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Any exploitation of Sentinel Island will wipe out tribals



In a recent **policy document**, the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) has mentioned that any commercial exploitation of the North Sentinel Island of the Andamans will endanger the survival of the Sentinelese tribes.

Who are Sentinelese?

- They are the **occupants of the Northern Sentinel Island** and have a population of about 50 to 100.
- They are a **negrito tribe** and have not faced incursions and remain hostile to outsiders
 - The tribe has been categorised as **particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTG)**.
- The inhabitants are **connected to the Jarawa** on the basis of physical, as well as linguistic similarities.
 - They speak **their own language** and the translation of their language cannot be done till present day.

- Based on carbon dating of kitchen middens by the Anthropological Survey of India, Sentinelese presence was confirmed in the islands 2,000 years ago.
 - Also, Genome studies indicate that the tribe could have been on the islands even 30,000 years ago.
- They have been **contacted by anthropologists through 26 expeditions** since the 1970s.

Protection Status:

- The Govt. of India has issued the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956** to declare the traditional areas occupied by the tribes as reserves.
 - The regulation **prohibits the entry of all persons** except those with authorisation.
 - **Photographing or filming** the tribe members is also an **offence**.
- **Other provisions for their protection :**
 - Restrictions under Foreigner (Restricted Area) Orders, 1963.
 - Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.
 - Visa Manual Conditions/Passport Act 1920, Indian Forest Act, 1927 and Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Know About Andaman and Nicobar Islands:

- It is a **Union Territory** and located in the Bay of Bengal.

- The **capital is Port Blair** and it covers an area of 8,249 sq. km.
 - Many **islands are uninhabited** and the inhabited islands are also sparsely populated.
- The **main islands** are North Andaman, Middle Andaman, South Andaman, Little Andaman, Car Nicobar, Little Nicobar, Great Nicobar.
- The **Andamans are the extension** of the Arakan Yoma Mountain range (Submerged) of Myanmar and **the Nicobars are extensions** of the Mentawai Islands of Sumatra.
- **Important Channels :**
 - - - **10-degree channel:** It separates the Andaman Group of islands and the Nicobar group of islands.
 - **Duncan Passage:** It separates the South Andaman and Little Andaman .
 - **The Grand Channel:** It separates the Great Nicobar islands and the Sumatra islands of Indonesia.
 - **The Coco Strait:** It separates North Andaman islands and the Coco Islands of Myanmar.
- **Tribes:**
 - - Onges Little Nicobar ; PVTG
 - Sentinelese Sentinel Islands ; PVTG

- Jarawa Middle and South Andaman ; PVTG
- Andamanese Strait Island
- Shompen Great Nicobar
- Nicobarese Great Nicobar

About Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG):

- It is a **classification by the Government** for more vulnerable tribes among the tribal groups.
 - The tribe has a **declining or stagnant population**, low level of literacy, pre-agricultural level of technology and are economically backward.
 - They **generally inhabit remote localities** having poor infrastructure and administrative support.
- **At present**, the Ministry of Home Affairs has classified **75 tribal groups Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG)s**