MATERIAL AND METHODS
2.1.0 LOCATION OF THE FIELD

The study is conducted among the Ongees of Little Andaman Island of Andaman and Nicobar Island, India. The details of field area are as follows:

2.1.1 ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLAND

The Andaman and Nicobar Island lie among the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal and a distance from Calcutta (Kolkata) 1255 Km and from Chennai 1190 Km to the Andaman district headquarter Port Blair by sea route. There are 572 islands but only 36 are inhabited, 24 in the Andaman group and 12 in the Nicobar group. In terms of are it has 8249 Sq. Km. Total population of the Andaman and Nicobar island is 356,265 according to the census report of India 2001. The Andaman and Nicobar Island is divided in to two Administrative headquarters/district, their area population and headquarters are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/District</th>
<th>Area (Sq. Km.)</th>
<th>Population (2001)</th>
<th>Headquarters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andaman</td>
<td>6408</td>
<td>314239</td>
<td>Port Blair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicobar</td>
<td>1841</td>
<td>42026</td>
<td>Car Nicobar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Port Blair is the capital of Andaman district and Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Nicobarese are the main language spoken. According to the census of India 2001 total population of Andaman and Nicobar Island is 356265 persons comprising of 192985 males and 163280
females. Rural population of the island is 239858 persons (128839 male and 111023 female) and urban population is 116407 persons (64148 male and 52259 female).

This has registered a growth rate of 26.94 per cent as against the national average of 21.34 per cent during the decade 1991-2001. The sex ratio (i.e. the number of female per thousand males) of population in the Andaman and Nicobar Island has improved from 818 in the previous census to 846 in the present census. The literacy rate has also shown improvement. This has increased to 81.18 per cent when compared to 73.02 per cent ten years back during 1991 census.

The Andaman and Nicobar Island are like a Pearl necklace in the Bay of Bengal and the extreme southern point called Indira Point is only 154 Km away from Indonesia’s Sumatra Island. The shores of the main island indeed of rocky and in a few places are lines with a smooth and sandy beach.

The Union territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands is cut off from the main land India by vast stretches of sea. There are two small rivers in the whole group of islands, one in the North Andaman Island (Kalpong river) and other in the Great Nicobar Islands (Galathiya river) a number of perennial streams are located here and there in the forest, thus affording good water and exhibiting in their descent over the rocks.

Nearly 90 per cent of the land in the island is under forests and precious teakwood can be found here. The extensive forests which these
Map 2: Andaman Islands
2.1.2 COMMUNICATION

Water transport plays a vital role in the life of the people of Island to Island, island to mainland India. The territory being dependent upon the mainland for most of the commodities, shipping services in fact the life line of these Islands. However, the islands are also connected by Air from Kolkata and Chennai, whereas inter Island shipping services and helicopter services connected the people of scattered islands, road transports also play a vital role in the life of the Islanders from south Andaman to north Andaman connecting Baratang, Middle Andaman Islands. All the inhabiting islands are interconnected with wireless stations and telephones.

2.1.3 TOURISM

The places of historical and tourist importance is listed below:

1. Cellular Jail  
   Port Blair
2. Ross Island  
   The then British headquarters
3. Anthropological museum  
   Port Blair
4. Marine museum  
   Port Blair
5. Chatham saw mill  
   Chatham island
6. Wiemo factory  
   Port Blair
7. Zoological gardens  
   Port Blair
8. Chiriya Tapu  
   Sea beach
9. Wandoor Beach  
   Port Blair
Islands overrun by, produces a variety of trees fit/suitable for construction of residential accommodation and many other purposes.

The most common trees are the Pour dammar and oil trees, red wood, ebong, cotton-tree, and badam. Alexandrian lunch poplar is a tree resembling the stain wood, bamboos and peals with which the natives make their bows. Many of trees afford timbers and planks for the construction of ships and other might answer for masts. High rainfalls and equable but warm temperatures ensure that vegetation is in abundance in the Islands.

The only quadrupeds yet discovered in these islands are wild boars, monkeys and rats guanos and various reptiles-monitor lizard, green snake, centipedes and scorpions.

A variety of birds are seen in the woods, the most common are pigeons, crows, parrots, kingfisher, curfews, fish hawks and owls. A species of humming bird are also found in these Islands.

