Tribal Situation in Andaman & Nicobar Archipelago: Their Anxieties-Our Consciousness some observations

-A. Justin, AnSI
Negrito: Andaman Islands
Ang (Jarawa)
Great Andamanese
Onge
Sentinelese

Nicobar islands
Mongoloid:
Nicobarese
Shompen

*Race as a biological concept discarded, e.g. Negrito is a Spanish derogatory term, which means short-stature people.
Population of A & N Islands at a Glance

Total Population 356265
Male Population 192985
Female Population 163280

Total S. T. Pops 29, 469

Tribal population constitutes 8.27% of the total of A&N Islands pop.

Density of population in A&N Islands 43 person per sq km

*2001 Census decadal growth rate of total pop 26.90%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>1046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4635</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: POP*
Tribal Linguistic Families

- **Austro-Asiatic Family**
  - Mon-Khmer branch
  - Munda branch
  - Khasi, Nicobarese
  - Santhali, Munda, Gond etc

- **Tibeto-Chinese Family**
  - Siamese-Chinese sub-family
  - Tibeto-Burman family
  - Bhotia, Lepcha, Abor, Mismi, Garo, Naga, Lushai etc

- **Dravidian Family**
  - Korwa, Toda, Kurukh or Oroan, Maler, Khond, Gondi etc

- **Indo-European Family**
  - Hajong, Bhilli etc
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Name of Tribes</th>
<th>Habitat</th>
<th>Pop</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ang (Jarawa)</td>
<td>South &amp; Middle Andaman Islands</td>
<td>266-388</td>
<td>2000-2001-2007-July 2011- Aug 2011-Dec 2016-March 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Great Andamanese</td>
<td>Strait Island (Since 1960)</td>
<td>53-55</td>
<td>2001 Census As on date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nicobarese</td>
<td>Nicobar Islands</td>
<td>28,653-38,000</td>
<td>2001 Census Pre-Tsunami findings of AnSI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Onge</td>
<td>Dugong Creek &amp; South Bay of Little Andaman</td>
<td>94-102</td>
<td>2001 Census As on date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sentinelese</td>
<td>North Sentinel Island</td>
<td>150-200</td>
<td>*Estimated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Shompen</td>
<td>Different coastal &amp; interior pockets of Great Nicobar</td>
<td>398-297</td>
<td>2001 Census Post-Tsunami findings of AnSI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Sinai peninsula

African birthplace about 100,000 years ago

Andaman islands
Genetic distance of the Nicobarese

[Mitochondrial DNA variation]


- Malay 0.0039
- Vietnamese 0.0035
- Cambodians 0.0025
- Chinese 0.0040
- Vanuatu 0.0069
ANG (JARAWA) GREAT ANDAMANANESE SENTINELESE ONGE

“Particularly Vulnerable Primitive Groups”
Lông/ Kanālō / Tökahnyi Lông (Great Nicobar)

Distribution of Shómhañp/ Shòm peñ (Shompen) shown in ‘Round black colour
Semi-nomad & Self-contained, Prefer Isolation
&Speak a distinct language of their own
The existence of “Shom--pen” (Shòmpëñ) was first reported by Pastor Rosen, a Danish Missionary in 1831.

Admiral Steen Bille paid the first recorded visit in 1831.

In 1880, De Roepstroff paid three visits, finding a temporary encampment, he was accompanied in 1831 by the Chief Commissioner Colonel T. Cadel.

E. H. Man visited them in 1884 & subsequently main contact with them. His research, together with the findings of Boden Kloss & Anderson were the earliest available data on the Shompen.

Man considered the Shompen (1886) as belonging to the aboriginal stock of the Nicobarese.

According to Boden Kloss, it was for long believed that the interior of Great Nicobar was inhabited by people akin to the Great Andamanese, but the Shompen were an isolated group of primitive Malayans.

