

The problem of ATR centers around the protection of culture and identity of Jarawas and the socioeconomic requirements of the 50% of inhabitants of A & N Islands.

Jarawas belong to hunter-gatherer primitive tribe and represent one of the several isolated groups of short stature peoples known as "Negritos" resembling African pygmies (in physical features) surviving in isolated parts of Asia such as Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Molecular genetic data support the view that the Andamanese (including Jarawa and Onge) represent the ancient human substratum in Asia, and the Great Andamanese, Onges and Jarawas are diversified; the genetic diversity is low because of small populations (Thangaraj et al, 2003). Recent studies (Thangaraj et al, 2005) showed that the Onge and the Great Andamanese have evolved in the Andaman Islands independently from other South and Southeast Asian populations (see also Chapter 1).

The Jarawas inhabit the Western region and coastal belt of South and Middle Andaman and the exact population is not known but according to some, the number is 240 as per 2001 census or 317 as per the ANI Administration (Meena Gupta 2007). Hostility among four tribes exists, particularly between Jarawas and Great Andamanese who used to be in large numbers and occupying larger territory and the same hostility of Jarawas towards non-autochthons existed through out pre-and post independence history of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. According to Kiran Dhingra (2005) it is difficult to say "As to how many of the Jarawas remained alive when the British handed over the power to the Government of India. The census count of 1931 put them at 500. Their numbers also suffered losses on account of the Japanese invasion of Islands.

The British made several expeditions between 1870 and 1946 to win over the Jarawas but all failed except for some casualties on both sides. When the settlements expanded, ambushes on the settlers began to take place and to provide protection to settlers, the Bush Police was formed. The net result was reductions in population of Jarawas. After independence, Forest Department allowed feral elephants to roam and forest guards found change in the behaviours of Jarawas who did not transfix them with their arrows. This was perhaps the first change occurred in Jarawas, although two minor attacks were