

THE *ANG* OF ANDAMANS: A STUDY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE AND IMPACT THEREON AFTER BREAKING THEIR SELF-ISOLATION

Bidyut Kumar Das

Abstract: The *Ang* (Jarawa), one of the primitive Negrito tribes, live in South and Middle Andaman Islands for thousands of years. They completely depend on foraging for their subsistence in tropical dense forest and coastal areas of the Islands. Penal Settlement (1858) by the British India Government and consequent development of colonisation, gradually made their life miserable. They made futile attempts to resist occupation of their territories and there were numerous encounters of conflict and battles between the primitive inhabitants and the British authorities. It ultimately compelled them to be self-isolated and intensified their hatred and hostility towards the outsiders (*Eenen*). After independence, following the idea adopted by Portman (1879-94), a policy of reconciliation for establishment of friendly relationship with the unfriendly and hostile *Ang* was initiated by the then Chief Commissioner of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 1952 through a system of periodical visits to the *Ang* settlements by a team of selected persons. While the process of confidence building with the *Ang* was in full swing, a major shift in their behaviour took place in October 1997. Leaving aside their self-isolation, hatred and hostilities, they came out of their settlements and started mixing with the neighbouring communities and others. In this study, an attempt has been made to analyze in detail the different components or traits relating to social organization, kinship system and subsistence economy of the *Ang* with a view to understand their tradition. Further, it also highlights the impact thereon, especially in their language, dress and ornaments, food items, tools and technology etc., after they broke their age-old self-isolation or self-exclusion and came in contact with the greater societies or civilization. Primary data for this study were collected between 2001 and 2007 from almost all of the *Ang* settlement areas using standard anthropological methods and techniques.

Keywords: *Ang*, *Eenen*, colonization, foraging, hostilities, Penal Settlement, self-isolation.

INTRODUCTION

The *Ang*, popularly known and called by others as Jarawa, one of the Negrito tribes, live in the western coast and in the tropical dense forest of South and Middle Andaman Islands. They are one of the classical examples of surviving, hunting and gathering tribes of the world. During pre-1997 days, the very name Jarawa was synonymous with hostility and nudity besides wonder, admiration, mystery and curiosity. In *Aka-bea* Andamanese language, the word 'Jarawa' means 'stranger'. Earlier studies (Man, 1883 and Radcliffe Brown, 1932) also suggest that the Jarawa are latter migrants in the Great Andaman Islands. Only a few years back, we came to know that the Jarawa identify and call them as *Ang* and the others are broadly categorized as *Eenen* and *Yono*. The *Eenen* includes the people who are neither Jarawa (*Ang*) nor any Negrito people of Andamans, while *Yono* are non-Jarawa

Negrito people of Andaman Islands like Andamanese, Onge and Sentinalese.



Figure - 1: Map of Andaman and Nicobar Islands [Courtesy: Author]

Andaman and Nicobar Islands, also known as Bay Islands, is an archipelago consisting of about 319 Islands. These Islands are situated in Bay of Bengal and are one of the most delightful Union Territory of the Republic of India. The Islands lie between 6°45' and 13°45' North latitude and 92°15' and 94° East longitude. It extends from South of Burma to North of Indonesia. Out of 319 Islands, only 38 are inhabited of which 26 are in Andamans and 12 in Nicobar Islands. This archipelago consists of six tribes i.e., Great Andamanese, Onge, *Ang* (Jarawa) and Sentinelese who belongs to Negrito racial stock and inhabit in Andaman Group of Islands while Nicobarese and Shompen belong to Mongoloid stock who inhabit in Nicobar group of Islands.

Considering their foraging style of life, the tribes of Andaman Islands are referred to as 'primitive tribes' by the Government of India as well as by the scholars. Here the term 'tribe' is used to denote people with identical or specific socio-cultural and physical characteristics, who share a particular territory, common name, common language, classless society, distinct custom, common right over natural resources and low level of technological development. Though in the global perspective, foraging i.e., hunting and gathering way of life is now largely extinguished mainly pushed out by agriculture, industry and modernity, yet there are a few tribes who had been very little affected by modern ways. Examples of such groups are Ju/Hoansi of Kalahari (Africa) desert, Hazda of Tanzania, Mubti of Congo, Batek of Malaysia, Agta/Aeta of Philippines and Sentinelese and *Ang* of Andaman Islands. Although, these hunter-gatherer groups still exist, traditional life of many of them have changed or nearly obliterated.

The Government of India vide their letter No. 20018/5/81-TDA dated 27th April, 1980 issued directives for identification of primitive tribal groups considering the following criteria, viz.,

- i) use of technology, which is of pre-agricultural level;
- ii) very low level of literacy; and
- iii) population, which is stagnant or diminishing.

All these six tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been declared as 'Scheduled Tribes' as per article 342 of the Constitution of India, to provide some special measures for socio-economic development like other tribal groups in mainland India.

About 200 years back, the entire territory of Andamans belonged to the ancestors of present day Negrito tribes. The Andamanese were originally ten distinct groups or tribes with their distinct territorial affiliations and dialects namely *Aka-Cari*, *Aka-Kora*, *Aka-Bo*, *Aka-Jeru*, *Aka-Kede*, *Aka-Kol*, *Oko-Juwai*, *Aka-Bojigyab*, *Aka-Bea* and *Aka-Bale*. All these ten Andamanese tribes were lumped together and referred to by the British administrators as Great Andamanese. Thus, the Great Andaman Islands (which is now divided into South, Middle and North) were inhabited by numerically predominant Great Andamanese and *Ang* while North Sentinel Island by Sentinelese and Little Andaman Island by Onge.

From earlier records it is revealed that geographers, travelers, mariners and traders, who frequently visited these Islands from different parts of the globe between 2nd and 13th Century, did not make any attempt to occupy this archipelago. It was the British India Government, who established a Penal Colony associated with a harbor for safety and protection of ships in danger in September, 1789 at Chatham Islands. Unfortunately, due to unhealthy situation, the settlement was abandoned in May, 1796. Later on, British India Government took occupation of the Andaman Islands and finally Penal Settlement was established in Port Blair in 1858. The

aborigines made futile attempts to resist occupation of their traditional habitat and there were numerous encounters of conflict and battles between pre-historic inhabitants and British Administration with trained forces. Within a few years, consequent development of colonization made *Ang* life and survival very miserable. It gradually intensified hatred and hostility and ultimately made themselves self-isolated from the 'Eenen'.

After Independence, following the idea adopted by Portman (1879-94), a policy of reconciliation for establishment of friendly relation with unfriendly and hostile *Ang* was introduced by the then Chief Commissioner of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 1952, through a system of periodical visits to the *Ang* settlements by a team of selected persons mainly from Bush Police Force. The team used to visit *Ang* area of the Middle Andaman Islands by mechanised boat and dropped gift articles like banana, coconut, pieces of red clothes etc. on the shore and noticed behaviour of *Ang* staying on boat from a suitable distance. During 1950s, large areas of forest were cleared for resettlement of refugees which carved the habitat and resource bases of the *Ang*. It not only provoked them to intermittent clashes with forest labourers and settlers, but killed many *Ang* and Non-*Ang* masses as well. Following a notification on Regulation for Protection of Aboriginal Tribes in Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 1956, the then Chief Commissioner of A&N Islands declared an area of 642 sq. km. of South and Middle Andaman as 'Reserve Territory' for the *Ang* in April 1957. It further includes 5 km. of coastal water from high tide line mark along with the reserve area. The motive behind this reservation was to allow the tribe to continue their traditional foraging mode of living and to provide them some protection from neighbouring settlers. In June 1968, the villagers of Kadamtala, Middle Andaman, captured two *Ang* boys who came in search of Iron implements. They were brought to Port Blair by the contact team (i.e., Bush Police Officers), where they were kept for a month. They were treated nicely and were sent back near their settlement area with many a gift. Between 1969 and 1974, many visits were paid with dropping gifts for the *Ang* of Foul Bay and Lakera Lunta area of Middle Andaman. In April 1974, for the very first time, *Ang* showed friendly gesture to the members of the contact team. They came on their own by swimming towards the boat and not only collected their gifts by climbing the boat, but also greeted the contact team members. Within a few years, the contact team members were able to secure favour of their trust and faith and became friendly with a section of *Ang* of Middle Andaman. Whenever contact team visited their Islands, they used to come to the shore and to the boat without their bows and arrows.

In February 1976, a voluntary organisation Andaman Adim Janajati Vikas Samity (AAJVS) was formed by initiative and support of A&N Administration. It was formed particularly with a view to protect health, prevent extinction/ depopulation, promote economic and social development etc. of the primitive tribal groups like Great Andamanese, Onge, Jarawa (*Ang*), Sentinelese and Shompen.

AAJVS was also supposed to achieve a) Contact and befriending *Ang*; b) To observe and study *Ang* and suggest measures to the government for their welfare and development. After its formation, AAJVS along with experienced officials of Anthropological Survey of India, Bush Police, Health Department, Andaman Administration and others were constituted to form a Jarawa Cell.

Although members of contact team were happy making friendship with a section of *Ang*, yet there were incidents of occasional attacks on the settlers and others, mainly encroachers and poachers who damaged their resource bases, also continued. *Ang* life and habitat was worst affected with construction of about 343 km. long Andaman Trunk Road (ATR), beginning from 1970s till its full operation in 1989. This long process of construction not only damaged the forest severely and restricted movement of wild animals due to continuous use of noisy heavy machines and vehicles, blasting of explosives, construction of numerous labour camps etc. but also extremely disturbed routine foraging life of the *Ang*. They made strong protest in their traditional way through guerrilla attacks from the very beginning of road construction activities.

While the process of confidence building of the administrators, planners and scholars towards *Ang* was in full swing, a major shift in the situation took place in October 1997. A group of unarmed *Ang* came out of their habitat and started visiting neighbouring settlements of Middle Andaman Island in broad daylight. Earlier, their visits to the neighbouring settlements were secret and occasional especially during nights, in order to collect their needs or requirements like banana and iron implements. Gradually, they started visiting village settlements like Uttara, Santanu, Kadamtala etc. adjacent to ATR, individually or in groups. It was learnt from the villagers that younger boys and girls asked for food through gesture. Villagers presumed that driven by hunger these folks had come out of the forest. Some of the villagers gave them eatables including boiled rice, khichdi etc. and also some used apparels. It marked the end of an era of xenophobia on the part of *Ang*.

Following the same manner, *Ang* of South Andaman also came out of the forest and started collecting banana, coconut and iron implements ignoring the residing villagers. Shortly, their behaviour became unacceptable to many, particularly villagers adjacent to *Ang* territory and ATR. A&N Administration especially AAJVS officials, Police personnel and some of the villagers together tried their best to control the situation. A strong annoyance started growing not only among the villagers but also on many others.

