

### **The Sentinelese:**

The Sentinelese are perhaps the most isolated and least known and exposed human community of the world with a present estimated population of 50. They inhabit the North Sentinel Island (about 60 sq. K.M) in geographical proximity to Port Blair in South Andaman. There has been stray incidences of visits to this island during the British period. After the departure of the British, the approach remained the same for many years but without any degree of success. Subsequently a major breakthrough was made in 1967 when the official team of the Administration visited the island. The first ever friendly contact with the Sentinelese was made on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1991 by a team led by Shri. S.A Awaradi, the then Director (TW) when the Sentinelese accepted the gifts of coconuts thrown into the water by the visiting party.

Although the outside world still remains unaware to a large extent of the different facets of the community, yet from the inputs gathered by the visiting teams, some information on their habitation, culture, social organisation etc. have come into public domain, which can be summarised as under:

#### **a) Habitation:**

The habitation is a cluster of small huts about 1 KM inside the forest built on small clearings, under the trees. Whether or not they have any permanent big structure deep inside is a subject of speculation. The huts have no walls or any platform. They obviously sit or sleep on the ground by spreading some leaves. The burn four or five