

LANGUAGE LOSS/MAINTENANCE: A CASE STUDY OF ANDAMANESE

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Geography

A cluster of islands running from North to South in the Bay of Bengal on the South Eastern side of the Indian sub-continent is the Andaman Islands. They lie between 10 13' ~d 10 30' N. Latitudes and 90 15' and 93 10' E. longitudes. They are spread over an area of 6,430 square kilometers and are separated from the Nicobar Islands in the South by the ten-degree channel. The Northern most islands of the Andaman islands is at a distance of 9,016 kms South East of the confluence of the Hugli river in West Bengal, India and at a distance of 193.12 kms South of Ca Negrais in Burma. The capital town Port Blair is at a distance of 1,255.25 kilometers from Calcutta and 1,190.88 kms from Chennai (Madras). The Andaman islands are divided into Great Andaman islands and Little Andaman islands. The Little Andaman islands are separated from Port Blair by 100 kilometers of Sea.

In the Little Andaman islands live the Onges. In Great Andaman islands, Jarawas live in the South Andaman and Rutland Islands, Sentinels in the North Island and the Andamanese in the Strait island

Anthropology

Anthromorphically, the native population of the Andaman Islands is 'Negrito' and that of Nicobar islands is 'Mangloid'. The Andamanese belong to the former. Their population is estimated to have been between 5,000 and 8,000 in 1858 when the British