The harbours and inlets from the sea are plentifully stocked with a variety of fish, as mutlels, soles, pomfret, rock fish, kate, green lands, seer fish, old wives, yellow tails, snappers, devil-fish, cat-fish, prawns, shrimps, cary fish, shark and many other and a species resembling the whale and different species of sharks, a variety of shell-fish are found on the reefs and on some places oysters of an excellent quality.
10. Viper island

11. Carbyn's cove

12. Sippighat Agricultural demonstration farm

13. Dilthaman tank

14. Dhanikhari water dam

15. Kalpong river project (Surya Chakra)

2.2.0 ANDAMAN DISTRICT

The filed area is situated in Andaman district. The general description of Andaman districts are as follows:

2.2.1 GEOGRAPHY OF ANDAMAN DISTRICT

Geography of Andaman is a cluster of named and unnamed island, running from north to south and lying to south-east of the Indian subcontinent in the Bay of Bengal constitute the Andaman island, the Andaman islands lie between 10°13'–10°30' north latitude and 90°15'–90°10' east longitude. Total area of the district is 6408 Sq. Kms. The headquarters of Andaman is located at Port Blair which is 1255.25 Km from Calcutta and 1190.88 Kms. from Chennai and 580 Km. from Rangoon. The extreme length and width of the Andaman are 352.44 and 51.5 Km, respectively. This island is followed by the three main islands North Andaman, Middle Andaman and South Andaman. All of them separated from each other by shallow seas. This area is known as Great Andaman.
The northern most island of the Andaman group lies at a distance of 9016 Km. south-east of the confluence of the Hugli in West Bengal and at a distance of 193.12 Km south of Cape Negrais in Burma. The entire cluster of islands is surrounded by natural forests of Coral reefs serving in general as a natural protection for those islands.

2.2.2 HISTORY OF ANDAMAN

The name of Andaman has been traced back to the Hindu mythology, Ramayana, where by the inhabitants of these islands are called ‘Hanuman’ or ‘Monkey people’ (Bonington 1931). It has been reported that Malaya has referred to them as ‘Handuman’, a corrupt form of hanuman.

It would seem that the Chinese and Japanese knew the islands in the first millennium A.D., and referred to them by the names Yeng-to-mang and Andaban respectively, Marcopolo gives a brief notice of the islands. "Andaman is a very large island, not governed by a king. The inhabitants are idolaters, and are a most brutish and savage race, having heads, eyes, and teeth resembling to those of the canine species. Their dispositions are cruel, and every person, not being of their own nation, whom they can lay their hands upon, they kill and eat.” Some of the Maropolos’s statements about the Andaman, as that the natives live on rice and milk and that they have coconut and plantains, are incorrect.

A more trustworthy account is that of Master Caesar Frederike, who passes near the Nicobar in 1566 “from Nicubar to Peru is as it were, a row or chain of an infinite number of islands, of which many are inhabited with
wild people, and they call those islands the Islands of Andemaon, and they called their people savage or wild, because they eat one another: also those islands have war one with another for they have small barques, and with them they take one another and so eat one another; and if by evil chance any ship be lost on those islands, as many have been, there is not one man of those ships lost there that escapeth uneaten or unslain. These people have not any acquaintance with any other people, neither have they had trade with any, but live only of such fruits as those islands yield.

There are numerous reference to the Andaman is the seventeenth and eighteenth century, and all of them show that the islands were feared and avoided. Visits were also paid by ships whose water supply has run out, and by Malay Pirates. There is evidence that boats, either Malay or Chinese, sometime visited the islands in search of edible bird’s nests and trepang.

Until the end of the eighteenth century there was no attempt made to open up communication with the Andaman Islands, although the Nicobar Islands were the scene of several attempts to establish a colony. In 1788, owing to the menace to shipping constituted by the islands and their inhabitants, the East India Company, under Lord Cornwallis, commissioned Archibald Blair to start a settlement, convicts being sent as labourers. The settlement was founded in September, 1789 in the harbour now known as Port Blair, but then called Port Cornwallis.
We possessed very little information (authentic) of the Andaman before eighteenth century. The earlier reference to the Andaman perhaps occurs in the Geographia, a Greek work on Geography, written by Claudius Ptolemaeus, the celebrated Greek astronomer, mathematician and geographer of second century A.D. He has also suggested that the name Andaman might have been adopted from a transcript of the 'Island of Good Fortune' in Greek as Ag, daimon (Agathou diamonos) coming to more recent time we have fairly authentic accounts of the Andaman in (1) the writings of Archibald Blair (2) Col. Symes 'Embassy to Eva' and RH. Colebrook's two accounts towards the end of 18th century. The Calcutta monthly Register (November, 1790) contains a brief account of the Andamans evidently written by a member of the party sent by the Government of India to survey the Andaman. Some idea of the general nature of these accounts may be formed from the account of Lieutenant RH Colebrooke Accounts of the Andaman Island written in 1974, by Lieutenant RH Colebrooke, being the first really careful and trustworthy account we have of these people.

2.2.3 CLIMATE OF THE DISTRICT

Being situated near to the equator, the climate of the island is a tropical type always warm with heavy rains and violent weather throughout the year. The maximum temperature varies between 30°C to 33°C. The high temperature coupled with high relative humidity gives rise to high sensitive temperature. The weather is always warm and sultry, but is tempered to some extent by pleasant sea-breeze. Due to excessive rains
the mass of hills enclosing narrow valleys in these island are covered with dense tropical Jungles. This type of climate is fit for dense forests. For that reason the Andamans are very rich in timber.

Island abounds in a variety of fish. Fisheries therefore constitute an important item of natural resources of these islands.

