

Poaching of vital resources such as wild pig and honey from within the Jarawa Reserve continues, often in connivance with law enforcement personnel. In May of this year, poachers illegally entered the Jarawa reserve and stole honey that the Jarawa had stored. Honey, which the Jarawa collect with special skills and at great risk, is priceless to them for its nutritional and spiritual value. The authorities did not punish the intruders or the poachers—instead, they forcibly moved the Jarawa band to a different location. Such high-handed action is completely contrary to the A&N administration's own Jarawa Policy, now rendered into law.

Further, an alarming increase is evident in the inducements offered to the Jarawa by local villagers in exchange of vital forest produce. These inducements include addictives peddled by unscrupulous individuals to create dependencies, so that Jarawa will be forced to bring out their most essential produce to feed their addictions. The scale of poaching is also far greater than before, with both the police and the social workers either complicit or callous to these developments. Repeated reports emerge of intoxicated Jarawa women being available for sex. The policy directives for training and sensitization of personnel and villagers regarding the rights and privileges of the Jarawa have been completely ignored.

Again, the failure is one of implementation: the Jarawa policy formulated by the Andaman administration in May 2004 and endorsed by the Kolkata High Court is adequate to protect the Jarawa—if enforced. The following points quoted from the Jarawa Policy document clearly demonstrate the extent to which the administration has contravened its own stated intentions:

- The policy of maximum autonomy to the Jarawas with minimum and regulated intervention shall be adopted by the Government towards the Jarawa.
- The quality of intervention with Jarawas will be managed with care and sensitivity through suitably trained and re-oriented personnel, in consultation with and evaluation by anthropologists and experts.
- No exploitation of natural resources within the Jarawa reserve by any non-tribal including Government agencies will be allowed. Necessary measures shall be initiated to curb even occasional extraction of resources from the Jarawa territory by the non-Jarawas. The A& N Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956 shall be amended to provide stringent punishment for poaching in the Jarawa territory and for exploitation of the Jarawas.

The noblest of stated intentions look hypocritical when no effort is made to implement them. If instead the necessary measures to execute these wise policy directives are effectively put in place, the Jarawa have a chance of well-being and security within their forest home. We strongly urge the creation of an empowered local body consisting of well-known anthropologists and NGOs that the administration is required to consult prior to taking any action regarding the Jarawa. The body will help the administration sensitively implement the legally mandated policies pertaining to the Jarawa.