

XIV) There has been reference to alleged starvation of Jarawas in the writ petition. This presumption is also wrong due to lack of knowledge of the correct position. The matter has been studied by the Anthropological Survey of India and their analysis which is also the view of the administration is that the Jarawas reserve which is spread over the length of tropical rain forest is a repository of floral and faunal wealth. The Jarawas are a foraging population and their requirements are not to be assessed in terms of the requirements of settled / sedentary population. While this administration had done enough to offer them food items like Banana or coconuts, it is in correct to presume that the Jarawas sustains themselves with this food. The traditional food items of Jarawas collected by themselves and noted by the researchers of ASI are tubers, wild fruits, fish, cells, wild pigs, turtle, turtle eggs and honey. Gifted items like coconut, banana and so on are by no means their staple food. Non exposure to Jarawas on the part of non-tribal settlers including peoples from mainland and a lack of understanding of their nomadic life style as hunters and gatherers lead to totally erroneous presumptions regarding their real needs. The Jarawas are well adapted to a seasonal variation in their preferred food supplies in the forest, in contrast with the sedentary mainland / settled population who try to ensure a uniform supply of essential commodities through out the year, and tend to assess the requirements of the Jarawas using the same yardstick which is a totally erroneous approach.

XV) In the writ petition, there have been suggestions that the Jarawa should be treated in a manner similar to the Great Andamanese and the Onges in particular. This again is erroneous and needs elaboration. In case of the Great Andamanese, they were considered numerous at one time and are estimated to have been of the order of nearly 10,000 towards the end of the last century. But their number began diminishing not only with the arrival of the Britishers but more so with the establishment of penal settlement in the last century with the import of hitherto unknown diseases from the mainland to the extent that there numbers had diminished to only 19 by the mid 1960s. With a view to saving this tribes from complete extinction, they were re-settled at Strait Island in 1969. Over the last three decades, their numbers has gradually increased and is now reached 41. They are administered by the AAJVS through the establishment of a co-operative society and some educational facilities have also been extended to them.