

The matter relating to Jarawa Tribe of Andamans Islands

The Convenor of INTACH, Andaman and Nicobar Islands Chapter has made the following specific observations relating to the Jarawa viz. poaching, exchange of forest produce by the Jarawa, exploitation of Jarawas by the non-tribals, extraction of the natural resources from the Jarawa area, amendment to the Regulation protecting tribals, local empowered body to advise the Administration etc.

Forest area inhabited by the Jarawa has been notified as Reserve under the A & N Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956. The Jarawa tribal reserve land and coastal sea area have been recently increased so that enough resources are available for the Jarawas to subsist. The extraction / exploitation of the resources has been prohibited under the above said law. Entry of non-tribals to the tribal reserve itself is not allowed unless a permit is issued by the Competent Authority. The Tribal reserve is also a reserve forest and therefore, the resources are protected not only by the Police but also by the Forest authorities to ensure that Jarawas have the sole and absolute access to the resources.

All out efforts are being made by the field officials belonging to the Welfare Department, Police and Forest to avoid interface of Jarawa with the non-tribals so that socio-economic exploitation of Jarawas by the unscrupulous elements is prevented. The movement of people on the road adjoining to the Jarawa reserve is also regulated through the convoy system of traffic to avoid interaction of tourists and other non-tribals with the Jarawas.

The officials of the various Departments and the Agencies involved in the protection and welfare of the Jarawas are being sensitized to deal with the delicate matters relating to the Jarawa. Further the villagers and other non-tribals are also being educated to be responsible and sensitive to the Jarawas so that the Jarawas may lead their own way of life not interfered and exploited by the outsiders.

The provisions of the above said regulations are being amended to make it more stringent and have a deterrent effect on the non-tribals to ensure protection of the Jarawas. A proposal in this context has been sent to Govt. of India.