

468 in 1901 to the present estimated number of 250. The Committee is alarmed at the prospect of a total fade-out of the Great Andamanese in the near future and the Onge in the not too distant future. Of late, the Islands Administration has taken in hand certain measures for these two groups and, yet, the negative numerical trend continues. Though we are not strictly concerned with these two groups, we cannot help making the suggestion that this matter needs urgent deep scrutiny. They also provide a perspective for taking appropriate measures for survival and development of the Jarawa.

6. From the records available, previous experience of the members, knowledge gathered during their visit to the Islands, inspection and discussions, the Committee cannot but help observe that the so-called "hostility" of the Jarawa tribe seems to have led to its preservation while the Great Andamanese and the Onge which had continued to have friendly contact with the outsiders have been undergoing decline. It seems that the Jarawa tribe has been led to use hostility as an effective shield against external onslaughts. The existing administrative demarcation of the Jarawa Reserve, however, imperfectly observed in practice, might have also helped them to not only enjoy a command area for hunting and gathering but to also protect them. Thus nurtured in seclusion they have been able to maintain their culture and life-style in harmony with the ecosystem. Our view in the matter of their induction into the modern age and technology is that this should certainly be done on their own terms after they have gained some cognizance of the contact situation. In the context of our review of the fate of the other declining Negrito tribes in the Andaman Islands who have been exposed to massive friendly contact, we feel that the Jarawa need continued and effective protection for quite some time to come. At the same time, carefully planned measures under the guidance of specialists, particularly anthropologists, be taken up for establishing contacts with them which would ultimately lead to mutual understanding between the Jarawa and the outside population.