

habitat deep inside the forests. It may be relevant to mention that the Jarawas occupy an area of 649 sq kms in the reserved forests along the west coast in South Andaman and Middle Andaman Islands, and they are also found in a few smaller islands such as Spike Island bordering the west coast. The length of the territory inhabited by the Jarawas in the tropical forests extends to a distance of nearly 120-130 kms. along the west coast of the aforesaid two major islands.

There has never been a detailed study of Jarawa society by the Anthropological Survey of India or any other scientists, either foreign or Indian, based on primary data gathered through long residence in Jarawa habitations and recording of observations. Since they are regarded as hostile tribes there have been no such studies, so far. (This is also the case with the Sentinelese). As a result, the precise number of Jarawas can only be approximately estimated, based on visual identification whenever teams from the Administration undertake contact expeditions. This estimate varies between 350-400.

While there are no detailed chronicles of contacts with Jarawas in British times, except prejudiced accounts which describe them in the most derogatory of terms, the first recorded non-hostile contact with Jarawas by the Administration in post-Independence times took place in 1974. Thereafter, over the last 25 years, the Administration's contact groups have been in periodic touch with the Jarawas in day time only, on days close to the period of the full moon. These contacts had been limited to gifting them with coconuts, bananas and red cloth.

In order to ensure minimal contact with Jarawas and the non-tribals in South and Middle Andaman Islands, the Administration has established a chain of police check posts inside the forests known as the Jarawa Protection Police posts. At present there are 26. In British times these used to be known as the Bush Police. These outposts inside the reserved forests are built with the help of readily available minor forest products, and no modern materials have been used for construction. However, such cane and bamboo outposts have often been subject to Jarawa arrow attacks at night, even injuring policemen, from time to time.