Covid-19 tests among the tribal population living along the Godavari river valley area

Part of: GS-I- CULTURE-Geography (PT-MAINS-PERSONALITY TEST)

Recently, a petition has been filed in the Supreme Court for directing the Andhra Pradesh government to conduct Covid-19 tests among the tribal population living along the Godavari river valley area.

Lack of awareness among the tribal people, who live in dense forest and other scheduled areas of the river valley, made them more prone to Covid-19 infections. Konda reddis, Koyas and Kolam are the popular tribes living in godavari valley. Konda reddis and Kolam are part of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG).

Polavaram Irrigation Project

- **Polavaram Project** is located in Andhra Pradesh on the river Godavari, near Polavaram village.
- **It is a multi-purpose irrigation project** as the project once completed will provide Irrigation benefits and will generate HydroElectric Power. In addition, this project will also supply drinking water.
- It will facilitate an inter-basin transfer to the Krishna river basin through its Right canal.
- It will also provide indirect benefits such as development of Pisciculture (breeding and rearing of fish), tourism and urbanisation.
- The Project has been accorded national project status by the union government in 2014 (under Section-90 of Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014).

Godavari River

- **Source**: Godavari river rises from Trimbakeshwar near Nasik in Maharashtra and flows for a length of about 1465 km before outfalling into the Bay of Bengal.
- **Drainage Basin**: The Godavari basin extends over states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Odisha in addition to smaller parts in Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Union territory of Puducherry.
- **Tributaries**: Pravara, Purna, Manjra, Penganga, Wardha, Wainganga, Pranhita (combined flow of Wainganga, Penganga, Wardha), Indravati, Maner and the Sabri.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

- In India, tribal population makes up for 8.6% of the total population.
- PVTGs are more vulnerable among the tribal groups. Due to this factor, more developed and assertive tribal groups take a major chunk of the tribal development funds because of which PVTGs need more funds directed for their development.
- In 1973, the Dhebar Commission created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups. In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as PVTGs.
In this context, in 1975, the Government of India initiated to identify the most vulnerable tribal groups as a separate category called PVTGs and declared 52 such groups, while in 1993 an additional 23 groups were added to the category, making it a total of 75 PVTGs out of 705 Scheduled Tribes.

- PVTGs have some basic characteristics - they are mostly homogenous, with a small population, relatively physically isolated, absence of written language, relatively simple technology and a slower rate of change etc.

Among the 75 listed PVTG’s the highest number are found in Odisha.