



US Citizen killed by Tribals in Andaman

An American national who tried to contact protected Sentinelese tribes in Andamans north sentinel island was allegedly killed by them.

- In August 2018, in order to promote tourism in the remote Andaman and Nicobar islands, the government excluded 29 inhabited islands which also included North Sentinelese island from the [restricted area permit \(RAP\) regime till December 31, 2022](#).
- The lifting of RAP means that foreigners are allowed to visit these islands without prior permission from the government is subject to certain conditions.
- Separate approvals of a competent authority would continue to be required for visiting reserved forests, wildlife sanctuaries, and tribal reserves.

Sentinelese

- The Sentinelese is a **pre-neolithic, negrito tribe who live in North Sentinel Island of the Andamans**.
- They are completely isolated with **no contact to the outside world**. The first time they were contacted by a team of Indian anthropologists in 1991.
- Due to no contact, the census of Sentinelese is taken through photographing the island individuals from distance. Census 2001 counted them at 39.
- Surveys of North Sentinel Island have not found any evidence of agriculture. Instead, the community seems to be hunter-gatherers, getting food through fishing, hunting, and collecting wild plants living on the island.
- Sentinelese are also listed under **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** by the government of India.
- They are protected under the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956**.
 - It declares traditional areas occupied by the tribes as reserves, and prohibited entry of all except those with authorization.
 - Photographing or filming tribe members is also an offense.

Should Tribes be contacted?

The situation of the tribal or the Adivasi community in India has always been a challenge. To assimilate or let “them” be are ongoing debates.

- **Humans by Nature Social**
 - Anthropologists who studied “uncontacted tribes” have said that the tribes were interested in making contact with the outside world, but they were too afraid to do so. Hence, outside contact should be made but only when they have initiated it.
- **Destruction of Tribal Culture**
 - Contact to the outside world also risks the destruction of tribal culture, knowledge, and languages which can get overwhelmed by outside influence and eventually become extinct.
- **Health Risk**
 - The “uncontacted people” are not vaccinated to various diseases, which outsiders may carry unknowingly. There is the health risk to these communities from outside contact.

- In America, the contact with outside diseases killed up to 100 million indigenous people following the European arrival.

Way Forward

- The academics have suggested that the best path forward is a policy of "**controlled contact**" with these communities instead of a policy of no contact. Carefully managed contact to avoid the spread of disease, but also enable the building of trust and providing aid and medical help if needed is the best way.
- Establishing contact with the outside world can also help governments to document their way of life, preserve their culture and their holistic development.

Uncontacted people: These are indigenous communities that have managed to exist almost entirely outside the purview of the nation-states in which they technically live.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

- PVTGs are centrally recognized special category from among the Scheduled Tribes and were constituted during the 4th five-year plan on the basis of the report of the Dhebar commission (1960-61).
- They are the most vulnerable section among tribals and generally inhabit the isolated, remote and difficult areas as small and scattered hamlets/ habitats.

Tribes of Andaman and Nicobar

The Andaman and Nicobar are home to **six tribes, Great Andamanese, Onge, Jarawa, Sentinelese, Nicobarese and Shompen.**

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