It is held that these arguments based on physical features thus remain inconclusive, while future progress on DNA may yield better insight.
• According to Paul Eura, Yaala, Lerkla, Claudia Koomuh, Jacob, Bonniface (Sitaram) & Nicobarese of different villages in Great Nicobar Island (Gr. Nic. Is)

• Two types of Shompen: Identify themselves as ‘Kalay’ who live on the west coast & ‘Këyet’ who live in the east coast. The Nicobarese of Gr. Nic. Is refer to them as Sömhañp (Sumhañp). The Shompen speak a distinct language of their own.

• Further, Paul Eura informs that a band of Shompen (Shòmpēñ) located at Trinket, northeast of Great Nicobar Island, refers to another band a
No! No, time in hand;
No! No! No! Please.
Intruding in our land?
No! Not for lease!
Hoofing to the rivulet,
Yonder there fishing.
Dusk in our hamlet;
Profusely slumbering.
   -A. Justin

Alien provides awfully strange food articles they be; but palatable otherwise
• Their houses are built on stilts to avoid dampness of the earth. Mainly their dwellings are thatched without compressed wall.

• As semi-nomad, they shift from one habitat to another as part of their foraging activity.
Peeling & shaping the stand for the cooking vessel

Cooking vessel made of bark
Bark Cloth

Portable pen for keeping a catch of wild boar (Saroal); preferably young one to be kept alive for domestication

Softwood as fire drill
Livelihood

- As semi-nomad, their main source of livelihood is food-gathering & hunting. Seems their eating habits quite balanced, relish both vegetarian & non-vegetarian
- They cooked their foods in vessels of tree bark of four layers. But of late, most of them acquired aluminium cooking utensils.

- Hunting & fishing are discernible commonly, while most of their horticultural activities are still subsistence in nature, which is precisely, why the Nicobarese of Lông/Kanālö Takahnyi Lông (Great Nicobarese) maintain symbiotic relationship with the Šhompen), which of late is strengthened by reciprocal bartering relationship

- They cultivate tapioca, lemon, chilies, & a native variety of betel-leaves besides yams other varieties of edible roots.
- Foods crops in their horticultural gardens refers to as Yov

- Varieties of kupeng (tubers) & fruits are processed elaborately, which they preserved & served for over three months
Varieties of *kupeng* (tubers) & fruits are processed elaborately, which they preserved & served for over three months.

Their staple foods consists of *larop* or *laroam*, a variety of screw pine tree, an edible fruit or known as pandanus tanctoria, (kewri in Hindi).

*Kaiyyu* per se qualifies to be tapioca or cassava plant that they prepared, a kind of concoction of grated tapioca & coconut.

They fish with five-head spears mostly from the seashores, rivulets creeks, which flow through their habitats throughout the year. Also they collect shell-fish, honey, bulb of the caladium, spathe of areca, fruit of the *nipa* palm.

They prepared fish sauce such as *ria ka, reha* that remains good for sometimes. Salt fish kept in air tight bottles are preserved & consumed.

They hunt throughout the year & invariably, dogs are part of their hunting operations. Hunting is taking place in the surrounding forest.
The Shompen have traditional knowledge of arboriculture & supplement their food source by bee-keeping. As far as division of labour is discernible, men hunt & fish, while womenfolk gather yams & various edible roots.

Basketry & weaving bark cloth are exclusively women, esp. elderly women. In the initial stages of making bark cloth, men extract the bark from a large tree trunk & then cut it into the desired shape & size as well.

Canoe making is males forte, the Nicobarese prefer the Shompen made canoe due because of its sea worthiness. Wich the former bartered with the later.

Birds such as megapode, kaloh, kavov etc are trapped.

Throughout the year, they hunt in surrounding forest such as monitor lizards, iguana, Saroal (wild boars) are hunted down with dog, which are either smoke or singe thoroughly.

Certain parts of Saroal are preserved for quite long time.
Ritualistic practices are noticeable in eating wild boar’s meat (pork). In case a small Saroal (wild oar) is caught alive, it is kept in a pen for domestication.

