

SENSITIZATION FOR PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE WITH PRIMITIVE
TRIBES

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The Andaman and Nicobar archipelago consists of about 572 islands, islets and rocks stretching over 700 KM from North to South in the Bay of Bengal. The present population of A&N islands is approximately 4.0 lakhs and is distributed over 38 inhabited islands. It includes six aboriginal tribes viz the Great Andamanese, The Onges, The Jarawas and the Sentinalese inhabiting the Andaman group of islands and the Shompens and the Nicobarese living in the Nicobar Group of islands, constituting about 9% of the total population of these islands. Former four tribes belong to Nigrity racial stock while later two belong to Mongoloid race. Prior to colonization, the negrito population was more than 5000. On account of the adverse impact of contact with settlers, some of the negrito tribes have become endangered. It is evident from the present population figure of Great Andamanese, onges and Jarawas, which is 50, 101 and 300 respectively. Considering their dwindling population A&N Administration has settled the Great Andamanese in strait island in 1974 and the onges at little Andaman while the Jarawas live in the Western coast of south and middle Andaman islands. The Jarawas completely depends on the forest and the marine resources by exploiting traditional means of hunting, fishing, and food gathering. The Sentinalise inhabit the north sentinel islands and they are still unfriendly and are inaccessible hence we do not know much about them.