The Tribal People of Andaman and Nicobar Islands by Annphilip

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The Andaman and Nicobar Islands was first discovered by British people in 1789. At that time the island was occupied by six tribal groups. When people started to immigrate from Bangladesh, Burma and Srilanka, the Island now occupies only five primitive tribal groups.

We can classify the people of Andaman into two main groups namely, Indigenous or Aborigines and Immigrants or Settlers. The aborigines of Andaman Island include Great Andamanese, Onges, Jarawas and Sentinelese.

The Great Andamanese tribe is one of the Negrito tribes that originated from Africa nearly 60,000 years ago. This was one of the largest tribe before the establishment of the Penal Settlement in Andaman Islands. The tribe which had a population of nearly 10,000 people in 1700 later reduced to just 19. This was mainly due to contagious diseases like influenza. The administration came forward to protect and preserve the culture of these tribal people. They provided shelter and food to Andamanese and rehabilitated them to a small island named Strait Island. Their traditional food items are fish, dugong, turtle, turtle eggs, crabs, roots and tubers. The tribal people also eat octopus, mollusks, turban shell, scorpion shell, sundial, helmet, trochus and screw shell. Vegetable cultivation and poultry farming are their current activities.

Onges is one of the most primitive tribes that belong to the Negrito racial stock. At present the tribe has only 105 people. To retain this tribal group, the administration has taken many important steps. This Hunting and Gathering tribe is currently settled at the Dugong Creek and South Bay of Little Andaman Island. The Andaman administration has provided them with pucca hut type houses, food, clothes, education and medicines. The people of this tribe fully depend on nature for their food, but laziness and dependent nature are their biggest enemies. They are good in making canoes.

Jarawa tribes inhabited the South Andaman Islands and the Western Coast of Middle Andaman Islands. Though the tribal people restrict themselves to the jungle dwellings, recently some the tribe members started mingling with people of nearby villages. The main language of the tribe is jarawa, but the regular contact with outside people helped them to understand certain Hindi words. Because of spreading diseases like measles, the tribe members are currently restricted to 400 in number. They have smooth skin, deep curly hair, long and sturdy hands and legs and sturdy bones. These healthy features make them physically fit in hunting and fishing. Their traditional food includes wild boar, turtles and its egg, crabs, fruits and honey.

The Sentinelese of North Sentinental Island are the only Paleolithic people surviving in the current world. Like jarawas they are also friendly to outsiders. These tribal people lead their life by fishing and hunting in the deep forest. They fish in the coastal waters with bows and arrows and hunt wild pigs in the North Sentinel Island. The expected population of Sentinelese is nearly 100.

Another group of people found in Andaman and Nicobar Island is the Shompens. They belong to the Monoloid race. A major group of Shompens live in the Alexendra and the Galathia river areas, while a smaller division of Mawa Shompens is living close to the coastal region. This tribal people are physically very weak and their population has shrunken due to various diseases.

It is really interesting to know about tribal people, their culture and customs. Lots of information related to different tribal people and their culture is available on the worldwide web connected to service from providers like FiOS Internet.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands is a union territory of India and lies in the Bay of Bengal. Port Blair is the capital city. Andaman and Nicobar consist of about 527 islands. The coastline of the Islands stretches for about 100 Kilometers. Of the total land area 92% of the land is covered with rain forests.

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As a freelancer, Ann is interested in writing about different tribal group and their special customs and culture. Worldwide web linked to a FiOS Internet helps her to collect information related to different tribal people around the world.

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