

there are presently 6 Onge students and two primary school teachers of the Directorate of Education. As stated in paras ut-supra a primer on the Onge language has also been developed to facilitate education of Onges and communication with them. It is judged by the facilities so extended to them by the A&N Administration that they cannot be described as primitive. In fact they are in a transitional stage and have already reached a state of partial acculturation as is evident from the fact that they have developed a fancy for modern clothes, and enjoy living in pucca houses. They also keep their dwellings remarkably neat and clean. Even in respect of their food habits, the Onges have been readily receiving rations according to the prescribed scales from the Andaman Adim Janajati Vikas Samiti which supplement their normal diet based on their traditional food habits. Due to this assured supply of food and medical care extended to them by the Administration the life expectancy of the Onges has apparently increased. The Administration has however not interfered in their traditional habits of hunting and food gathering in any way and the Onges enjoy full freedom to forage in the virtually limitless forests besides free access to the sea to cater to their natural talent for turtle hunting etc.

- (B). I say that as regards the extent of forest areas, out of the total area of 732 sq. kms of the Little Andaman island around 500 sq.km is a tribal reserve notified under the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation 1956 for the Onges. For a total of 101 Onges as per the statistics furnished by the petitioners at para 11 of their writ petition, it would