

CHAPTER - 4

Traits in Andamanese

Abstract

In the geological past some of the lands—now far disconnected due to wide sea in between—have been joined by the land-bridges or narrow passages of land through which animals could migrate. At times, however, a continent or large land segment may remain cut-off from the other mainlands due to the absence of land-bridges. Australia, for instance, was cut-off from Asia for the last 98 million years till man put his foot on the continent no earlier than a hundred thousand years ago. Populations in such cut-off lands are static and undergo virtually no evolution. These constitute relict or fossil populations exemplified by Kangaroos. Such relict populations are invaluable because the life of past is available in the present for study and analysis. Isolation of Andaman Islands from India, for about fifty thousand years, with endemic aborigines presents a similar relict population of men as Kangaroos of Australia. They preserve the same level of consciousness for our study when the men of Andaman Islands migrated there and remained marooned for the last fifty thousand years.

The warm, humid and rainy Andaman Islands form a nearly three hundred kilometres long chain of several islands around 93°E between 10°N and 14°N. Three of them are more extensive and may at times reach fifty kilometres in width. The nearest mainland for the people of the islands is Myanmar to the north—three hundred kilometres away.

Andamanese people had no communication with the rest of humanity till the British reached there during the last century. The date of migration and entrapment of the Andamanese people is established through a study of their stone implements. Paleolithic tools scattered all over the Andaman do not relate to the Upper Paleolithic flake type implements. A heap of these tools, on the southern tip of Guitar Island, then in continuity with the mainland of Andaman, was discovered in March, 1992. These tools are primitive flake type as well as massive semiflake type and include a variety of choppers, scrapers, diggers and some spears. All the illustrated and observed material is accommodable under Mousterian Industry of the Middle Paleolithic.

Considering that there are only two major sea-level falls during the Middle Paleolithic, one around 70 Ka and the other around 55 Ka, aborigines' migration with available evidence is around 55 Ka. Their marooning in the Island relates to sea level rise between 50 and 40 Ka.

Physically Andamanese are a dwarf people, often figuring as a racial or semi-racial type—Negrito. Their average heights are 149 cms and 140cms for males and females respectively with corresponding weights of 44 and 42 kilograms.

A survey of emotional pattern among the Andamanese suggests that all normal perception and expressions of our species have developed among them before their migration, i.e., before 55 Ka. Further, their emotions related to shyness, guilt and jealousy are feeble and detectable only in their eyes. Face remains expressionless.

In their personal life they do not observe any abstentions but endurance for fasting is seen among them during journeys. They are taught early to be generous and self-denying. **These people make presents of the best they possess.** Traditionally these people love justice, fairness and implementation of fair justice.

“A man becomes spirit after death” is an usual phrase in the Onge language suggesting their staunch belief in rebirth. Rituals and rites for the dead are elaborate and a mother follows them specially in the event of the death a young one with a view to ensuring the return of the same child to her womb in its next birth. They believe in *Puluga* which is possibly the same as *vedic Purukha*—the Creator. Fables and stories about the *Puluga* and his wife are current among these men. As they say “he is angered by the commission of certain sins and he is the judge from whom each soul receives its sentence after death”. There is an equally strong belief in continuance of fruits of action of this birth into the next birth. In addition to *Puluga* there are spirits of varied types in which people depose strong faith. These are benevolent, malevolent, neutral and triggering monsoon winds.

Intelligence potential of Andamanese compares well with the fellow humans suggesting that basic equipment of memory and intelligence has not changed in man during last fifty thousand years.

Language of Andamanese serves as an invaluable tool to fix their affinity as well as confirm the antiquity of their date of migration. There is no tie up of basic relational words like father, mother, son and daughter between Andamanese and languages of Indian-mainland. This, however, is equally true about languages like Sanskrit, Bhojpuri, Mundari, Khasi etc., all spoken in India. Andamanese nouns, nevertheless, either as such or in syllables of the longer words of Indian continent show commonness with Indian languages.

There are a good number of words suggesting that Andamanese language has worked as a root language for advanced languages like Sanskrit, Latin and Greek besides having a closer affinity with Bhojpuri, Assamese, Khasi and Bengali. The language, however, is too old and has been absorbed in younger languages of the main land, leaving only a few words to survive with independent identity .

Evaluation of language also suggests that Andamanese have migrated out of India before 45 Ka. Andamanese population constitutes a classical relict group which demonstrates that the basic human mind of modern times with optimal intelligence, low logic and good memory had already evolved before fifty thousand years ago. Their faith factor, however, is slightly high due to poor logic and strongly conditioned minds to believe in the traditions and statements of elders.

Introduction

In the geological past some of the lands—now disconnected due to a wide sea in between— were joined by the land bridges or narrow passages of lands through which animals could migrate. Such passages were responsible for intercontinental migrations. Through one of such land-bridges, across the Bering Strait, horses originating in North America migrated into Eurasia about two million years ago.

At times, however, a continent may be cut off too far from the nearest land territory, leaving hardly any avenues for new revolutionary changes in the last population. Major characteristics of such an isolated population, therefore, remain static. Best example of this type is Australia which separated from Antarctica-Africa-India segment of land around 98 Ma (Haq and Van Eysinga, 1977). As a result, there was no external migration, and the surviving life of the continent is, with minor alterations, a basic animal community that once flourished there 98 million years ago. The two main groups of primitive mammals—marsupials and monotremes—are now restricted to this continent and adjacent islands like Tasmania and New Zealand. These animals constitute a relict or fossil population seen nowhere else on earth due to their extinction.

Isolation of the Andaman Islands from India, for about fifty thousand years with endemic aborigines is comparable to that of Australia even if the time span is very short, geologically. Andamanese preserve almost the same level of consciousness for our study when the men of Andaman Islands were communicating with their counterparts in Assam-Bengal tract of India. The culture and consciousness levels of the then men have undergone radical changes on the Indian mainland because of several human migrations in Indo-Mediterranean Region, but remained frozen among the Andamanese due to their isolation.

The relict human mind and consciousness among Andamanese, probed in the subsequent pages, is a window to a domain of consciousness, dating back to around 50 Ka. It demonstrates how the archaic human mind was acting in the equatorial belt with plenty of food and no competition around.

