

224/255

forest in the Andamans to be declared as reserve, what will happen after the population crosses 500 (the present population is 349), given the limited resources at their disposal, needs to be pondered. Very likely the pressure on land and resources would lead to increasing conflicts not just between the Jarawas and non-tribals, but also amongst the members of the tribe itself. The Govt. must be prepared for this scenario over the next 10-15 years.

There is need for a visible demarcation of the Jarawa reserve; that Jarawa children showing interest in a Primary School or Anganwadi Centre should not be sent away but sensitively accommodated; that the Jarawas must not become like the Onges and the Great Andamanese who now show signs of depression and suicidal tendencies. Though skin disease among the Jarawas, introduced by well meaning but ill-informed visitors through gifts of synthetic cloth, which they do not wash, not being introduced to this practice, has reduced to a great extent, the continuing fear that contact may introduce infections, unknown to them or the way to treat such infections with traditional medicine, that may create havoc persists. Government should not introduce any change in their life style, diet, medical regime of the Jarawa tribes, because such uninformed actions can do irreparable harm, in spite of best intentions. The movement of non-tribals in the Jarawa reserve must be restricted; the staff involved in the welfare of the Jarawas and also the villagers may be sensitized; and the behavioural changes taking place must be monitored effectively.

As regards protection of natural habitat, it was explained that there are two channels of communication and alerting. The staff posted at nearby areas and