

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

Q4(b)

Discuss the main features of the debate between G. S. Ghurye and V. Elwin on tribal development

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · Sociology GS 2 · 20 marks · Caste System

Caste System: Perspectives (G.S. Ghurye, M.N. Srinivas, Louis Dumont, Andre Beteille); Features of caste system; Untouchability - forms and perspectives.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss the main features of the debate between G. S. Ghurye and V. Elwin on tribal development
- Cover assimilation, isolation, and the later integration path

Revision summary

Ghurye saw tribes as backward Hindus to be assimilated.

Elwin saw tribes as peoples to be protected from rapid dispossession.

Nehruvian integration tried a middle path of partnership.

Schedules, PESA and forest rights follow Elwin's caution in law.

Projects like Narmada show development as loss when land goes.

Introduction

- G. S. Ghurye and Verrier Elwin argued over what tribal development should mean: joining a Hindu civilisational whole, or protecting a distinct people from that whole. The debate still frames Schedules, mines, and schools.

Body

Ghurye's pole

- Ghurye treated many tribes as backward Hindus. Development meant Hinduisation, absorption into caste society, and an end to separatism.
- Indology supplied a long history in which tribe and caste were a continuum, not two nations.
- Isolation, for him, was a colonial museum policy that denied tribes the wider society's goods.

Elwin's pole

- Elwin defended protection, cultural respect, and a slower contact so that land, myth, and self-rule were not crushed.
- The National Park idea and a suspicion of missionaries, contractors, and Hindu reformers came from watching dispossession.
- Development without protection was, in his view, another name for loss.

How the debate was joined

- **Nehruvian Panchsheel tried an integration middle:** development as partnership, not Ghurye's assimilation and not a permanent zoo.
- Fifth and Sixth Schedules, later **PESA and the Forest Rights Act**, are legal grandchildren of **Elwin's** caution inside a Ghurye-era nation-state.
- Field sociology after Srinivas showed tribes already in markets and states; purity of isolation was itself a book-view risk.

Development on the ground

- Mines, dams, and the **Narmada**-type projects made Ghurye's 'joining' look like displacement of Adivasi land.
- A small educated tribal elite can look like successful assimilation while the majority remain a labour reserve, which Desai's class lens would stress.
- Identity politics among Adivasis refuses Hinduisation as destiny, closer to **Elwin's** peoplehood than to Ghurye's continuum.

Balanced features

- Ghurye is strong against romantic isolation and on historical contact.
- **Elwin** is strong against cultural arrogance and land theft.
- Neither fully theorised Adivasi citizenship with resources, which is the live developmental question.

Flow diagram

Ghurye assimilation Hinduisation -> Tribal development
 Elwin protection peoplehood -> Tribal development
 Nehru Panchsheel integration -> Tribal development
 Dams mines Narmada -> Displacement

Conclusion

The Ghurye-**Elwin** debate is assimilation versus protection. Indian policy named integration, then often practised dispossession. The main features remain: tribe as backward Hindu versus tribe as a people with land, and a republic still choosing between those two developments.

Facts & figures

The Scheduled Tribes

Ghurye's thesis that many tribes are backward Hindus, not a separate civilisation.

Elwin

Anthropologist-administrator who argued for protection and respect of tribal culture.

Panchsheel

Nehru's principles of tribal development without imposition.

Narmada

Dam politics that made Adivasi displacement the test of both poles.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/sociology-gs-2/2021/discuss-the-main-features-of-the-debate-between-g-s-ghurye-and-v-elwin-on-tribal-development/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com

WRAP Exams