Period of Migration

The Andaman Group of Islands, comprising four large ones and dozens smaller ones, appear as beads in a string of necklace, in the map of Myanmar-Malaya Region. Covering about 300 kilometres from north to south and occasionally over 50 kilometres wide in their east-west stretch, these are positioned close to longitude 93° E between latitudes 10° and 14° N (Fig 4.1). These warm, humid and rainy islands are surrounded on all sides by deep black-waters of the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea and the nearest patch of continuous habitable land is Myanmar (Burma), nearly three hundred kilometres to the north. No one, in human history, seems to have touched these islands after their separation from the Burmese mainland till British set their foot in the last century.

The Andamanese people in their fables carry history of a sort. Their stories recount, they are occupying the islands from a date prior to the 'great-flood'. This certainly was long before 2000 years—the oldest date of charcoals located in the Islands so far. It is possible to fix this date through study of Pleistocene geological records of the Island for the last sea level rise in the Island belt and the intrinsic evidence of stone-tools with which the people of Andaman migrated there .

It is certain that the marooned Andamanese population reached there during the days of Paleolithic because they lived in stone age with stone tools as late as the last century (Man, 1883). Incidentally, stone tools of Paleolithic period are seen all over in the Andaman Islands. None of these tools are similar to the flake type tools of Upper Paleolithic. Apparently, isolation of Andaman Islands was complete before Upper Paleolithic when Perigordian or younger industries developed. Again, on southern tip of Guitar Island a stratified layer of Pleistocene rubble contains a large number of Paleolithic tools. Apparently, this small isolated island was then continuous with the mainland and the Paleolithic industry site of the island catered the need of different settlements. The discovered tools are primitive flake type as well as massive semi-flake type. These include a variety of choppers, scrapers, diggers and some spears. There is also a stone axe blade very similar to the steel blade in the fodder-axe (*gandasa*) of Eastern Uttar Pradesh. Scrapers are both large and small while the digger blades, when fixed in wood, would have made a good tool to dig graves or poles for huts (Fig.4.2). All the illustrated and observed material is accommodatable under Mousterian industry, taking off during the Middle Paleolithic (Fig. 4.3).

The date of migration of Andamanese lies between 71 Ka and 32 Ka during the Mousterian period of Middle Paleolithic. The well known glacial cycles of Pleistocene and— relationship between the rise and fall of sea level during the last hundred thousand years give the likely date of the lowest sea level during the Middle Pleistocene when the coast-line of Arakan in Myanmar region would have stretched to Preparis

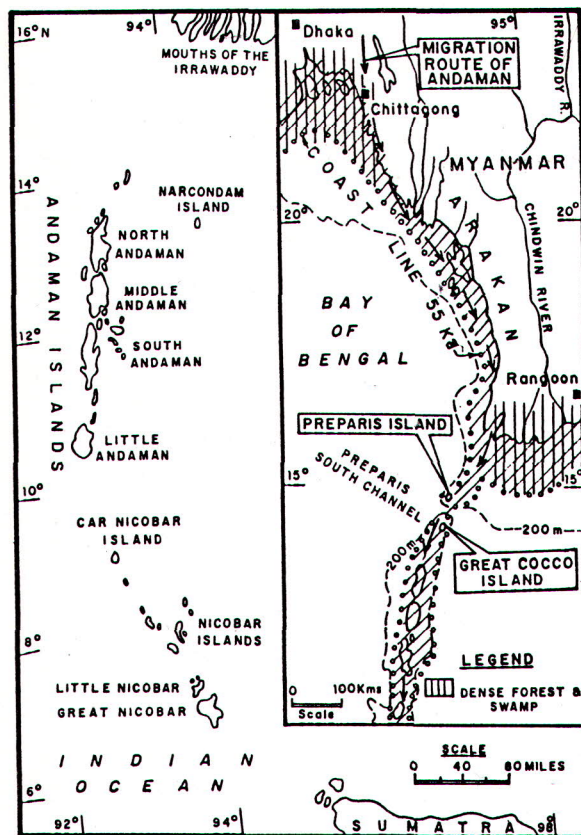


Fig. 4.1 : Geographic setting of Andaman Islands.



Fig. 4.2 : Stone tools of Andamanese from Guitar Island. These include curde chopping axes of limestone (a-b), and dolerite (c); (specimen is from the Middle Andaman); refined diggers and axe blades (d-e), a digger that was fixed in wood (f); a long blade fixed in wood and possibly used for cutting the fish in slices (g,h). Marks of scale indicate centimetres.

