

## The Jarawa (*Ang*) Territory: Historical Manifestations and Contextual Situations in Andaman Islands

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**Abstract:** This manuscript is an attempt to analyse different manifestations of Jarawa (*Ang*) territory in terms of historical context and present situations in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Jarawa (*Ang*) is one of the last remaining *Negrito* hunter-gatherer communities of Andaman and until recently they were living in complete isolation from so called civilized society. From different historical documents it is also evident that compared to the Great Andamanese tribe, the Jarawa (*Ang*) is the later immigrants at the Great Andaman Island and they were living in a continuous conflict and clash during pre-British colonization period also. Except few sporadic contact events, Jarawa (*Ang*) never came into a friendly relationship with the outsiders during about 150 years of British colonization and 50 years of post-independence period. Due to different historical specific and contextual specific reasons, the Jarawa (*Ang*) territory had never been a fixed geographical area. It was in continuous change and shift from coastal to the interior forest areas and from south to north direction. This change of Jarawa (*Ang*) territory is not merely the physical shifting of particular community from one place to another. It has many socio-cultural and demographic implications and consequences. After independence a demarcated area has been declared as reserve forest for pursuing their livelihood. The present day Jarawa (*Ang*) territory (1028 sq. km) is surrounded by different dominant neighboring settler communities from three sides at South, East and North. The notionally and geographically demarcated boundary of Jarawa (*Ang*) territory is merely an administrative category; it does not make any sense for a nomadic hunter-gatherer community like Jarawa (*Ang*). A reciprocal relationship has already been established between Jarawa (*Ang*) and neighboring villager. Across the boundary this reciprocity is the prime source of many changes in Jarawa (*Ang*) society and culture.

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### **Introduction**

A careful reading of different historical documents and literatures on Andaman Islands reveals that both the identity and territory of Jarawa (*Ang*) was not so static. From historical time being, the Jarawa (*Ang*) territory was not a fixed geographical area. However, due to different historical specific and contextual specific reasons, it was subjected to continuous change and shift. Significantly, this frequent change and shifting of Jarawa (*Ang*) territory reflects the dynamicity of their relationship with the neighbouring communities. So, for better understanding about the notion of Jarawa (*Ang*) identity and Jarawa (*Ang*) territory, one has to go deep into the history of colonising the Andaman Islands and dynamicity of relationship among the different native tribes. So, discourses of Jarawa (*Ang*) territory include people, space and history of contact events within and across the boundaries.

The Andaman and Nicobar group of Islands with a geographical area of 8298 sq. km consist of 572 islands and islets, spread in Bay of Bengal at a distance of at least about 1200 km from the any cost of mainland India. It is the series of islands extending from Cape Negrais of Myanmar at north to Achin head of Sumatra at south. It stretches between 6° to 14° North latitude and 92° to 94° East longitude. The name 'Andaman' is probably derived from the term 'Handuman', the Malay form of the term 'Hanuman', treating the islands as the abode of the Hindu mythological monkey people.

The Andaman group of islands are also known to be inhabited by four Negrito communities namely Jarawa (*Ang*), Great Andamanese, Onge and Sentinelese. But historically all these tribes were combindly referred as Andamanese or Andaman Islanders. According to Brown (1922), the Andaman Islanders are divided into several groups, with the differences in language and culture. There are two main divisions, which may be referred as the Great Andaman Group and the Little Andaman Group respectively. The Great Andaman Group includes all the natives of Great Andaman Islands with the exception of those of interiors of the South Andaman, who are known as Jarawa (*Ang*). The Little Andaman Group includes all the inhabitants of the Little Andaman Island, those of North Sentinel Island and the Jarawa (*Ang*) of South Andaman. So, according to him, in spite of their present location at Great Andaman Island, the Jarawa (*Ang*) comes under the Little Andaman Group. These two different divisions of Andaman Islanders exhibit many differences of language and culture. On the other side, the natives of the Great Andaman Group were divided in ten different tribes with the distinctiveness in their dialect and cultural attributes. The following were the list of these tribes, passing from north to south :- *Aka-Cari, Aka-Kora, Aka-Bo, Aka-Jeru, Aka-Kede, Aka-Kol, Oko-Juwoi, Aka-Puchikwar, Akar-Bale and Aka-Bea*. Though most of the above mentioned Great Andamanese Groups

were extinct during the last two centuries and only few surviving groups are settled in Strait Island by the Andaman administration. Historically, the *Aka-Bea* was the immediate neighbouring community of Jarawa (*Ang*) and they were residing in a stage of continuous conflict and clash (Map-3).