2.2.4 TEHSILS

The Andaman district was constituted with four tehsils namely (1) Diglipur, (2) Mayabunder, (3) Rangat and (4) South Andaman. The South Andaman tehsil was further bifurcated into two tehsils, namely Port Blair and Ferrargunj in the year 1975 vide Andaman & Nicobar Administration notification No. 106/75/F40-6/74-J dt. 30th October, 1975. Thus, at the time of the 1981 census, the district of Andaman comprised five tehsils:

(i) Diglipur tehsil
(ii) Mayabunder tehsil
(iii) Rangat tehsil
(iv) Port Blair
(v) Ferrargunj tehsil
2.2.5 TOWN AND VILLAGES

The district at present comprises 2 sub-division and 5 tehsils. Their name and area are as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-division</th>
<th>Tehsil</th>
<th>Areas in Sq. Km.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Maya bunder</td>
<td>Diglipur</td>
<td>884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maya bunder</td>
<td>1348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rangat</td>
<td>1049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. South Andaman</td>
<td>Port Blair</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ferrargunj</td>
<td>3010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It has 3 Community Development Blocks. 1 town and 355 (villages 334 inhabited village and 21 uninhabited villages)

2.2.6 POPULATION

Total population of the district according to 2001 census is 314,239 persons comprising of 170,378 males and 143,861 females.

The scheduled tribes population of the district as per 1991 census is 1917 persons of which 1415 person enumerated from rural area and 502 persons enumerated from urban areas. There is no scheduled caste population in the district.

The other details about population and geography are as follow

- Highest point above sea level - 2,500 ft. (Saddle Peak)
- Average Rainfall - 150 inches
Number of decadal growth rate  30.14 (1991-2001)
Sex ratio (2001)  44
Density  3
Child population in the age group (0-6 - 39,459 person)
          males  - 20,049
          females - 19,410
(0-6) Sex ratio - 968
Literates / Person - 226,291
          males - 130,944
          females - 95,347
Literacy rate / person - 82.35
          male - 87.10
          female - 76.61

2.2.7 LANGUAGES AND RELIGIONS

Main languages spoken in the district are Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam.

People of different religions live in the Andaman district. The chief religions are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains are some other religions of the districts.

2.2.8 RIVERS

District has only one river.
2.2.9 EDUCATION AND COLLEGES

1. Govt. B.Ed. College, Port Blair, Andaman
2. Govt. College, Maya bunder, Andaman
3. Jawaharlal Nehru Rajkeeya Mahavidyalaya, Port Blair, Andaman

2.2.10 MEDICAL

There were 2 Hospitals, 3 Community Health Centres, 4 Dispensaries, 14 Primary Health Care, 64 Sub-centre and 5 Urban Health Centre in the district.

2.2.11 ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF DISTRICTS

The economic structure of the districts is both rural and urban. The main revenue of the economy agricultural products like Paddy, Coconut, Banana, Rabi pulses, Arecanut, oil seeds, fruits and vegetables and Animal husbandry. Besides Marine and Shipping department or services, are also well developed.

2.2.12 INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

At present there are five DGT units, including one Government saw mill functioning in these islands. These are -

1. Wimco Manufacture of match splints.


5. Govt. Chatham Sow Mill.

910 small scale industries were also functioning and registered with the state Directorate in the Union Territory.

2.3.1 FIELD AREA (LITTLE ANDAMAN)

The origin of the name Little Andaman is curious and obscure. In some maps, the names Isle de Andaman and Isle de Maon appeared to indicate Great Andaman and Little Andaman, respectively. Similarly, a number of others names appeared in maps at different points of time, e.g. Andemaon (1710), Cite Andemaon (1710, 1720) etc. The name of the modern Cinque Island, between Great and Little Andaman, seems to be derived from the name Chinque Andemaon, Little Andaman Island as reported, continued to be known as Chetty Andaman till 1858. The modern name of Little Andaman appeared for the first time in the map of Port Blair in 1790.

The Andaman group of islands is divided into (1) Great Andaman and (2) Little Andaman, extending over 140 miles in length Great Andaman is made up of the main island of North, Middle and South Andaman together with the Archipelago, the interview Island, the Rutland Island and several lesser islets adjacent to its seaboard. About 40 miles
from Great Andaman on the south and midway between Great Andaman and the southern most point of the Nicobar group of Islands lay Little Andaman. A single island about 44 Km in length and varying in breadth from 16 to 25 Km it has an area of 731 Sq. Km.