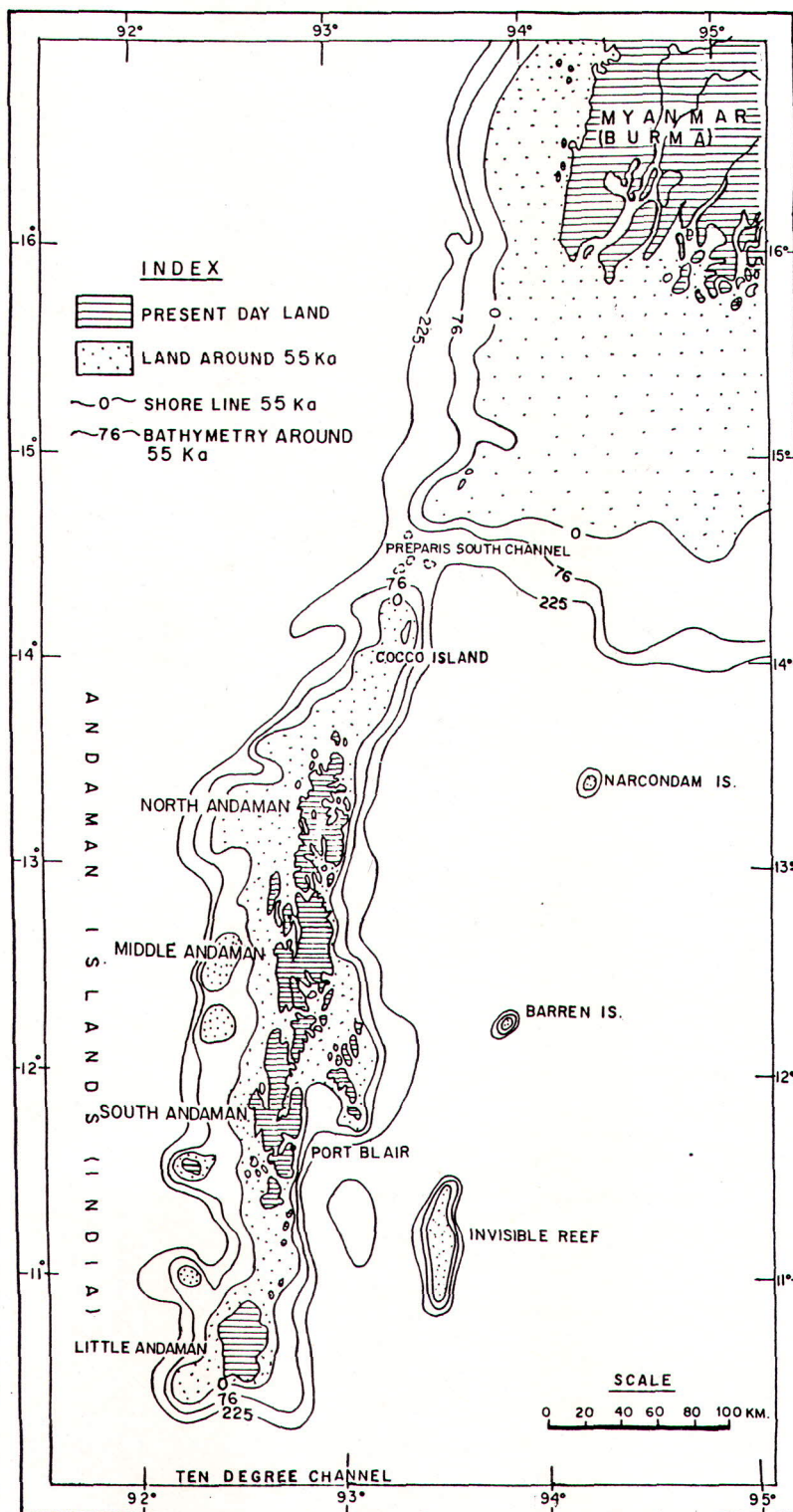
CLASSIFICATION OF WURM OR WEICHSELIAN ICE AGE				TIME IN K.YRS.	ARCAEOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION			
GLACIATION		STADE/INTERSTADE		B P	GENERAL	S.W. EUROPE AND N.AFRICA		
HOLOCENE (POSTGLACIAL)				0	HISTORICAL TIME			
					SUBATLANTIC		IRON AGE	
					SUBBOREAL		BRONZE AGE	
					ATLANTIC		NEOLITHIC	
				5.0	MESOLITHIC			
					BOREAL		LATE STONE AGE	CAPS- IAN
					PREBOREAL		AZILIAN	
YOUNGER DRYAS		10						
TARDIGLA- CIAL		LATE GLAC- IAL	ALLEROD	10				
			OLDER DRYAS					
W U R M		W E I C H S E L I A N	OLDEST DRYAS	15	P A L E O L I T H I C	MAGDALENIAN		
			POMMERANIAN (BLANKENBERG)				DANIA GLACIAL	
			FRANKFURT BRANDENBURG (BRANDON)					
			TAME VALLEY					
			DENEKAMP (ZELZATE)					
			(STETTIN)					
			HENGELO/HOBOKEN (FLADBURY)					
			(UPTON WARREN)					
			MOERSHOOFD (POPERINGE)					
			ODDERADE					
CHELFORD								
BRORUP(LOOPSTEDT)								
RODEBAEK								
AMERSFOORT								
EEMIAN INTERGLACIAL				75	OLDER PALEOLITHIC	MICOQUIAN		

Fig. 4.3 : Classification of Later Pleistocene and Recent. Age distinction between Mesolithic and Neolithic is rather notional. In areas like Catal Huyuk, Neolithic follows the Paleolithic around 10 Ka i.e., at the level of Paleolithic/Mesolithic boundary. Term Epipaleolithic is used in the Middle East for denoting Mesolithic and Neolithic together.

Island in south and that of Andaman to Cocco Island in north (Fig. 4.4). In the history of the Middle Paleolithic, there are only two dates when sea level could have been quite low on account of glaciation. These were the periods of I and II stadials of Wurm glaciation i.e., around 70 Ka and then 55 Ka respectively (Frakes, 1979). Among these the former was weak and lowering of sea level was around 50m. The latter was quite strong when the sea level could fall by 80 meters. Considering these observations and the present bathymetry of Andaman Sea, the date of migration of Andamanese men stands around 55 Ka.

The history-cum-fable of great flood in Andaman has also its relevance because in the Neill Island, the sea level of the area during those days of great 'flood' was around 15 to 20 metres above that of the present. Many smaller islands would have disappeared during those days and the area of main Andaman Islands too would have reduced considerably. Naturally, it is this event that has its echo now in the fable-cum-history of Andamanese. This was perhaps the acme of Würm II/III Interglacial period, around 40 Ka, when the sea-level-rise crossed 20 m above MSL in the

Fig. 4.4 : Paleogeography of Andaman Islands around 55 Ka. The shore line of Andaman Islands was then covering an extensive land about 450 Km long and upto 80 Km wide very close to the equator. Gap between Myanmar main-land and Andaman was less than 50 Km. Small islands within this gap, now submerged, facilitated the people to shift southwards in wake of the major glaciation at this date.



Gujarat area (Chapter-6). 40 Ka may, therefore, be taken as the likely date when Andaman Islands had shrunk considerably and inhabitants recall this event as 'great flood'. This rise of sea level commenced around 50 Ka, shortly after migration of the Andamanese to the islands .Andamanese people have remained

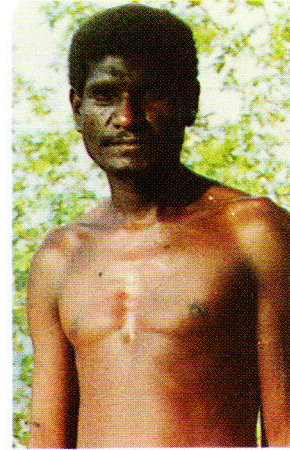


Fig. 4.5 : Andamanese people. *Top left : Onge; bottom left and top right Great Andamanese; bottom right a Jarawa couple. Men with similar features and physique still inhabit Bengal-Assam region of India.*

cut off from the main land, due to their inability to cross the high seas in their small dug boats. **Fifty thousand years have passed adding almost nothing in the evolution of this relict marooned population.**

That the migration to Andaman Islands is of such great antiquity is also supported by the observation of Man (1883). He writes "Before their comparatively recent acquaintance with us, they had not the faintest knowledge of the existence of even the neighbouring coast of Burma, much less of the world at large, and consequently imagined that their islands formed almost the entire terrain area, and that they themselves comprised the bulk of the inhabitants."