Considering the fact that *Ang*, a purely isolated community, were accepting various non-traditional food items, used apparels and came in regular contact with large number of outsiders which might have caused serious health hazards among them, a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) – W.P.48 of 1999 was filed in the Calcutta High Court seeking an order, directing the Government to provide all sorts of facilities, suitably rehabilitating them as was done for *Onge* and Great

Andamanese of Andaman Islands. An interim order was passed in May 1999. A committee of special officers was directed to submit a report on the problems and suggesting the ways and means for their rehabilitation and welfare. In June 1999, the committee submitted its report. Being not satisfied, the Division Bench of High Court referred the entire gamut to an expert committee in February 2000 requiring it to submit its report within six months. A new committee was constituted which submitted a report in April 2001. After going through this report, High Court felt that certain fundamental issues of *Ang* needed to be decided upon as a matter of Policy Decision of the Government and further directed the Ministry of Home Affairs, GoI, to constitute a committee of experts to study and spell out in clear terms: a) Reasons for sudden change in behaviour of *Ang*; b) Suggest remedial measures for the welfare of *Ang*.

In pursuance of the said judgment order of Calcutta High Court, the Ministry of Home Affairs, GoI, constituted a committee of experts in July 2001. On 9th October 2001, the Committee decided to get the *Ang* studied or surveyed in details through Multi-Disciplinary Research Teams in three phases to cover all the seasons of a year. The departments involved in this study were: Anthropological Survey of India, Botanical Survey of India, Zoological Survey of India, All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Directorate of Health Services and Forest Department, A&N Administration. Multi-Disciplinary Research Team was divided in three groups to study the entire *Ang* population in all their habitations. The author was Research Coordinator of one such groups. This was for the very first time, the research groups studied *Ang* living within among them in the reserve territory for continuous thirty days each in three successive phases in three seasons i.e., post-monsoon, summer and monsoon of the Islands, in order to understand probable seasonal variations in different aspects like subsistence, health and behaviour etc.

Though, a good number of studies are available on Negrito people of Andaman Islands but very little are known about *Ang* because of their long practiced unfriendly attitude towards others. Earlier, works on Andaman Islanders by Man, (1883); Portman, (1899); Radcliffe Brown (1922) and Cipriani, (1966) which marked a breakthrough in anthropological study particularly on the Great Andamanese, were mainly interesting ethnographic description of unusual nature. Among the Indian pioneers, works on Jarawa (*Ang*) by Pandit and Sarkar are worth mentioning. Pandit's work is a unique story of Jarawa hostility – a challenge to the civilisation, while Sarkar provides a first-hand account on Jarawa way of life. Sreenathan's (2001) study on language and culture is a lexical enquiry on extent and ways the vocabulary of *Ang* language is structured. Again, the study on outline grammar and sound system of *Ang* language by Raja Singh (2002) is a unique enquiry. *Jarawa contact: ours with them theirs with us* edited by Mukhopadhyay, et. el. (2002) is the finding of different scholars of various fields of social science and other disciplines, having a first-hand knowledge of *Ang*. The volume presents different

aspects of *Ang* life mainly on contact situation, environmental and ecological, health, nutrition and demographic, linguistic, welfare and some related issues. However, it is devoid of any comprehensive ethnographic account or any detailed study on social-economic life of the *Ang*. *Mee Ang: An Ethnographic profile on the Jarawa of Andaman Islands* by Das, (2016) - is a ready reference on habitat, demography, material culture, social structure, economy, beliefs and practices, impact of contact and changes on this foraging nomadic tribe.

This primitive small population group primarily subsists on foraging activities with their simple technologies and almost lived in self-isolation from greater societies. Now they have been compelled to live close to villages of diverse culture on account of colonisation. This situation demands special attention of administrators, scholars and others regarding the present state of socio-economic state of this indigenous population. Considering this, present study analyses in detail about the different components or traits relating to social organization, kinship system and subsistence economy with a view to understand their tradition. It also highlights the impact thereon, especially in their language, dress and ornaments, food items, tools and technology, attitude and behavior etc., after they broke their age-old self-isolation or self-exclusion and came in contact with the greater societies since October 1997.

Physical features of the *Ang* are characterized by short stature with average height of male - 155.61 cm and female - 148.93 cm. They are well built and without any extra fat in their body except in case of very few adult or aged females. Their skin color is dark with frizzle and woolly hair. Body hair is absent in both males and females. Their head is generally broad to round in shape and medium in size. Cheek bones are not prominent. Nose is depressed at the root with little flattened nose wings. Eyes are attractive with straight eyelids. Tongue is spotted with pinkish follicles and they are capable of tongue rolling. Lips are little thick. Teeth are strong, clear and bright without abrasions and diastema. Presence of steatopygia is a typical feature of women that grows with the advancement of age. They speak in their own dialect or language but they do not have any script for its manifestation. Their dialect or language have no affinity with any other language families of India but bear some similarities with dialect of their counterparts – Onge and Great Andamanese. Dialect of *Ang* is yet to be studied in depth. However, Raja Singh's (2002) study on outline grammar of *Ang* language indicates that the sound system of *Ang* language attests 13 vowels and 26 consonant phonemes. Word system of language attests 6 word classes namely – Noun, Pronoun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb and Article.

Data for this study were collected between 1989 and 1995 as a contact team member and again between 2001 and 2007 as a Research Coordinator of 'multi-disciplinary research team' and also in different occasions as assigned by the authorities. Almost all the *Ang* settlement areas were studied which covered the total population. Period of stay varied from 2-3 days to one month or so at a stretch.

Information on life and culture were gathered through interviews from most of the adult and youth members especially who had knowledge about their community and who could reply on the queries. Exhaustive genealogy had been collected not only to understand various aspects of their social system but to link and cross verify the collected data also. Observation and participation method were also adopted wherever necessary and admitted by the community.

HABITAT AND BASIC DEMOGRAPHY

Today, *Ang* inhabit the Western costal forest areas of South and Middle Andaman Islands but this territory was not actually under their possession about 150 years ago. They used to live in southern parts of South Andaman Island including Rutland Island. Later, with the near extinction of Great Andamanese, especially *Aka-bea* Andamanese group, the *Ang* gradually occupied all the forest areas of South Andaman Islands. During early stage of erstwhile Penal Settlement, *Ang* were known to have occupied interior parts of the forest while *Aka-bea* Andamanese were living in long shore (*aryauto*), creek (*adajig*) and forest dwellers (*eremtaga*). While trying to use or occupy the coastal areas, *Ang* often came in conflict with *Aka-bea*.

Ang have divided the area under their occupation into three broad territorial divisions which are again sub-divided into a number of local groups or bands. The local band members together of each territorial division or the tribe as a whole, depending on the situation, defend their territories against any interference or invasion by outsiders. According to their division, southern part including coastal and forest areas of South Andaman Islands from Constance Bay along the Mount Choulanga Range, popularly known as Tirur, and up to Puttatang is identified as '*Boiab*', while after Puttatang and along the Mount Cadell Range up to Middle Strait is identified as '*Thidong*' and the western part, both coastal and forest areas of Middle Andaman Island is identified by them as '*Tanmad*'.

The settlement sites for habitation is selected depending on availability of resources mainly food, shelter and sources of drinking water – the stream, locally called '*hoya*'. *Ang* are eco-friendly and extract only that much of natural resources which are required for their survival without destroying their surrounding environment. They make tools and implements using materials which are available in their surrounding habitats, except iron. Since long, they have been collecting iron from different sources like wrecked ships and later from surrounding villages and nowadays, it is supplied by Andaman administration through Andaman Adim Janajati Vikas Samiti (AAJVS). The *Ang* denotes a habitation or a settlement site or a communal hut or a small temporary hut, as '*chadda*' and identify it by prefixing the area like '*huelele chadda*', '*tahato chadda*', '*tuhi chadda*', '*chhan-ope chadda*' and so on. Earlier, they had large number of settlement sites or '*chadda*', scattered over the Western Coastal areas and jungle of South and Middle Andaman Islands, of which many are abandoned now. To them, a '*chadda*' is not only a place to live

in or stay temporarily for a few days during their foraging movement, but it also has a tradition and historical past – an abode of their ancestors where they were born, got initiation and married, a field of their bravery and also where they had breathed their last.

Besides six tribal communities in this Archipelago, there are huge migrant populations from mainland India who have settled here since Penal Settlement which changed the demography and socio-cultural scenario of the Islands. Prior to Independence in 1947, many people were brought here as convicts or prisoners by way of punishments while some came here as traders, workers or service holders under the British Government like Moplah, Burmese, Karen and others. After 1947, Bengali speaking refugees from East Pakistan (present day Bangladesh) were brought in successive phases followed by large number of people from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and many others from different states of India. Even some tribes from Chhotanagpur started coming in search of livelihood. The total population of Andaman and Nicobar Islands has been recorded as 379,944 as per Census 2011. Of this, only 10% of the population lives in Nicobar Islands.

Today, total Negrito population has established only a few hundred, as no proper census for all groups is available due to their nomadic habit and unfriendly attitude, especially of the *Ang* and the Sentinelese. However, census enumeration of Great Andamanese and Onge is available since last few decades. The Great Andamanese, being worst effected population due to colonization, were numbered at 19 in 1961. However, they registered an increase from 48 in 2001 to 53 in September, 2008 which comprised 29 males and 24 females. Regarding *Ang*, the population figures till 2001 are all estimated as no census enumeration had been done. As per study report of the ‘multi-disciplinary research team’ 2002 and as recorded by the author self, it reveals a population of 266 *Ang* individuals comprising 135 males and 131 females. According to latest available report of 2009 of AAJVS, the *Ang* population has increased up to 341 comprising 177 males and 164 females.

Age and sex distribution population of *Ang* (2009), reveals an overall sex ratio of 93 females per 100 males which is a little less than earlier study of 2002 where it was 97 females per 100 males.

TABLE -1: AGE AND SEX DISTRIBUTION OF ANG POPULATION (2009)

Age – group	Male		Female		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	
0 – 14	63	18.5	69	20.2	132 (38.7)
15 – 44	91	26.7	79	23.2	170 (49.9)
45+	23	6.7	16	4.7	39 (11.4)
Total	177	51.9	164	48.1	341 (100)

Population among the children (0 – 14 years) reveals 38.7% (132) comprising

18.5% (63) boys and 20.2% (69) girls. Sex-ratio in this age group is more progressive i.e., 109 girls per 100 boys. Population between 15 to 44 years, the most economically and reproductively active population, shows the largest concentration of persons i.e., 49.9% (170) with 26.7% (91) males and 23.2% (79) females. Sex-ratio in this age group is comparatively less i.e., about 87 females per 100 males. Average life span of *Ang* is about 55 years. The age group of 45+ years counts a total of 11.4% (39), comprising 6.7% (23) males and 4.7% (16) females. Prior to 2002, the frequency of infant mortality rate was high but necessary action has been taken since, by the Directorate of Health Services, A&N Administration, to arrest the infant mortality. Though overall sex-ratio is low, yet the children group reveals a progressive trend. Thus, it is expected that present population structure of *Ang* will help for a healthy trend of population growth.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The *Ang* are an identical endogamous ethnic group that maintains their identity through distinct dialect, socio-economic traits, beliefs and customs and share a definite territory for habitat and subsistence activities. Like other typical hunter and gatherers in the world, *Ang* still reveal earliest form of human society. They live in local groups or bands with no central leadership. In their nomadic hunting and gathering life, they move from one resource base to another throughout the seasons and years, going back and forth between food and water. They neither practice horticulture and agriculture nor herd animals. With plenty of resources for survival at hand, everyone enjoys almost equal right and share. They have adopted to procure and make their food with their simple tools and techniques as needed. There is no competition for accumulation of food and resources among them. Even, the concept of permanent storage of food is yet to be developed and as such they maintain a typical classless or egalitarian society.

