

Strait Island was inaccessible due to the Tsunami havoc. Though my research team was well prepared to work with the tribes not much could be achieved as the tribes in general were not in a mental state to converse. Since the Great Andamanese community was dislocated following Tsunami and it were yet to recover from the shock of the aftermath, only a beginning was made during this period as far as collecting linguistic data is concerned. I personally could not accompany my research staff due to urgent medical problems [I was detected of CIN I, an early stage of precancerous growth that needed immediate surgery].

3.1 The work. The atmosphere at Port Blair, was not conducive to research and thus two of the team members returned after a month without collecting much data. Despite the adverse situation prevailing then we could attest the basic word list, noting immense variation especially in the lexicon containing bilabial fricative, both voiced and voiceless and lateral consonants. The former had variant forms ranging from bilabial plosives to bilabial glides and at times simple lateral sounds. Similarly, the range of variation in the realm of diphthongs in the sound system was very large perhaps due to different origins of the speakers we interviewed. With the result, we are not sure of what is the ultimate inventory of the sounds in the language. As far as the morphological system is concerned, the language seems to provide an interesting pattern of verb morphology and genitive constructions where part and whole relationship as well as intricate relationship between the possessor and possessum seem to be operative. However, this has to be confirmed by subsequent data attestation. No sentences of any useful length could be collected and hence we are unable to specify the nature of the syntactic complexities except the fact that the language is like any other Indian language of SOV type. The only interesting feature worth reporting is that despite the verb finality modified precedes the modifiers unlike other Indian languages. However, the genitive constructions do not follow the rule. Data related to the pronominal system was collected but is far from satisfaction as gaps in the area of inclusive/exclusive distinction in first person singular and plural are yet to be filled.

3.2 Some songs and riddles were collected but the elicitation could not be supported by word-to-word or morph-to-morph translation due to lack of availability of willing Great Andamanese speakers. Though all the tribes in the community were friendly to us, they seem to be preoccupied by the anxiety of restoring and resettling in the Strait Island.