Racial Relationship and Physique

Andamanese people on account of their community distribution in the islands form three main tribes. A friendly, now communicable tribe originally inhabiting Little Andaman, named Onge, has about a hundred surviving members today. Another major tribe is Jarawa, a few hundred in numbers, and occupying a good part of western Middle Andaman. There is a third tribe the Great Andamanese survived by about a dozen men as seen by the author in Strait Island (Fig. 4.5). Man has listed nine tribes but observes that although each of the several tribes possesses a distinct dialect, these are traceable to the same source and are all the same. An investigation in one language pattern, therefore, would suffice to gauge the intellectual fabric and culture of the entire population on one hand and consciousness level on the other. A more recent work on Great Andamanese (Chakraborty, 1990) is ignored here for the reason of their late communication with the modern people for a period of over hundred years since the document by Man was prepared and the ensuing cultural dilution in the community. **In the present analysis Andamanese are conceived as a newly discovered aborigines around 1880 AD—a little over a hundred years ago.**

In most text books dealing with anthropology or physical anthropology, the Andamanese often figure as a racial or, semi-racial type—Negrito. Physically, the Andamanese are dark coloured, short statured and somewhat frail in construction. Their average measurements are: height 149 cms for male and 141 cms for females; their weights are 44 and 42 Kg, respectively.

The average life span of the people, due to large child mortality, is 22 years while the maximum is around 50 years. Puberty in males follows at 16 years and in females at 15 years; and, as Man notes, these are later than the native Indian on the mainland. These compare closer to European community. Thus the puberty ages in the equatorial and temperate-polar zones are same and higher as compared to tropical zone of India where corresponding figures are less by two years. It is due to acceleration in evolution on account of higher consciousness potential in the tropical belt.

Emotions and Other Responses

Man has documented the behavioural aspects related to the emotions of the Andamanese. These are being reproduced here for their usefulness in the discussion about the level of evolution of the human mind during the Middle Paleolithic period.

1. When an Andamanese is in good spirits, his eyes sparkle and the surrounding skin is slightly wrinkled, while the corners of the mouth, which is partially opened, are drawn back; if he be in low spirits the eyes are directed to the ground, the forehead is transversely wrinkled in the centre, and the lips are closed but the corners of the mouth are not depressed; under the influence of great grief the nostrils are observed to dilate.
2. In thinking deeply, or while endeavouring to understand the construction of some object, the eyes are fixed intently on it, and a slight elevation of the lower lid is noticeable.

3. Astonishment is expressed by the eyebrows being raised, the mouth opened a little and covered with the left hand, while the right hand is brought smartly to the left side just above the heart; a man will also, on being reminded of an unintentional omission to fulfil some promise, act either in this manner, or he will slap his thigh and then place the hand over his opened mouth. Women show their surprise (and also joy) by striking the thigh, which is raised for the purpose, with the open hand. **Indications of slyness, guilt and jealousy can be detected in the eye only.** (bold letters author's)
5. Disgust is shown by throwing the head back, dilating the nostrils, drawing down the corners of the mouth, and slightly protruding the lower lip: no expiration, however, made.
6. Shame is evinced by the head being averted, the eyes lowered and the hands raised so as to conceal the portion of the face exposed to view.
7. Defiance is expressed by raising and slightly averting the head, and slowly uttering the word *arta log ba*, which is equivalent to 'try it on'.
8. Women and children when too frightened to run away throw themselves on their faces on the ground and raise shrill cries, while men, under similar circumstances, show their alarm by falling backwards, with their hands uplifted, and their eyes rolling. Laughter is sometimes carried to such an extreme as to bring tears.
9. When very angry a man does not stamp his foot, but he places his left hand, palm uppermost, between his teeth, and glares fiercely at some object on the ground near the offender; he at the same time, raises some weapon with his right hand, and utters, as well as the position of the other hand permits, words of terrible import.
10. A man, if threatening another, does not clench his fist but will seize some weapon or missile, and express his intention of inflicting an injury with it.
11. A dogged or obstinate expression is indicated by averting the head, closing the lips, lowering the eyes, as if ignoring the presence of others, and frowning slightly.
12. When sneering, the teeth are clenched, the upper lip slightly curled, and the eyes are fixed on some object near the person addressed.
13. Children, when sulky, behave much as those in other lands, for they pout, frown and utter noises which betoken discontent.
14. When a man wishes to show that he cannot prevent something being done, or cannot himself do something, he averts his head and pouts his lips, but does not shrug his shoulders.
15. In beckoning, the head is nodded vertically and a hand out stretched, the fingers with the knuckles uppermost being waved towards himself.
16. In affirmation the head is nodded vertically, in negation it is shaken laterally.

From the foregoing description, it is easily demonstrated that all normal perceptions and expressions that are seen today in man and his enlarged social fabric have developed in the Andamanese. Incidentally, this also suggests that they share the pattern of shaking head in affirmation and negation with the Indians of the Indo-Gangetic plains, with whom they seem to be related on the basis of language. Also, the expression of shame as well as sneering are common to those shown in North India. Further, on gross plane, their emotions related to slyness, guilt and jealousy are much subdued, not noticeable on their wooden face. These properties are not common in this population. One of the anthropologists, investigating upon them expressed to this author that their general expression in conversation is also wooden. A Jarawa would often say 'narima' (no) with an expressionless face even in an emotional situation (unlike us). Emotion, thus, is poorly developed among the archaic Andamanese people.

