

(179)

Summary record of discussions held on 4th February, 1984 in the Ministry of Home Affairs on matters connected with construction of 87-110 kms. stretch of Andaman Trunk Road and association of Anthropological Survey of India with the study of Jarawas.

The list of participants is at Annexure.

2. Shri S. Narayanaswamy, Additional Secretary introduced the subject which was further elaborated by Shri P. Tripathy, Joint Secretary (Tribal Development) and Shri R.V. Pillai, Joint Secretary (U.T.). It was noted that the Jarawa tribe still continues to be isolated from developmental activities and the contacts with them and the Administration have been far too less. According to A & N Island Administration 5 contacts were made in 1980-81, 3 in 1981-82 and 6 in 1982-83. Recently, however, in January, 1984 a group of about 60 Jarawas met the members of the Advisory Committee on Primitive Tribes for A & N Islands when a representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs (Shri D.N. Tewari, Director) was also present. The precise population of Jarawa tribe is still not known for no Census enumeration was ever done. The estimated population now is 250. It is gathered that their number has been reducing. It was felt that urgent attention for their health-care and medical facilities on a regular and sustained manner, apart from ensuring adequate food supply, assumed paramount importance.
3. Smt. Kapila Vatsayayan, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Education and Culture expressed the view that all out efforts must be made to conserve the so called diminishing species. It will be a pity to allow them to be extinct. Apart from Jarawas, Andamanese, Sentinelese, etc. she also referred in this connection to the plight of Cholanaiickens, the cave-dwellers of Kerala. She felt that the concern of Anthropological Survey of India (A.S.I.) to conserve such diminishing tribes does not and should not contradict with the developmental approach for such tribes. The opening up of the areas might increase contacts with the outsiders and unless the Jarawa tribe are prepared to meet the new situation their ecological balance will be disturbed which might affect adversely their food base. Normally, a buffer zone to absorb the ill effects of such contacts on the tribe could be thought of. The A.S.I. had definitely a positive role to play in conserving/expanding the declining tribes and help reach the developmental benefits. This role was to be carried out in consonance with the changed situations where developmental approach for the group had to be understood. Mrs. Vatsayayan felt that all possible steps towards socialisation of the Jarawas should be taken. She felt that where language is a barrier, dancing with a group could be one of the processes of socialisation. She expressed the hope that she might be able to visit the Islands to study at close quarters more about the problems and suggest further measures to make increased friendly contacts with the Jarawas, to which the Lt. Governor responded with welcome.
4. Shri M.L. Karpani, Lt. Governor of A & N Islands explained in detail the efforts made by the U.T. administration in increasing contacts with the Jarawa tribe. He narrated in detail his

...../-