

15478

Jarawa Contact Expedition
10-13 Feb. 1997

Preliminary observations regarding health and nutritional status

During the expedition, a group of 40 persons of Jarawa community at Yadita point and 38 persons at Spike island (total 78 persons) were contacted on 12 and 13 February 1997 respectively. A group contacted on 13 February included some new faces which were not seen during earlier visits indoor Jarawa pilot project. The contact lasted for about three hours on 12 Feb. and about two hrs. on 13 Feb. 1997. Following are the preliminary findings based on superficial general examination and anthropometric measurements on contacted persons.

The group of the 40 Jarawas contacted at Yadita point included 12 men, 8 women, 13 boys and 7 girls. Children included three male and two female infants. Another group of 38 Jarawas contacted at Spike island consisted of 10 men, 12 women, 8 boys and 8 girls. Children included six male and five female infants. Two women from the second group were pregnant.

Most of them were active and apparently healthy. They were well built with dark skin and short curly hair and majority of the adults appeared well nourished except one adult female who appeared thin and wasted. Teeth and tongue of the majority were clean. Personal cleanliness was good except for long and sometimes dirty nails. A man aged about 35 years with amputated left forearm was seen again during this contact. The wound could not be examined as it was bandaged with cloths and he did not allow exposing the wound. None of them were found suffering from any skin diseases. Four children and seven adults had healing abrasions on different parts of their body. Two adults (one male and one female) had upper respiratory tract infection. Three children had dry and muddy conjunctiva which could be an early sign of conjunctival xerosis due to Vit. A deficiency. However, none of them had bitot's spot. Nine adults including two pregnant women and six children had clinical signs of anaemia. No other signs of nutritional deficiency disorders were observed among them.

Anthropometric measurements were taken on many of the contacted Jarawas, particularly on those who were not present during the earlier visits. Preliminary analysis indicates that majority of them have good nutritional status except in the case of young children, majority of whom are undernourished.

Fifteen sentinelese (2 men, 2 women and 11 children) were seen at North Sentinel island (11 Feb. 1997), but the expedition party did not go ashore. They were observed from a distance. All of them appeared to be well built and active .