

MATERIAL CULTURE AND BELIEF SYSTEM OF KARENS
INDICATING THEIR ETHNIC CHARACTER OR OTHERWISE.

A house-hold survey of the Karens in Andamans was carried out to ascertain their socio-economic condition including the ethnographic teachers of the community. Further, their belief system was also recorded during the survey. The analysis of the data so collected is discussed below.

84.95% houses are built on stilts, while 15.03% of houses are built on the ground. So Karens predominantly follow their traditional custom of building the houses on the stilts. The small minority of the Karens appears to have adopted the custom of building the houses on the ground from the other communities.

54.23% of Karen houses have wooden planks as flooring, 18.64% of houses have the floor made of sticks, 11.86% of the houses have the mud floor, 6.72% of the houses have mat flooring and only 4.66% of the houses have the cement flooring. Few houses have the floors built of sticks as well as mat and remaining few houses have the floor made of planks and sticks combined.

60.81% of the Karen houses have the walls built of mat, 29.79% houses have walls of wooden planks and 6.93% of the houses have the mat and thatched walls combined. 72.65% of the Karen houses have the thatched roof while 26.5% of the houses have the tin roofs.

Thus the houses pattern and the house building materials used by the Karens is predominantly traditional specific to the Karen community in the Andaman Islands.