

Write-up on material Culture i.e. artifacts of the Onge.

**Material culture of the Onge: -**

The Onges inhabiting Dugong Creek and South Bay in Little Andaman manufacture traditional artifacts representing their traditional culture. The process of making of some of the artifacts and their uses in their day to day life could be depicted in the tableaux by colour-sketch/design. Some of their artifacts are described below :-

1. **Temporary Hut :-**

The typical indigenous *Korale* (temporary hut) of the Onges may be considered as one of the simplest types of human shelter. The Onge still continue to use them, preferring them to the wooden huts provided by the Administration. There are two front poles for the back, about 40 cm each. All four poles are firmly planted in the ground at a distance of almost 2 mtrs. from each other, forming a square. Two parallel poles, about 2.25 mtrs. each are tied with the pair of front poles and back poles, a few cm. below the top of the poles. A roof of palm leaves, slightly bigger than the slanted frame of the roofs, is spread over and tied to the frame with the bark strips. A number of slender wooden sticks are placed casually below the roof in the gap between the two parallel poles of the roofs to complete the structure. A raised sleeping platform used as a bed is constructed below the roofs exactly in the same way as in the communal hut.

The Onge men often sing while constructing a "*Korale*".

2. **Out-rigger Canoe :-**

The single outrigger canoe called the 'dange' is the only means of navigation used by the Onge. It is a simple dug-out canoe fitted with a float on one side. The canoe is quite comfortable and safe for sailing, especially in the sea. The enormous task of making the outrigger canoe is taken care of single-handed.

The process of making a canoe starts with the selection and felling of a suitable tree. The bark is carefully stripped off without chipping the wood just underneath. The surface selected for the keel of the canoe is kept on the ground while the others surface is chipped flat with the indigenous hatchet or adze. Thus starts the long process of chipping and carving leaving about 1 to 2 feet of flat spaced on the surface of the platform each side. The float is almost of the same length as of the dug-out tree trunk and is made slightly pointed towards the ends. At least two sets of three pegs each (slender hard branches of trees made pointed at one end) are driven into the float to form triangles at two opposite ends. Two outrigger booms of hard wood are fitted parallel to one another in the holes made