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Q8(c)

Why have we started using another category of tribes called the Particularly Vulnerable Groups (PVTGs) Why are they so called ?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 marks · Perspectives on the study of Indian society

Perspectives on the study of Indian society: Indology (G.S. Ghurye); Structural functionalism (M.N. Srinivas); Marxist sociology (A.R. Desai).

Core demand of the question

- Why have we started using another category of tribes called the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)? Why are they so called?
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

PVTG is a finer category inside Scheduled Tribes.

It was needed because larger ST groups hid tiny communities in collapse.

They are called particularly vulnerable for population, food, isolation, and livelihood risk.

The label should mean protection, not a primitive stamp.

Assimilation or mining without consent is the practical danger.

Introduction

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups are a policy category inside the Scheduled Tribes. India started using it because a general ST list hid communities on the edge of demographic and livelihood collapse. They are so called because vulnerability is extreme relative to other tribes, not because they are 'primitive' as a colonial insult.

Body

Why another category

- ST as a whole includes numerically strong and politically organised groups. Micro-communities with tiny populations were losing land, language, and food at another speed.
- Dhebar and later expert lists, and then the **PVTG** label, marked those who needed a finer tool than ordinary tribal development.
- G. S. Ghurye's assimilation path would have dissolved them into a Hindu or generic tribal mass. The category is a refusal of that disappearance.

Why 'particularly vulnerable'

- Pre-agricultural or precarious foraging and shifting systems, or a collapsed resource base after forests were reserved.
- Stagnant or declining population, low literacy, and high malnutrition relative to neighbouring STs.
- Geographic isolation and weak access to PESA-style councils that larger tribes can capture.

- Contact that brought debt, liquor, and disease faster than it brought rights.

Sociological caution

- The name can freeze people as relics. The need is land, health, and consent, not a zoo of culture.
- Elwin's protection without a veto on mining still fails them.

Flow diagram

Scheduled Tribes umbrella -> Hides micro collapse

PVTG category category -> Land health isolation

Hides micro collapse -> PVTG category

Assimilation Ghurye -> Risk of disappearance

Conclusion

PVTGs exist as a category because the ST umbrella was too coarse. They are so called because demography, livelihood, and isolation make them more exposed than other tribes. The label should trigger protection of land and numbers, not a romance of backwardness.

Facts & figures

PVTG

Government category for the most vulnerable tribal communities inside the ST list.

Dhebar lineage

Earlier expert identification of groups needing special care, later renamed PVTG.

Ghurye contrast

Assimilation would erase micro-groups the PVTG label tries to keep visible.

Forest reservation

A state process that often broke foraging and shifting bases and produced vulnerability.

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