Personal Life

Abstention

Higher religions like Jainism consider the renunciation or abstention from worldly pleasures as a measure of evolution of human soul. Five among them, when followed rigorously constitute, noble five *mahavrats* (Chapter-8). Abstention from food and fasting also fall in the same line of renunciative activities. None of these have developed among Andamanese as organised or traditional features, although people, in their journey time do face long spells of foodlessness and survive through it. In the education of children, however, discipline and self-denial appear significant. As observed by Man, "Andamanese children are reproduced for being impudent and forward, but discipline is not enforced by corporal punishment; they are early **taught to be generous and self denying**, and the special object of the fasting period, regarding which I shall hope to speak to you on another occasion, seems to be to test the fortitude and power of endurance of the lads and lasses before entering upon the cares and responsibilities of married life. The duties of showing respect and hospitality to friends and visitors being impressed upon them from their early years, all guests are well treated; every attention is paid to their wants, the best food at their host's disposal is set before them, and then they take their leave, some tokens of regard or goodwill are bestowed, or, to speak more correctly, interchanged. Strangers visiting an encampment for the first time are welcomed if introduced by some mutual friend."

Again, "**Selfishness is not among their characteristics** for they frequently make presents of the best that they possess..... and; at the same time it must be confessed that it is tacitly understood that an equivalent should be rendered for every gift."

Law and Justice

In modern communities, one of the illogical and stupid maxims is "All is fair in love and war". This approach and high type of courage common among most 'civilized' nations due to social conditioning by the west appears to be totally lacking among Andamanese; "nevertheless those who evince courage are much admired and poltroons are subject of general ridicule". Traditionally, these people love justice, fairness and implementation of fair justice, and follow traditional norms of a tribal judicial conduct. Logic, accordingly, rules the people better than emotionally conditioned rules of religion in the modern society.

Concept of Rebirth

"A man becomes spirit after death" is an usual phrase in Onge language . Accordingly, the people and their culture accommodate all possible actions and rituals to bring back the departed soul to the family as soon as possible. In the funeral rites, every respect is shown to the dead till buried in a somewhat elaborate funeral ceremony. Much more affectionate are the post-burial rites of a child when his bones are used to prepare a necklace to be worn by the mother. This is done under the belief that the departed soul will return to the mother and the child will be reborn.

Religion

Monotheism, in a way, with a semi-human god constitutes the religion of the Andamanese. The following is an abridged account from Man.

"Though no form of worship or religious rites are to be found among them, yet are there certain beliefs regarding powers of good and evil, the creation, and of a world beyond the grave, which show that even **these savages have traditions more or less approximating the truth**, but when derived will ever remain a

mystery". Now the date of their knowledge, 'and truth' turns out to be no less than 50 Ka in the answer to the curiosity of Late H.E. Man. Man continues further. "I may also add that they all agree in stating that their accounts of the creation etc., were handed down to them by their first parent *Tome* [author's note = *Ta on(ge)*= God man]

Puluga is their prime deity and of *Puluga*, they say that:

- I. Though His appearance is like fire, yet He is (now-a-days) invisible.
- II. He was never born and is immortal.
- III. By him the world and all objects, animate and inanimate, were created, excepting only the powers of evil.
- IV. He is regarded as omniscient while it is day, knowing even the thoughts of their hearts.
- V. **He is angered by the commission of certain sins**, while to those in pain or distress he is pitiful, and sometimes deigns to afford relief.
- VI. **He is the Judge from whom each soul receives its sentence after death**, and, to some extent, the hope of escape from the torments of *jereg-lar-mugu* [their course of action in the present life = *prarabdh karms* vide *vedant*].

Puluga is believed to live in a large stone house in the sky, with a wife whom he created for himself; she is green in appearance, and has two names, *chana aulola* (Mother Freshwater Shrimp), and *chana palak* (Mother Eel).

Puluga is said to eat and drink, and, during the dry months of the year, to pass much of his time in sleep, as is proved by his voice (thunder) being rarely heard at supplies of animals, birds, and turtles; when they anger him he comes out of his house and blows, and growls, and hurls burning faggots at them in other words, visits their offences with violent thunderstorms and heavy squalls; except for this purpose he seldom leaves home, unless it be during the rains, when he descends to earth to provide himself with certain kinds of food; how often this happens they do not know since, now-a-days he is invisible.

Puluga has no authority over the evil spirits, the most dreaded of which are *erem-chaugala*, *juru-win*, and *nila*-; they are self created, and have existed from time immortal .

The abode of *Puluga*, these people carry the story, was the Saddle Hill in the North Andaman—the highest hill of the country (2400 ft.) in the ancient days prior to the big deluge.

The God of Andamanese is unmistakably the *Purukh* of the *vedic* works which is male and all powerful [transformation of $l \rightarrow r$ and *kh* in the place of *g*, *kh* is the missing vowel between *k* and *g* in the Andamanese]. Even the wife of *Puluga* is a *chana* (= *jana* of Sanskrit, i.e., a mother). *Chana aulola* is the mother for *aulola* or care and the other is *palak* or protector vide Sanskrit vocabulary. However, these feminine deities are seen no more in the *vedic* literature now. The *vedic* *Dyavaprihivi* couple (Chapter-7) is seemingly a later substitute of *Puluga-chana* couple. The people of Andaman, thus, have unmistakable affinity with a religion relatable to the *vedic* population of Indo-Gangetic plains. Very significantly their religion takes into account a large number of spirits as a part of their belief that have not been created by *Puluga* or their principle deity. So is the *vedic* system—a host of gods are there besides *Dyavaprihivi* or *Purukha*. This by itself, indicates a long evolution of men and adaptation of deity names one after the other owing to their interaction with other communities before their migration from India during the cold of Wurm-II glaciation.

Traditionally, Andamanese have been the people who roam about naked. Among them the marriage, however, is a strictly observed relationship during the reproductive age. In tradition such marriages are exogamous and near-family ties are prohibited among young people. Even otherwise love, as a sex linked emotional tie, is rare and these people seldom "fall in love". Love stories are not a part of Andamanese culture. Apparently, their tradition and low emotion have contributed to non-development of premarital or

conjugally controlled emotions usually defined as love and romance. In this character, they differ remarkably from highly emotional people of tropics where love stories and dramas are a part of literature and sex has been made even a subject of wars since the earlier days of *vedic* history. The battle of Ram and Ravana over Sita or Bali and Sugriva over the wife of latter is followed by hundreds of examples in the later history. Love of *Urvashi* and *Pururva* makes an adequate theme in a hymn of *Rigved* (10.95) and well portrayed in the famous drama of Kalidas, titled '*Vikramorvashiyam*'.

