

A Status note on welfare of Jarawa tribe and other 'Particularly Vulnerable Tribes' of A&N Islands

There are six Scheduled Tribes in Andaman & Nicobar Islands viz. Great Andamanese, Onges, Jarawas, Sentinelese, Shompens and Nicobarese. The tribes other than Nicobarese are classified as Particularly Vulnerable Tribes (PTGs). To look after the welfare of these PTGs, an autonomous body namely Andaman Adm Janjati Vikas Samiti (AAJVS) is functioning under the Chairmanship of Lt. Governor, A & N Islands. It has a General Body and Executive Council which meets periodically. The General Body lays down policies and programmes for the welfare of PTGs. The composition of General Body of AAJVS is attached at **Annexure - I**.

The Executive Council is also chaired by Lt. Governor, A & N Islands and Chief Secretary, A & N Administration is its Vice Chairman. The Executive Council is responsible for the management and administration of the Samiti in accordance with the rules made there under. The composition of Executive Council is attached at **Annexure-II**. The Tribal Welfare Department provides 100% Grant-in-aid to AAJVS out of its Annual Plan.

The AAJVS has set up field units at various places in the island territory for the welfare of the PTGs. The Great Andamanese with a population of 52 have been settled at Strait Island in Middle Andaman, while the Onges with a population of 100 have been settled at Dugong Creek in Little Andaman. They are provided with necessary amenities like houses, drinking water, electricity, schools, medical sub centres etc. They are being supplied with monthly ration at the prescribed scales to meet their nutritional requirements. Sentinelese tribe remains in isolation, inhabiting an island namely North Sentinel Island. They are hunters and gatherers, whose population is estimated to be 100. The Administration has adopted a policy of 'no contact' with this tribe and the island is off-limits to all outsiders.

Shompens are a semi nomadic tribe inhabiting the Great Nicobar Island and their population is 398 as per 2001 census. The Administration is providing necessary medical coverage, ration articles at their camps only when the Shompens seek this assistance. Entry of non-tribal into Tribal Reserve areas is prohibited under the provision of Andaman & Nicobar islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956.

The Jarawas, with an estimated population of 362, inhabit the forests of western part of South and Middle Andaman Islands. The Govt. of India, Ministry of Home Affairs in consultation with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Andaman & Nicobar Administration has framed a separate Policy on the Jarawa Tribe, on the basis of the recommendations of the experts. The Policy was notified in December, 2004 and is being implemented strictly to ensure protection and welfare of Jarawas. In order to provide a rich resource of forest based traditional food like wild pig, turtle, honey and fish etc, the Jarawa reserve area has been increased to 1028 Sq. Kms in 2004 from 847 Sq Km earlier. Exclusive marine resource base has also been increased by declaring coastal waters upto 5 Kms from west coast as tribal reserve. Exclusive Medical Wards in Primary Health Centres, located at Tushnabad in South Andaman,