***The Jarawa (Ang) Territory: Pre-Independence Manifestations***

Historical and Anthropological accounts of different authors like Mouat (1863), Man (1883), Portman (1899), Kloss (1903), Brown (1922) and Cipriani (1966) revealed that the geographical area of Jarawa (*Ang*) territory was subjected to continuous change and shift. So, any discussion on the historical manifestations of Jarawa (*Ang*) territory may include the history of colonising the Andaman Islands, dynamicity of relationship among the different native tribes and their relationship with the outsiders.

Until the end of the eighteenth century there is no written account of any attempt to establish a settlement in Andaman Islands by any outsiders. In 1788 the erstwhile British East India Company commissioned Lieutenant Archibald Blair to establish a settlement at Andaman and convicts were sent as labourers. The settlement was founded in September, 1789 at harbour now known as Port Blair, but then called Port Cornwallis. In 1792 the settlement was shifted from the first site to the harbour at the North Andaman now known as Port Cornwallis. The transfer was made with the idea of creating a naval base for which the newly selected place was thought to be much ideal. Unfortunately the new site proved to be very unhealthy and the scheme was abandoned in 1796. The convicts were transferred to Penang and settlers returned to India. The East India Company again considered the question of colonizing Andaman during mid-nineteenth century. At the end of Indian Mutiny, the company found themselves with a large number of prisoners and it was decided to create a new penal settlement at Andaman. The site of the first settlement of 1789 was chosen for that purpose and named as Port Blair. The Penal Settlement was established on March 1858 and has been in existence ever since.

According to Portman (1899), the first documented contact with the Jarawa (*Ang*) was available in the writings of Lieutenant Colebrook which also reveals that during 1790's the natives to whom people of Lieutenant Blair's settlement of South Andaman developed friendly relationship and whom they took to Car Nicobar and Kolkata were actually the members of South Andaman Jarawa (*Ang*) tribes. The description of their habits, weapons, utensils, vocabulary etc. also supported this point. From the members *Aka-Bea* tribe, the author also came to know that in former time Jarawa (*Ang*) used to be more numerous and powerful than they were then and they inhabited the southern part of the harbor of Port Blair, the western part, and much of the neighboring interior. Many 'Kitchen-Middens' on

the shores of Port Blair have been pointed out to him as the sites of Jarawa (*Ang*) habitats. The *Aka-Bea* further proved their contentions by showing that some shell heaps which contained the refuses of articles consumed by Jarawa (*Ang*) but *Aka-Bea* never touched those. According to him it was probable that some diseases were introduced among the Jarawa (*Ang*) by the people of Lieutenant Blair's settlement which reduced this them considerably in numbers and thus enabled *Aka-Bea* to obtain the upper hand. It would appear as if the Onge group of tribes had at one time inhabited as one body the whole of the country from Little Andaman to Port Blair and had passed from one island to another freely. The people on Rutland Island would make excursions in their canoes during the calm weather (Portman, 1899).

So, it was evident that during first effort of British colonization during 1790s, the Jarawa (*Ang*) were distributed in most of the today's Port Blair areas like Haddo, Navy Bay, and the creeks running south of Viper islands and appeared to be fairly numerous. The fact that how the tribes (Jarawa) with whom Lieutenant Blair had good terms, became unfriendly (so called hostile) during later years. Nothing is known about the period between 1797 to 1858. But when Andaman were re-occupied in the latter years (1858), the *Aka-Bea* were far more stronger and numerous tribe and had occupied the whole of the land around the harbor of Port Blair, driving the Jarawa (*Ang*) into the interior of the island and fighting with them whenever they met.