Once the Ongees were scattered all over the Little Andaman today the Ongees are confined to the Dugong Creek and South Bay of Little Andaman areas. It was only happen after the formation of Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti (AAJVS) constituted under special assistance from Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs in March, 1976 with the idea to welfare of the primitive tribal of Andaman and Nicobar Islands:

The details of field area are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Place</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Dugong Creek and South Bay in Little Andaman Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Total Geographical area</td>
<td>731 Sq. Km. Little Andaman and 76 Sq. Km. Dugong Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rain fall</td>
<td>127.35 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Inhabitants</td>
<td>Ongees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Year of settlement</td>
<td>1976-77 Dugong Creek and 1980 South Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>establishment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Dugong Creek 78 (47 male and 31 female) South Bay 17 (10 male and 7 female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sex ratio</td>
<td>666.66 female per thousand male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Number of tribal</td>
<td>26 at Dugong Creek and 05 at South Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>houses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>House for the staff</td>
<td>11 at Dugong Creek and 03 at South Bay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other establishments:

- Police radio, communal hall, medical sub-centre, poultry unit, diesel generator, solar power plant, guest house, pump house, OMPCS*, School at Dugong Creek
- at South Bay diesel generator

Staff establishment:

- AAJVS: Plantation in charge, ward attendant - 1, SBEO* - 1, SPP† attendant -1, Dinghy operator -1, Chowkidar -1, Cook -1,
- Medical Deptt: ANM‡ -1, Medical officer -1, Police radio operator -2, cook -1,
- Electricity Deptt: SPP attendant -1
- Education Deptt: Teacher -2

* Ongees Multipurpose Co-operative Society
* Switch Board cum Engine Operator
† Solar Power Plant
‡ Auxiliary Nurse cum Midwife

2.3.2 CLIMATE

The climate of Little Andaman is generally warm and tempered by pleasant sea breezes; tends to become warmer with the movement of the sun towards the north. The island is exposed to both the north-east and south-west monsoons which bring comparatively dry and very wet weather respectively. Calm weather prevails from February to April and in October. The nights are relatively cool and foggy from January to March. Rainfall varies from year to year and from island to island. The average
annual rainfall is 127.35 inches for the whole of Andaman Islands including Little Andaman.

2.3.3 AGRICULTURE

At the place of their settlement i.e. Dugong Creek and South Bay a 20 acre and 5 acre coconut plantation has been raised by the Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti for the welfare of the Ongees, besides this fruits bearing trees are also planted in and around the settlement area, like Jackfruits, mango, cashunut etc. It is observed that the Ongees are not taking any interest to the agriculture. However, constant efforts have been made by the Andaman & Nicobar administration to motivate the Ongees to cultivate the fruits in their settlement area, and to work in the coconut plantation. Efforts were being made through the agriculture department, and a communal kitchen garden was also raised in the settlement (Both Dugong Creek and South Bay) with the intension to attract the Ongees towards consumption of vegetables as well as cultivation. A separate Banana orchard has also been raised. The Ongees never shows their interest neither in vegetable garden not in coconut plantation. However, they use to consume vegetables and collect the nuts from coconut plantation.

2.4.0 TARGET POPULATION (THE ONGEES)

The Ongees belong to negrito race. They have been in contact with civilized society for over hundred years. They still observe the tribal rites and rituals. Initially the Ongees were scattered all over the Little Andaman
Photograph 2.1: Ongees female, visiting neighbouring hut with modern utensils

Photograph 2.2: Ogee family in the modern wooden hut provided by welfare agency
island in different bands. Later they have been settled at two places viz. Dugong Creek and South Bay in Little Andaman Island. In spite of the resistance of the Ongees they were rehabilitated in two places during the year 1976-77 and 1980 one at Dugong Creek and other at South Bay respectively.

The passage of the Century has witnessed the transformation of an unapproachable, dreaded group of hunter-gatherers to what may be called one of the most peaceful and loveable people of the world today, with very less possession and fewer needs, the Ongees are included among the darkest people of the world. In terms of their complexion, short stature, presence of steatopygia or unusual growth of the buttock among both males and females, the Ongees are regarded as one of the purest of all the surviving groups of negritos of the world. They have very scanty body hair, except in rare cases. Their hands and feet are small and well made. Their eyes are bright and clear while in contrast to their complexion. The feet of the male Ongees are nearly always flat while those of the women tend to turn in (Cipriani, 1966 : 17).

2.4.1 DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

The Ongees are included among the darkest people of the world. Earlier the Ongees were mother naked ‘aala’ the present day Sentinelese and Jarawas. Subsequently they started covering their genitalia. The Ongees women wear the tassal over their pudendum and men the loin cloth over their reproductive organs. Painting the face and body with ochre in variety of designs and pattern is a distinct feature among Ongees.
The painting all over the body gives an appearance of skin tight clothing. The tassal weared by female adult Ongees called 'nakuinyage' made of tender palm leaves. After they came into the contact of other culture or settled/rehabilitated in settlement (Dugong Creek and South Bay, Little Andaman) they adopted the habit of wearing clothes. Ongees girls generally remain without clothing up to the age of 3 years and boys up to 4 years. However, they confine themselves in the settlement area. Whenever they are out to settlement they are seen in good and proper dress. Generally the Ongees boys and men often wear colourful vests, shirts, shorts, trousers, jeans etc. and the female wear petticoat, blouse and suite and saris etc.

