

### **The aboriginal tribes of Andamans**

The Tribes of the Andaman are known to have been living in these islands for ages, hence it is difficult to trace their origin. However, prima facie they belong to the Negrito stock and have considerable ethnic affinity with two other aboriginal communities, namely the Semangs of Malaysia and the Acta of the Phillipines. But, it has not been possible to establish any linguistic relationship among them. The Andaman Islands and the Negrito has remained very isolated for centuries due to obvious geographical reasons before the British conquest. Before the issue of the Sentinelese, which is the prime subject of the instant report taken up, it would be appropriate to have a mention in brief of the other Negrito groups in the Andaman group of islands:

#### **a) The Great Andamanese:**

Settled in Strait Island off the coast of Middle Andaman by the Administration in 1970, the present population numbers to 61 presently. The Community once enjoyed the largest part of the Andaman Archipelago and lived independently following the ancient hunting and gathering mode of subsistence. However, over the period of time, their population has declined to a great extent for various man made and natural reasons. The population which was estimated to be 625 in 1901 census had come down to 29 in the 1990 census. The A & N Administration takes care of the social, welfare and other basic needs of the settlement through a well organised Administrative system.