

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

Q7(c)

Critically evaluate the concept of Nation-State and describe its impact on indigenous societies

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · Anthropology GS 2 · 15 marks · Social change and contemporary tribal societies

7.2 Social change and contemporary tribal societies: Impact of modern democratic institutions, development programmes and welfare measures on tribals and weaker sections.

Core demand of the question

- Define the nation-state
- Show how the Indian Union approximates and differs from the European ideal type
- **Describe impacts on indigenous societies:** list, border, school, army, market
- Keep Fifth/**Sixth Schedule** and ILO ideas in view

Revision summary

- **Nation-state:** one people, territory, law and citizenship; indigenous life is clan, grove and seasonal land.

India is a Union with asymmetric clauses, not a pure nation-state, but still centralising in school, army and mine.

- **Impacts:** borders, legal monopoly, standard language, development-security, market.

FRA, PESA, 371 and **Sixth Schedule** are domestic tools of coexistence.

India has not ratified ILO 169; consultation remains the unkept promise.

Introduction

A **nation-state** claims one people, one territory, one law, one citizenship. **Indigenous societies** were historically organised by clan, village and seasonal territory, not by that monopoly. Independent India is a **constitutional Union of states**, not a textbook France, but it still presses indigenous life into a single map.

Body

The concept

In European political theory (and in **Weber's** monopoly of legitimate force) the nation-state replaces empire and tribe. **Benedict Anderson's** imagined community is its cultural form. **Indigenous** here means Adivasi and similar peoples with prior occupancy and a distinct public - the sense used in **UNDRIP** and, cautiously, in Indian scholarship even though India officially prefers "**Scheduled Tribe**" to "indigenous people" in some UN forums.

Indian impact

- **Cartographic:** Inner and international borders cut Naga, Mizo, Khasi and pastoral worlds. **Inner Line** is a colonial tool reused by the nation-state.

- **Legal monopoly:** Customary courts survive only as the Constitution allows (371A, **Sixth Schedule**, tribal customs in personal law). **Samata** and **Niyamgiri** are indigenous wins inside that monopoly.
- **School and language:** The nation teaches a standard language and history. Mother-tongue policy is the concession.
- **Development and army:** Dams, mines, and AFSPA-bearing regions make the state felt as road and rifle. **Elwin** already feared this in NEFA.
- **Market:** Forest becomes timber and carbon; labour becomes circular migration.
- **Positive impacts exist: universal franchise**, ST reservation, **FRA** as a national statute that recognises community title, **Panchsheel** as official ethic. The nation-state can protect a small people against a local king or a company - when it chooses.

Critique

Xaxa and indigenous theorists say the nation-state **sees like a list**. It cannot easily see a people who live across two districts or two countries. **ILO 169** (not ratified by India) would demand consultation as a right. India uses **PESA** and **FRA** as domestic analogues.

The remedy inside the Union is **asymmetric federalism** (371, **Sixth Schedule**, tribal majority states) plus **Gram Sabha consent**, not a romantic exit from citizenship. Citizenship without land is a hollow nation for the indigenous household.

Flow diagram

Nation-state -> One law one map
 Indigenous society -> Clan grove season
 Nation-state -> 371 Sixth FRA PESA
 371 Sixth FRA PESA -> Indigenous society

Conclusion

The nation-state wants one law and one map. Indian indigenous societies meet it as list, school, border and project. **Asymmetric federalism**, FRA and PESA are the working compromise; they fail when the map is drawn before the grove is asked.

Facts & figures

UNDRIP 2007

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; India engages it while using ST as the domestic legal category.

ILO Convention 169

Requires consultation of indigenous peoples on land and projects; India has not ratified it.

Asymmetric federalism

Articles 371 and the **Sixth Schedule** allow different rules for different regions inside one Union.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/anthropology-gs-2/2025/critically-evaluate-the-concept-of-nation-state-and-describe-its-impact-on-indigenous-societies/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com

WRAP Exams