

ANANTAM IAS · OPTIONAL NOTES

Sociology Optional Social Structure II: Tribal Communities and Social Classes in India

Paper 2 · Unit 2

Two units that reward the same move: refuse the ready-made category, then show who made it and what it does.

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UPSC SYLLABUS

(iii) Tribal communities in India: (a) Definitional problems. (b) Geographical spread. (c) Colonial policies and tribes. (d) Issues of integration and autonomy. (iv) Social Classes in India: (a) Agrarian class structure. (b) Industrial class structure. (c) Middle classes in India.

Tribe: The Definitional Problem

Everything else in the unit depends on this. No sociological definition of 'tribe' survives contact with the Indian evidence. What exists is a legal-administrative list with a colonial parentage.

- Imperial Gazetteer of India (1911), the classic administrative definition: a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory, not usually endogamous though originally it might have been so. The hedges show the definition is already unsure of itself.
- D.N. Majumdar added reciprocity: common name, territory and language, taboos on marriage and occupation, and a developed system of mutual obligation.
- Every diagnostic trait fails somewhere. Isolation: the Meena and Bhil have been in dense contact with peasant society for centuries. Animism: many Santhals and Gonds worship deities the Census records as Hindu. Egalitarianism: the Toda and the Naga are not equally stratified. Shifting cultivation: most Indian tribes are settled. Language: several speak Indo-Aryan.
- The Constitution does not define tribe. Article 366(25) says only that STs are those deemed STs under Article 342, which is circular by design: an ST is whoever the President has notified. The category is a schedule, not a concept.
- Andre Beteille ('The Definition of Tribe', 1960; 'The Concept of Tribe with Special Reference to India', 1986): tribe in India is definable only negatively, by relative distance from the caste-peasant civilization around it.
- Beteille's sharper point: the term is political and administrative before it is sociological. Scheduling brings reservation, land protection and Fifth Schedule cover, so groups fight to enter the list. The category is an object of politics, which is what a sociological category should not be.

KEY TERMS

Article 342 — The President specifies STs for a state or UT by public notification after consulting the Governor; only Parliament may then include or exclude by law.

Lokur Committee criteria (1965) — The five administrative tests actually used to schedule a tribe: primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact, backwardness. None is in the Constitution.

Diku — The Santhali and Mundari term for the outsider trader, moneylender or landlord who entered tribal tracts under colonial land settlement.

The Tribe-Caste Continuum

If tribe cannot be defined against caste as a type, treat them as poles of one field. This converts a definitional dead end into a research programme.

- F.G. Bailey, 'Tribe, Caste and Nation' (1957), from Bisipara in Orissa: tribe and caste are two ends of a continuum, and the variable is access to land. In tribal society access runs through the segmentary lineage

and most hold land directly; in caste society access is dependent and hierarchical. Bailey proposed measuring the continuum by the proportion with direct access.

- N.K. Bose, 'The Hindu Method of Tribal Absorption' (1941), on the Juang: Hindu society absorbed tribes not by force but by offering a guaranteed occupational niche and the security of the jajmani order. The tribe entered as a caste and traded autonomy for subsistence.
- Surajit Sinha, on the Bhumij of Barabhum, traced the reverse route: chiefs claimed Rajput descent, commissioned genealogies, and converted a tribe into a caste through Kshatriyization and state formation.
- M.N. Srinivas supplies the mechanism: Sanskritization works on tribes as on low castes. A tribe that acquires land and claims Kshatriya status has moved along Bailey's continuum.
- The limit: the continuum assumes a single field of ranking. It fits central India, not the Northeast, where Naga and Mizo societies were never inside the caste order and the relevant contrast is with the state, not the Brahmin.

KEY TERMS

Khuntkatti — The Munda system of corporate lineage ownership of land by descendants of the original clearers, recognised in the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act 1908.

Kshatriyization — Sinha's term for a tribe's claim to Rajput status through myth, genealogy and state formation; Sanskritization worked by chiefs rather than whole castes.

Ghurye, Elwin and Nehru: Isolation, Assimilation, Integration

The heart of the unit: a policy argument that doubles as a theoretical one, still live every time a Fifth Schedule mining lease is signed. The attributions are routinely swapped, so fix them.