2.4.2 LANGUAGE AND RELIGION

The Ongees speaks in Ongees dialect as common language among themselves. However their long and constant contact with outsider, they have picked up Hindi, but only the male adult prefer to speak in Hindi. Among themselves they never speak Hindi, the female are not seen Hindi speaking ever.

Regarding religion, unlike many other communities, the rituals of the Ongees do not involve any religious worship as such, propitiation or sacrifice. In fact, they do not have an organized religion, but rather some beliefs and fears emanating from them.

The Ongees believe that the death of human beings, loss of weight, and the dispersal of smell are always and steps in which humans are
transformed into spirits. It is these spirits who then can move anywhere. Onges also believe that although spirits, human and animals share common space, it is through their different capacities of movement that each remains alive with in different places within that space. Spirits hunt human and displace them by killing and taking them away from the island. Human beings, like the spirits, hunt animals and take them away from either the sea or forest.

Onges believe that spirits transform human beings into food or fellow spirits, human being transformed spirits into foetuses and transform animals from raw meat to cooked food.

Onges believe that none of their women can conceive without the grace of ‘Onkobowkwe’, a spirit whose abode is in the sky over Little Andaman. The souls of babies sent by ‘Onkobowkwe’ enter some food items such as honey, roots and tubers. The soul enters the womb of women if she happens to take that particular item of food.

However, the Onges believe in supernatural power and the spirit of the forest.

2.4.3 ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

The Onges of Little Andaman are basically hunters and food gatherers. Hunting, fishing and collection of food from forest and sea are the traditional economic pursuits of the people. Beside this nowadays the Andaman Administration has been providing free food items and engaging them in various welfare activities on daily basis.
The Ongees economy is the simplest subsistence type, hunting, fishing and collection of edible roots, fruits, tubers and honey is done for immediate consumption. The concept of property and surplus do not exist till recently. There is a clear division of labour on the basis of sex, with activities like hunting, fishing, construction of temporary and communal huts, collection of honey, preparation of dug-out canoe, implements etc.

The economic activities of the Ongees are fully guided by the climatic condition of the Island. For example, rainy season pig hunting and collection of forest produce, dry season also pig hunting, dugong, turtle and collection of fire wood.

Fishing is almost common in both the seasons. Beside hunting and fishing, the collection of honey is also one of the main economic pursuits of the Ongees, is collected only in the dry season. Nowadays, of course they do sell it to the market through their co-operative society.

Of late Ongees are being employed by the Andaman Administration, in various departments and as unskilled casual labourers on daily wages to attend the power house, pump house, medical sub-centre, police radio, and to clean the coconut plantation or collect and store the coconuts under guidance of the worker of the Administration.

2.4.4 ADOLESCENCE CEREMONY

The transition from adolescence to adulthood in the life of Ongees is marked by certain rituals as part of the ceremony called the 'Tanagiru'. A boy, who occasionally goes along with some hunting party, suddenly
comes to know that his 'Tanagiru' ceremony will be performed on a particular day. He remains preoccupied with the thought of how effectively he can prove his powers as an Ongee hunter to earn his entry into the world of adult and acquire the status of good hunter. A girl, on the other hand attain the most important phase of her life through the performance of a ritual of puberty, through which she attains status of an adult and subsequently a prospective Ongee wife and mother. It was reported that the 'Tanagiru' ceremony is performed for three days, subject to availability of pig (hunt). The ceremony begins with the setting out of a hunting party led by the chosen boy. If he succeeds in killing a toothed male wild boar, without the help of other Ongees, he comes back to the settlement/communal hut with the party and this makes the beginning of the rituals. The boar is to be carried by the respective boy who's 'Tanagiru' is to be observed. All the Ongees male and female assemble in the respective communal hut, connected or selected for the ceremony, the boy silently enter the hut through a small opening and not through the main entrance he does so by keeping his hands folded on the chest in a stooping posture. The pig is then placed on its back and its legs directed upwards near the central pole of the hut. The elder brother or sister's husband leads the boy up to the pig and helps him sit on the belly of the pig, his palms on the abdomen, and his eyes closed and directed towards the ground. As part of the ritual, the boy will not talk to anybody, will look steadily at ground below and remain confined to the specific enclosure for all the days of ceremony. The boy is made to drink the clotted blood of the pig several times by his elder brother. The boy as well as his elder brother's
wife, as a part of ritual, will not take anything except water till the boy
takes the ceremonial bath in the sea. All the skulls and bones of the pig
killed during the ceremony are preserved by the Ongees. As a privilege,
the boy’s sister’s husband would cut the pig into lumps which they would
share among themselves only. Early the next morning, the boy is
beautifully decorated by his elder brother’s wife with headbands, chest
band of bark strips, a bead necklace, bracelets and tuffs of bark fibres
hanging from the neck up to the groin. The boy has been painted with
white clay on the previous day. From the main entrance of the hut the boy
is carried to the sea on the back of his sister’s husband, followed by a few
other men but not by the woman. The boy is then held straight, parallel to
the level of the water and dipped thrice in the water in that position. The
sister’s husband uses sea water to clean the paint from the face and body
of the boy. From the edge of the sea beach to the hut some wooden logs of
two feet each are placed on the sand and the boy have to go up to the
communal hut to cross each one of these logs without touching any one of
them with his feet. The boy enters the hut through the window with his
knees bent and hands folded on the chest his elder brother’s wife
embellishes him with paint. The boy is then offered a mug of black tea
without milk and sugar, taking black tea he remains confined to the
enclosure awaiting the nest hunting expedition. The ceremony, and the
rituals associated with it go on till the boy succeeds in hunting a total of
nineteen male pigs and one female pig by himself the end of ‘Tanagiru’
ceremony with a hunt of a female pig. Tanagiru ceremony can be
performed after marriage also.
Ongees to mark the first menstrual discharge of girl in the rite of puberty called 'Tamleangabe' the girl remains confined to her bed in one of the 'Korale' (temporary hut). The ritual continues through the days of her menstruation. At the first sign of the menses the girl puts some 'Batagae' leaves, soft and soothing, under the tassel and on the bed as well. As a part of ritual she abstains from eating any meat but can take fish, crab, honey, roots etc. during the period. The face of the girl is always kept daubed with white clay paste. She has to keep her hands and palms always on her abdomen even when she lies on her bed. At the end of the menstrual period the girl is led to sea for a bath by a few women. The girl is then adorned by the female relatives with the indigenous ceremonial dress consisting of headband, chest band, bead necklace and waist band etc. A fresh tassel is worn by the girl after taking bath in the sea water. Her face head and body are then painted with ochre and offer some food and clotted blood of female pig to the girl.

