

Sansad TV Perspective: 'Protecting the Tribes'

In the series Sansad TV Perspective, we bring you an analysis of the discussion featured on the insightful programme 'Perspective' on Sansad TV, on various important topics affecting India and also the world. This analysis will help you immensely for the [IAS exam](#), especially the mains exam, where a well-rounded understanding of topics is a prerequisite for writing answers that fetch good marks.

In this article, we feature the discussion on the topic: 'Protecting the Tribes'

Guests:

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Context:

- The last known member of an indigenous tribe in the Amazon rainforest has died after living alone for decades. The unidentified man from an uncontacted indigenous tribe in Brazil was known as the 'man of the hole' because he was often spotted taking shelter in pits dug in the ground.
- The death of the 'man of the hole' has now resulted in discussion among activists about the need to protect the indigenous people.

Background:

- There are around 370 million indigenous people in the world. These people belong to 5000 different groups in 90 countries. They constitute about 5% of the world's total population.
- There are 110 million tribals in India, distributed across 18 states. They constitute about 8% of India's total population. In India, most of the tribes are collectively identified under Article 342 as "[Scheduled Tribes](#)". 705 scheduled tribes have been notified under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution.

General concerns of the tribal community:

- The dwindling population of the indigenous communities remains the main concern.
- Most of these indigenous communities live in extreme poverty. They suffer from malnutrition

and lack access to basic education and health facilities.

- Unrestrained development in forest areas has led to the degradation of the forest areas which account for the major basis for the survival of the tribal community.
- Failure to recognize the rights of the indigenous communities to forests and forest resources.

Scenario in India:

- Notably, in India, the proportion of the tribal community in the total population has been increasing with every census as against the trend observed globally.
- Also, while the socio-economic indicators of the tribal community remain below the national average values, they continue to improve over time.

Significance of the indigenous communities:

- The tribal population is known to live sustainable lives, in harmony with nature. Hence they can play an important role in environmental conservation efforts worldwide.
- The indigenous communities are a treasure trove of knowledge of forest resources for medicines and foods and could prove to be life-saving for the global community going ahead.
- The language, art and traditions of the indigenous communities are an indispensable part of our cultural heritage.

Recommendations:

- The efforts should not only be directed at protecting the population of the tribals by ensuring access to quality nutrition and health resources, efforts are also needed to preserve their heritage, culture, language, art, traditions and sensibilities.
- Steps need to be taken to alleviate the position of the tribals by taking measures to ensure the economic upliftment of the tribals.
- Tribes which haven't had contact with the modern world should be allowed to remain isolated given the threat of the spread of diseases.
- The policies and programmes for the development of the tribals should be tailored to the unique character of the community and should be need-based.