Intelligence Potential

Man observes "Opportunities for comparing the mental capacity of the children with those of other races have been few, but these have tended to show that, up to the age of 12 or 14, they possess quite as much intelligence as ordinary middle-class children of civilized races when competing in subjects in which they have been instructed in common; but the precociousness of intellect which has so often been remarked in the very young does not appear to be maintained. Dr. Brander, who was for some time in charge of the Andaman Hospital, gave it as his opinion that **as a race "they are not deficient in brain power; it rather lies dormant and unused in their savage state;"** and he mentions the case of an aboriginal patient of 12 years of age, who had been educated in the Ross Orphanage School, and who, in spite of his tender years, could yet read English and Urdu fluently as well as speak and write in both these languages, retaining also a knowledge of his mother tongue. He had, besides, acquired a fair knowledge of arithmetic. I may add that this is not an exceptional case, for I could instance others and one lad in particular, who was his superior".

The cited observation shows that the basic equipment of memory and intelligence has not changed in man during the past fifty thousand years; and, on the projection of such a slow change in time, man around 2 Ma could well be a semi-intelligent brain almost comparable to a modern child of ten years. If there is any change, basically it lies in the emotion and ego patterns which are decidedly relatable to the values of life in a community after colonization has reached fourth order.

Arithmetic

As a subject, counting has hardly had any relevance for the Andamanese people who see no change in relation to climate. Advancement of arithmetic in India has been due to interest of the pre-*vedic* and *vedic* men in astronomy. There has also been no possessive urge among Andamanese for counting riches and adding them up as western man did. As a result, their numbers are only one, two and three. But for a human gathering of a small number, from 10 to 20, they use *arduru*. A somewhat greater number would be implied by the use of *jeg-chau* and a still greater assemblage, say of 50 persons, by *jibaba*. Beyond this, the notation of number is as *ubaba*. These words may be translated in a rising scale as : *arduru* = several; *jeg-chau* = many; *jibaba* = very many; *at-ubaba* (or *ubaba*) = innumerable.

In the actual count when anxious to express a certain small number with exactness, as, for example, nine, the nose is tapped with the tips of the fingers in successive order, and, commencing with the little finger of either hand, "*uba-tul-*" (one) is said; with the next finger '*ikpor*' (two), after which with each successive finger "*an-ka*" (and this) is uttered. When the forefinger of the second hand is reached both are held up, and, the thumb of the second hand being clenched, the necessary number of digits is exposed to view, whereupon the word "*arduru-*" (all) is pronounced. Ten is the highest number precisely indicated by this method. The method shows how the earliest arithmetic had its origin using fingers and finger tips.

Language

Language—the equipment to accumulate and convey feelings and knowledge in man—had evolved considerably before the Andamanese occupied the islands although the scientists are still discussing, in the

light of the fossil record in Western Asia and Europe, whether or not the vocal apparatus in man had the potential of speech as late as 60 Ka. It will be worthwhile, therefore, to examine the ancient language of Andamanese from three points of view: its affinity, organizational level and consciousness requirement for its grasp.

Affinity

In 'A handbook of Onge Language' Dasgupta and Sharma (1982) state "no detailed study on Onge Language has yet been done. No genetic relationship could have been established with any family of languages spoken in mainland of India". The observation on absence of any affinity of genetic relationship between Bhojpuri, Bengali and Assamese languages in Ganges-Brahmputra plains and the Andamanese is quite tenable, at least superficially, because the complete uncommonness of vocabulary for words denoting mother, father, son and daughter in Andamanese and any of these languages (Table 4.1). A critical analysis of the Andamanese vocabulary, however, suggests a clear link between this language and the languages of Indo-Gangetic plains [Box 4.1]. There is some reason to believe that syllables in the words of even far away languages like Latin or Greek are in the Andamanese vocabulary [Box 4.1].

Grammar

A study of Andamanese words generally shows the affinity of the language as also its organizational status almost at par with Bengali, Hindi or English where grammar induced artificialization, typical of Sanskrit, has not yet seriously affected the language. The vocabulary of this language, however, is extremely poor for the reason of limited nouns in their day to day life in the closed surroundings and **lack of an extrovert investigative mind**. The organization of Onge language involves nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs nearly at the same level as Mundari—a tribal language of Bihar. The nouns have articles as the suffix, in contrast to prefixes in Khasi (*ka, u*), Arabic (*al*) or European languages (*the, die* etc.) These articles include *gi* and *i*. The only comparable language where these find some usage is Bhojpuri, where a word like *du-go* (two) or *mana-i* (man) exist but the articles have been fused and absorbed as a part of the word. In the modern languages of North Indian plains articles are no more there, nor do they figure in Sanskrit and Persian. Accordingly, the Irano-Bengal tract is the exclusive area where Sanskrit related tradition of a language without articles exists, the suffix articles have disappeared and prefix articles have not been entertained basically for more meaningful communication in fewer words due to mnemonic loading in the Sanskrit language.

The Andamanese nouns are declined as singular, dual and plural with specific endings like in Mundari or Sanskrit (and unlike Bengali, Bhojpuri or Assamese), the pronouns remain singular and plural; and, the verbs are always used without notation of number. Their tenses are present, past and future. The last among these takes ending *nene, ba* or *kaku*, which have some resemblance in Bhojpuri e.g. *jatane* (to go in immediate future), *jaib* (shall go: unspecified future) or *jaunga* (unspecified future). Even Bengali *khabo* (shall eat) or *jabo* (shall go) follow this trend. **This construction is typically restricted to the areas of Ganges valley.** The arrangement of words in a sentence follows the trend of Hindi-Bengali-Assamese with minor differences. This trend is seen even in the *vedic* Sanskrit.

