

move out of Strait Island on first opportunity and indulge in wrong activities like drinking which tells badly not only upon their health but also on their outlook towards themselves.

Therefore, it is urgent to take some steps to stabilise and revitalise their cultural decadence by diverting the attention of Welfare/Development Schemes towards providing cultural inputs also rather than providing materialistic support only.

Though the Great Andamanese have taken up the formal education but they are forgetting their own language which is basic for cultural development of a tribe. In the new administrative structure, a Linguist must be posted there who will also implement the cultural revitalisation programmes.

The Onges :-

The Onges is a Negrito tribe inhabiting the Little Andaman Island at a distance of about 100Km to the south of Port Blair. The Onges are basically a hunting, gathering and fishing tribe. **Presently 105 in number**, they were settled at two places viz. Dugong Creek and South Bay in Little Andamans in 1976. Like the Andamanese settlement in Strait Island, these two establishments at Dugong Creek and South Bay were also provided with the requisite facilities like timber huts, drinking water, electricity, a primary School, a medial Sub-Centre and a community centre. Two coconut plantations were raised. A helipad and a jetty were also constructed at Dugong Creek. A full time Medical Officer, an ANM, a Social Worker, a school teacher and a Plantation-in-charge at Dugong Creek and a Plantation-in-charge at South Bay were posted. A part from scaled free ration and clothes, the Onges are given some cash allowance also to meet their requirements.

The problems of the Onges are similar to those of Great Andamanese but their intensity is less. Onges so far have not taken up the formal education despite the posting of teachers for last 14 years. Their present **literacy level is less than 5%**. Their clan vital has been on wane. The dole system has made them indolent and over dependent upon the hospitality of the Admn. Their cultural decadence has been accelerated due to their contact with the outsider world at an unequal footing.

In their case also, development/ welfare programme need to be diverted towards providing of cultural inputs rather than materialistic support alone. The second level primer in Onges