2.4.5 MARRIAGE

The marriage follows the band/clan exogamy in practice. Monogamy is the only form of marriage among the Ongees. They never marry again during the lifetime of the partner. The marriage within the same band and close relative is strictly avoided but cross cousin marriage is in vogue/popular. Remarriage of widows and widowers is a common feature among the Ongees.
Marriage among the Ongees is a simple ritual. As early as 1911 Bonington, then census superintendent gives an interesting account of the Ongees marriage:

"Marriage is usually exogamous sometimes the wife goes and lives with the sept/band of the husband and at the other times with the sept (band) of the wife. One or two cases are on record where man and wife are of the same sept (band). The Ongees marry quite young, being perhaps only ten or eleven years old and not fully developed. The ceremony was simple and it consisted in an elder of the sept taking the wrist of his daughter and placing it in the hands of the young man of the visiting sept. The girl then became his wife and he was free to take her away provided the girl did not release herself and run away into the interior, in which case she was free to go back to her sept. This actually happened due to the dislike of the girls to her would be husband. A woman may be a grandmother when she is thirty years old, or even younger. The average are attained by the healthy is perhaps not much more than forty years and persons known to Banington (1911) thirty years ago as children, have within his knowledge declined and died when they were about forty years old.

In another account of an Ongee marriage, it has been reported that:

Marriage is accomplished in the communal hut of the bride. Here a bed is prepared in advance for the bridegroom, and on the nuptial day he goew he goes to sleep in it. During the night, and while resin torches are kept burning giving good light, the bridegroom goes towards the bed of
the bride, takes her by hand and brings her to his bed, where the consummation takes place, after which they sleep together for the night. This is done in presence of all the inmates of the bride's hut and is regarded enough. Sometimes the ceremony is arranged by parents without even consulting the girl. When this happens and girl does not like his to be her husband, instead of refusing him she hides herself in the jungle (Cipriani 1953:80-81).

The marriage may be settled wither by the man himself or by his parents through negotiation with the parents of the girl, but always with the consent of the girl. As present, because of the scarcity of marriageable partners, the Ongees may not always necessarily follow traditional process of marriage settlement. However, the consent of the woman, who may be an unmarried girl or a widow, is still given preference over other considerations. The simple nuptial ceremony generally takes place in the communal hut at night on the date fixed for it, but may also take place in the Korale of the bride, this is especially the case for an Ongee female of who are at South Bay. The bride and the bridegroom sit on two different beds, allotted to them for the ceremony, in the communal hut. Most of the relatives of both the partners are assemble on the occasion, then the ritual of bridegroom bringing the bride by holding the wrist of her left hand to his own bed followed by the consummation on the same night on the same bed. On the following morning the couple goes around the settlement to meet the relatives, where they exchange mutual greetings through embracing one another. On the same afternoon (evening) the bride
meticulously embellishes the face and body of her husband with designs of white clay, she also gets herself painted by some female relatives. The newly married man wears a neck band made of woven red bark fibre and stripe of the yellow skin of the dendrobium orchid, and the wife puts on an ornamental girdle or apparel of bark stripes round her waist. The relatives of both the group may also get themselves painted on the occasion to take part in a group dance along with the couple in the evening.

