

Review of Jarawa Policy

Views of Ministry of Tribal Affairs

The Jarawas community has been notified as Scheduled Tribe under Article 342 of the Constitution and identified a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PTG) in the A&N Islands. On the orders of Hon'ble High Court of Calcutta (Circuit Bench at Port Blair). The Ministry of Home Affairs in consultation with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs had formulated the 'Policy on Jarawa tribe of Andaman Islands, 2004'.

The Policy lays emphasis on **protecting** the Jarawas from harmful effects of exposure and contact with the outside world while they are not physically, socially and culturally prepared for such interface, and on **preserving** the social organization, **mode of subsistence** and cultural identity of the Jarawa community. The Policy envisages maximum autonomy to the Jarawas with minimum and regulated intervention by the Government. There shall be no intervention in the cultural life of the Jarawas and they will be left at liberty to develop according to their own genius and at their own pace. No attempts shall be made to bring them to the mainstream of society against their conscious will. The policy lay emphasis on **protection** and **preservation**.

In pursuance of decision taken, at the 12th IDA meeting, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and A&N Island Administration, had to opine on the setting up of a Jarawa Tribal Development Authority, as suggested in the report of Sub-Group of Experts set up by the Planning Commission and the role of AAJVS in implementation of the Policy on Jarawa Tribe of Andaman Islands, 2004. A meeting was convened on 11.5.09 at Port Blair under the Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs. It was decided that there is no need for a Jarawa Tribal Development Authority as it would duplicate the work already done by AAJVS and the Tribal Welfare Department of the UT Administration. The AAJVS would be revamped/restructured with the help of professional bodies. Their staff performing such important functions must be adequately trained, compensated and rewarded for good and dedicated work. The General Body and the Executive Council would be reconstituted and their meetings scheduled so as to enable outstation members to participate.

Views of MP A&NI

Compounded by the effects of inbreeding, difficult living conditions of the forests of Andamans and constantly shrinking habitats, the Jarawa population decreased year by year to stand at a mere 300 nos. Owing to their food gathering and hunting habits, requirement of land per head is very large. Although the Administration, guided by a collective decision of experts, has adopted a policy of isolation/no contact