Their food habits are altering after contact with outsiders, though mostly, they prefer to avoid.

The Shompen have learnt of late, what outsiders require from them.

They have started eating rice, pulse & sugar in addition, which the AAJVS officials provides to them.

As per reliable information gathered from PHC Campbell bay & AAJVS officials, clinical and PF malaria, bleeding gum, pyrexia, buttock abscess

Acute bronchitis, scrotal ulitis gum inflammation

Fungal, rash, viral, scalp & skin infections are common among them.

They are reported to be anaemic (Verma 1989)
In admiration of volunteers approaching the temporary make-shift hut built on elevated inland

Emerged on the road soon after the occurrence of devastating mega earthquake/Tsunami on Dec 24, 2004

Post-Tsunami situation: In a state of awe with gift articles that volunteers provided
NICOBARESE
The Nicobarese of different twelve Nicobar Islands, are relatively sturdy and resilient have accepted the challenge of change and have even flourished and multiplied.
Peaceful coexistence of Aminism, Christianity & Muslim in the Nicobar Islands
North Sentinel Island pre-tsunami situation
April 2004 Expedition
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No.</th>
<th>Date of Expeditions and Name of Participants to Represent the An.S.I.</th>
<th>Locations at</th>
<th>Number of individuals Sighted</th>
<th>Attitude &amp; Gifts Distributed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>March 28-30, 1970 T. N. Pandit and the three Onge tribes, named Napi Kotai, Kanjo &amp; Tambolay</td>
<td>South, West and East Coastal, etc</td>
<td>20 children of different ages and sexes and sizable number of adult males and females</td>
<td>Threatened to shoot arrows. Fish, coconuts, bananas, red fabrics, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>March 28-29, 1974 T. N. Pandit</td>
<td>South coastal area</td>
<td>Unable to count were large in numbers</td>
<td>Arrow shpt at contact team. Yorkshire hog, red linen, coconuts, bananas, plastic buckets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>October 24, 1981 T. N. Pandit</td>
<td>South coastal area</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>No gestures of unfriendliness and allowed dropping of usual gifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>January 3, 1982 T. N. Pandit</td>
<td>South coastal area</td>
<td>Unable to count, were large in numbers</td>
<td>No sign of unfriendliness and dropped gifts in presence of Sentinelese on the beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 21, 1982</td>
<td>T. N. Pandit</td>
<td>South coastal area</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Threatened to shoot arrow, but came in dugout canoe to collect gifts from contact team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 28, 1982</td>
<td>T. N. Pandit</td>
<td>South coastal area</td>
<td>None sighted</td>
<td>Usual gifts were dropped on the beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 15, 1982</td>
<td>T. N. Pandit</td>
<td>South coastal area and cruised around the entire Island</td>
<td>No trace of tribesman as seen in earlier contact</td>
<td>Dropping of usual gifts took place on the beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 19, 1982</td>
<td>T. N. Pandit</td>
<td>South coastal area and near Constance Isle (southeast) at South Point</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Shot arrows menacingly and one was shot at P. V. Sinari, Superintendent of Police. Thereafter allowed contact team to place gifts on the beach such as coconuts, buckets, mugs, choppers, freshly caught fish etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 6, 1983</td>
<td>T. N. Pandit</td>
<td>South coastal area</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Holding arrows and bows exhibited and ion agitating moods. Coconuts, buckets, mugs, 25 choppers, sickles, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1, 1985</td>
<td>Dr. J. K. Sarkar</td>
<td>South coastal area</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Brought arrows and bowls but did not shoot. Allowed contact team to put 400 coconuts, 15 kg sweet potatoes and thirty pieces of adzes on the beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Name(s)</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Observations</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 11. | December 27, 1985 | Dr. M. K. Raha  
Dr. D. C. Bhowmik  
Dr. R. Subbakrishna | South coastal area | 13 and 9 adult males and females and 4 children between 6 to 10 years and the fourth one about 15 years. In all 26 tribesmen were sighted. Two females were pregnant. No sign of unfriendliness. 400 coconuts dropped on the beach. |