According to Man (1883), Jarawa (*Ang*) are those native individuals inhabiting Little Andaman and southern portion of Great Andaman. He mentioned that during his trips Little Andaman also visited, but all our efforts to conciliate the Jarawa (or inhabitants of that island) with their offshoot in South Andaman have hitherto proved fruitless (Man, 1883: xxii). So, he combinedly termed Onge and Jarawa as 'Jarawa. The term 'Onge' may be not in use to refer the inhabitants of the Little Andaman during that period.

Today the area which is inhabited by Jarawa (*Ang*) is a recent phenomenon, probably not more than two centuries. According to the study of Brown (1922), Jarawa (*Ang*) were distributed in Rutland Island and Southern parts of Great Andaman Island (Map-3). Due to different colonial forces and other different reasons, they were pushed further northwards and occupy the present position. He also stated that 'there can be no doubt the Jarawa are the descendants of emigrants who at some time in the past made their way across from the Little Andaman and thrust themselves in upon the inhabitants of Rutland Islands and the South Andaman, maintaining their footing in the new country by force of arms' (Brown 1922, 13). Mukhopadhyay (2010) stated that only in recent years we came to know from the people that the Jarawa (*Ang*) call themselves as '*Ang*'. It has been argued that *Aka-Bea*, one of the Great Andamanese tribes used to refer the '*Ang*' as 'Jarawa'. So, Brown (1922)

rightly assumed that 'the natives of Little Andaman refer to themselves as Onge (men). It is probable that the so-called Jarawa of the South Andaman have the same word'. As the present author has worked both among the Jarawa and Onge tribes, consequently it has been found during the fieldwork that the Onge's pronunciation of the word 'Onge' is quite close to the Jarawa's pronunciation of the word 'Ang'. Cipriani (1966) during his fieldwork in 1950s found that Jarawa (*Ang*) were living in the dense tropical rain forest of South and Middle Andaman. He also stated that a few roads radiated from Port Blair, but none of the roads penetrate more than twenty kilometre and a well maintained police cordon were starched across the island from east to west to prevent Jarawa (*Ang*) infiltration.

So, from the above discussion it seems that during last decade of eighteenth century (1790s) the Jarawa (*Ang*) territory was spread over the vast areas from Rutland Island to South Andaman (including the coastal areas Port Blair). But when second time the penal settlement was established in 1858, no Jarawa (*Ang*) were found near the coastal areas of Port Blair. They were confined inside dense tropical forest areas of South Andaman and the entire coastal areas was under the control of Great Andamanese. It was assumed that Jarawa (*Ang*) faced the problem of depopulation due to some diseases acquired from the people of the first penal settlement, thus they were pushed into the deep forest by the Great Andamanese (*Aka-Bea*). Situation changed drastically when second time the penal settlement was established at Port Blair in 1858. At that time the Jarawa (*Ang*) were restricted to be inhabited in the interior, hilly and dense tropical rain forest areas of South Andaman. They were almost surrounded by Great Andamanese who were residing at all the coastal areas. But after 1858, the Great Andamanese population started decline rapidly mainly due to spreading of some contagious diseases acquired from the settlers. In 1901, numbers of Great Andamanese was reduced to only 600 and in 1961 to a mere 19 (table-1). Such a rapid decline in the Great Andamanese population also created a vacuum space for the Jarawa at South and Middle Andaman areas.

The movement of the Jarawa (*Ang*) in the Middle Andaman seems to be a recent phenomenon. Middle Andaman was never known to be part of Jarawa (*Ang*) territory until recently. This area was the exclusive territory of Great Andamanese tribes like *Oko Juwoi*, *Aka Kol* and *Aka Kede* etc (map-3). The period when Jarawa (*Ang*) entered into the Middle Andaman Islands is not exactly known but it can assumed to be somewhere in 1890 to 1910 (Port Man, 1899 and Brown 1922). One of the earliest settlements in Middle Andaman Island was Bonnington (present day Mayabunder) and a little village called 'Webi' inhabited by Keren community (settled from Myanmar) created in 1925. Some old Keren still recount incidents of sighting Jarawa (*Ang*) around their village and nearby

mangrove creeks. During the second world war when the Andaman and Nicobar islands were Japanese occupation (1942-1945), the Jarawa (*Ang*) territories of South Andaman was indiscriminately bombarded which pushed Jarawa to spread different areas of South and Middle Andaman areas to occupy the present position.

