

REASONS FOR EXCLUSION OF THE SETTLEMENT VILLAGES FROM THE BUFFER ZONE

In the wake of the Hon'ble Supreme Court's interim order dated 2.7.2012 in SLP Civil No. 12125 of 2010 directing the Andaman and Nicobar Administration not to allow any commercial or tourism related activities in violation of the prohibition contained in the Administration's notification dated 30.12.2007 and the ~~amended~~ Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Amendment Regulation 2012 empowering the Administrator to declare any area which is adjacent and contiguous to the reserve area as Buffer Zone and specify the limits of such area and may from time to time in the like manner alter such limits, and defining commercial establishment barring any trade or business or services for consideration with more 20 employees and annual turnover of one crores rupees or more, tourist establishment which comprises resorts, restaurants, bars, boarding and eating houses, paying guest accommodations, the Administration had to revisit the buffer zone notification of 2007 in the interest of Jarawas as well as settlers living in the revenue villages across the buffer zone. In fact the livelihood activities of the settlers were likely to be affected adversely with the coming into force of the amended regulation and its implementation vis-à-vis buffer zone.

The other reasons for exclusion of the revenue villages that were earlier included in the buffer zone is the following, among others

- 1) There were only a few revenue villages, where the Jarawa movement was frequent compared to many other villages where there was no movement at all. As such continuing such villages in the buffer zone was considered of no use.
- 2) Baratang island comprising four villages separated from Jarawa reserve by creek with width of approximately 500mts is no longer visited by the Jarawa so exclusion of Baratang Island from Buffer zone does not affect the interest of Jarawa tribe adversely. This fact was based on the Jarawa movement register maintained by the field functionaries of the AAJVS posted at Middle Strait, a Contact Point.
- 3) Similarly, seaward sides of the western and eastern boundary of Jarawa tribal reserve area as the Jarawa are used to shallow water fishing.
- 4) The essential public services like banks, transports, electricity, schools, health institutions and agricultural related activities were to be continued which caters to the needs of the villagers.
- 5) In all these villages, petty commercial establishments like eateries, ration shop, tea shop, tailoring, general grocery shop, cloth shop, saloons, vegetable marts etc were to be allowed to continue functioning as these are catering to the daily needs of the local residents and also in no way harmful to the Jarawa tribe.