- G.S. Ghurye, 'The Aborigines So-Called and Their Future' (1943), reissued as 'The Scheduled Tribes' (1959): tribes are imperfectly integrated classes of Hindu society, or in the phrase he is remembered by, backward Hindus. They differ from the Hindu poor in degree, not kind, so the answer is assimilation, not a special status that preserves them as exhibits.
- Ghurye's political charge: isolationism served the colonial state, since missionary and anthropologist together produced a separateness that could be used to argue tribes were not part of the Indian nation. He was arguing against partition-by-ethnography as much as against Elwin.
- Verrier Elwin, 'The Baiga' (1939) and 'The Aborigines' (1943): contact had destroyed the Baiga, hence the National Park proposal, protected zones where tribes could be left alone until able to meet the plains on their own terms.
- The correction most candidates miss: Elwin abandoned that position. In 'A Philosophy for NEFA' (1957) he argued for development along the tribes' own lines, run by their own people. The debate is early Elwin against late Elwin, with Ghurye attacking a position Elwin had left.
- Nehru's Panchsheel for tribal development, in his foreword to the second edition of 'A Philosophy for NEFA' (1959): (1) people should develop along the lines of their own genius, and their traditional arts and culture should be encouraged; (2) tribal rights in land and forest should be respected; (3) a team of their own people should be trained for administration and development, avoiding too many outsiders in tribal territory; (4) do not over-administer or overwhelm with schemes, and work through their own institutions rather than in rivalry with them; (5) judge results by the quality of human character evolved, not by statistics or money spent.

- Nehru's gloss: tribes should be neither placed in a museum nor forced to assimilate. Integration means joining the national economy and polity while keeping cultural distinctiveness, which is why the Fifth and Sixth Schedules sit inside the Constitution.
- The honest verdict: the doctrine is Nehru's, the practice has been Ghurye's. Principles 2 and 5 are least observed, which is why displacement and the Forest Rights Act dominate the unit today.

The three positions on tribes and the nation

Position	Chief exponent	Diagnosis	Prescription	Standard criticism
Isolation	Verrier Elwin, early work (The Baiga, 1939; The Aborigines, 1943)	Contact with plains society means land loss, debt, disease and cultural collapse	National Parks: protected zones, controlled entry, slow exposure on tribes' own terms	Freezes living societies as specimens; economically impossible; politically it echoed the colonial Excluded Areas. Elwin himself dropped it.
Assimilation	G.S. Ghurye (The Aborigines So-Called and Their Future, 1943)	Tribes are backward Hindus, already partly inside Hindu society; the problem is poverty, not difference	Absorb into the mainstream through education, land and development, as with any backward class	Treats a distinct culture as a deficit to be cured; assumes the mainstream is neutral; ignores who gains from the land that absorption frees.
Integration	Nehru's Panchsheel (foreword to A Philosophy for NEFA, 2nd edn, 1959); Elwin's later position	Neither isolation nor absorption; the tribe must join the nation without ceasing to be itself	Development along their own genius, land and forest rights respected, tribal personnel, minimal administration, judged by human outcomes	The most quoted and least implemented. No enforcement mechanism; the Governor's Fifth Schedule powers and the Tribes Advisory Councils have stayed largely unused.

Geographical Spread and the Scheduled Tribe Category

Numbers here are scaffolding. The analytic point is that the map is not a map of tribes; it is a map of where the state drew lines.

- Census 2011: ST population 10.43 crore, 8.6 per cent of India, close to 90 per cent rural, with more than 700 communities notified.
- Absolute numbers are highest in Madhya Pradesh; the highest proportions are Mizoram among states and Lakshadweep among UTs. The largest single ST is the Bhil, then the Gond. Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Puducherry and Chandigarh have no notified STs at all, which alone shows the list is administrative rather than ethnographic.
- The conventional zones: North and North-Eastern (Naga, Mizo, Khasi, Garo, Bhotia, Tharu); Central or Middle, along the Chotanagpur plateau, the largest by far (Santhal, Munda, Oraon, Ho, Gond); Western (Bhil, Meena, Garasia); Southern (Toda, Chenchu, Kadar, Irula, Kurumba); Island (Jarawa, Onge, Great Andamanese, Sentinelese).
- The central belt is the loaded one: it holds the largest tribal populations, the mineral wealth, the densest forest, the bulk of development-induced displacement and the Maoist conflict. That overlap is the political economy of the unit in one sentence.

- Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups: 75 groups, identified from 1973 on the Dhebar Commission's recommendation, called Primitive Tribal Groups until renamed in 2006. Criteria: pre-agricultural technology, stagnant or declining population, extremely low literacy, subsistence economy. The renaming matters: 'primitive' was a judgement, 'vulnerable' names a relation to the state.
- The category is contested from both ends: groups outside agitate to enter, and within it better-placed tribes such as the Meena capture a disproportionate share, the tribal version of the creamy-layer problem.