As already mentioned, *Ang* refer to a hut as '*chadda*' and identify the residents of a family as '*tutime chadda*'. Husband-wife with or without their minor children is common trend of household or family composition among them. Generally, widowed persons get married soon after death of either of the spouses. It is common practice that a youth establishes a separate family immediately after marriage at least for a certain period. As noticed during field investigation, *Ang* households or families can broadly be divided into two heads - Nuclear type and Broken type. Under Nuclear type, there are three distinct categories of families, which are - a) couple without child; b) couple with young or unmarried children and c) remarried widowed persons with their children and minor children of earlier marriage. Broken type consists of - a) married brother with unmarried sisters and brothers or all unmarried brothers and sisters and b) widowed mother or father with their unmarried children. No extended or joint type of families were seen. They have separate bachelor dormitories for boys and maidens which continuously go through

fission and fusion due to regular movement of its members.

In each community hut or in temporary small huts, the residence of families or dormitory members are well demarcated and right on temporary huts or living and sleeping space in communal hut is almost reserved. The respective family use it during their rotational movement or any of the kin members from the either side could use it in their movements. It was noticed that the residents of a family are identified and called as '*tutime chadda*'. Thus, the very word or term '*tutime*' is used and refer to identify a family among the *Ang*.

Like other societies, family i.e., '*tutime*' is not only the smallest social unit but also the basic structural and functional unit among *Ang*. It consists of husband and wife with or without their minor or unmarried children. In case of death of either of the couple, members of the broken family, as per norm, leave to their respective dormitories until and unless he/she gets remarried. Further, children of the widower stays with relatives of either side for a certain period or until the widower gets remarried. The boy or girl after generally attaining 6-7 years of age, do not share sleeping space with their parents. Rather they live with bachelor boys or maidens in the respective dormitories. The dormitory is a center from where they socialize and learn the life of a forager but never cut-off their link with their parents and siblings. The dormitory of boys is called '*thorkulang chadda*' and that of girls and widows is called '*abile/thorkongo chadda*'.

'*Tutime*' is an institution in which the members of a kin group are recognized as descendants of a particular person. It is also a primary sustenance unit. It plays an important role in understanding social organization of *Ang*. It is formed with permanent union of men and women through marriage. Beside legal sexual relation between a husband (*wagi*) and a wife (*wangab*), a strong bond of love and affection exists between them which is marked in each step of their life. During long stay with them and regular visits, the author never had seen any quarrel or wrangling between them. Neither husband nor wife shows anger or temper on other. Exception was noticed among a newly married couple where husband wanted his wife's company alone throughout day and night like a shadow. Nobody's interference is tolerated. As such, their fellow members never disturb them. Any barrier in their early conjugal life may lead to awful consequence but they never get separated.

Like all human societies, they follow a system of rights and duties in regulating conduct towards one another. It is marked between the family members and between inter and intra family, local groups or community members. It is remarkable to *Ang* that a child, boy or girl, is highly precious than anything else. Though the children during their infancy are usually grown up under care of its parents, yet they are found to be nourished and pitted by every female member of the group. Often women with weaned child are found to suckle to a child of fellow mother. From 3-4 years of age, a boy begins to learn hunting by way of playing with toy bow and arrow usually given by his father and gradually pick up the knowledge about edible animals, fishes

and plants. Similarly, a girl accompanies her mother or elder female relatives, for collecting various regular edibles near their habitat and gradually learns the art of catching fish, picking up mollusks, collection of turtle eggs etc. The children are treated with utmost care, extreme kindness and affection and never gets physically punished of any kind. But one thing is unbecoming with their social custom and practices that the orphan children are hardly adopted, not even by their relatives and they often grow up neglected and struggle hard for their survival.

Being hunter and gatherer, a father primarily does hunting as well as basic processing of the hunt and also makes hunting implements, while a mother does fishing and collection including boiling and cooking in addition to other domestic chores. The artefacts made and used by them are mostly function oriented and gender specific. Men make and use hunting implements like bow (*aab*), arrow (*patho*), chest guard (*kekad*), wooden bucket (*uhu*) etc. For making iron implements, they do not temper iron in fire, rather they make it only by hammering which is a very hard and laborious job just like hunting a wild pig. Considering so, their social system keeps away females from hunting as well as making such implements. Women mainly make fishing nets (*botho*), cane basket (*taika*), which are mostly used by them for fishing, collecting and gathering.

Usually *Ang* intake baked or boiled pigs meat, hunted in groups and process it in their common fire place called '*thuha*', while monitor lizard, fish, crab, shell, prawn, turtle-eggs, roots, tubers etc. are taken after boiling. Members of the family including kin members sit encircling '*thuha*', take food directly from the vessel into their hands and consume it, as they do not have any concept of using plates to serve the food. During field investigation, it was noticed in a communal feast that cooked pig's meat was served to each person in their hands after directly feeding a little quantity to each one of them.

Relationship between husband and wife is mainly based on trust, mutual understanding and sincere love while that of children, is based on responsibility and with kindness and consideration on the part of former and rendering of filial piety and obedience on the part of latter. Behavior of siblings to one another depends on their respective ages. Younger members are expected to obey their elders while the elders look after and protect their younger siblings. Usually the hunters do not depend on others for their food. Hence, the duties of a man or a woman towards his or her relatives, other than those to parents and siblings, are not so distinguishable. There is a custom among them that a man would not directly call or address to and speak with his parents-in-law or vice-versa. But the son-in-law treats his parents-in-law with great respect and regard and similarly the latter treats the former with great affection. Again, elder sister-in-law is respectable and younger sister's husband cannot crack a joke or merry-making with her. Owing to their nomadic habits and foraging economy, they are found to form a few temporary groups regularly to serve their day-to-day purpose including attacking the poachers and even for singing and

dancing which is their passion and prime entertainment. The groups are made of members of different age groups who may or may not be related to each other but are mostly guided by the senior knowledgeable persons. Similarly, friendly relation is maintained by different local groups and between inter-territorial divisions through occasional visits. It helps them to maintain social cohesion and to bind people in one identical community. Again, the duties that a person renders to one another, are determined not only by their relation which is either through consanguinity or marriage but also by their respective age and social status.

The next social unit is local group or band. It consists of several families mostly kin members along with individuals who live in dormitories. The local groups are not permanent in nature as they continuously go through the process of fission and fusion which depends on availability of resources, mainly food and water. It may so happen that persons camping together divide themselves in smaller groups and go in different directions and reassemble somewhere at a later date.

Allocation of huts in the settlement sites reveal that *Ang* do not follow any single line i.e., consanguineal or affinal relations for construction and occupation of huts. Rather, it is a combination of both type of relations in addition to some distant relatives or others. Their regular movement also follows the same pattern. During movement, vacant huts in temporary settlements or living space (*thula*) in community hut are generally occupied and used by kin families or members.

Next larger unit is the territorial group. We now know that *Ang* have divided their reserved territory into three divisions like *Boiab* - Southern part of South Andaman, *Thidong* - Northern part of South Andaman and *Tanmad* - rest of the territory in Middle Andaman. There is no distinctive *Ang* name for a territorial division. A territorial division is denoted by reference of an area in which the group belongs like *Boiab Ang*, *Thidong Ang* and *Tanmad Ang*.

A person is considered to be belonging to a territorial division by way of their birth and living or by way of marriage. There are certain customs governing the rights of a territorial group over its territory. Persons are free to forage within their own territory but not in others. However, to forage in others territory, prior permission of senior members of the concerned territory must be obtained. Generally, guests are allowed to accompany hosts for pig hunting or honey collection but foraged items are shared between members participated.

Though territorial divisions enjoy considerable autonomy, yet the larger identical ethnic group i.e., the tribe is quiet important. Social interaction takes place regularly between all the territorial divisions through marriages and social visits. Even though members of a territorial division live a long distance apart and in geographic isolation like island to island or interior forests or jungle to coastal areas, yet all members of the community are well acquainted with regular events relating to socio-economic life and health. As such, members of '*tanmad*' group

know each member of 'boiab' and 'thidong' group personally and vice-versa. In case of threat to their territory, members of the respective territorial divisions or all the members of the tribe come forward and unitedly defend it.

Ang are strictly endogamous. There is no standard age for marriage among them. Generally, girls are eligible for marriage after attaining puberty while boys after attaining adulthood ceremony. Marriage age incompatibility was found although to a limited extent. From childhood, even at the age of 2-3 years, it has become a custom that the *Ang* parents or elderly relative, select a prospective husband for their child. Formal marriage is solemnized on receiving consent of both partners after attaining adulthood ceremony, 'lepa' for a boy and 'upemame' for a girl. In this system, there is a problem especially in case of betrothed bride. In case of sudden or accidental death of betrothed partner at an early age, the girl suffers a lot with the advancement of age from the unmarried youth or grown-up boys until she gets a marriageable partner, usually a betrothed or a widower.

Ang strictly follows monogamy. Even in case of barrenness, none of the partners marry again. Divorce or separation is not reported. Widow and widower remarriage is prevalent. Regulation of marriage is on the basis of relationship. Marriage with near kin members of both the father and mothers side is strictly prohibited. Age is not considered in widow and widower remarriage. Intra and inter local group, territorial division marriage is prevalent. Both levirate and sororate marriage is prohibited. Marriage is usually arranged by senior members of both sides and is celebrated by youths of the dormitory.

There is no organized leadership among *Ang*, whether it is local group or territorial division or even in community level. Affairs on socio-economic issues or in defending their territory are mostly regulated by senior members and youths. Participation of women in all affairs was noticed. Besides respect for seniority, *Ang* pays respect to those also who possess certain personal qualities like skill in hunting and warfare, skill in making well finished implements and artefacts, possession of supernatural power and nowadays skill in communicating with outsiders. Person possessing such skills inevitably acquires some influence and control over their community. His opinion on any matter is more valuable than that of any senior members. It has been observed that in each territorial group there are one or more such influential persons to control and look after their society. There is no specific term to address them but they are paid due respect and honor even after their death as per social norms like skull of such person is preserved in cavities of certain trees near their habitat. In certain cases, collar bone and finger bones of deceased are collected and tied around neck and arms with cane thread for a certain period.

KINSHIP SYSTEM

In each and every society, groups of people are tied together by various kinds of

kinship bonds like bond of blood between parents and children, between siblings and affinal bonds between spouse and their relatives on either side. To understand social structure of a community, kinship bond plays an important role. The network of social relation between different kinship bond is organized and operate in such a way which connect or relate different generations and reflect in social continuity and coherence. Like any other society, from birth till their death, each and every *Ang* is surrounded by a number of people. Some are his relatives, some are friends and some non-related community members. The community members extend their cooperation in constructing family or a large community hut, in foraging activities, in movement from one camp site to another and in all social events like birth, marriage, death and other rituals.

