

The Jarawa :-

The Jarawas is one of the four Negrito tribes of A & N Islands earlier in-habiting the length and breadth of Great Andaman Island. Now they live on the western coast of South and Middle Andamans. First friendly contact was made with them in Feb. 1974 Thereafter such contacts, are being made at periodic intervals.

It has, however, been felt that no enduring progress has been made in consolidating the friendly relations with these tribals as they still continue to ambush the people and plunder banana and iron implements from the settlement areas on the eastern side of Middle and South Andamans. Quite often these contacts turn into mere routine of taking gift articles and dropping them for the Jarawas. The then Lt. Governor, therefore, directed that the present policy of the Administration towards this tribe should be reviewed. Accordingly, a Seminar was organised by the Tribal Welfare Department in the month of December, 1995, wherein experts from all over India were invited to discuss the present policy of the Administration towards the primitive tribes, particularly the Jarawas and the Sentinelese. The participants to the Seminar included Directors of Anthropological Survey of India, Zoological Survey of India, Central Institute of Indian Languages (Mysore), some eminent Sociologists and Anthropologists, besides a representative of the Bharat Adim Janjati Sevak Sangh, New Delhi.

After making a field visit to the Jarawa and the Sentinelese area, the Expert Group recommended that the laid down policies and approaches of the Govt. of India in the light of associated constitutional commitments should continue to be respected in respect of the Negrito groups of Jarawas and the Sentinelese as well. All the participants felt that in spite of their's (i.e. the Jarawas and the Sentinelese) being a unique situation, there does not seem to be any alternative to the 'policy of integration' which is an agreed-upon policy at the Central Government level. It was, however, felt that due to inadequate knowledge about the aborigins of Andamans, an assessment of their problems, as of now, was far from satisfactory. Hence, knowledge of their language, socio-economical and psychological traits and physical and biological parameters was required for a proper understanding of their problems. The Expert Group, therefore, recommended that a pilot project should be launched in the first quarter of 1996 to understand the material culture, health problems, nutrition profile and language basics of the Jarawas. The Contact Team may comprise of a Medical Scientist, one or two Anthropologists, Linguists, Biologists and one or two people familiar with the ground situation and the area. The contact expeditions may be planned