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Q10

Given the diversities among the tribal communities in India, in which specific contexts should they be considered as a single category?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · GS I · 10 marks · Indian Society and Diversity

Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.

Core demand of the question

- Given the diversities among the tribal communities in India, in which specific contexts should they be considered as a single category?
- Name legal and political contexts, and state when the single label would be wrong
- Keep the explanation within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Tribes differ in tongue, faith, and farming across India.

They are one category in the ST list, Schedules, reservations, and forest-displacement law.

The shared fact is a relation to land, custom, and the settler-contractor state.

Culture and livelihood need specific names, not a single folklore.

Hold the legal umbrella and the ethnographic many together.

Introduction

Indian tribes differ in language, faith, farming, and kingship, from the north-east to the Andaman. They should be treated as one category only where the Constitution, the forest, and the settler state place them in the same relation of vulnerability.

Body

Contexts for a single category

- The Scheduled Tribe list, reservations, and the **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes** treat diverse groups as one legal class for political representation and jobs.
- Fifth and **Sixth Schedule** areas, governors' powers, and autonomous councils address a shared problem of land, custom, and non-tribal settlement, even when Naga and Bhil histories differ.
- Forest rights, displacement by dams and mines, and the **Forest Rights Act, 2006**, meet a common pattern of state property versus community use.
- **Census**, tribal sub-plan finance, and anti-atrocities protection need a workable administrative umbrella, or the smallest groups vanish from the file.
- In opposition to the diku trader, contractor, and policeman, many communities already speak of a shared adivasi condition.

Where the single category fails

- Language families, shifting versus plough agriculture, and world religions among tribes make one culture claim false.
- North-eastern treaty politics, island Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, and central-Indian peasant tribes do not share one demand list.
- Elite capture inside a pan-tribal party can hide gender and jati-like rank among some groups.

How to use both truths

- Use the single category for rights against dispossession and for affirmative action; use specific names for language, health, and local government design.

Flow diagram

Diverse tribes -> ST list Schedules FRA
 Diverse tribes -> Languages livelihoods faiths
 ST list Schedules FRA -> One legal category
 Languages livelihoods faiths -> Many peoples
 One legal category -> Rights against diku state
 Many peoples -> Local design

Conclusion

Tribes are one category in law, forest, and anti-dispossession politics because the modern state met them as a single frontier. They are many peoples in culture and livelihood, and policy must hold both facts at once.

Facts & figures

Scheduled Tribes

Constitutional list that creates one administrative category from many peoples.

Fifth and Sixth Schedules

Special area arrangements for tribal majority and customary zones.

Forest Rights Act, 2006

Law that recognises community and individual forest rights after colonial and later enclosures.

PVTGs

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, a sub-class that shows diversity even inside the ST list.

Birsa Munda / Santhal hul

Central-Indian struggles that named a shared agrarian-forest wound without erasing tribal names.