Vast majority of the primitive societies have some or other form of kinship relationship known as the ‘classificatory system of relationship’. But this system is intimately connected with the existence of the social divisions - the ‘clans’. Among the Andaman Negritos, there are no ‘clans’ and the system of relationship is fundamentally descriptive in nature. To understand *Ang* kinship system, it is necessary to examine the terms by which they denote different kind of relationships which are recognized by their society. *Ang* kinship can be classified into four groups, viz., consanguineal, affinal, collateral and descendant. In reference and in address, the kinship terms are mostly prefixed with ‘*ma*’, ‘*wa*’, ‘*k*’, ‘*u*’ etc. Their kinship system can be illustrated in terms of ego through the diagrammatic charts shown as under:

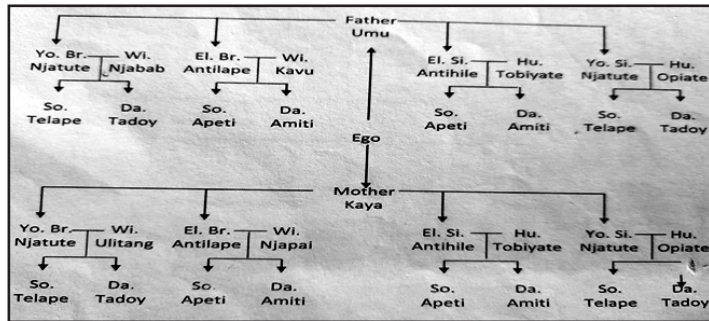


Figure-2: Consanguineal Kin

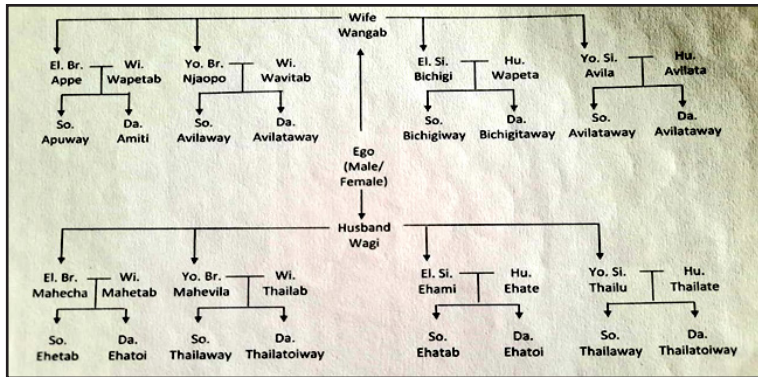


Figure-3: Affinal Kin

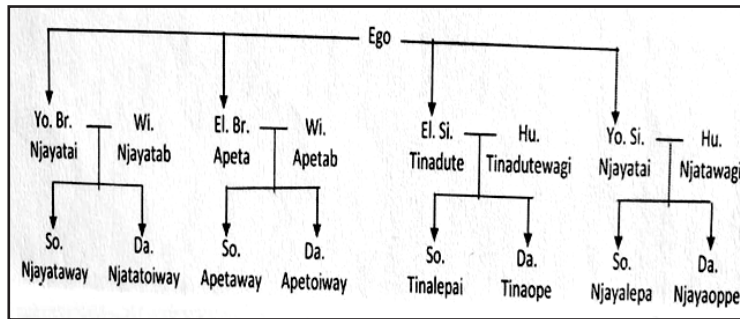


Figure-4: Collateral Kin

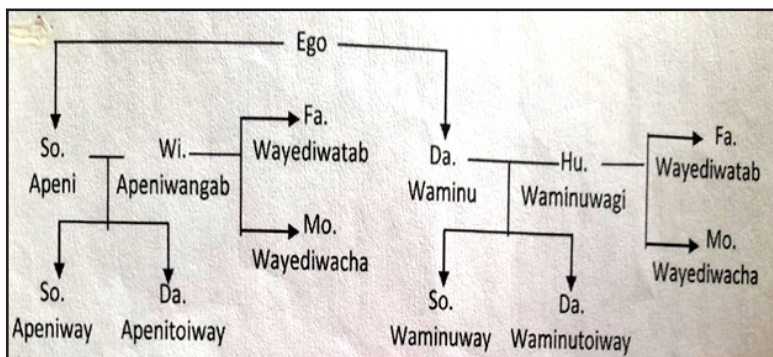


Figure-5: Descendant kin

[Abbreviations: Fa – Father, Mo – Mother, Br - Brother, Si – Sister, El – Elder, Yo – Younger, So – Son, Da – Daughter, Hu – Husband, Wi – Wife, Gr – Grand]

The term 'umu' denotes father which is gender specific and not equated with

any other kin. In reference and in address, it is used as '*ma umu*' and '*waumu*' respectively. Similarly, the term '*k aya or waaya*' stands for mother, which is used as '*ma waya*' in reference and '*wa kaya or kaya*' in address. Further, father's father is referred to as '*ma umuame*' and is addressed as '*umeed*' based on the basic component '*umu*'. Father's mother is referred to as '*ma umuwaya*' considering the exclusively used and gender specific term '*aya*' for mother and is addressed as '*njahelaya*'. Similarly, mother's father is referred to as '*ma ayaamu*' and is addressed by the term '*umeed*', while mother's mother is denoted by the term '*ma wayaaya*' and is addressed by the term '*njahelaya*'.

Father – *ma umu or waumu*

Father's father and Mother's father - *umeed*

Mother – *k aya or waaya*

Mother's mother and Father's mother –*njahaleya*

Siblings of both father and mother of ego are referred by the common terms which are gender specific and generally cover one generation. Here distinction is maintained according to their position in the family as elder or younger. They consider father's and mother's elder brother to be of same status and hence they are referred by same terms. It is same in case of father's and mother's younger brothers and further similarity is maintained in case of sisters as well.

The term '*antilape*' is used for the elder brother of ego's parents, and to denote the younger ones, '*njatute*' is used. Further, the elder sister of the ego's parents is referred to as '*antihile*' and the younger counterpart is denoted as '*njatute*'. The spouse of ego's father's and mother's elder brother is considered to be of the same status and is denoted by '*kavu*' and '*njapai*' respectively, while the younger one is referred to as '*njabab*' and '*ulitang*'. For denoting the spouse of elder and younger sister of the parents, terms '*tobiyate*' and '*opiate*' are used respectively. Siblings of the ego belong to the same status. Similarly, the children of father's sister and mother's brother enjoy the same status and are denoted by the same terms. Thus, father's sister's son and mother's brother's son who is older than the ego is denoted by the term '*apeti*' while the younger one is '*telapi*'. Similarly, father's sister's daughter and mother's brother's daughter who is senior to ego is referred to as '*amiti*' and the younger is '*tadoy*'.

Father's and mother's elder brother – *antilape*

Father's and mother's younger brother – *njatute*

Father's and mother's elder sister – *antihile*

Father's and mother's younger sister – *njatute*

Father's elder brother's wife - *kavu*

Mother's elder brother's wife - *njapai*

Father's younger brother's wife – *njabab*

Mother's younger brother's wife - *ulitang*

Father's sister's son and mother's brother's son – *apeti / telapi*

Father's sister's daughter and mother's brother's daughter – *amiti / tadoy*

Ego's relatives through siblings are considered as collateral kins. *Ang* mostly use a single generic term of reference for the siblings irrespective of age and sex, like the term '*eikuta*' is denoted for brothers and sisters. However, *Ang* identify the siblings in terms of age, sex and social position also. Some major kinship relations with reference to ego are as follows:

Elder brother – *antihilape/mapo*

Married elder brother – *apeta*

Younger brother – *lepai*

Married younger brother – *njayatai*

Ang in general use the term '*wangab*' to refer wife and for husband it is '*wagi*'.

Elder brother's wife - *apetab* (*apeta* + *aab*, in descriptive form i.e., el. br. + wi.)

Younger brother's wife – *njayatab* (yr. br. + wi.)

Elder sister – *tinadute/wami*

Elder sister's husband – *tinadutewagi* (el. si. + hu.)

Younger sister – *njayatai*

Younger sister's husband – *njayataiwagi* (yr. si. + hu.)

The children of ego's brothers and sisters are generally referred to by common terms '*da*' and '*doye*' referring for boys and girls respectively. Similarly, the common term '*ichele*' denotes the children in general. Even then there are specific terms used for denoting the offsprings which are descriptive in nature.

Son – *apeni*, Daughter – *aminu / waminu*

Elder brother's son – *apeti / da*

Younger brother's son – *njayataway / da*

Elder brother's daughter – *amiti / doye*

Younger brother's daughter – *njayatatoi / doye*

Elder sister's son – *tinalepai / da*

Younger sister's son – *njayalepa / da*

Elder sister's daughter – *ami / tinaope / doye*

Younger sister's daughter – *njayaope / doye*

Terms for spouse of son and daughter are role specific and descriptive, same is in the case of grandchildren. Here, the word '*way*' and '*toi way*' are suffixed to refer grandsons and granddaughters and even brother's sons and daughters, thus it covers two generations.

Son's wife – *apeniwangab* (so. + wi.)

Daughter's husband – *waminuwagi*(da. + hu.)

Son's son - *apeni way*

Daughter's son – *waminu way*

Son's daughter – *apenitoy way*

Daughter's daughter – *waminutoy way / apetatoy way*

Brother's son – *apeta way*

Brother's daughter – *apetatoy way*

Some affinal kinship relation equates and identifies the same social position with the primary relations like the parents of ego.

Wife's father - *wahatab*

Wife's mother – *mayaab*

Wife's elder brother – *wape,*

Wife's younger brother – *njaopo*

Wife's elder brother's wife - *wapetab*

Wife's younger brother's wife – *wavitab*

Wife's elder sister – *bichigi,*

Wife's younger sister – *avila*

Wife's elder sister's husband – *wapeta,*

Wife's younger sister's husband – *avilata*

Wife's brother's and sister's son – *da* (in common term) / *appuway / avilaway* and *bichigiway / avilaway*

Wife's brother's and sister's daughter – *doye*(in common term) / *amiti / avilataway* and *bichigitaway / avilataway*

Husband's father – *mihaumu*

Husband's mother - *mihajaya*

Husband's elder brother – *mahecha,*

Husband's younger brother – *mahevila*

Husband's elder brother's wife – *mahetab,*

Husband's younger brother's wife - *thailab*

Husband's elder brother's / sister's son - *ehetab,*

Husband's elder brother's / sister's daughter - *ehatoi*

Husband's younger brother's / sister's son – *thilaway,*

Husband's younger brother's / sister's daughter – *thilatoiyway.*

It is found that, in *Ang* language there are certain words which serve to denote and maintain network of kinship relationship. It manifests a developed system of terms denoting social status of the person concerned, who also perform some special

duties. Similarly, the conduct of persons to one another is determined by their age, sex and respective positions in the group or in the society at large. Among *Ang*, the lowest structural unit of their social organization is the elementary family i.e., '*tutime*'. Further, there are some purely temporary groups like hunting, fishing or collecting group which consist of consanguineal, affinal, collateral and descendant kin members i.e., it covers both intra and inter generation kin members. This is not only because of proper utilization and management of resources but plays an important role in maintaining cohesiveness in kinship relations also. *Ang* kinship terminology reveals a lineal type of kinship system as it separates the cousins from the siblings, like the term father '*umu*' is distinct and different from that of brothers of father and mother – '*antilape*'. Again, the observation of Sreenathan, (2001) and study of the author, unanimously state that the use of same set of terms for cross cousins – '*apeti / telapi*' and '*amiti / tadoy*', separate terms for the siblings and prohibition of cross cousin or cousin marriages reveals that *Ang* kinship system have some resemblance with the 'Eskimo kinship type'.

