

However, it should be pointed out that it is the belief of the ASI, Doctors and Officers of the administration that the Great Andamanese have completely fore shaken their capacity for self-reliance and are no longer a vibrant vigorous people like the Jarawas. In so far as the Onges are concerned, here again they are spread over Little Andaman Islands, and with the re-settlement of refugees from the mainland in 1967, two Onge settlements were created at Dugong Creek and in South Bay in these island, and they were re-grouped and settled here owing to local compulsion. Their number today is only 95. Here again the AAJVS administered a co-operative society for their welfare and a primary school has also been established for Onges among other things. However, like the Great Andamanese, to a considerable extent the Onges are also a dependent people who rely / depend on the AAJVS and the administration for their needs and are no longer a self-reliant and vigorous people, though a limited extent that they still go out to hunt. The respondent like to submit that the Administration, while doing everything necessary to assist the Jarawas with the medical aids whenever required and such food assistance as may be necessary in their judgement from time to time are firmly of the view that the Jarawa should continue to be encouraged to reside in their traditional forest habitats. At the same time, it is not to be construed to mean that the Jarawas should be confined in jungles only, indefinitely. This administration believes in the gradual integration of the Jarawas and not their assimilation. This would have been done over a period of time which cannot be definitely defined at present and it may be spread over several decades. Whatever is done will be done without compromising on the self-reliance and independence of Jarawas, or forcing the abandonment of their culture. The Administration is categorically opposed to any scheme on the line of the Onges or Great Andamanese re-settlement, because while both the schemes no doubt, helped in preserving these two indigenous tribes from extinction, and infact contributing towards their increase in numbers over the last 2-3 decades. They have nevertheless lead to vastly diminished self-reliance, independence, and self-esteem of these once vibrant tribes. In case of the Jarawas, there is no such apprehension at all regarding diminishing of numbers and if they continue to be by and large healthy. To take away from their forest habitat and confine them in smaller settlement/reserves would be a serious error.

XVI) Summing this background notes, the Respondents submits to the Hon'ble High Court : -