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Samiti (AAJVS) whose composition and tasks are similar to what is now being suggested for JTDA except the fact that this Council deals with the problems and development of all the tribes. The Council is chaired by the Lt. Governor of A&N Islands. If the need is felt, this Council could be strengthened instead of creating a parallel body at the Centre.

### **Andaman Trunk Road ( ATR )**

The Andaman Trunk Road is the spine of the northern group of Islands and has been the subject of much debate as to whether its existence is a cause of threat to the survival of the Jarawa tribe. It may be pointed out that the suggestion made for alternate arrangements for transportation can be examined though at the same time this Administration cannot agree with the suggestion to close ATR completely. The reasons for this are manifold apart from the fact that habitations and settlements exist in the northern group including towns, which are serviced by this road.

Furthermore, the A&N islands are subjected to cyclones and earthquakes more frequently than elsewhere (not to speak of the disaster caused by tsunami which was completely unforeseen and could well happen again). In these circumstances the purpose of disaster management in general and earthquakes in particular as well as providing relief, in such crisis makes it imperative that the ATR should be fully serviceable as a road throughout the year. If this does not happen then inhabitations both tribal and non-tribal would be completely cut off and no alternative arrangements of transportation (either sea or air) will be feasible to cater to such a large demand apart from the fact that weather conditions will not permit such operations. This is also a requirement for defence