Colonial Policies and Tribal Revolts

Colonial policy did not merely oppress tribes; it produced the tribe as an administrative object and the diku as its enemy. The revolts are the record of that production.

- Land: the Permanent Settlement of 1793 and later settlements imposed private, revenue-paying property on tracts held by lineage. Where khuntkatti or Santhal corporate tenure had no revenue-payer, the state manufactured one, and outsiders became landlords over the people who had cleared the land.
- Forest: the Imperial Forest Department was set up in 1864 under Dietrich Brandis, and the Indian Forest Acts of 1865, 1878 and 1927 created reserved, protected and village forests. The decisive move was legal: customary rights were reclassified as privileges granted by the state, and shifting cultivation, hunting and grazing became offences. This is the injustice the Forest Rights Act 2006 names in its preamble.
- Population: the Criminal Tribes Act 1871 notified whole communities as criminal by birth. Repealed in 1952 and the groups denotified, but the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes still carry the stigma and most are not scheduled as STs at all.
- Administration: the Scheduled Districts Act 1874, the Backward Tracts of the Government of India Act 1919, and the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas of the Act of 1935. The Fifth and Sixth Schedules descend directly from this apparatus, which is why autonomy carries a colonial genealogy.
- Concessions extracted by revolt: the Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act 1876 followed the Hul, and the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act 1908 followed Birsa Munda's Ulgulan, recognising khuntkatti rights and restricting alienation. Protective tribal land law in India was written under duress.
- The revolts: the Kol uprising (1831-32); the Santhal Hul (1855-56) under Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu; Birsa Munda's Ulgulan (1899-1900); the Bhumkal in Bastar (1910); the Tana Bhagat movement from 1914 under Jatra Bhagat; the Rampa rebellion (1922-24) under Alluri Sitarama Raju.
- Read them as three types, not a list: restorative revolt against the diku and the state (Kol, Hul, Ulgulan, Bhumkal); reformist and Sanskritizing self-purification, often turning to the Congress (Tana Bhagat, which combined abstinence and monotheism with a rent strike); and post-independence autonomy movements (Jharkhand, Bodoland, the Naga movement), which take the demand into the constitutional arena rather than against it.
- K.S. Singh's study of Birsa Munda showed the millenarian and the political as one thing: Birsa was Bhagwan and land-restorer at once. Nandini Sundar's 'Subalterns and Sovereigns' (1997) on Bastar makes the companion argument for the state: colonial and princely administration did not find tribal identity, it helped construct it.

Integration and Autonomy: The Constitutional Architecture

The Constitution chose integration, then built two different machines to deliver it. The gap between the machines and their output is the substance of the current questions here.

- Fifth Schedule, Article 244(1): Scheduled Areas in ten states (Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan). The Governor reports to the President, may direct that a law shall not apply, and may regulate land transfer and moneylending, advised by a Tribes Advisory Council. The design is protective, not self-governing.
- Sixth Schedule, Articles 244(2) and 275(1): Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram. Autonomous District and Regional Councils hold real legislative, executive, judicial and financial powers over land, forest, shifting cultivation, inheritance, marriage and custom, and run their own courts. This is autonomy; the Fifth Schedule is protection.
- PESA 1996, following the Dileep Singh Bhuria Committee, extends Part IX to Fifth Schedule areas and makes the Gram Sabha the competent authority: consulted before land acquisition and resettlement, recommending on leases for minor minerals, owning minor forest produce, controlling moneylending, preventing and restoring land alienation. Consultation is not consent, and that word carries most of the litigation.
- The Forest Rights Act 2006 recognises individual rights up to four hectares, community rights, community forest resource rights under Section 3(1)(i), and rights over minor forest produce, with the Gram Sabha as the recognising authority. Other Traditional Forest Dwellers must show three generations, taken as 75 years. Its preamble is unusual in Indian law: it says the state is correcting a historical injustice.
- Samatha v State of Andhra Pradesh (1997): government and forest land in Scheduled Areas cannot be leased to non-tribals or private companies for mining, only to tribals, state undertakings or tribal cooperatives. It has been narrowed in practice by state amendment.
- Orissa Mining Corporation v MoEF (2013), Niyamgiri: the Court sent the question of religious and community rights to the Gram Sabhas of the affected villages, and all twelve rejected bauxite mining. It is the only occasion on which the Gram Sabha's veto over a mining project has actually operated.
- Displacement is where integration breaks down. Estimates vary and there is no census of the displaced; Walter Fernandes' widely cited estimate puts tribals at roughly 40 per cent of those displaced by development projects since 1947, against a population share under nine per cent. Cite it as an estimate.
- The Xaxa Committee (2014), chaired by Virginius Xaxa, is the authoritative official assessment: protective law widely unimplemented, Tribes Advisory Councils moribund, displacement without rehabilitation routine, the Governor's Fifth Schedule powers essentially unused.