NORMS, BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS

The pattern of behavior and social relationship between kin members are expressed in various stages of rituals like birth, puberty or initiation rites, marriage and death. These life cycle rituals in association with norms, beliefs and customs, plays an important role in determining their socio-cultural life as well as traditions. Birth of a child is significant because it determines not only one's membership in the society but also ascribe with the status and affiliation to the particular kinship system.

Birth

It is known to *Ang* that union of male and female is the cause of pregnancy and birth of a child, yet they believe that blessings of their ancestors and supernatural power is the prime cause for a woman to get pregnant (*kidu-aleum*). Cessation of regular menstrual cycle (*cheng-mameya*) and then the tendency of vomiting or occasional vomiting (*amle*) are the indications of pregnancy. During pregnancy, a woman follows certain rules and regulations in their daily life. She is abstained from taking honey (*leo / pod*), meat of monitor lizard (*orug*), turtle (*ukale*) etc. and any non-traditional food items which they get nowadays from *Eenen*. Further, she can go to forest but cannot climb up the trees for honey collection and also she will not decorate her face and body with white clay (*ood*) or with any traditional or non-traditional ornaments.

During advanced stage of pregnancy, a temporary hut is prepared on a side which is adjacent to the temporary settlement or an extended temporary living space in one side of their communal hut where husband and wife are allowed to live for a certain period mainly for pre and post-natal care. The temporary hut or living space

is provided with a wooden floor, usually small in size of about 4' x 4' in length and breadth, and a little above the ground. It is made of areca nut planks and erecting four comparatively strong wooden posts of about 1½' to 2' in height. The wooden floor covered with tender '*salaipatti*' (*Liqualapeltata / spinosa*) and two fire places are set on either sides to keep the room warm. During delivery, no male member is allowed except her husband. Generally, husband, elderly women and teen aged girls help in delivery. When labor pain starts, husband or any of the women gives massage or gives a light pressure with a piece of fresh bark (about 1' in length and 8-9'' in breadth) of a plant on abdomen and waist while someone gives foment by hitting his/her foot on fire and press it on abdomen of the expectant mother. Further, husband or any of the elderly women collects vaginal fluid (*chelo-oten*) coming out of expectant mother and massage her abdomen from up to down.

After birth, one of the women cleans the new born with very soft tender leaves and cuts his/her umbilical cord with a knife (*tohad*) or shell (*wag*) and knot it (*aahotanaya*). Then the baby is laid down on a very soft bed prepared with a thick cover of tender leaves on the wooden platform. As per their custom, one elderly lady takes a little pig's fat oil in her middle finger's tip and touch it on the mouth of new born baby, this custom is locally called '*echo-hobo*'. Placenta and other leavings of delivered mother are cleaned by her husband and cast away in the hole of a tree in nearby jungle. It is believed by them that if these leavings from the mother's body is not properly disposed and if it is eaten by wild animals then it will cause harm to the newborn. New mother is not allowed to take honey for about a month and no other restrictions are imposed in taking food but fish and bivalves are taken in more quantity. Monitor lizard or pig's fat is used to massage the newborn babies. A baby fully depends on breastfeed till dental formation and such feeding continues up to 2 years of age or little more, along with other foods.

The parents, following the favorite and most usable natural objects like plants, animals, fishes including the settlement site or the stream, first give a name (*atiba*) to the baby. It may be mentioned here that *Ang* never refers and use one's died parents by names as it is social taboo. *Ang* boy or girl is again ascribed with an adult name when he or she attains initiation or puberty ceremony called '*lepa*' and '*upemame*' respectively.

Usually, on attaining 13-14 years of age, the adulthood ceremony (*lepa*) of a boy is celebrated. It is a highly desirous ceremony of each and every youth and is celebrated with great joy and enthusiasm by all relatives and members of the band or even beyond. The boy is required to hunt a wild pig by his own endeavor and offer it to his kin members and others. Similarly, the puberty ceremony (*upemame*) of a girl is observed with sincere care and affection when she attains puberty. These ceremonies help to obtain the status of adult to a boy and a girl respectively through social sanction.

Lepa

Hunting of wild boar or pig is a regular phenomenon among *Ang* which is mostly done in groups. Hunter feels proud and boasts himself on hunting a large pig or big tusked wild pig. As per their legendary beliefs and customs, they abstain from destroying the pig's skull. They preserve these by properly fastening both the upper and lower jaws with cane threads. As a result, huge number of pig's skull, either big or small, are bundled in fishing nets or single skull, are seen hanging from the thatched roof of the community huts. They believe that the pig's skulls depict the skill and heroism of the hunters, their ancestors. On destroying these skulls, they will be annoyed and due to this, pig or boar will be gradually wiped out from their territory and also they will face some physical problems.

The youths are well aware about the problems and consequences of hunting a wild pig or boar by lone effort, yet strong determination, great zeal and will force with hard labor, helps them to proceed and achieve the target. Immediately after hitting the final shot in the boar, the youth runs after the hunt which is in the pangs of death. Usually, he sits on the hunt, takes out the arrow, kisses it, takes a little blood from the hunted pig and smears on his chest and body. Sitting on the hunt, he proclaims loudly, '*meeavaikoa*', '*meeavaikoa*', which means "I have successfully hunted a boar...".

After returning back to '*chadda*', as soon as he keeps his hunt on the ground, all the senior members present over there embrace him one by one with great cheer and joy. Usually his elder sister or elder brother's wife comes forward and expresses her deep love and best wishes by repeatedly kissing on his forehead. Encircling the youth, all the male members start dancing while the female members sing songs related to pig hunting and *lepa* ceremony. One of the female smears '*ood*' on his forehead and rubs pig's fat oil over his body. He is offered only a little water, usually by his elder sister or elder brother's wife. After this, the youth is allowed to take rest for a while. In '*lepa*' ceremony, elder sister and her husband, elder brother and his wife and cousin with his wife, play certain specific role to make the ceremony a success.

With the beginning of dusk, his elder sister or alike awakens him with great affection and care and offers him a little water (*ing*) with spoon made of leaf and her husband then feeds him two baked ripe bananas. One of the elderly women decorates the youth with tender palm leaf bands in crisscross manner from chest to back and then rubs a few baked leaves of a creeper plant on his face and body with a view to protect from evil spirits. Holding hands, his elder sister's husband brings him near the central fire place (*wiah*) of community hut. He is then directed to stand silently by placing his right foot on the left and bending the head down. Keeping his hand on the youth's shoulder, the elder sister's husband then elaborately informs the gathering about the youth's heroism while killing the wild boar with

his own endeavor. Following social norm and custom, he, with the permission of the gathering declares the youth as adult with an adulthood name which he will bear throughout his life. As social sanction, the cheerful crowd immediately repeats the name several times. The programme becomes lively with the uproar of crowd and songs of '*lepa*' sung by the male members, slowly moving their bodies. The elder brother or cousin of new adult comes holding boiled head of the pig hunted by the new adult and stands face to face. This is then followed with bringing of a pig's skull nicely fastened with a cane thread by a friend of the new adult who stands next to his side. Then, different batches of women beautifully decorated with flowers and leaves, sing and dance. His elder brother or cousin then affectionately brings him to his elder sister-in-law by holding his hands and makes him sit on her lap. Before serving the invitees, following their customs, his elder sister and her husband takes a little portion of boiled or baked liver and a piece of meat and feeds him. The adult youth then cast away a little portion of chewed meat onto a leaf and throws it in fire as a mark of respect towards his ancestors. Then the close relatives of the new adult feeds little portion of liver and meat to the invitees directly into their mouth and also serve into their hands. After feast, as per practice they smear '*ood*' on the face of all the guests. This news of adulthood of a youth immediately spreads to all the local groups and even to the territorial divisions by early dawn.

Upemame

'*Upemame*' ceremony is celebrated when a girl attains first menstruation. From the first day of menarche, her movement is restricted specially towards jungle and sea except early in the morning. In the dormitory hut, a small square area covering her sleeping space (*thulog*) is surrounded by four posts with a platform of about 3' in breadth and 3½' in length made of splits of jungle areca nut tree. She remains seated or lay on the bed of '*deoa*' leaves (creeper plant) spread over the platform. A mixture of red soil (*alum*), pig's fat and gum extracted from creeper plants is applied on her head, neck and face. During this period, she doesn't even bath or decorate herself with '*ood*', even will not apply the same on her face and mouth after the meal. Her interaction with the male counterparts is also restricted. She is also not allowed to take meat of pig, monitor lizard and honey. She has to subsist primarily on fish and mollusk, fruits and tubers and water.

On the fourth day morning, she takes bath and served with pig's meat. On the same morning, as per their customs, she has to take a few babies on her lap and pray to their ancestors as a fertility cult. During evening, she is nicely decorated with '*ood*', flowers and leaves and is allowed to sit in the open space of '*chadda*'. All women and girls of the band, decorate themselves with flowers and leaves and sing songs and dance around her. In their songs, they describe meaning and importance of adulthood of a woman and that she has now entered into reproductive life and also how she would make love (*henago*) with her mate and its limitation. Male

members do not participate in this occasion.

Marriage

It is known that *Ang* practice monogamy and following their age old customs, suitable mates, bride and groom, are selected from very childhood. As a result, both the betrothed partners get ample scope to know and love each other by way of exchanging food and gift articles. The relatives like elder sister and her husband, elder brother and his wife, mother's sister and her husband, father's brother and his wife, come forward to approach parents of betrothed partner. They finalize date of solemnizing the marriage and place of celebration. *Ang* usually practice patrilocal residence, especially when the partner belongs to different territorial divisions. The bride is then brought to groom's territory by her relatives and after marriage, she continues to live there. In some cases, when groom agrees to go to bride's father's territory for solemnizing the marriage, he continues to reside there or after a certain period, the couple may return back to groom's territory. In no case, one could enjoy benefits of both the territories and its resources.

