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Q6(b)

Define ethnicity . Discuss the factors responsible for the growth of ethenic movements in India.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · Sociology GS 2 · 15 marks · Social Movements in Modern India

Social Movements in Modern India: Peasants and farmers movements; Women's movement; Backward classes and Dalit movement; Environmental movements; Ethnicity and Identity movements.

Core demand of the question

- Define **ethnicity**. Discuss the factors responsible for the growth of ethnic movements in India

Revision summary

Ethnicity is a claimed common origin and culture used for political belonging.

It is situational, not a biological race.

Displacement, language, federal incentives and jobless education feed movements.

Majoritarian culture politics produce counter-**ethnicity**.

Narmada, Jharkhand and **linguistic states** illustrate different mixes of the same factors.

Introduction

Ethnicity is a social identity built on a believed common origin, culture, language, or history, used to claim recognition and resources. Ethnic movements in India grew where the nation-state, development, and ranked society failed to feel fair.

Body**Definition**

- **Ethnicity** is not race in Ghurye's old physical sense. It is a political we-feeling that can use tribe, language, sect, or region.
- **It is situational:** the same people may stress language in one decade and religion in another.
- It differs from caste, yet in India the two can fuse, as in some Dalit and dominant-caste mobilisations.

Factors of growth

- **Uneven development and displacement:** mines, dams, and forests produced Adivasi movements, with **Narmada** as a public text of whose land is national.
- **Language and state reorganisation:** linguistic identity became a legitimate political grammar after independence.
- **Political opportunity:** federalism, reservation, and parties reward organised **ethnicity**, as **BSP** did for a Bahujan bloc that is caste-ethnic in practice.
- **Relative deprivation:** educated youth without jobs, which NEP-era schooling debates also touch, turn identity into a job claim.

- **Cultural threat:** majoritarian recasting of tradition, which Yogendra Singh's modernization thesis can describe as a political use of the great tradition, feeds minority and regional counter-ethnicity.
- **Historical memory and print:** heroes, scripts, and census categories freeze a people into a movement.

Illustration

- Naga, Mizo, Jharkhand, Gorkhaland, and Kashmiri assertions differ, yet each mixes culture with the state and the market.
- Chipko began as livelihood and ecology and could take a regional-ethnic colour of hill versus plains.

Caution

- Not every movement is secession. Many seek a state, a schedule, or a share of the budget.

Flow diagram

Ethnicity as we-feeling -> Ethnic movements
Displacement uneven growth -> Ethnic movements
Language federal rewards -> Ethnic movements
Cultural threat deprivation -> Ethnic movements

Conclusion

Ethnicity is organised peoplehood. Indian ethnic movements grew from development injury, language, federal incentives, deprivation, and cultural threat. They are a modern political form, not a tribal leftover.

Facts & figures

Ethnicity

A we-identity of believed descent and culture, activated for recognition and resources.

Narmada

Displacement struggle that fused Adivasi livelihood with a critique of national development.

Linguistic states

Post-independence reorganisation that made language a legitimate ethnic-political unit.

BSP

Electoral vehicle that organised a stigmatised identity into a claim on the state.