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Q3(a)

Examine the colonial policy of segregation of tribes under the Government of India Act, 1935.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2020 · Sociology GS 2 · 20 marks · Tribal communities in India

Tribal communities in India: Definitional problems; Geographical spread; Colonial policies and tribes; Issues of integration and autonomy.

Core demand of the question

- Examine the colonial policy of segregation of tribes under the **Government of India Act, 1935**

Revision summary

The 1935 Act created excluded and partially excluded tribal areas.

Governors ruled with special powers; ordinary politics was thinned.

Protection from plains exploitation was the official reason.

Isolation also othered tribes and delayed political voice.

Schedules after 1950 reuse the spatial exception as autonomy, unevenly.

Introduction

The **Government of India Act, 1935**, wrote tribal segregation into late colonial constitutional law through excluded and partially excluded areas. The policy claimed protection. It also prepared a people as administratively other.

Body

What 1935 did

- It classified certain hill and forest tracts as excluded or partially excluded, limiting ordinary provincial law and legislatures.
- Governors held special responsibility. The tribal subject was a ward more than a voter.
- The lineage runs from earlier Inner Line and scheduled district practices to this Act.

Official rationale

- Isolation would shield custom from plains landlords and moneylenders, a protective note Elwin could recognise.
- It also cheapened administration and kept labour and timber frontiers manageable.

Sociological effects

- Segregation defined 'tribe' as a spatial-legal type, feeding later definitional problems of ST lists.
- Ghurye attacked isolation as a bar to Hindu integration; nationalists saw a divide-and-rule map.
- Mission, market, and forest contractor still entered; segregation was never a sealed museum.

- Political voice was delayed, which later autonomy movements had to invent against both colonial and postcolonial centres.

Afterlife

- **Fifth and Sixth Schedules** inherit the spatial idea of exception, now as self-rule rather than Crown wardship.
- Discontent continues when exception is protection on paper and a mining corridor in fact.

Flow diagram

1935 excluded areas -> Wardship not full franchise
1935 excluded areas -> Claimed protection
1935 excluded areas -> Later Later ST spatial exception spatial exception
Markets mines -> 1935 excluded areas

Conclusion

The 1935 segregation policy mixed protection with political quarantine. It shaped who counts as tribal and how the republic later scheduled areas. Examination must hold both the shield against plains landlords and the denial of equal political membership.

Facts & figures

Excluded / partially excluded areas

1935 spatial categories of tribal administration.

Governor's special responsibility

Colonial wardship in place of normal provincial politics.

Ghurye critique

Isolation as a barrier to integration into Hindu society.

Fifth and Sixth Schedules

Republican heirs of exceptional tribal geography.