The prevalence of the system of remarriage creates a problem of great concern for unmarried boys and girls. The limited strength of the population, the restrictions on marrying within the prohibited degrees of relatives and band exogamy, all put together have further aggravated the problem. All these have led to an acute scarcity of suitable mates for marriageable boys and girls.

In fact the ages of spouses (that is a young boy to the age of 20 to 25 years may marry a widow and vice-versa) nowadays is an inevitable consequence of the existing problem. Incompatible pairing leads to unproductive marriages and inhibits growth of the population.

Besides the special sexual relation between a husband and wife there is a special economic relation was observed among the Ongees. It is the duty of the wife to provide the fire wood and the water for cooking and drinking and to cook the meals for the family. It is the duty of the husband to provide fresh food for himself and his wife.
The only regulation of marriage is on the basis of relationship. Marriage is forbidden between near consanguine. It is quite clear and also observed that a man would not be permitted to marry his sister or half sister, nor his father's or mother's sister, nor his brother's or sister's daughter.

Marriages are arranged by the older men and women. Children are sometime engaged (or promised to marry) betrothed by their parents while they are still infants. I have found during my field work one such case in the Ongee settlement of South Bay and the Dugong Creek and the betrothed couple. (Boy was of Dugong Creek and girl of South Bay) though they were yet small children were spoken of as being 'married'.

When a husband dies his widow may marry again if she wishes. She should not take another husband before the end of her mourning for her former husband. Generally mourning period has been observed for six months to a year (this is especially for the bride). I myself observed a case, however, of a woman (about 18 years old) with a 2 years male child who married again to a man aged about 45-50 years only a fortnight or so after her husband's death.

A widow may be allowed to marry her husband's younger brother after the death of her husband. When the husband of a wife died the older man of the same group will select one of the unmarried men and request him to marry the widow. Preferably they selected a man who was younger than the deceased and gave the preference to an unmarried younger
brother if there were one or two relative of the deceased, such as a father’s brother’s son.

The divorce is not in practice. It is never found that a bride or bridegroom divorced each other. The women never leave her husband.

2.4.6 BIRTH

At an advance stage of pregnancy, an Ongee woman goes through the ritual of the ‘Gotechela’ when she is ritually offered some food item (Pork, turtle’s meat etc.) by any man, women or child. The food is offered repeatedly, and each time the woman spites it out after chewing. The person who offers the food enters into a kind of ceremonial or putative relationship with the child to be born.

Regarding the delivery of an Ongee child on 3/3/1954 it has been reported by Cipriani 1966 : 14.

“Like most deliveries, birth took place in the forest on a bed improvised for the purpose, with only the father (on some occasions also the wife’s mother) present, and the placenta was buried under the bed. The women recover very quickly; after a few days they are fit for heavy work, returning to the group without any purification ceremonies and this was no exception.”

The indigenous method of child birth among the Ongees has been described by Roy and Ganguli (1961) “A communal hut or a temporary hut may be the place chosen for delivery, with the presence of men and
boys prohibited, while young unmarried girls are permitted to witness the delivery. Experienced elderly women voluntarily came forward to assist during the occasion. The prospective mother is helped to sit on the improvised bed on the ground and she lean back on a woman sitting behind her. One of the women gently massages the abdomen exerting a little pressure downwards to relieve pain and quicken the delivery. Fresh leaves of the 'Batagae' tree are spread all over the region between the hips and spread out legs of the woman for the safe parturition of the child. The umbilical cord is cut with a sharp indigenous knife made of cane or with an iron knife. The naval of the baby is fermented with palms warmed in the fire or burning resin which is kept nearby the body of the newly born baby, is cleaned with the soft leaves of the 'Tejomo' tree. The placenta along with the blood stained leaves is buried in the ground at the spot where the birth took place. The new mother is helped to sit on the bed of the dry warmed leaves and she is made to lean back to the wooden post planted behind her for ease and comfort, she is not allowed to lie down until the bleeding stops. The belly of the mother is comfortably tied with bark strips of the 'Toibotilebe' tree to restore the normalcy of the uterus and the shape of the abdomen.

