

Nicobar Island. They are basically a hunting, gathering and fishing tribe who do a bit of horticulture and rearing of pigs also.

Unlike the Great Andamanese and the Onges, they have not been settled by the AAJVS in one place. However, a Shompen Hut Complex has been built in 1984 at a distance of about 27 Km on the East-West road from Campbell Bay where the Shompens occasionally show up. This Complex consists of an Ashram School, a model Shompen Hut, a medical sub-centre, quarters for the staff and a small garden of banana and lemon. A medical officer, a social worker, a Plantation-in-charge, a teacher, a cook, a ward attendant, trekking assistants, a driver, etc. have been posted to coordinate the various activities. As per latest information, **there are about 161 Shompens** living in 8 camps scattered all over the Great Nicobar Island. Considering the present state of Shompens, it is felt that **they have still not reached the stage where they can be motivated to take up any sustainable economic activity.** However, they are aware of barter trade. Occasionally they show up at the Shompen Hut Complex with the forest produce like honey, resin, etc in exchange of which the AAJVS employees provide them with some essential articles of daily use like rice, dal etc. at subsidised rates.

But due to difficult terrain, and the scattered groups of Shompens into the interior forest it has not been possible to extend sufficient and timely medical coverage to all the groups. Also the unscrupulous activities by the outsiders to exploit the natural resources has not been fully checked.

Under the new administrative structure field establishments will have to be set up at two more places viz. (i) Kopen heat and (ii) Lawful Bay with the posting of an Anthropologist and a Linguist apart from other staff.