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Q8(c)

## What are the identifying criteria for PVTGs in India? Examine their current status, nomenclature and distribution

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · Anthropology GS 2 · 15 marks · Demographic profile of India

2. Demographic profile of India-Ethnic and linguistic elements in the Indian population and their distribution. Indian population-factors influencing its structure and growth.

### Core demand of the question

- State the identifying criteria for PVTGs
- **Give current nomenclature history:** PTG to PVTG
- Outline distribution and numbers
- Examine present status through **PM-JANMAN**, FRA and remaining gaps

### Revision summary

PVTGs are a vulnerable subset of STs, about 75 groups, identified on pre-agricultural livelihood, lagging population and literacy.

The name changed from Primitive Tribal Groups to drop a colonial adjective.

- **Distribution:** mainland scatters plus Andaman isolates with a separate contact ethic.

**PM-JANMAN**, older CCD plans, **FRA habitat rights** and Niyamgiri are the status markers.

- **Gaps:** missed hamlets, standard housing, weak habitat titles.

### Introduction

**Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups** are a subset of Scheduled Tribes named for sharper historical decline. The category began as **Primitive Tribal Groups** after the **Dhebar Commission**, was renamed to drop the word primitive, and now sits at the centre of **PM-JANMAN**. Criteria, names and maps must be kept distinct.

### Body

#### Criteria

The administrative tests, grown from **Dhebar** (1960-61) and later MoTA practice, are typically: **pre-agricultural or hunting-gathering / shifting livelihood, zero or negative population growth at the time of identification, extremely low literacy**, and a related **economic backwardness** compared with other STs. They are identified **within the ST list**, not instead of it. About **75 groups** (the count taught after later inclusions) are spread across many states, with concentrations in Odisha, Andhra-Telangana, Bihar-Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh-Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, the Andaman Islands (including **Sentinelese, Jarawa, Onge, Great Andamanese**), and Kerala-Tamil Nadu hills (Toda, Kota, Kurumba, Irula appear in this Paper's Nilgiri question; some of these are PVTG-listed in state files).

- **Criteria fail in the same way Lokur fails:** a PVTG hamlet may now have a phone and a PDS card and still lack forest title. **Shyness** should not return as a test.

## Nomenclature

**Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG)** was the old name. It was changed to **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG)** to remove the colonial insult while keeping the targeting. The Gazette and scheme documents now use PVTG. Anthropology should use **PVTG** in the exam and mention PTG as history.

## Status and distribution

Numbers are small relative to the ST population, but **habitations are scattered**. Andaman groups raise **isolation and epidemic** ethics (contact policy). Mainland groups (Chenchu, Birhor, Paharia, Dongria Kondh, Lodha, Kharia, etc.) face **FRA eviction pressure, mining, and thin hostels**.

**PM-JANMAN** (Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan) packages housing, water, education, health, connectivity and livelihood for PVTG habitations. **DAJGUA** and earlier **CCD (Conservation-cum-Development)** plans were the older tools. **FRA** community rights and **habitat rights** (section 3(1)(e) of FRA, still weakly implemented) are the land core. **Niyamgiri Dongria** are the judicial emblem of PVTG religious-forest rights.

- **Gaps:** habitation lists miss seasonal camps; housing packets ignore jhum architecture; **Sentinelese** policy is non-contact, which is not a house-and-tap scheme. Status is **targeted but still precarious**.

## Flow diagram

Dhebar PTG -> PVTG rename  
PVTG rename -> Livelihood growth literacy  
PVTG rename -> PM-JANMAN  
PVTG rename -> FRA habitat

## Conclusion

PVTGs are STs identified for pre-agricultural livelihood, stagnant population at identification, and extreme educational lag. The name replaced PTG. Distribution is a scatter of hamlets plus Andaman isolates. **PM-JANMAN** and **FRA habitat rights** are the present instruments; consent and title remain the test of status.

## Facts & figures

### Dhebar Commission

1960-61 commission whose concern for the most isolated tribal groups led to the later PTG/PVTG category.

### PM-JANMAN

Union mission for PVTG habitations covering basic services and livelihoods, launched as a saturation drive.

### FRA habitat rights

**Section 3(1)(e)** of the **Forest Rights Act** provides for rights of PVTGs and pre-agricultural communities over their habitat, still rarely titled.

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