KEY TERMS

Autonomy vs protection — Sixth Schedule councils govern; Fifth Schedule areas are governed protectively by a Governor. Conflating the two is the commonest factual error in this unit.

Community Forest Resource right — FRA Section 3(1)(i): the Gram Sabha's right to protect, regenerate and manage the forest it has traditionally used; the Act's most radical and least granted provision.

Agrarian Class Structure

Class in the Indian countryside is not read off ownership alone. It is read off the relation between rights in land and the labour a person actually performs, which is why Thorner's categories outlived every rival.

- Daniel Thorner, 'The Agrarian Prospect in India' (1956), used three criteria together: the source of income from land, the type of rights held, and the extent of field work actually performed. The third is the innovation and is what makes the scheme sociological rather than legal.

- Malik: income chiefly from property rights in the soil, principally rent, with no manual work; big landlords, often absentee, and rich landowners who supervise. Kisan: working peasants holding small plots worked with family labour; small landowners and substantial tenants. Mazdoor: those living by working on others' land; poor tenants, sharecroppers, landless labourers.
- Thorner used the Hindustani terms deliberately, because the regional tenure vocabulary (zamindar, ryot, bhagchasi, adhiyar) is a legal thicket hiding an identical class relation.
- Utsa Patnaik sharpened it with the labour-exploitation criterion: class position is given by the ratio of labour hired in to family labour used, so a household hiring more than it works is exploiting, one working out more than it hires is exploited, and the middle peasant sits at the balance point.
- Andre Beteille, 'Caste, Class and Power' (1965), on Sripuram in Tanjore: the three hierarchies were once congruent, the Brahmin landowner also wielding power, but had begun to come apart, non-Brahmins acquiring land and Adi-Dravidas acquiring votes, so they now cross-cut. The Indian village is best described as a system in which caste, class and power dissociate at different speeds.
- M.N. Srinivas' dominant caste ('The Dominant Caste in Rampura', 1959) bridges caste and agrarian class: dominance needs numerical strength, economic power over land, political power, a ritual position not too low, and, he added later, Western education and jobs. It explains why the Jat, Patidar, Reddy, Kamma, Maratha and Yadav are agrarian classes and caste blocs at once.
- The Green Revolution restratified rather than levelled. Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, 'In Pursuit of Lakshmi' (1987), named the winner: the bullock capitalist, the self-employed cultivator with enough land to be viable and not enough to hire out the work. This is Thorner's kisan turned into a political force, and the base of the 1980s farmers' movements, Sharad Joshi's Shetkari Sanghatana and Mahendra Singh Tikait's BKU, which framed the conflict as Bharat against India, not peasant against landlord.
- Land reform explains the present structure by what it failed to do. Intermediary abolition largely worked and destroyed the zamindar; tenancy reform and ceilings largely failed, as oral tenancy went underground and benami transfers defeated ceilings. Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan, launched at Pochampally in 1951, secured land that was mostly poor or litigated. The result is a countryside dominated by middle and rich peasants of the dominant castes.

Thorner's agrarian classes

Class	Source of income	Rights held	Field work performed	Strata within
Malik	Rent and property in the soil	Proprietary	None	Big landlords (absentee); rich landowners (supervisory)
Kisan	Own cultivation	Ownership of small plots, or secure tenancy	Own and family labour	Small landowners; substantial tenants
Mazdoor	Working on others' land	None, or precarious and unrecorded	All of it	Poor tenants; sharecroppers; landless labourers

Industrial Class Structure

India industrialised under colonialism, which gave its bourgeoisie and its working class an unusual origin. Neither turned out as the European model predicted, and the literature is about why.

