GEOGRAPHY 28 September 2026

Protecting Autonomy and Habitat of Andaman's Sentinelese Tribe

Tribal expert Manish Chandi highlighted growing ecological threats and external interference affecting isolated tribes like the Sentinelese in Andaman.

An analysis of environmental risks and protection measures concerning isolated Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

KEY EXAM POINTS

- The **Sentinelese tribe** lives in voluntary isolation on **North Sentinel Island**, protected under a strict government no-contact policy.
- Buffer waters around **North Sentinel Island** face ecological threats from illegal commercial **trawlers** entering reserved marine zones.
- Developmental infrastructure projects near tribal **buffer areas** threaten traditional hunting and foraging grounds of island communities.
- Sentinelese communities rely heavily on intact **mangrove** and **coastal reef ecosystems** for spearfishing, hunting turtles, and gathering mollusks.
- Conservationists emphasize protecting tribal **self-determination** rather than imposing external development perspectives on isolated indigenous populations.

DID YOU KNOW..!?

Andaman and Nicobar Islands are home to **5 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** : Great Andamanese, Jarawa, Onge, Sentinelese, and Shompen.

Among the 5 PVTGs in Andaman and Nicobar, the **Shompen** tribe alone resides in **Nicobar Island**, while the other four belong to Andaman Islands.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Protection of Aboriginal Tribes (PAT) Regulation was promulgated in **1956** to protect tribal lands and resources.

Dhebar Commission in **1960** established the Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) category, which was renamed as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in **2006**.

India currently identifies **75** tribal groups across **18 States** and 1 Union Territory as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

Odisha holds the highest number of PVTG communities in India with **13** recognized groups.

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Andaman & Nicobar has 5 PVTGs: Great Andamanese, Jarawa, Onge, Sentinelese, and Shompen (Nicobar).

Syllabus Relevance: Highly relevant for Unit 3 (Geography - Tribes of India/PVTGs) and Unit 2 (Environment & Ecology).

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