

93
coconuts resulted in increased food supplies. The Jarawa were themselves tending these plantations.

Breakaway group

Another argument given in favour of bringing the Jarawa into the outside world is the existence of what has been called a "breakaway group". This small group of 6-7 young girls, 8-9 orphans and few older men have broken away from the main tribes and set up huts close to settler villages and police outposts. Their behaviour pattern and desire to socialise with non-tribals is proof of the fact that the Jarawa are undergoing a significant behavioural change. The obverse side of this argument is that the young girls have been alienated due to harassment by a few Jarawa youth who have come under the influence of settlers and outsiders. The orphan children have no one to protect them and the older men are unable to forage for themselves. The important fact, however, is that this breakaway group has grown from 8 to 22 in 4 years, representing a crisis in the making within Jarawa society. At the same time it is asserted that this does not reflect the mainstream behaviour of the Jarawa.

Vulnerability of this breakaway group is proven by the fact that a Jarawa girl from this group delivered a non-Jarawa child, who in keeping with Jarawa practice, was immediately killed. We also heard reports that Jarawa girls from this group are frequenting police *chowkis* at night. This has grave implications. Recent studies by the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) show that the Jarawa and other Negrito groups of Andamans have the susceptibility gene for HIV, making them extremely vulnerable to AIDS.

Poaching

Poachers have a free hand as far as the west coast is concerned. 104 cases of poaching have been reported in 3 years; for every reported case there are 10 unreported cases. Venison and meat of wild boar is freely sold in markets around the Reserve. In June this year, a Jarawa boy who raised an alarm against poaching was mercilessly beaten up by the poachers.