- The Indian bourgeoisie did not grow out of a feudal order it defeated; it grew inside a colonial economy that constrained it. A.R. Desai, 'Social Background of Indian Nationalism' (1948), gave the classic materialist account of how the bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia and the working class were all products of British rule.
- The comprador thesis, that the Indian capitalist was a junior partner of colonial capital, is the position to argue against. Amiya Kumar Bagchi, 'Private Investment in India 1900-1939' (1972), documented how the managing agency system and British control of banking, shipping and government purchase squeezed Indian capital, which is why the Indian bourgeoisie financed the national movement. Bipan Chandra runs the same way.
- Recruitment was communal, not individual. Parsi, Marwari, Gujarati bania and Chettiar trading communities converted mercantile capital into industry, so caste and kin networks were the infrastructure of Indian capitalism rather than an obstacle. Milton Singer, 'When a Great Tradition Modernizes' (1972), showed Madras industrialists managing the contradiction by compartmentalization, keeping industrial and ritual roles in separate spheres, and by vicarious ritualization, delegating rites to wives and priests.
- The working class was never fully separated from the land. Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, 'The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India' (1994): the Bombay millhand's village tie was not a survival waiting to wither but a rational strategy in an economy without social security, and the jobber, the mukadam, mediated recruitment, discipline, credit and neighbourhood politics at once. Class formation went through the jobber and the chawl, not around them.
- Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Rethinking Working-Class History: Bengal 1890-1940' (1989), pushed further: the jute workers' consciousness was not an immature version of a bourgeois-individual consciousness that would mature later, but was organised by community, religion and hierarchy, which the sardari system reproduced inside the mill. There is no universal proletarian script Indian workers failed to follow.
- The decisive fact of the present structure is informality: the overwhelming majority of India's workforce is informal, either in unorganised enterprises or informally employed within organised ones, and the NCEUS report (2007) under Arjun Sengupta established the scale of it in official language for the first time.
- Jan Breman, 'Footloose Labour' (1996), from south Gujarat: a circulating, casual, footloose proletariat, migrating seasonally, recruited through jobbers and advances, never anywhere long enough to organise, practising what he called wage hunting and gathering. This is what Thorner's mazdoor and Chandavarkar's millhand became.
- Class consciousness is weak for structural, not cultural, reasons: the organised sector is a labour aristocracy of under a tenth of workers, and the rest are segmented by caste, region, language and contractor. E.A. Ramaswamy, 'The Worker and His Union' (1977), adds the political reason: unions grew under outside leadership, tied to parties and competing for the same members, so unionism fragmented along political rather than class lines.
- The current frontier is platform work: the Code on Social Security 2020 defines the gig worker and the platform worker for the first time, a category existing precisely to sit outside the employer-employee relation, which is Breman's footloose labour with an app.

KEY TERMS

Managing agency system — The colonial arrangement in which a firm floated, financed and managed several companies it did not own, concentrating control of Indian industry in a few, largely British, agency houses.

Jobber (mukadam, sardar) — The intermediary who recruited, supervised, lent to and controlled millworkers; the reason Indian industrial labour was disciplined through community rather than contract.

The Middle Classes in India

The plural is the argument. India's middle class was not produced by industry and did not behave as the European bourgeoisie did, and every serious writer starts from that anomaly.

- B.B. Misra, 'The Indian Middle Classes: Their Growth in Modern Times' (1961), is the foundational text, and the thesis to lead with: the Indian middle class was a creation of British administrative and educational needs, not of industrial capitalism. It was born of the state, not of the market.
- The consequences follow from that origin: a class of functionaries rather than entrepreneurs, dependent on government employment and the professions; drawn overwhelmingly from the literate upper castes, so it inherited caste privilege and renamed it merit; urban, English-educated, detached from production. Macaulay's Minute of 1835 announced the intention: a class of interpreters, Indian in blood and colour but English in taste and opinion.
- The comparison is the exam point. The European middle class rose against the state and remade it; the Indian middle class was manufactured by the state and has looked to it ever since, for jobs, reservation and licences. That is why it produced nationalism rather than a bourgeois revolution.
- Pavan K. Varma, 'The Great Indian Middle Class' (1998), indicts it: the class that claimed Nehruvian idealism abandoned it once liberalization made consumption possible; it is politically apathetic to the poor, insulated in its enclaves, and far smaller than the marketing arithmetic pretends. It is a polemic and should be cited as one, which is what makes it useful for a critical paragraph.
- Satish Deshpande, 'Contemporary India: A Sociological View' (2003), gives the structural version: the middle class is small but ideologically enormous, functioning as the proxy for the nation, producing the images through which India understands itself, and presenting its own upper-caste composition as merit.
- Leela Fernandes, 'India's New Middle Class' (2006), locates the break at liberalization: the new middle class is not a bigger old one but a politically constructed category defined by consumption and by private-sector, English-speaking work. Her sharpest concept is the politics of forgetting, by which the urban poor are erased from the city's plans, aesthetics and public space.
- Distinguish old from new. Old: salaried, state-dependent, vernacular, frugal by ideology, mobile through examination. New: private, consumerist, English-medium, mobile through markets. They overlap in the same households, which is why they read as one class from outside and two from within.
- Size estimates vary from roughly five per cent to a third of the population, because income, consumption, occupation, education and self-description each give a different answer. Quote the disagreement, not a number: the disagreement is itself evidence the class is defined culturally rather than economically.
- Mandal in 1990 is the moment the class became visible to itself: the anti-reservation agitation was led by the urban upper-caste middle class defending, in the language of merit, a monopoly on state employment that its own origin story explains.

