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Comments on 'Problems faced by the Jarawa community and proposal for their rehabilitation and/or settlement'.

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1. The major problems faced by the Jarawa is that they had to share their resources like land, forest and water with immigrants to these islands since mid-nineteenth century. They had to undergo traumatic experiences during the colonial rule. After independence, their hardship became somewhat less when in 1957 a chunk of forest in South and Middle Andamans was notified as Jarawa Reserve and exclusive right of the forest and adjacent water was bestowed on them.
2. It has been suggested that the Jarawa are suffering from scarcity of food and water. We, however, do not agree with such a suggestion on basis of the information collected by us on the people and their habitat. Let us consider a few points:
  - a) The forest of Andaman & Nicobar group of islands comes under the tropical rain forest category and as such is the repository of floral & faunal wealth. The carrying capacity of the rain forest for a foraging population is 2 to 4 persons per square mile. Accepting it as a yardstick and considering the present state of the forest in the Jarawa Reserve (Area <sup>405.6</sup> 250 Sq. miles/649 Sq.km). it appears that the Jarawa Reserve is tentatively sufficient for the Jarawa as their estimated population is between 300 to 350. This postulation clearly shows that the Jarawa reserve is just sufficient to provide them with adequate food resources at present.

Had the Jarawa Reserve not been sufficient in terms of food resources, the Jarawa would have always been found at those points from where food items like banana or coconut are distributed to them. On the contrary they follow the rhythm of the seasons and accordingly move in the jungle to collect the food