

Abstract of Proposed Lecture

In spite of some important findings the knowledge about the origin and migration of the Primitive Tribes of the islands is still meager and obscure. India's least known and most mystery riddled Primitive Tribes are about to undergo genetic scrutiny. From studies on the genes scientists hope to wrest clues to the roots and history of the tribes. They believe the investigations will also yield medical spin-offs for the tribes themselves and perhaps for the rest of the world too.

The origin of the tribes remains shrouded in mystery today despite countless attempts by ancient travelers, historians, anthropologists and government officials to unveil their roots. Who were the first people to set foot on these islands? Where did they come from? Did they all arrive in one go or in succeeding migratory waves of small groups? How are the tribes related to population groups elsewhere in the world?

The current consensus is that modern human originated in Africa and spread to other continents some time between 50,000 and 1,50,000 years ago. Some experts have suggested that the Negrito tribes on the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago may be the direct descendants of the first of modern human who migrated out of Africa.

In the past, genomic studies of populations elsewhere in the world have revealed their historical roots and also indicated how present populations are related to each other. One study showed that the Kazakh, Uighur and Kirghiz people of Central Asia are the descendants of those who moved from Europe and from Asia to Europe around 2000 years ago. That may not be so surprising since central Asia lay along the trade route between Europe and Asia between 200 BC and 400 AD.

In most of the earlier studies special attention was paid to the African races in the context of the origin and migration of Andaman Tribes. But here an attention is to be paid to the Aurignacians along with the African races. The Aurignacians were of the period of Neanderthal man who survived on earth 60,000 years ago in Europe and South East Asia. Side by side Cro-Magnon lived about 30,000 years ago in South west France. Both Homosapiens lived around 1,00,000 years ago. From an Aurignacian deposit of Grimaldi two skeletons were found. The skeletons belonged to a youth and woman, both of rather short stature and they present traits which have been interpreted as Negroid in character. In South Africa works of character are attributed in past to those dwarf fish, yellow-skinned, wooly-haired little hunters the Bushmen themselves undoubtedly a very ancient race, now nearly extinct. Interestingly some physical peculiarities of the Bushmen are shown clearly in the figures of very stout nude women carved from Ivory or softstone, which have been found here and there in the upper Paleolithic of Europe. These facts taken in conjunction with the Negroid traits ascribed to the two Grimaldi skeletons just mentioned, seem to hint at some influence on Aurignacian art. Most importantly there are many evidences that form similarities / links between Andaman Tribes, Bushmen and Aurignacians. The existence of steatopygia were in Aurignacians and are in present surviving Bushmen and Andaman Tribes.

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