

## Protest by Idu Mishmis

### Why in news?

National Tiger Conservation Authority's (NTCA) proposal to convert Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary into Tiger Reserve has attracted protests from Idu Mishmis.

### Who are Idu Mishmis?

- **Mishmi group** - The Idu Mishmi is a sub-tribe of the larger Mishmi group.
- The Mishmi group consists of Digaru, Miju and Idu sub tribes.
- **Location** - Mishmi Hills in Arunachal Pradesh and neighboring Tibet.
- They are of Mongoloid race and have a distinctive dialect falling under the Tibeto-Burma group of languages.
- **Occupation** - Weaving and craftsmanship skills
- **Population** - 12,000 people as per 2011 Census.
- **Language** - Idu Mishmi language is considered endangered by UNESCO.
- **Worship** - Idu-Mishmis believe in animism.
- They worship *Maselo-Zinu and Nani Intaya* as creators of mankind and universe as a whole.
- *Mithun*, is a semi-domesticated cattle of the Gaur family which they consider extremely valuable and rear for ritualistic sacrifices.
- **Cultural relations** - They brew local rice beer called 'Ebu'.
- Reh and Ke-Meh-Ha are two important festivals of Idus.
- According to Idu mythology, tigers are considered to be their "elder brothers" as they were born to the same mother.
- **Iyu-ena** - It is a strict belief system of myths and taboos that restrict them from hunting many animals, including a complete prohibition on killing tigers.
- **The Idu Mishmi Cultural and Literary Society (IMCLS)** - Apex body of the tribe.
- The body fights for the rights of the tribe.



### What about Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary?

- The Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the **Dibang Valley district, Arunachal Pradesh** which is divided into upper and lower Dibang Valley.
- It is named after the **Dibang River which originates in China** and cascades through this valley.
- The sanctuary was notified in 1998.
- The vegetation of Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary is of temperate and alpine type.
- Important fauna includes Red Panda, Musk Deer, Serow Leopard, Tiger, Orange Bellied Himalayan Squirrel, Himalayan black bear, barking deer, snow leopard, and the famous **Mishmi Takin**.

**Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh** - Adi, Nishi, Apatani, Tagin, Mishmi, Khampti Nocte, Wancho, Tangshangng, Singpho, Monpa, Sherdu-Kpen and Aka

### What is the NTCA proposal about?

- The NTCA has proposed for a reconstitution of the existing Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary as the Dibang Tiger Reserve.
- As Dibang Valley became a site by wildlife biologists to map the tiger habitat and count tigers, the recommendations from these visits have led to this proposal.

### Community Conserved Area (CCA)

- Idu Mishmis have declared part of its forest land as CCA.
- It is a model governed entirely by local populations, where villagers are demarcate

a part of their ancestral land as a bio cultural conserved area.

- There will be no hunting, felling trees and implement other conservation measures.

### What are the concerns?

- **Access** - An upgrade to a tiger reserve would feature stricter security measures like a 'Special Tiger Protection Force', which would be guarding the area at all times.
- The tribe fears that the move will cut off access to their lands.
- **Arbitrary actions** - Members of the community claim that Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary was created without people's consent or knowledge.
- The due procedure as mentioned in the provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 was not followed.
- **Demarcation** - In 2015, the community had approached the Gauhati High Court seeking legal re-demarcation of the wildlife sanctuary.
- **Misleading facts** - The community also alleges that the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) study about the presence of tigers in the upper reaches of the Mishmi hills is misleading.

### Quick facts

#### National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)

- The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is a statutory body under the ***Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change***.
- NTCA has been constituted under section 38 L (1) of ***Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972***.
- The authority consists of
  - **Chairperson** - ***Minister of Environment and Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC)***
  - **Vice-Chairperson** - Minister of State in the MoEFCC
  - 3 members of Parliament
  - Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests
- It is entrusted with strengthening tiger conservation measures in the country

#### Wildlife Institute of India (WII)

- An Autonomous Institution of the ***Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change***
- Established in 1982
- **Location** - ***Dehradun***
- Offers training program, academic courses and advisory in wildlife research and management

## References

1. [The Indian Express | Idu Mishmi](#)
2. [NTCA | About NTCA](#)
3. [WII | About WII](#)

