

A brief note on the Six Scheduled Tribes of A & N Islands and their status

There are in all six Scheduled Tribes in Andaman and Nicobar Islands viz. Great Andamanese, Onges, Jarawas, Sentinelese, Shompens and Nicobarese. These tribes are notified as Scheduled Tribes by the President of India under Article 342 (1) of the Indian Constitution (Andaman & Nicobar Islands Scheduled Tribes Order 1959).

The tribes other than Nicobarese are classified as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs). They are at the distinct socio-cultural stage with a primitive technology. They are essentially hunters and gathers and as such constitute a special group among the STs and required a different approach for their well-being. The Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs) is looked after by an autonomous body known as Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti (AAJVS), which is headed by the Hon'ble Lt. Governor, A&N Islands.

The two primitive tribes namely the Great Andamanese and Onges, have been settled by the Administration and they are provided with coconut plantation for their livelihood. Administration creates infrastructure and provides free rations and clothes to them permanent houses, potable water supply, electrification at settlement, free medical care, school and other amenities like Police Wireless for communication, community Hall, footpath, jetty for berthing of the boats etc. The Administration has introduced a economic activities like rearing of poultry for the tribals to improve their nutritional status. The Jarawa tribe inhabits the western parts of South and Middle Andaman Islands. In December 2004 a policy has been framed and notified to protect the Jarawas for the harmful effects of exposure and contact with the outside world. The Shompens inhabit the interior terrains of Great Nicobar Island in the Nicobars District. Shompens practice horticulture, hunting, fishing and gathering. Administration provides free ration under BPL Scheme, free medical care and iron tool kits etc to Shompens.