From the comparison of their deity, language, vocabulary and grammar, it is evident that the Andamanese are unmistakably relatable with Bhojpuri-Bengali-Assamese language on one hand and Mundari-Sanskrit clan on the other. Traditionally these are the people in cultural continuity with those, later absorbed in the *vedic* population and participating in the migration to western world where Andamanese words like *gea* (Earth, Latin) have reached upto Italy. Clearly, in the Andamanese language evolution of a dual form of noun is unique because pronouns and verbs have not changed nor taken any dual form. It has been passed in to the Sanskrit and a language like Mundari. Barring the counting of numerals upto twenty nine, the language level of Mundari and Andamanese is the same. Andamanese has advanced phonetics over the level

English	Sanskrit	Bhojpuri	Bengali	Khasi	Assamese	Mundari	Andanamese
Mother →	<i>Matri</i>	<i>Mai</i> →	<i>Ma</i>	<i>Mai</i>	<i>Ai</i>	<i>Aiga</i>	<i>Eteddi</i>
Father →	<i>Pitri</i>	<i>Bap</i> →	<i>Baba</i>	<i>Kpa</i>	<i>Deuta</i>	<i>Aba</i>	<i>Inerare</i>
Son	<i>Putra</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>Chhele</i>	<i>Putek</i>	<i>Lora</i>	<i>Kadahan</i>	<i>Takware</i>
Daughter	<i>Putri</i>	<i>Beti</i>	<i>Meye</i>	<i>Jiyek</i>	<i>Swali</i>	<i>Kudihan</i>	<i>Tinege</i>

The above shows mostly limited communication on close relational words in different old tribes and at times, long distance travel of words. These words seem to have differentiated in different populations in far antiquity and are continuing as such till date. Connections between them show their dates of antiquity. Assamese *Ai* and Mundari *aiga* are seemingly related and may date back to the most ancient Mundari migration from the radiation centre of North-Eastern India to West India. In Assamese *Dikhu*, Disang River names or *dalang* (bridge)—intimately related to *da* or water in Mundari - still exist. In Punjab, Western India, where *Kudi* of Mundari still survives with meaning of daughter in Punjabee *Putek* of the Khasi language endemic to Kachchh transforms to *Putra* of Sanskrit. Sanskrit base for son from Khasi *Putek* may be older than *ud* for water [AST:6.3.5.7]. *Da*, in Mundari, means water and *Um* in Khasi. The interaction between the two in Rajasthan-Punjab produced *Ud*. Similarly *Mai*, and *Ma* of Bhojpuri, Khasi and Bengali are related and may date back to a period of easterly migration of Khasis around 35 Ka. Andamanese have migrated from Eastern India to Andaman prior to the date of Mundari migration to the west around 45 Ka. Andamanese *Ine* and old Sanskrit *Ime* (=In) for water suggest that the base of language of earliest Sanskrit is Andamanese.

Sanskrit in the *vedic* form, has a younger stratum of around 28 Ka and *putek* transformation to *putra* in the primordial vocabulary may go to this date while preexisting *ud* transformed to *udak* at this date. Comparison of Andamanese vocabulary with the later languages, which have been interacting with new migratory words, is rather difficult because of its long separation in time and space before the Mundari became wide spread in Chamunda Valley (Chan-ab River) of Punjab-Rajasthan where Khasis were dwelling earlier.

Table 4.1: Comparison of some key relational words in different Indian languages.

<p>Sun</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>Eke Ark</i> (Sanskrit) * <i>Tunkulu</i>– Tun, Sun, Sam (English, Arabic) * <i>Tobilebai</i>....? * <i>Narechankwe</i>....? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>Taygage- Swamp</i> (<i>Toy-ga-ge</i>: Water-land-land = Big watery land) <i>Toy</i>(Sanskrit) * <i>Tota</i> - soil? * <i>Balame</i> - sea (Va (l) + am water-water (Big water)) * <i>Balanqwene</i> - sea - Va(l) + um+que+lne (big water)
<p>Moon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>Chileme</i>– <i>Chalam</i> (moves, Sanskrit) * <i>Dabekommimele</i> <p>Water, Earth etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>Akwene</i>=Saliva(<i>Ark+Wan</i>=distillate of tonge, Sanskrit) * <i>Ine</i>= Water (close to Khasi <i>Um</i>; and <i>Im</i> in Sanskrit) * <i>Ingele</i>- Sea (<i>In-gele, ja</i>: water Sanskrit): water-water (Big water) * <i>inje</i>- sea (cf. in - gea: land of water; <i>jya</i>=earth; Sanskrit). * <i>Injp</i> - drink * <i>Ijo</i> - drink * <i>Igene</i> - rain * <i>Otagile</i>- sweat * <i>Inde</i>bath (<i>in + deh</i>=water on body) * <i>In le</i>- bring water (cf. <i>la</i>=bring; Hindi) * <i>Uli</i>- stone (<i>bali</i>, Sacrifice by axe on a stone; Sanskrit) * <i>Kwa</i> - Stream: A-qua water; Latin) * <i>Kwatannane</i>,- Sea (<i>Kwa</i> of <i>tanne + ine</i>: River terminal water). * <i>Gitambe</i>Boil water (<i>Git+Amb</i> water; Sanskrit) * <i>Gea</i>-Land (Ge, Geo :Greek; <i>Jya</i>: Sanskrit) * <i>Jallojallo</i> bubble-up (<i>ja</i>: Sanskrit) * <i>obakwela</i> - flow of water 	<p>Transformation of Tun for sun has two lineages firstly T→S as well as T →D. The former relates to Arabic-English clan while the latter to Sanskrit. This base word, accordingly, is far more older than both. In a Khasi word <i>Umsohryngkew</i> (<i>Um</i>=water, <i>sohra</i>=<i>cherra</i>=town; + <i>in</i>(g) + <i>Kew</i>), both <i>in</i> and <i>Kwa</i>, denoting water in Andamanese are present. One has to conceive the date of migration of Andamanese before Khasi <i>um</i> and <i>sohra</i> were prefixed with the remaining segment <i>in</i> and <i>kew</i> representing two pre-existing clans related to Andamanese in Meghalaya. The Khasi migration could be around 35-45 Ka in waves. Apparently, the language of the home land of Andamanese on the Indian terrain is now completely replaced and their vocabulary is disseminated in several languages including Khasi. Yet, some of these words are either surviving or continue as transformed into Sanskrit, Latin and Greek besides Khasi . Some of these are <i>am</i>=ray (cf. Sanskrit <i>Ras-m</i>=light), <i>ile-badda</i>=naughty (cf. ale-child+<i>badd</i> of Bhojpuri meaning naughty) <i>Ote</i>=get up (<i>Utho</i>-Bhojpuri); <i>Kane</i>= rice (relatable to Bhojpuri, <i>Kanna</i>, a rice product); <i>Kue</i> = pig (cf. <i>Kar</i> in <i>shukar</i> Sanskrit), <i>Kwan Katu</i>= arecanut (cf. <i>Gua</i> - Assamese); <i>genale</i> = <i>vulva</i> (<i>genitalis</i>. Latin); <i>tuke/ tukegotabe</i> = fire/ smoke (<i>dhu</i>-violent fire; <i>Dhu-am</i>=smoke; Hindi); <i>nareaille</i> = coconut (<i>nariya</i>-Hindi); <i>Le</i>=Honey (<i>Leh</i>-Sanskrit for substance to be licked) ; <i>Dela</i> = lump of clay (<i>Dhela</i>-Bhojpuri) etc. The wide distribution of Andamanese words suggests that their forefathers were scattered in the far and wide lands during the Middle Paleolithic.</p>

Box 4.1 : Sun, Moon, Water and other related words in Andamanese

of Tamil where g,j, etc., are still undifferentiated. The grammar has taken the road to a differentiated use of singular, dual and plural as in Sanskrit but such a distinction is restricted to nouns only. The verbs and adjectives don't take up numbers as in Sanskrit nor is there a complex declining of words comparable to Sanskrit.