### ***Jarawa (*Ang*) Territory: Post-Independence Manifestations***

After Indian independence in 1947, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are included under the administrative control of the Government of India. It took about a decade to frame a regulation for the protection of Jarawa (*Ang*) and their territory. The 'Andaman and Nicobar Protection of Aboriginal Tribes Regulation' (ANPATR) came into existence in 1956. Most of the areas which were inhabited by Jarawa (*Ang*) declared as reserved area by the Andaman and Nicobar Administration (notified by ANPATR/3(1)/1, 1956/57). The reserved area includes entire areas along with the west coast of South Andaman and Middle Andaman including coastal water up to 3 km starting from the mouth of Constance Bay to the Louis Inlet Bay. The Jarawa (*Ang*) territory was further modified by different notifications and de-notification by Andaman Administration [107.7/F No. 40.243/78-TW dated-19.07.1979 and No. 159/2004/F. No. 1-752/2002- TW(PF) dated-15.09.2004] (Map-2).

After the latest administrative notification in 2004, the present day Jarawa (*Ang*) Reserve is an area of 1028 km<sup>2</sup> spread along with the western coast of Middle and South Andaman Islands. Significantly the Andaman Trunk Road (ATR) which is cutting across the Jarawa (*Ang*) territory has been excluded from the Jarawa (*Ang*) Reserve. Previously existing 200 metre belt from central line of Andaman Trunk Road has also been minimised to 30 metre on the either side of the Andaman Trunk Road. The Jarawa (*Ang*) reserve is also extended towards coastal waters up to a distance of 5 Km from the high tide water mark line on the western side of the South and Middle Andaman Islands from Constance Bay to Lewis Inlet Bay (Map-1).

### ***Period of Refugee Rehabilitation Programme***

Immediately after independence, Government of India along with rehabilitation department of West Bengal and Andaman Administration decided to launch a scheme for resettlement of East Pakistan refugees at Andaman Islands. With the view of all round development of the Islands, it was decided to resettle both in agriculturist and non-agriculturist category. Under this scheme a total of about 4164 people (931 families) were settled during 1949 to 1955 at the vicinity of Jarawa (*Ang*) territory (table-3). Huge forest coverage in and around Jarawa (*Ang*) territory was cleared for the purpose of providing land to the settlers. It was

proposed to allot 10 acre of land (5 acre plain paddy land and 5 acre of hilly land) to each family who were settled under agriculturist scheme. About 1,42,920 acre of land in and around the Jarawa (*Ang*) territory were cleared and allotted during 1949 for the above mentioned refugee rehabilitation scheme (table-5).

In the first batch 202 families were rehabilitated on March 1949 and settled in a liner fashion mostly closed to road at the Tsunabad–manpur- Colinpur-Temple Myo-Herbatabad-Tirur areas of South Andaman at the edge of Jarawa (*Ang*) territory (table-3). Similarly on the other hand about 1397 number of families were settled around the Jarawa (*Ang*) territory in Middle Andaman during the period from 1953 to 1959 (table-4). Suddenly, the Jarawa (*Ang*) found themselves surrounded by many alien neighbours and dynamics of Jarawa (*Ang*) territory changed ever since. Soon the land allotted to the settlers become insufficient for their livelihood and they realised the utility of the bountiful forest resources of Jarawa (*Ang*) territory. Gradually they started to encroach the adjacent forest areas for horticultural activities and many of them involved in poaching of forest resources like timbers, wild boar, deer, fishes, crabs, honey and other minor forest produces.

