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Dear *Shri Jairam Ramesh ji*

Please refer to your D.O. letter No. 282/VIP/MOS (C) 2006 dated 28.08.2006 regarding the genetic research by the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad by taking 10 ml blood samples from Jarawas and Onges. It is mentioned here that Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) located at Port Blair had undertaken a project to immortalize the cells and maintain the cell-lines of the tribes of these islands in collaboration with CCMB earlier.

They had collected blood samples from Onges, Andamanese and Nicobarese and buccal swabs from Jarawas along with the CCMB team and had transformed these cells. The immortalized cells were taken to CCMB for maintaining there. Part of the cell-lines was also stored in RMRC for further studies. The blood samples were also collected from Jarawas during an outbreak of malaria among them. These samples were used to study their genetic susceptibility for malaria in collaboration with Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata. Earlier samples were collected from accessible tribes for testing for anti-leptospirosis antibodies.

Biological samples like blood are sources of enormous amount of information and it may be difficult to ensure the security of such information and there is a chance of this information going out of the country. Therefore, it will be better if any proposal to draw biological samples from tribes of A & N Islands is examined keeping in view the ICMR ethical guidelines for biomedical research involving human subject and with the permission from concerned Ministry in Government of India.

Further, as per the Jarawa Policy framed by the Ministry of Home Affairs and notified by the A & N Administration on 21.12.2004 the meaningful research on the Jarawas is allowed under the advice of Andaman Adim Janjati Vikash Samiti (AAJVS) to further the understanding of their life and culture including their traditional knowledge. However, it shall be ensured strictly that the confidentiality of genetic resources on the Jarawas is maintained and not used for commercial exploitation by any agency/ organization which is not directly concerned with the welfare and protection of the Jarawas.

*with best wishes & regards*

Yours sincerely,

*M.M. Lakhera*  
(M.M. Lakhera)

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