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Q1(c)

Elucidate the challenges of integration for tribal communities in india.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 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

- Elucidate the challenges of integration for tribal communities in India
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Ghurye's assimilation and Elwin's protection still frame the debate.

Nehruvian integration promised partnership; projects often meant loss of land.

Schedules, **PESA and the Forest Rights Act** are the legal path.

Displacement, language loss and a thin elite are the main social risks.

Integration must be citizenship with resources, not cultural wipe-out.

Introduction

Tribal integration in India is the problem of joining Adivasi communities to the republic without dissolving their land, language, and self-rule. Isolation, assimilation, and integration have all been tried; each leaves a different wound.

Body**Policy triangle**

- G. S. Ghurye leaned toward assimilation into a Hindu social world. Verrier Elwin defended protection and a slower joining.
- Nehruvian Panchsheel promised development without imposition. In practice, dams, mines, and Forest Departments often arrived first.
- The Fifth and Sixth Schedules, **PESA**, and the **Forest Rights Act** are legal tools of integration as rights, not as cultural erasure.

Concrete challenges

- Land alienation and mining displacement in Jharkhand, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh turn integration into dispossession.
- Education and jobs can mean language loss and a small tribal elite, while the majority remain on the forest fringe.
- Insurgency, stereotyping, and weak implementation of reservation and local councils split the community from the state.

Sociological reading

- Integration fails when the state treats tribe as a labour reserve for national growth.
- It works better where title, council, and school sit with the community, not only with a district office.

Flow diagram

Tribal communities -> Integration as rights
Tribal communities -> Assimilation Ghurye
Tribal communities -> Displacement mines dams
Integration as rights -> PESA FRA Schedules

Conclusion

The challenge is not whether tribes should meet the wider society. It is whether meeting happens as citizens with land and voice, or as displaced poor. Law exists; power on the ground often does not follow it.

Facts & figures

Ghurye and Elwin

Opposed poles: assimilation into the wider Hindu society versus protective isolation and gradual contact.

Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA)

1996 law that vests Gram Sabha powers in scheduled areas as a tool of self-rule.

Forest Rights Act

2006 recognition of forest dwellers' titles, still unevenly implemented.

Narmada

Dam submergence made Adivasi displacement the public face of failed integration.

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