2.4.7 DEATH CEREMONY

In Ongees custom dead body is buried under the bed of the deceased person, in a temporary hut. On hearing the news of death all relatives assemble at the Korala/Communal hut and weep for hours. It is the privilege of the elder brother/elder sister's husband of the deceased to
perform the rituals connected with disposal of the dead body. Sometime preference was given to deceased's younger sister's husband. The Ongees digs a grave measuring about three feet in length breadth and depth. The corpse is then bent in such a way that the knees touch the chest and the palms are made to cover the eyes. The elbows rest against the ribs of the corpse. The corpse is then tied in the posture with 'Kuebo' (a species of Libiscus) bark. The body is laid on its back in the grave with the head facing the sea. Tommeroe leaves (Licuala palm) are spread all over the body before covering with earth. The period of mourning continues for at least 2 to 3 months or till such time when they are sure that the flesh has completely decayed and the bones will not smell. Once again all the relatives along with the person, who performed death rituals, assemble at the spot. The same person, who performed the burial rituals, exhumes the lower jaw of the deceased from the grave and decorates the mandible with red ochre and threads made of bark fibre. All the relatives wear it for sometime and by turn. The mandible is again reburied in the same grave by the same person after 4-5 days. After the completion of ritual, all the relatives of the deceased invariably paint themselves with red ochre, prior to that (during mourning period) application of red ochre is prohibited. All the married women dance in the middle of the communal hut at night. The completion of this ceremonial dance marks the end of mourning. The Ongees believe that, since the dead body of their relatives are buried in the Korale, the spirit of the deceased will always remain with them to protect, help and guide them, especially during hunting.
2.5.1 THE MATERIALS

The Ongees of Dugong Creek and South Bay are one of the most primitive and isolated tribals population of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The present investigation is based on 95 Ongees individuals distributed in thirty one (31) households was covered under study. Out of ninety five individuals, 78 Ongees belong to Dugong Creek and 17 Ongees belong to South Bay settlement of Little Andaman. The details about age, sex and locality/settlement wise distribution of the sample are shown in Table 2.1.

The Table 2.1 shows age, sex and locality wise distribution of the sample. It could be concluded from the table that male samples are in majority among all the groups. Since the population is very less, therefore whole Ongees population has been selected as sample.

T-17699
Table 2.1: Showing age, sex and locality wise distribution of sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Age Group (years)</th>
<th>Locality/Settlements</th>
<th>Total Onges</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Onges of Dugong Creek</td>
<td>Onges of South Bay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ab</td>
<td>Pc</td>
<td>Ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 - 10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40.43</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11 - 20</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>10.63</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21 - 30</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>12.76</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>31 - 40</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>12.76</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>41 - 50</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>14.89</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Above 51</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>08.51</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ab : Average Population
Pc : Percentage
2.6.0 METHODOLOGY

2.6.1 SAMPLING DESIGN

All the house hold of both the Ongees settlement (Dugong Creek and South Bay) has been covered from Little Andaman Island. All the available individuals of each house hold have been covered under the study. In this regard representation of total Ongees population of Dugong Creek and South Bay has been covered (Table 2.1). In all total Ongees house holds have been investigated with in the proposed time period.

2.6.2 TOOLS USED

The present investigation has been conducted through interview schedule. Interview schedule has been administer among the adult male only (directly) where the adult females are not speaks to outsider, however respective husbands are keen to translate the views of their wives, simultaneously group discussion and formal interview methods have been used. Observations have been conducted through participant observation methods. The data have been collected in following manner.

2.6.3 SOCIAL INFORMATION

As indicated above the information was gathered through interview, using a pre-tested schedule. Detailed information on socio-demographic, socio-cultural variables, sanitation, hygiene and health seeking behaviour obtained using a semi-structural schedule and also by participants observations.
Prior to the commencement of fieldwork for social information, all the necessary precautions were duly observed. The pre-requisite for reliable relationship between researcher and the subject was obtained by taking care of selection of place of interview, recognition of the subject's qualities and weakness and its spirit of tolerance.

Before conducting the interview a proper care was taken so that the subject should fed at ease and efforts were also made for changing of view. During the course of interview all the points listed in the schedule were duly obtained.

2.7.0 MAINTENANCE OF THE QUALITY OF DATA

In order to ensure the quality of data, the following steps were taken:

(a) The filled questionnaires were scrutinised and edited properly by the investigator in the field. The discrepancies observed were discussed with the Ph.D. supervisor/guide immediately. Whenever necessary, the researcher were sent back to resolve inconsistencies. Questionnaires properly edited by the supervisor.

(b) The supervision was exercised by the supervisor. Some spot house hold sample checked to ascertain the accuracy of data collected.

(c) The necessary corrections were incorporated before tabulation of the data. The corrections are based on the results of group discussion and informal interviews.
2.8.0 USE OF SECONDARY DATA

In addition to interview, relevant records of cultural contact and changing health practices were scanned to know the changes in culture and health practices in the population under study. District census handbook and Gazetteer and other latest publications were consulted.

2.9.0 DEMOGRAPHIC RATES AND RATIOS USED

Following demographic formula used in the present study.

1. Sex Ratio = \( \frac{\text{No. of Females}}{\text{No. of Males}} \times 1000 \)

2. Age Dependency Ratio = \( \frac{\text{Population under age 15} + \text{Population over age 64}}{\text{Population Age's 15 - 64}} \times 100 \)

3. Birth Rate = \( \frac{\text{No. of Births}}{\text{Total Population}} \times 1000 \)

4. General Fertility Rate = \( \frac{\text{No. of Births}}{\text{Total Population}} \times 1000 \)

5. Death Rate = \( \frac{\text{No. of Deaths}}{\text{Total Population}} \times 1000 \)