

There was a Public Interest Litigation in the Calcutta High Court in the context of this sudden change in the behaviour of Jarawas i.e. their shedding of the age-old hostility towards outsiders and intense interaction with non-Jarawas. The High Court in its judgement order dated 9th April 2001 issued certain directions in the matter of the welfare of the Jarawas.

In terms of the above directions the Govt. of India, Ministry of Home Affairs have constituted an Expert Committee under the convensorship of Lt. Governor, A & N Islands vide notification dated 21.7.2001 to go into the issues relating to the change in behaviour of Jarawas and suggest remedial measures for their welfare and development.

The Expert Committee has submitted its report on the Jarawas on 28.7.2003 to the High Court of Calcutta, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India and Andaman and Nicobar Administration. A policy decision, plan and programmes for the well-being of the Jarawa tribe will be drawn up by the A & N Administration and Govt. of India after considering the opinions and suggestions of the anthropologists and other experts world over within a period of six months. Such final policy decision and plan programmes for Jarawas will be placed before the High Court for appropriate final order and hence the welfare programmes will be initiated thereafter.

The Expert Committee has gone into depth on the causes leading to the Jarawas coming out into the open and also submitted a detailed list of suggestions and recommendations for the well-being of this tribe. The decision of the High Court of Calcutta is awaited. However, it is informed that there is no scarcity of food or water resources for this tribe within their reserve area which is rich with marine resources.