As usual, before celebration of marriage, the groom constructs a new hut, a little away and in one side of the settlement, for his new family. On the day of marriage, bride's party along with the bride, come to groom's area and awaits a little away from the settlement for formal permission of entrance or welcome into the groom's *chadda*. Usually the senior members of the groom's *chadda* come to receive them to their *chadda*. Both bride and groom is decorated with traditional and non-traditional ornaments by their respective parties. They prefer dusk and as such, formal marriage is solemnized during twilight hours. Both the parties get themselves ready. All band members along with kins and relatives assemble at groom's *chadda*. With permission of senior members, the groom is directed to sit on a bed of leaves keeping his legs straight on ground. Female members of the bride specially her friends, married sisters, elder brother's wife, mother's sister etc. bring the bride holding her hands near the groom. Again, with permission of the senior members, the female relatives help the bride to sit on the lap of groom. The groom is then asked to hold the bride firmly. Any of the senior members, declares them as husband and wife (*wagi* and *wangab*). The audience cheers the new couple with great joy and clapping. The ceremony is followed by singing, dancing and common feast in traditional way. After feast, the new couple goes to their new hut, beginning of a new '*tutime*'.

Death

The news of death of any individual, irrespective of age of deceased and whether in a coastal '*chadda*' or forest '*chadda*', spreads to all the local groups as well as to the territorial divisions within a short while. *Ang* live in a close knit social relation

following their traditional norms and customs suited for their society. Despite this, it seems that some of their customs and practices are incompatible and against their usual behavior though they have their logic behind this. During field investigation, it was seen that a married son occasionally gives some amount of meat from his hunted share to the old parents or to the widow mother or widower father. It was also heard that during dying stage of a person, sons and daughters, whether married or unmarried, move to another camp leaving their dying father or mother alone keeping a few pieces of meat and little water.

On hearing the news of death, all kin members, relatives and band group members assemble and sit surrounding the body, express their grief keeping their hands on each other's shoulder and bowing their head down, starts weeping. *Ang* generally dispose dead body inside the forest away from their settlement site in two ways – by burial or by keeping the dead body between the buttresses of large trees. For burial, some male relatives and band members go to the jungle, select a spot and dig out grave in the ground. Generally, the grave is about 3' in depth. Before proceeding to the burial ground, legs and hands of the deceased are tied together firmly with bark threads and a piece of log or wood is inserted between the tied hands and feet to carry it to the burial ground in hanging position which is carried by the relatives and band members. On reaching the graveyard, tied hand and legs are opened. The body is tied again tightly in sitting position folding the legs so that knees come close to chin and hands hang as usual touching feet. Body is then placed in the grave and tied bark threads are cut with knife. The body inside the grave is covered with some '*salaipatti*' and is then covered with soil. If the deceased is male, some of his used articles like bow (*aav*), arrow (*patho*), knife (*tohad*), chest guard (*kekad*) and even some ornaments are kept on the grave. While for a deceased female, some of her regular used ornaments like necklace (*lelele*), waist girdle (*oniniyang*) etc. are kept on the grave.

In disposing dead body between the buttresses of large trees, it is placed in such a position as is kept in burial and then it is partially or completely covered with leaves and wood. Returning to settlement, all the consanguineal kin members smear '*ood*' in their whole face and apply it for several days, while other relatives and band members smear '*ood*' in their forehead only. Further, kins or relatives throw away the remaining articles used by the deceased including bow and arrows into the jungle or in the stream. Whole band members leave their '*chadda*' and abandon it permanently or for about a year and sometimes construct a new habitat, little away from the deserted one based on availability of resources and importance of the area. However, close kin members visit occasionally and awaits for decomposition of the body in order to collect a few pieces of bones like lower mandible, collar bones and some finger bones which are used after washing and cleaning in sea or in creek by close male relatives of deceased person. Mandible and long collar bone are worn as necklace tied with bark threads while finger bones are used as waist

girdle for several weeks or even months to mark mourning and to show their regard or affection to the deceased.

In their society, unwanted baby, be it of an unmarried girl especially who has lost her betrothed partner in childhood or of a widow and also handicapped baby, are not accepted in their society. In their consideration, in nomadic and foraging way of living, it is very difficult for a lone lady to care and upbringing a child. Following their customs and practices, within a few days of the birth, all arrangements are made to send the hapless baby to '*upper/thaluowa chadda*' – an imaginary beautiful place of all happiness. Generation after generation, senior members of the society, makes miserable mother believe the concept and make her willing for sending her baby to '*upper/thaluowa chadda*'. In each territory, there are certain people who possess some supernatural power and do this work. On a day fixed by such person, mother of the unfortunate baby is directed to come alone with the baby in a predetermined place, generally a little away from their settlement. As decided earlier, after handing over the baby to the person, she returns to '*chadda*', never looks back towards the person or the baby. It was learnt that, after going to deep jungle, the baby is thrown from hilltops. Nobody knows what happens afterwards. For this occasion, no mourning is observed.

SUBSISTENCE ECONOMY

Ang, being a typical foraging tribe entirely depend on natural resources for their survival. They forage both in terrestrial and aquatic resource bases applying their most simple technology for food and non-food items. They have broad spectrum economy, which mainly involves – 1. Hunting of wild animals from forest; 2. Fishing in sea, creeks and streams; and 3. Collecting roots, tubers, fruits, honey, turtle-eggs and non-food items like wood, resin, leaves etc. from forest.

Once they inhabited the vast areas of Great Andaman Islands – from Rutland Island in South to North Andaman. They now have been pushed to an area of 642 sq. km. which has been earmarked as the 'Reserve Territory' on Western Coastal areas and adjacent forest of South and Middle Andaman Islands. The major problem faced by them is that they are not the exclusive user of resources reserved for them due to the presence of number of non-tribal population close to their habitat. The major components of colonization process were not only establishment of settlement for the refugees, other settlers and forest operations but also to provide basic requirements to these settlers such as drinking water, public transports, school, health care, electricity facilities etc. under development program. As a result, areas of natural resource bases have gradually been carved out from the reserve territory. Further, the settlers specially of the adjacent villages, found potential of the reserve territory as an exploitative zone for its biotic resources as an extra source of food and income. Instances of poaching and encroachment into these territories increased which contributed to ecological imbalances leading to scarcity of natural resources,

thereby affecting on hunting and gathering life even on the small population of *Ang*.

It is known that *Ang* have divided their territory into three broad divisions – *Boiab*, *Thidong* and *Tanmad* – for proper utilization and management of natural resources. They are nomadic and regularly moves from one ‘*chadda*’ to another in small local groups or bands within their respective territorial divisions mostly to make better use of natural resources. Their traditional custom of forest management and use of resources not only helped them in maintaining equilibrium of resources and its density but also in reducing any risk of resource paucity.

The notable feature of resource availability in this tropical rainforest is that edible species are widely dispersed rather than being clumped. Further, the tropical rainforest environment of Andamans with over 2,000 available species is extremely diverse floristically. *Ang* who inhabit in such a diverse biotic environment are found to largely depend upon a limited number of plants and animals for food and non-food items including medicinal plants. They have acquired an excellent understanding about ecology and prevalence of various food items, both animals and plants, in different niches. They are well acquainted with a good number of species of plants (about 100) and animals (about 200).

Considering its distribution, *Ang* have classified resource bases into five categories as under:

- a) *Tinon* – Deep forest
- b) *Chanhanap* – Plain land
- c) *Tagid* – Marshy land
- d) *Pileh* – Sea shore
- e) *Wa / Hoya* – Fresh water bodies and streams

Their food culture consists of collection of different kinds of food items, its mode of processing and consumption. During field investigation, with a view to understand their ideas about “food”, whenever they were enquired what have they eaten, we got the reply, “*titabnadem / ovutitab / napotitab / orugtitab / leotitab*” which literally means “there is no food / eaten pig’s meat / eaten fish / eaten monitor lizard / eaten honey.” Thus, the word ‘*titab*’ not only stands for food or eatables of all kinds but also represent as a verb – eat or eaten. It may be mentioned here that like *Ang*, other Negrito people of Andaman Islands – Great Andamanese and Onge, use the word ‘*napo*’ and ‘*choge*’ to denote fish and all food items respectively.

Though *Ang* have a long list of indigenous food items in their dietary habits, yet they have definite choice on certain food items as well as in mode of consumption. From day to day observation in different seasons, it has been found that they have dietary preference on meat of wild pig and monitor lizard, fish, crab and honey. The study suggests that these food items are available in sufficient quantity. In their consideration, wild pig’s meat is the most preferred, prime and relishing food of all edible items irrespective of sex and age groups. It is available throughout the year,

though from middle of May (starting of rainy season) up to January, it is available in abundance which they hunt regularly. To them, during this period, a thick layer of fat develops in pig's body which is relishing and they consume it by boiling or baking. As a result, other food items are taken in considerably less quantity during this time. During hot summer days (February to April), pig bears very little fat in their bodies and availability becomes less and their food is substituted by many other food items such as seasonal fruits including wild jackfruit seeds, roots and tubers, fishes, crabs and mollusks. It may be noted here that although availability of deer is regular in Andamans since colonization, yet *Ang* never eats it as they consider it as their non-traditional food item. Prior to colonization, wild pigs were available in plenty due to which *Ang* had to invest less labor, time and energy to get a hunt, which has now significantly changed. This is not because of resource paucity but mainly due to becoming of wild pig as a subject of poaching and market economy to the neighboring non-*Ang* population, the settlers and others.

The coral beds, mainly in littoral and sub-littoral zones, provides variety of marine resources such as mollusks, echinoderms, fishes etc. which are available in plenty. Many varieties of fishes, prawns, bivalves are found in creeks and shallow water near their habitat which they catch easily. Similarly, crabs are available in muddy zones. These foods are not only sources of protein but also supplies calorie providing fat. Honey is another traditional food of *Ang* which they relish a lot. They collect ample quantity of honey from forest during dry season between November and early months of May. When there is excess collection, particularly during December to March, it is stored for some days or a few weeks. For storing purpose, they dig an elongated ditch and orderly put wooden buckets containing honey without beehives. The buckets are covered with thick layer of palm leaves and finally covered with soil. Nowadays, some are found to use plastic bottle for preserving honey.

Being a typical forager, they have several implements associated with food procuring technology i.e., for hunting, they use bow and different types of arrows; fishing implements consist of hand nets as well as bow and arrow while cane basket, wooden bucket, digging rod, machete etc. are used for gathering or collecting. In making foraging implements and in applying them in their daily activities, *Ang* reveal a clear sex-division of labor.

During study, it was reported that they eat flesh of different kinds of birds (*noha*) like parrot (*eechav*), wild duck (*churukarove*), dove, teal etc. but during long stay with them, it was never seen so. However, remnants of killing and processing of birds like wings with feather, skull with beak etc. were noticed. Further, they have a specific arrow for shooting birds called '*tochau-thaulab*'.

Both men and women do fishing. Usually women do fishing in groups. Fishing by couple together is not uncommon. The men folk do fishing with bow and a special type of pointed wooden arrow (*tochau-thad*) or needle like iron arrow point

(*tochau-thom*), mostly during low tide while women use hand net to catch fish from shallow waters, streams and near shore lines. They use hand net for trapping crabs or dug out crabs from burrows. Another way of catching crab is by making them fool through inserting a fine iron rod in the burrow.