| 12. | May 1986      | A. Justin | At two different places in Southern coastal area (southeast) | Sighted 98 of different ages and sexes. Gleefully accepted coconuts, bananas, iron pieces etc. Planted seedlings of coconut trees between the Creek (about 2 km away) Near Allen point (south –west) and a hut (about 2 km from the cliff) in mid of south coastal area. |
| 13. | February 11, 1987 | Dr. J. K. Sarkar | South coastal area and South Point, near Constance Isle (southeast) | 27-28 @Shot arrows at the contact team, some fell into a few inches away from the lifeboat. The security officer of Lt. Governor, Shri T. S. Oberoi shot towards the sky to scare the tribesmen. About 100 coconuts, a gunny bag full of dah (choppers) etc., were placed on the beach. |
| 14. | May 27-28, 1987 | Dr. R. Subbakrishna | South coastal area and South Point, near Constance Isle | 13 Threatened to shoot arrows. 100 coconuts dropped on the beach. Citrus saplings were planted on the beach with police personnel protecting with shield and guns |
| 15. | February 9-10, 1988 | Dr. M. K. Raha  
Br. B. K. Das | South coastal area | 4 children, 2 adult women and 21 adult males in all 27 Gleefully accepted the gifts of 18 gunny bags coconuts |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>People</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>March 23, 1988</td>
<td>Dr. M. K. Raha</td>
<td>West coastal area</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Exhibiting gestures of friendliness. Coconuts, red ribbons, mirrors, rubber balls, bead necklaces, etc.</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>November 7-8, 1990</td>
<td>A. Justin</td>
<td>Southern coastal area</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Seem amenable to make friendly contact with outsiders and accepted gifts as usually seen in earlier contacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Two Onge family members of Bada Raju and Chota Raju participated.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A combined friendly contact with the Sentinelese and the Ang (Jarawa) of middle Andaman.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>*January 1991</td>
<td>A. Justin</td>
<td>Southern coastal area</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>*Exhibiting cordial behaviour, Dr. Sanaut Kaul &amp; A. Justin got down from the life boat, approached the Sentinelese who stood on the beach and they collected gifts from the visitors’ hands.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>March 1992</td>
<td>A. Justin</td>
<td>Three different places at southern coastal area</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>In cheerful moods of gaieties, dancing showing their phallus, sitting on haunches, etc., and accepted gifts. A contact team member had mistakenly threw a coconut on a women, intriguingly none of them were provoked.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Note</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>February 12-13. 1993</td>
<td>A. Justin, Four different places at southern coastal area</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>No sign of unfriendliness and happily accepted gift articles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>January 1994</td>
<td>A. Justin, Perhaps the 1st ever contact made at the eastern coastal area</td>
<td></td>
<td>No sign of unfriendliness and happily accepted gift articles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>April 2003</td>
<td>A. Justin, Southern coastal area</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>No sign of unfriendliness and happily accepted gift articles. An Onge built canoe was gifted to the Sentinelese.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
POST-TSUNAMI MAP OF NORTH SENTINEL ISLAND SHOWING THE NEWLY ERUPTED CHUNK OF CORAL REEF ATTRIBUTED TO SEISMIC ACTIVITIES

Total area: 59.67 sq km
Post-tsunami Contact Expedition on Dec 30, 2004

The wreckage of a Panama make vessel positioned near Allen Point in southwest coast (Dec 30, 2004)

A clear view of Jarawa Isle, now connected to the main parent Island in southeast coast
A view of a wreckage of a Panama make vessel named ‘Prime Rose,’ which ran half aground; now seen at the edge of new erupted chunk of landmass between Snake Islet and another Isle near ‘Double Point’ in western coast, apparently larger than the ruined of a vessel at Allen Point (Dec, 2004)
Post-Tsunami view showing Constance Isle now connected to the main landmass of North Sentinel Island in southeast coast.
Dec 30, 2004