffer between tribal habitat and full industrial or fortress-forest pressure.

The core should keep customary land and livelihood; the margin should regulate contact.

Wildlife core-buffer maps are a cousin, but must not evict the village from the core.

Without FRA and PESA rights the buffer is only delay.

The idea continues Elwin's caution against sudden assimilation.

Introduction

B. K. Roy Burman used **buffer zone** for a belt of land and livelihood that should stand between a tribal habitat and the full force of mines, plantations, highways and reserved-forest fortress conservation. It is a development-anthropology idea, not only a wildlife map.

Body**The idea**

Roy Burman, a leading applied anthropologist of tribal India, argued that isolated or PVTG-like communities need a **protected ecological and social margin**. Inside the core, customary land, shifting cultivation or foraging, and ritual geography should continue. Around it, a buffer of mixed use - regulated minor forest produce, limited roads, no heavy industry - would absorb contact. Outside, the ordinary market and state could operate.

The concept sits with **Elwin**'s protective philosophy and against a sudden **Ghurye**-style assimilation. It also sits with later **national park** language (core-buffer-transition), which Roy Burman did not want to become an excuse to evict people from the core. For him the tribal village is the core to be buffered, not a trespasser in a tiger reserve.

Use and criticism

Planners used buffer talk for North-Eastern and Andaman contact policy and for industrial belts in Jharkhand and Odisha. In practice, buffers were often **drawn on paper after a lease was granted**, or they became a police line. **Xaxa** and mining ethnography show that a buffer without **PESA, FRA and Samata** title is only a delay of alienation. Wildlife buffers can criminalise tendu and grazing. Roy Burman's point remains: **contact must be paced and spatially organised**, or vulnerability becomes dispossession.

Flow diagram

Tribal habitat core -> Buffer mixed use
Buffer mixed use -> Industry and market
PESA FRA title -> Tribal habitat core

Conclusion

- **Roy Burman's buffer zone is a spatial ethic of tribal development:** a living core, a regulated margin, and a delayed industrial front. Without rights in the core, the buffer is only a map.

Facts & figures

B. K. Roy Burman

Applied anthropologist of Indian tribes; wrote on development, identity and spatial protection of vulnerable groups.

Core-buffer

A planning geometry later common in tiger reserves; Roy Burman wanted it to protect people, not only fauna.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. ·

<https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/anthropology-gs-2/2024/b-k-roy-burmans-concept-of-buffer-zone/> ·

ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com