Usually women, sometimes couple together collect turtle's eggs from sandy beach in bay area. Turtle nesting grounds are usually found near edge of the tidal flat where grass grows. Women and young girls are mostly found to collect marine mollusks like trochus, turbo, giant clams, cowries etc. from inter-tidal areas of the coral beds on open sea shore or mouth of bay area. During low tides, coral beds are generally exposed where these mollusks are seen in good numbers. They collect grubs of wood beetle from soil just underneath the rotting logs. Larvae or grubs of wood-borers are collected cutting or exposing an infected tree or tree stumps with an adze or axe.

Collection or gathering of food items and other required materials of daily need are mostly done by women folk or by the couple. Collection of honey, wild jackfruit seeds, firewood, cane etc. are done by male as well as female or jointly by couple. Log wood, thick bark sheets or bark etc. for making basket, chest guard and thread are collected by men.

Honey (*leo/pod*) is a precious and relishing food item to the *Ang*. Both men and women collect honey. They collect it in two ways – one from the tree holes which are generally at lower heights and where honeycombs as well as bees are smaller in size. Honey so collected by them is called '*pod*'. '*Pod*' is rarely available for collection by *Ang* as it is mostly collected by neighboring non-*Ang* communities. Another way is by climbing high tree tops where the honeycombs are larger in size so as the honey bees. This is more relishing to them which they called as '*leo*'. It is collected by cutting honeycomb from high tree tops and then collecting the honey in a container of wooden bucket. The person who first locates a beehive, enjoys the privilege of cutting it. If the person cannot collect honey immediately, a few shrubs surrounding the tree are twisted or broken to notify others that this beehive has already been located by one of their fellow men. Juice of soft stem and leaves of some plants, locally called '*homal*' (*Pseuduvaria Prainii*) and '*wio*' (*Amomum Aculeatum*) etc. are used as bee repellants. They chew the stem and leaves and the juice is rubbed on their face, body and hands when they go for collecting honey. Sometimes they spit the juice on bees just before breaking the hive. Even then they cannot totally protect themselves from killer bees. As seen, collection of '*leo*' is a risky job, even casualty and deaths are also reported.

Collection of edible plant resources are another important subsistence activity, mainly of the women. The major edible plant resources are wild tubers, seeds and various seasonal fruits. Women gather wild tubers by digging with sticks or rods. Proportion of wild tubers in their diet is quite low. Usually they consume it when they camp in the interior forest. It is eaten after boiling or baking. Leaves are not

used as food, rather these are used for medicinal purposes.

Ang eat a good variety of fruits and seeds which are mainly available during peak dry season to early rainy season i.e., April to July. A large portion of fruit such as '*khatta phal*' (*Baccaurea ramiflora*), '*bet phal*' (*Calamus longistus*), '*sapota*' (*Baucaeria ramiflora*) etc. is consumed by both men and women during its collection, while some fruits like '*dhani phal*' (*Nypa fruticans*), '*tendu*' (*Diospyros andamanica*), '*badam*' (*Terminalia calappa*) etc. are collected and generally carried back to their '*chadda*'. Women are found to make different temporary ornaments with fruits like head gear, necklace, arm band etc. to decorate themselves on their way back to *chadda*. During dry season, wild jackfruit seeds (*aab*) comprise a considerably high proportion of their food. These are available more in interior part of forest and less in coastal areas. Most of the times, couple together collect and process the jackfruit seeds.

Traditionally, food is cooked in common dug out earth oven or pit ovens, locally called '*wiah*' or '*aalav*'. These are made inside the community hut or outside temporary huts for roasting, boiling and baking food. Wild pig, the prime food item is consumed after processing. Usually after group hunting, the hunted pig is cut open and its intestine and other organs which are inedible are removed. Bunch of '*salaipatti*' is then inserted into it, keeping heart and liver intact following by securing it with bark threads. The pig is then carried by the main hunter or any other elder or senior member. On returning to '*chadda*', the hunt is kept by the side of common fire place or pit oven. One of the young members of hunting party, untie the hunted pig by cutting bark threads and takes out inserted '*salaipatti*', liver and heart from the abdominal cavity and keeps on another cleaned '*salaipatti*' spread on the ground. He cleans the pig by burning its body hair over fire and then scaling the whole body with knife for further processing. When the hunt is big, more than one young boys are found to participate. After this, one of the adult members of the team, first cuts up feet joints of the pig and gives it to the dog (*oome*) which accompanies *Ang* in hunting. This is then followed by cutting both the ears (*ikwagu*). He pours one in his mouth and the other one, as per usual practice gives to the young boy for chewing who first cleans the pig. He then cuts up the pig into several large pieces after separating the body (*atelu*) from the head (*ootha*), while another adult member with 2-3 young boys, light up huge fire with good quantity of firewood. A good number of stones of different size are spread over the firewood to make the oven and stones extremely heated. After sometime, burnt firewood and heated stones are kept aside and thick layer of '*salaipatti*' is spread inside the hot oven to place the pig's meat over it which is again covered properly with '*salaipatti*'. Finally, it is covered with heated stones, burnt firewood and heated sand. The meat is taken out after 2-3 hours which is completely baked and ready to be shared and eaten. This whole process is done by men folk whereas in the next morning, involvement of any of the sexes is seen in smoking the residual meat. In group hunting, sharing of

meat is done in almost equal quantity to all the members participated but processed head is given to the main hunter in addition to his normal due share.

Recently in addition to baking, they also boil pig's meat like that of monitor lizard, fish, crab etc. where they relish soup as well. Boiling is done in aluminum vessel (*buchu*) which are mainly supplied by AAJVS or the ones which they collect from neighboring villages. It may be mentioned here that for boiling of monitor lizard, fish, crab, turtle egg etc. any member can participate irrespective of sex.

Ang prefers wild jackfruit seeds (*aab*) more than ripen fruits or seed vessels. The seeds are eaten following a lengthy process for consumption after roasting. Matured fruits are collected either in groups or by couple or even by family members. The fruits so collected are roasted either in the collected spot itself or nearby open space in earth oven cooking system where a little deep but wide pit is dug in the ground. The collected jackfruits are generally small in size, average weight of which is nearly 350 grams. An average of about 25-30 kilograms of seeds are collected by each family in the season. Process of roasting these jackfruits is same as like that of baking of pig's meat except that the oven used here is wider in size and comparatively flat. After roasting, only seeds are collected from roasted fruits. These seeds are then tightly packed in bundles, containing about 10-12 kilograms each, in '*salaipatti*' tied firmly with cane threads. These bundles are kept beneath silt mud in the creeks, a little below the shoreline which gets regularly filled with at least a little sea water even during low tide, for a period of about four weeks or so. In this process, the seeds absorb little salinity and can be preserved for further few weeks. After the scheduled period, the bundles are taken out from the creeks and the seeds are cleaned in fresh water and dried. It is eaten any time as a light food on their way to hunting, fishing and gathering, and even while gossiping in groups or in leisure time. It is generally shared with other kin and non-kin members, male or female.

Fish, prawn and crab are eaten either by roasting or by boiling but larvae and matured or ripened banana (usually collected from neighboring villagers) are taken only after roasting, whereas molluscs, turtle egg etc. are taken only after boiling. These are generally shared within the family members, though some of the kin members are found to share the food occasionally. Foraging habits of edible items and consumption of food differ on nature of families. It has been observed that the maidens and members of broken families, particularly widow with minor children, living in dormitories consume less quantity of pig's meat than the other counterparts, as such they are more dependent on variety of fish including fresh water fish, honey, crab, larvae, shell, roots, tubers, molluscs, turtle egg etc.

Ang do not exploit the entire resource base simultaneously at their disposal, rather many areas remain unexploited during peak foraging season or even during the year. They have enough knowledge of their territory and resource bases with types and density of resources. They move from one place to another or one '*chadda*' to another in small bands to ensure that they forage in such areas where the density of

resources is reasonably high and where lesser effort, energy and time is required. Movements of band members and their stay in a 'chadda' is not uniform and do not follow a regular order. In certain cases, especially for pre and post-natal care of a pregnant lady, the family may stay in a 'chadda' for several months at a stretch. Close relatives keep on visiting regularly during this time.

Like other classical foraging community, every member among *Ang* plays some specific role in maintaining their livelihood, be it construction of their shelter or collection of food materials. Usually, when a family has sufficient quantity of residue food, especially pig's meat for the day, the male members do not go for hunting and they remain busy in making some domestic articles or bow and arrows or pass their time by gossiping together or sleeping even during daytime. They do not follow any routine or time schedule for their domestic chores or economic activities except hunting of wild pig. The females hardly abstain from collection even during leisure time. When a group of women of different ages gossip together, most of them are found to weave fishing nets or making threads or finishing the cane baskets. However, their daily activities start from sunrise (*kekame*) and continue till sunset (*thepole*) or early evening.

IMPACT OF CONTACT AFTER BREAKING SELF-ISOLATION

So far, we have discussed, how, during the colonial period and even after Independence, *Ang* life became very hard with development of colonization. It not only compelled them to maintain isolation but also intensified hatred, distrust and hostility towards 'Eenen'. Instances of hostility took place when some of the settlers tried to extract resources within the reserve territory as poachers, in forms of felling trees which hurt their sentiments as they think it is the abode of their ancestors; hunting animals especially pigs with fire arms, their most favorite dish; random fishing along with collection of other marine resources; quarrying and collection of sand; entering in their settlement in absence of male members and so on. The neighboring settlers never gave due importance to their way of living, attitude, sentiments, norms and values of these simple folks, rather encroached the areas suitable for settlement and food production, thus gradually carving out their reserve territory. It has ultimately contributed to ecological imbalances leading to inadequacy of resources as well as space.

Ang maintained prolonged socio-economic isolation from the greater societies until October of 1997. Coming out of their habitat and establishing friendly contact with neighboring population and the trend of gradual carving out of resource bases, might have allure them in rejection of some of their traditional practices. Further, increased dependency on some induced measures under welfare or development programs certainly have some impact on their socio-cultural and economic life. Let us discuss the impact of contact on following socio-cultural traits of *Ang*.

Language

Ang were a monolingual community until quite recently. In course of contact mission, when *Ang* for the first time showed friendly gesture to the contact team members in April 1974, since then they gradually picked up a few words of Hindi language such as '*nariyal*' (coconut), '*khana*' (boiled rice), '*kela*' (banana), '*suar*' (pig), '*paani*' (water) and so on. With the end of hostility, *Ang* started coming in contact with neighboring settlers and others. Thus, coming in contact with outsiders more frequently, majority of the young boys and girls got better opportunity of learning Hindi. Now, a few of them can understand and speak Hindi better than their elder counterparts. Even some of the boys and girls, can sing Hindi songs. Certainly, knowledge of Hindi gives them an advantage of interacting with outsiders of all sections well.