Geographic Limits of Knowledge Communication

It is conceivable from the comparison of Andamanese language and tradition that Mousterian people who reached Andaman were once most abundant in the Indo-Gangetic-Brahmaputra plains. However, it appears that their western limit of vocabulary reached as far as Italy and Greece (cf. *aqua, gea* etc. in Box 4.1). The latter area was then occupied by the Neanderthal population. It would have happened only when free migration existed in the Indo-Mediterranean region in the Early Mousterian or Middle Paleolithic. Not only the Mousterian tool is common between Mediterranean and Andamanese, but also some key words in vocabulary suggest that man, even around 50-60 Ka, was a freely moving and knowledge transmitting species irrespective of geographical and morphologic differences. Neanderthal Europeans were as much in communication with Mundari Indians as the English with Bengalis in India.

A significant feature in the survey of language is that Andamanese migrations or distribution predate the 'da' migrations from the eastern India relating to Munda tribe adapting Chamunda River (*Chen-ab*) and *um* migration of the Khasi people from Kasi Hills in Kachchh, Western India. Again analysis of Andamanese language disproves that man has started talking very late. With the kind of complex words and grammar that the Andamanese deployed at 50 Ka, one has to believe that the first communication in words of men could well be around 2 Ma with several successive steps in organization of grammar. The level of Andamanese knowledge, and their consciousness potential is at the same plane as of any human population in the Indo-Mediterranean region.

The Andamanese constitute a classical relict group which demonstrates that a basic human mind of modern type with optimal intelligence, low logic and good memory had already evolved at least fifty five thousand years ago. Mentally they are comparable to 90% of the human population today comprising mechanics, farmers, businessmen, players, politicians and office-goers.

Faith Factor

Andamanese people provide a unique example of human mind when language evolved for documenting information and knowledge and the man's curiosity was knocking doors of several frontiers of knowledge. When some information was beyond the available logical strength of analysis, an imaginative creativity was utilized to build a story and pass the story to next generation in the name of faith. The successive generations have continued with such fables. All such stories are about the unexplained and constitute man's treasure house of fables and scriptures **including some in *veds*. These days such stories are being woven around cosmogeny and black-holes.** Andamanese have them since Middle Paleolithic. They know nothing about anatomy and evolution of pigs. They made a story about it. "In early days pigs were without ears and these were later provided to them". This tale continues still. Similarly, to explain the occurrence of natural phenomena, they invented spirits that controlled actions and forces of nature. A survey of Andamanese vocabulary brings out fourteen such spirits bringing good and bad to them [Box 4.2]. The faith factor in the Andamanese is obviously fairly high due to low logic. Their minds are conditioned to believe in the statements of elders. Domain of faith rules them as much as other communities with low logic elsewhere in the world. For example, number 13 is missing in the seating arrangement of Lufthansa airlines. No logic can explain this irrational faith of the jinxed 13 in the west which is one of the sacred dates of the Hindus—worshipping Lord Shiv.

Types of spirits

1. *Ankobaykwe*: benevolent spirit above the sky
2. *Ingennankwe*: sea- spirit
3. *Eaika*: Harmful spirit below the earth
4. *Koceaye*: Spirit below the earth
5. *Kwalokane*: Spirit sending southwest monsoon
6. *Gaygage*: Harmful spirit above the sky
7. *Gabulembe*: Harmful spirit above the sky
8. *Jugene*: Harmful spirit above the sky
9. *Taore*: Spirit below the earth
10. *Tegede*: Spirit below the earth
11. *Tetabaye*: Harmless spirit above the sky
12. *Toranchu*: Spirit below the earth
13. *Dare* : Spirit sending southwest monsoon
14. *Maikane*: Spirit sending northeast monsoon

The list of spirits relates mainly to the heavenly, hellish, benevolent and evil ones besides some related to wind-directions. Names have been brought during migration by several small tribes. It was homogenized among these people partly around the date of their migration and partly around 14 Ka when sea level fell about 70 metres and most of the Islands formed a continuous largely intercommunicable land.

Box 4.2 : Spirit related terminology among Andamanese.**Inferences**

People migrated to Andaman Islands as early as fifty five thousand years ago and have been marooned there for about 50 Ka. Their linguistic affinity with the Bihar-Bengal-Assam area of India is quite strong although they have decidedly separated at an antiquity intervened by other racial migrations. The Assam area is now dominated by mongoloids and in Bihar there is a strong flux of brown Indo-Mediterranean men who fade considerably in Bengal. The Andamanese negrito population was the basic population of Assam-Uttar Pradesh-Bihar-Bengal tract before the later migrants occupied these lands. Their southwards migration might have been greatly facilitated by the pressure of cold during Wurm-II Glacial.

A remarkable change in the population of tropics of Uttar Pradesh-Bengal region since the separation of the Andamanese, is the lowering of the puberty age by 2 to 2.5 years on account of accelerated consciousness manifestation. Further, the consciousness level as indicated by intellectual organization seems to be the same as of other people in the world speaking simple languages like English or Hindi. Sanskrit has its roots in Andamanese, it appears. However, the artificialization of this language to an extreme limit needs much more brain-power for transacting in this language.

Faith factor of the Andamanese is pretty high, possibly a shade higher than western societies. Correspondingly their logic is poorly developed. Much of this strength of their faith component has gone into organization of the western colonial mind-set where individuals, even if logical, have been conditioned to follow the social rules bending all their logic. In general Andamanese are much less emotional than colonially conditioned men of today.