

!!Welcome students!!

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The title of my model is the Ghurye-Elwin debate.

The outline of my model is the introduction, the Ghurye-Elwin debate, the policy of isolation, the policy of assimilation, the policy of integration, the principles underlying the constitutional provisions, summary, and references.

Learning outcome: Students will be able to understand the Ghurye-Elwin debate from the historical point of view and also understand the relevance of the Ghurye-Elwin debate in contemporary days while dealing with the tribal issues in India and lastly to deal with the current societal challenges faced by the tribal communities.

Differences have been the hallmark of Indian society. These differences emerged as the result of various long and complex historical processes. These differences have been diverse and varied depending upon cast, language, religion and region. Added to these differences during the colonial period was the tribe.

Discussion on the nature and significance of the tribe as a distinct category was at the forefront during colonial rule in India. Several scholars reflected on the nature of tribes.

Let us understand the Ghurye-Elwin debate. After India became independent formulating and implementing an appropriate policy for tribes assumed critical importance. Even before independence the nature of the policy to be adopted had become a matter of heated debate between two scholars, namely Ghurye and Elwin.

Let us understand who was Verrier Elwin? Verrier Elwin was an anthropologist, who came to India in 1927 as a missionary and later known as a sociologist and tribal activist and scholar as his works on tribal groups in India made a remarkable contribution. Some of his well-known books on tribal life are *The Baiga*, *The Aborigines*, *A Philosophy for NEFA*, *Songs of the Forest: the folk poetry of the Gonds*, *When the World Was Young: folk-tales from India's hills and forests*, *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin: an autobiography*, etc.

Let us understand who was G.S. Ghurye? Govind Sadashiv Ghurye known as GS Ghurye was a sociologist from India. Some of his well-known books such as *The Scheduled Tribes*, *The Aborigines so-called and their Future*, *Caste and Race in India*, etc.

The debate between these two scholars made a remarkable contribution in defining tribal identity and their position in society, especially during the colonial period. Their view on the tribal situation before independence, that is before or during 1943, and the focus was on three policies.

The policy of isolation.

The policy of assimilation and

The policy of integration.

Let us understand what is the policy of isolation? The debate had its genesis in Elwin's work. The book which is published in 1939 and operational in 1944. Verrier Elwin proposed the policy of isolation. He was in favour of protecting and retaining a tribal way of life by supporting the isolation policy. He was in favour of the isolation of tribal communities from mainstream society. He was of the opinion that the tribal community should not mix with others. If they get to mix with others there is the possibility that the tribal community might imitate or adopt the lifestyle of so-called others. So he was in favour of giving the opportunity to the tribal communities without harming their own identity and protecting them from exploitation and oppression. He termed his view as National Park. Because of this position, he was called a revivalist by his critics especially by a well-known sociologist called G.S. Ghurye. This approach is not accepted by society.

Let us understand the second approach that is the policy of assimilation G.S. Ghurye. G.S. Ghurye Advocated the policy of assimilation. He argued that tribes were Hindus and to put it more bluntly, Backward Hindus. He thought of them as inferior and backward because they were cut off from the large mass of the Indian population. He also identified them standing a step lower on the evolutionary ladder and in fact not being very different from other Indians. His views considered that tribes should be assimilated into larger societies so that they could be lifted out of their abject poverty and based living conditions. This view places the tribals at the lowest position in society.

Therefore we have the next policy that is the policy of integration in India. Neither of the two policies was thought. adequate in independent India by the nationalist leadership. Elwin's strategy could not work and therefore is the approach of isolation failed whereas Ghurye termed tribes as "backward Hindus" while defining the caste system structure in India. The provisions pointed to an approach that quite different from those propagated by Elwin and Ghurye.

The provisions included statutory recognition, proportional representation in the legislatures, the right to use their own language for education and other purposes, the right to profess their own faith, and the right to pursue development according to their own genius. The Constitution also empowered the state to make provisions for reservations in jobs and appointments in favour of tribal communities.

The Directive Principles of State Policy of the Constitution required that the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of society, including those of the tribals, should be promoted. Moreover, the Constitution empowered the state to bring areas inhabited by tribes under the Fifth and Sixth Scheduled for the purpose of special treatment with respect to the administration of tribal people. These constitutional provisions aimed at safeguarding, protecting, and promoting the interests of the tribal people. If one examines these provisions more carefully, one would find that the Constitution clearly adopts a policy of integration rather than of isolation or assimilation.

Prime Minister Nehru propounded the integration policy for the betterment of the tribal community based on the *Panchsheel*, the five fundamental principles underlying the constitutional provisions for tribal development in India.

The Five Principles underlying the Constitutional Provisions:

Firstly, People should develop along the lines of their own genius, and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture.

Secondly, Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected.

Thirdly, We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. We should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory.

Next, We should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through, and not in rivalry to, their own social and cultural institutions.

And lastly, We should judge results, not by statistics of the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved.

These principles have been the guidelines of tribal development more for the north-eastern region than for mainland India, where the reality has been a situation characterized more by assimilation than by integration.

The debate between Verrier Elwin and G.S. Ghurye supporting the policy of isolation and the policy of assimilation of tribes from the mainstream society is an ongoing debate, whereas the Government of India adopted the policy of integration of tribes with the mainstream society aiming at all-around development.

These are my references.

Thank you.