Dress and Ornaments

Post 1997, during our study we had noticed that some of them started wearing simple type of apparels, which they had procured from several sources primarily tourists, hospital authorities and even neighboring villagers. Whenever any of them fell ill, AAJVS personnel working in the area brought the patient to the hospital with relatives and friends. They were given simple type of apparels while visiting hospital which they used to carry back to their settlements, but it was not necessarily worn regularly while their stay in their habitats. Initially, when *Ang* started using garments (*kangapo*), they faced some problems in utilizing and managing it. They had no idea of sex-wise division of garments, as sometimes boys were seen wearing ladies gown or even blouse. Most of them did not change the garments drenched in rain or in stream water which caused health hazards to them. Besides garments, non-traditional ornaments such as bead necklace, plastic bangles etc. were also given to them. They were also provided with red clothes and woolen balls from which they themselves made head band, armband, waist girdle etc. Each and every member, irrespective of age and sex, adorn themselves with these non-traditional items along with their own traditional ornaments.

Food

They procure almost all required food items from their territory. At the same time, they often started taking raw or processed food items which they did not consume earlier. Since initiation of befriending program in February 1969, a few non-traditional food items such as banana and coconut were given to them as gifts along with some articles of adornment by contact team members. These non-traditional food items are not available in their territory. After October 1997, although some more non-traditional food items like biscuits, bread, idly, vada, paratha, tea etc. were also added to their traditional food chart, yet it cannot be considered as their

secondary food sources due to its irregular availability and insufficient quantity. These non-traditional food items were mostly procured from tourists, drivers of tourist or other vehicles, shops located near jetty, police posting near their habitat and even some encroachers.

In their regular movement, when a local group inhabit by the side of or in the forest close to ATR, some young *Ang* boys and girls spend a few hours of the day on the roadside or jetty. In fact, most of these boys and girls minimized their foraging activities and indulged more in tourist hunting. It may also be noted that the same group of *Ang*, while camping at coastal areas or in forest, do not think of these non-traditional food items.

Ang do not have any idea or concept of money and its value system, similarly they do not have idea of weights and measures as well. Some instances were noticed where *Ang* inhabiting close to settler villages were found to indulge in exchanging some of their precious eatable and non-eatable articles such as honey, crab, resins and even their weapons in an uneven barter system. Once it was noticed that an exchange of about 2-3 kilograms of crab was made in lieu of about 1 kilogram of local rice.

Use of Tobacco and Pan

Recently, almost all of the male members including young boys, became habituated of chewing tobacco (*sukkah* - fine cut tobacco leaves) and pan (mixture of *sukkah*, pieces of areca nut and lime). Neighboring villagers or encroachers who off and on enter into *Ang* territory with different motives, driver of different vehicles, posted police officials, forest laborers, are the ones who might have introduced these *Ang* people with intoxicants in order to accomplish their self needs. On enquiring from some young boys, it was learnt on consuming '*sukkah*' or pan, they get strength (*takatmiltahai*). It was also seen that a youth was applying '*sukkah*' on his external injury presuming it would help him in reducing pain and sterilizing the wound. Possibly they have learnt this practice from non-*Ang* tobacco users. However, female members have not yet indulged in such activities.

Tools and Technology

It is known that Andaman Islanders including *Ang*, used to collect iron from ships wrecked along its coastal areas in order to make their hunting weapons. Nowadays, they are getting it in the form of big nails, spade, machete etc. from time to time while a hammer, chisel, sharpening file are supplied occasionally by Andaman administration through AAJVS. Following their traditional techniques, they prepare implements or weapons without tempering iron rather make it only by hammering. They strictly follow their traditional foraging techniques. At present, they are well aware about some new techniques of hunting and fishing adopted by neighboring villagers like setting of trap or snare to catch pig, deer, or use of line and hook for

fishing even in their territory. Almost all trap setters or poachers are known to them whom they now consider as their friend (*mitajile*). Taking full advantage of their ignorance and simplicity, these '*mitajile*' supply them '*sukkah*' and pan in lieu of the information about entrapped games. They never hunt animals indiscriminately and usually select the game considering its edibility and some other qualities.

Traditionally, *Ang* used to make rope from bark fiber threads. Even they prepared fishing nets with bark threads. But nowadays, they make rope with nylon threads procured from seashore as flotsam. They also now use nylon threads for making fishing nets and to decorate cane baskets as well.

Impact of Andaman Trunk Road (ATR)

Construction of ATR started in phased manner from 1970's and finally it became fully operational in 1989. About 343 km long National highway, ATR starts from Chidiyatapu in South Andaman passing Bush Police Camps, Forest Camps and depots and settler villages across both sides of South and Middle Andaman Islands and ends at Diglipur in North Andaman. Further, it also covers the South-Eastern and Eastern boundaries in South Andaman Islands and North-Eastern and Northern boundaries of Middle Andaman Islands of the reserved territory followed by cluster of villages without well demarcated buffer zone between *Ang* settlement (reserve territory) and settler's village. These together have created tremendous and consistent pressure on reserve area by poachers for collection of timber, bamboo, cane, fish, wild boar, deer, Andaman Teal etc. Many incidents of conflict which had taken place since colonization and increased over the years, worsen further with the construction of ATR. As mentioned earlier also, the situation gradually started changing since 1997. The road itself compensates for the disadvantage; to the *Ang* as well as for outsiders. There is no doubt that ATR offers other attraction specially to young *Ang* like supply of non-traditional food, faster movement to jetty, hospital and other *Ang* habitats besides lots of fun and amusements. It won't be too much to say that *Ang* (Jarawa) tourism was and still remains attractive for either sides as tourists from different parts of the country on their way to visit Baratang, Rangat, Mayabunder and Diglipur take the opportunity to have a glimpse of these primitive people and simultaneously *Ang*, especially children, waits for some non-traditional gifts from them.

Interaction

Interaction between *Ang* and *Eenen* can broadly be divided into two groups:

1. Between *Ang* and the neighboring villagers, Government officials including police personnel, drivers of different vehicles, shopkeepers in jetty; and
2. Between *Ang* and the tourists

Most of the settlers, in general, and the neighbouring villagers, in particular,

were less interested about the well-being and welfare of *Ang*; rather they feel disgusted with the behaviour of this primitive tribal community. Even, some of them demanded for the resettlement of *Ang* in an isolated island like that of the Great Andamanese. The primary concern of these people was to get something extra or earn an extra amount by any means mainly through collection of forest and marine resources from the 'Reserve Territory'. They did not even hesitate to claim excessive compensation from the government whenever *Ang* raided settler's house or plantation. Rather, they themselves exploited *Ang* in different ways. But in spite of these, there are cases where some people came forward to rescue the *Ang* in danger and vice-versa. Sometimes, some interactions turn into quarrel and violence causing injuries to the poachers and encroachers.

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing pages, it has been discussed about socio-economic life in detail including recent contacts and developments of *Ang* who have been living in Andaman Islands for thousands of years maintaining their identity and tradition. With initiation of colonization, the eco-cultural equilibrium of *Ang* started changing slowly like that of other hunting-gathering communities of the world. They had to defend their territory and natural resources from the outsiders through means of hostility. After Independence of India, expansion of settlement continued under colonization program that made their life miserable. In 1952, the government adopted a policy of reconciliation for establishment of friendly relation with unfriendly hostile *Ang* through periodical visits to *Ang* settlement areas and supplied gift articles to them. Further, to allow *Ang* to continue their traditional mode of living through foraging and also to provide them protection from outsiders, the government declared an area of 642 sq. km. as 'Reserved Territory' in 1957. Reserved area then became the ground of conflict between *Ang* and *Eenen* as settlement around the reserve area and those beyond always remained a source of natural resources throughout the year. Thus, encroachment in reserve territory, illegal poaching and extraction of forest and marine resources by settlers and others, continued. Although opening of ATR through 'reserve territory' and resource bases around it, severely disturbed the life and culture of *Ang*, yet it has also offered attractions especially to the young *Ang*.

However, since October 1997, leaving aside their age-old hatred and hostility, *Ang* started mixing with *Eenen* in village settlements and other public places which resulted in changing their socio-economic behaviour. A major section of *Ang*, particularly young boys and girls, have picked up some knowledge in Hindi and could interact with outsiders using broken Hindi and *Ang* dialect. Despite having no knowledge about use and handling of garments, many of them are now seen using it, especially when they visit hospital or other public places. Similarly, non-traditional ornaments such as bead necklace, woolen head band, armband, waist girdle etc. are highly preferred and found to be adored a lot by all age and sex groups of people. Since

initiation of befriending program and later their contact with outsiders, *Ang* have learnt to consume a few non-traditional food items including spicy dishes. Use of tobacco and pan mostly by male members, introduced to them by outsiders, is now alarmingly increasing. This may lead to significant change in their demography and ultimately on social organization. This is also giving rise to uneven barter system, supplying their valuables like honey, resin, crab etc. in lieu of such cheap and toxic items. None of them have any knowledge about value of money, commodities as well as weights and measures. Taking full toll of their simplicity, interested *Eenen* take advantage to exploit them.

Ang, after coming out of their age-old isolation of thousands of years, are now facing regular disturbances in many forms which is leading to change in some of their socio-economic and cultural traits, but no remarkable change has been noticed in their traditional habits, beliefs and customs. Minor changes have been marked in economic behavior that too to a smaller section of population. However, considerable improvement has been noticed in their health status thereby arresting the mortality rate in general and child mortality rate in particular. Finally, immediate action should be taken by the government to arrest the process of depletion of the 'Ang reserve' including resources bases; and all types of poaching, visit and interaction of unauthorized persons, besides very cautious steps should be taken in introducing any new item of food, technology and culture to them.

References

- Cipriani, L. (1966). *The Andaman Islanders*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson
- Das, B. K. (2006). Population Composition of the Jarawa of Andaman Islands. *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society* 41 (3): 311-318.
- (2012). *Achena Chena Ang: Jarawader Jivan Jatra o Sanskritir Kichu Katha* (in Bengali). Kolkata: Balaji Publication
- (2016). *Mee Ang: an ethnographic profile on the Jarawa of Andaman Islands*. Kolkata: Balaji Publication
- (2018). Beliefs and Customs of Little-Known Foraging Tribe: An Observation on the Ang of Andaman Islands. In Amitabha Sarkar and Dr. (Mrs.) Samira Dasgupta(eds.) *Little Traditions in A Culturally Pluralistic Nation*, Pp. 247 – 263. New Delhi: Aayu Publications.
- Majumdar, R.C. (1975). *Penal Settlements in Andamans*. New Delhi: Ministry of Education and Social Welfare.
- Man, E.H. (1975). *The Aboriginal Inhabitants of the Andaman Islands*. Delhi: Sanskaran Prakashak.
- Mukhopadhyay, K and et. el. (ed.) (2002). *Jarawa Contact: Ours With Them Theirs With Us*. Kolkata: Anthropological Survey of India.
- Radcliffe Brown, A.R. (1922). *The Andaman Islanders*. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press
- Sarkar, J.K. (1989). Endangered Tribes and their Development in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society* 24: 1–45.

(1990). *The Jarawa*. Calcutta: Seagull Books on behalf of Anthropological Survey of India.

Sreenathan, M. (2001). *The Jarawa: Language and Culture*. Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India.