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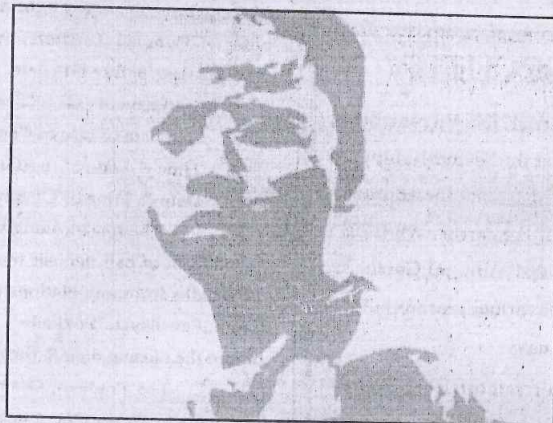
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Jarawas in Tirur: Irreversible Cultural Damage!

By Zubair Ahmed

Port Blair, Nov. 20: One after the other, news about illicit barter between settlers and Jarawa tribe and exploitation are pouring in from Tirur since change of guard in AAJVS. In a fresh incident reported from Tirur, one Ashush Samaddar was arrested by Police on a tip off about a group of Jarawas being sheltered by him and for serving liquor in exchange of 20 kg of venison. The Jarawa youth Kunu along with two members were found at the poacher's residence.



Of late, many incidents of transgressions are reported from Tirur. It has also come to light that four poachers, in connivance with a few staff in AAJVS headquarters are engaged in such

activities. Three of them who are suppliers of implements to AAJVS also engage in illicit barter with the Jarawas. A couple of months back, one such person Saurab Biswas who was detected

with a group of Jarawas was chased and apprehended by Coast Guard. However, he was let off after it was confirmed by AAJVS headquarters that he was an authorized supplier

to AAJVS and also engaged in transporting Jarawas in his Dinghy officially. Later, his tender was cancelled. But, he managed to get fresh tender to one of his kin, Narayan Biswas.

The illegal liaison by such unscrupulous staff of AAJVS and police personnel posted in Tirur is a matter of serious concern as it fails all efforts to curb the menace of illegal poaching inside the Reserve and the unwarranted exposure.

Moreover, the cultural damage among Jarawas caused due to the prolonged excesses of six to seven years seems to be irreversible. The recent incident of a scuffle between two Jarawas under the influence of liquor did

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not attract the attention of the policymakers. The episode was given a different colour and concealed. For a decade, Tirur Jarawas remained under abrupt neglect and exploitation, with police personnel as well as the Tribal Welfare Officer posted in Tirur having a free reign.

It is also learnt that a few settlers were also indulging in sexual exploitation of the Jarawas. Some of them have

erected small sheds behind their houses, where liquor is served and obscene films shown to Jarawas and lured to indulge in sexual acts. Though, such incidents were very much in the knowledge of police as well as the officer posted in Tirur, they turned blind towards it.

After the change of Tribal Welfare Officer posted in Tirur, and increased watch, Jarawas, who were addicted to alcohol

are now desperate for their daily quota.

Without a total overhaul of the Jarawa police outpost at Tirur and an ironhanded approach in dealing with the poachers, the situation will only get worse. However, in most cases, the culprits seemed to be let off after minor or petty charges filed against them, making a mockery of the provisions of ANPATR.

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