

21 In his book 'Above the Forest' Anthropologist Vishwajit Pandya has described the adverse impacts of deforestation on the Onge. Likewise Indian Cultural Conservation Monitoring Centre, World Wildlife Fund for Nature in a report has described in its report the problems of the Onge arising out of the destruction of their forest homes. Similarly Third World Network(TWN) has outlined in detail the breakdown of the Onge's biocultural equilibrium. Romulus Whitaker the internationally renowned herpetologist has in a publication of the World Wildlife Fund and the Department of Environment Government of India titled "Endangered Andaman" has lamented that the Andamanians have become the prime target for settlers and for forest operations and that the onslaught of "development" was going on without respite. It was the isolation of the Onge that shielded the tribes from the lethal effects of contact with outsiders.

22 In 1975 Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister while addressing the people of the island said

"Neither the settlements nor the development should be made an excuse to uproot the tribal groups and to cut down the forest. The tribals are the original inhabitants and any disturbance may threaten their survival."

23 In 1975 an Expert Team was sent to the Island by the Government of India to report on the impact of deforestation. The report stated that the various areas inhabited by aboriginal tribes should not be cleared any more. Despite this thousands of hectares of virgin forests were cleared, roads were constructed in Hut Bay, Jetties were constructed at Hut Bay and Dugong Creek, settlement was made in South Bay and a match factory was established and an attempt was made to force the Onge to live in small sheds in one area only.

24 M A Kalam in his publication titled "Development or Ethnocide with Particular Reference to the Andaman Archipelago", points out the unhappy and unfortunate consequences of the "civilization of the Onge". The onslaught has been overwhelming