

Kattunayakan Tribe [UPSC Notes]

The 'Elephant Whisperers' won the best documentary (short film) category award at Oscars 2023. Set in Tamil Nadu, the Elephant Whisperers tells the story of an orphaned elephant calf who is put in the care of an old couple - an indigenous couple from the Kattunayakan tribe dwelling in the picturesque Mudumalai forests in the Nilgiris. The Elephant Whisperers was filmed inside the Theppakadu Elephant camp, one of the oldest elephant camps in Asia. It was established in 1927 as an Elephant Rehabilitation Camp. In this article, you will learn about the Kattunayakan tribe, important for the [IAS exam](#) geography segment.

Kattunayakan Tribe

Kattunayakan or Jennu Kurumbar is a designated scheduled tribe mainly found in parts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

- The word Kattunayakan means 'king of the jungle' in Tamil and Malayalam.
- The Kattunayakan tribe is one of the earliest known inhabitants of the [Western Ghats](#).
- They are completely dependent on forests and forest products. Their main livelihood is collecting, and selling honey and are known for their expertise in honey collection.
- The tribe is one of the 75 PVTGs ([Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups](#)) of India.
- They speak a language which is a mixture of Dravidian languages.
- The tribe is one of the few tribes of India that still live as hunter-gatherers.
- They follow a religion which is strongly rooted in their culture and worship animals, birds, trees, rocks, snakes and almost everything natural.

Mudumalai National Park

Mudumalai National Park is located on the north-western side of the Nilgiri Hills (Blue Mountains) in Tamil Nadu.

- It shares its boundaries with the states of Kerala and Karnataka.
- It is flanked by [Bandipur Tiger Reserve](#) (Karnataka), Nagarahole National Park (Karnataka) and Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala).
- Mudumalai National Park is a part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. It is one of the first forest ranges in India to be declared a national park.
- Mudumalai National Park was declared a tiger reserve in 2007. The Moyar river enters through the south and is joined by five tributaries.
- Theppakadu Elephant Camp is located inside the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. The landscape of Mudumalai National Park and Tiger Reserve is the largest contiguous wild habitat for the [Asian elephant](#). **The mahouts and caretakers mostly belong to the Kattunayakan tribe, the original dwellers.**

- Mudumalai Tiger Reserve is one of the five elephant reserves in Tamil Nadu. This national park, apart from being home to elephants, also houses the Bengal tiger, the Indian leopard, the sloth bear and many species of birds.

UPSC Questions related to Kattunayakan Tribe

Q. Who won the best documentary short film at Oscar 2023?

Ans. The 'Elephant Whisperers' directed by Kartiki Gonsalves and produced by Guneet Monga won the best documentary short film at the 95th Academy Awards. It is the first Indian film to win an Oscar in this category.

Q. Who are Kattunayakan tribes of Tamil Nadu?

Ans. Kattunayakan tribe is one of the 75 PVTGs of India and is mainly found in parts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Q. What is the language of Kattunayakan tribe?

Ans. They speak a mix of various Dravidian languages chiefly Tamil and Malayalam.