Last-mile revision

- Tribe has no sociological definition in India; it has a schedule. Article 366(25) is circular, and the Lokur criteria (1965) are administrative, not constitutional.
- Beteille: tribe is definable only negatively, by relative distance from the wider civilization, and in India it is political and administrative before it is sociological.
- Bailey's continuum runs on access to land; Bose's absorption on the security of an occupational niche; Sinha's Bhumij on Kshatriyization. Three routes across one boundary.
- Ghurye said backward Hindus, assimilate. Early Elwin said National Parks, isolate. Nehru's Panchsheel (1959 foreword to A Philosophy for NEFA) said integrate. Late Elwin agreed with Nehru.
- Panchsheel in order: own genius; land and forest rights; their own personnel; do not over-administer; judge by human character, not statistics.
- Census 2011: 10.43 crore STs, 8.6 per cent, roughly 90 per cent rural, 700-plus notified communities, 75 PVTGs. No STs in Punjab, Haryana or Delhi.
- Colonial forest law converted rights into privileges; the FRA 2006 preamble calls this a historical injustice. That word links the two halves of the tribal section.
- Fifth Schedule protects, Sixth Schedule governs. PESA gives consultation, not consent. Samatha (1997) barred non-tribal mining leases; Niyamgiri (2013) let twelve Gram Sabhas say no. Xaxa (2014) is the official audit.
- Thorner: malik, kisan, mazdoor, by income source, rights held, and work actually done. The third criterion is what makes it sociology.
- Beteille's Sripuram: caste, class and power were congruent and are now dissociating. That sentence answers half the agrarian questions.
- Breman's footloose labour and the NCEUS informality finding are the industrial structure now; Chandavarkar and Chakrabarty explain why no European-style proletariat formed.
- Misra: the Indian middle class was made by the colonial state, not by industry, so it is a class of upper-caste functionaries. Varma, Deshpande and Fernandes all develop that.

Common errors to avoid

- Defining 'tribe' confidently in the first line. The definition is the question, not the preliminary.
- Making Elwin a lifelong isolationist. He proposed National Parks in the early 1940s and had moved to development along tribes' own lines by A Philosophy for NEFA (1957). Saying so is a cheap mark.
- Attributing Panchsheel to a policy document or a committee. It is Nehru's foreword to the second edition of Elwin's A Philosophy for NEFA (1959).
- Swapping the Fifth and Sixth Schedules. Sixth Schedule councils legislate and adjudicate; Fifth Schedule areas have a Governor and an advisory council, and no self-government.
- Claiming PESA requires Gram Sabha consent for land acquisition. It requires consultation, and a recommendation for minor minerals. The difference is why the Act underdelivers.
- Quoting displacement figures as census facts. There is no count of the displaced; Fernandes' 40 per cent is an estimate, so label it.
- Treating the tribe-caste continuum as universal. It fits the central belt, not Naga or Mizo society, where the relevant relation is with the state, not the caste order.
- Reducing Thorner to landowners, tenants and labourers. Without the work-performed criterion it is a tenure list and the point is lost.
- Assuming the Green Revolution polarised the countryside into two classes. It produced the bullock capitalist, a middle stratum, which is why the 1980s farmers' movements spoke of Bharat against India rather than class struggle.
- Writing 'the Indian middle class' as one thing. The old salaried state-dependent class and the new consumerist private-sector class are different formations; the plural in the syllabus is a hint.
- Quoting a middle-class population figure as settled. Estimates run from about five per cent to a third depending on definition, and the disagreement is the finding.