### ***Buffer Zone Issue***

Recently, the most debated and politicised issue regarding Jarawa (*Ang*) territory was 'Buffer Zone'. With the view of better protection of Jarawa (*Ang*) *visa-vis* their territory and to regulate the harmful effect of culture contact with the outsiders, the Andaman administration in 2007 declared the area upto 5 km radius adjacent and contiguous to the entire Jarawa Reserve starting from Constance Bay of South Andaman to Lewis Inlet Bay at Middle Andaman as Buffer Zone. Many villages of different Gram Panchayats of South Andaman and Middle Andaman Islands came under this Buffer Zone declaration. Establishment and operation of different commercial, tourism activities were regulated and restricted in the buffer zone villages. Initially livelihoods of all the villages were seriously affected due to this declaration.

Tremendous social and political agitations were raised by the settlers. Consequently a negative attitude towards the Jarawa (*Ang*) was developing among the buffer Zone villagers. Many villagers were of opinion that the Jarawa (*Ang*) are the sole responsible for this negative impact on their livelihood. Consequently this Buffer Zone declaration was re-notified in 2013 and with some partial modification it was declared to exclude 30 villages and entire seaward side of west of South and Middle Andaman from buffer zone. This re-notified Buffer zone also excludes most of the settlement villages near to the Jarawa (*Ang*) territory.

### ***Contextual Situations and Discussion***

Apart from few exceptional cases, till 1997, Jarawa (*Ang*) avoided any interaction with the non-Jarawa, immigrant population, who have settled down at the vicinity of their habitat in indifferent phases. According to annual report of Andaman Adim Janjati Samity (AAJVS) 2012-2013, the total population of Jarawa (*Ang*) are 425 having male 225, female 200 and sex ratio is 888 (table-6).

Increased contact with outsiders brings about changes in Jarawa (*Ang*) society and culture. The self-sufficient Jarawa (*Ang*) society gradually started to depend on different need based, contextual specific outside elements. Barter relation have established between Jarawa (*Ang*) and settlers. The relationship is basically need based exchange of different commodities. Unlike the days of hostility, one notable thing is that the urge of barter is often comes from the side of Jarawa (*Ang*). A reciprocal relationship exists between both the bartering partners. It is also notable that they often select bartering partner from the villagers by trial and error method where the basic criteria is to get the best deal. Most of the time barter occurs with specific and preselected individuals. Jarawa (*Ang*) men and women used to come the fringe villages near to the Tribal Reserve with their bartering items and demand for the desired article in exchange. In some cases bartering also occurs on some pre-fixed consent between the partners. They like to barter those required articles which they can't manufacture from the available forest resources or the articles to which they are fond of or addicted. Few bartering items which are **flowing inward** towards the Jarawa (*Ang*) are rice, biscuits, spices, different food items, tobacco (Sukha, Jarda etc.), cloth, torch, battery, Iron implements, metal utensils, safety pin, mirror, plastic bottle and container to store water, polythene sheet, nylon rope, plastic drum, soap, cosmetic cream and powder, artificial ornaments etc. The bartering items which are **flowing outward** from the Jarawa (*Ang*) are deer meat, resin, mud crab, prawn, cat fishes and other forest resources as demanded by bartering partner.

Most importantly, none of the above mentioned inward flowing bartering item can be produced by Jarawa (*Ang*). They are unable to manufacture any of the inward flowing bartered items from their available resources and technology. Besides different socio-cultural impact of this bartering relation, one significant aspect is, as Jarawa (*Ang*) are unable to manufacture the bartered item, they are gradually becoming depended on the bartering partner for continuous and subsequent supply of the bartered item or part of it. So, manifestations of culture change among the Jarawa (*Ang*) and its territory both are dynamic are dynamic in nature. Further intense study is required for better understanding on this topic and also for the welfare of the communities.



**Acknowledgement:** The authors acknowledge Director, Anthropological Survey of India, Kolkata and Head of Office, Anthropological Survey of India, Andaman & Nicobar Regional Centre, Port Blair for their support and cooperation. Support of Andaman and Nicobar Administration especially Director, Tribal Welfare; Executive Secretary of AAJVS are highly appreciated. Most importantly authors are thankful to the all Jarawa (*Ang*) of Middle Andaman area for their warm acceptance and sharing their views.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>In the original book '*The Andaman Islanders*' the author has mentioned his name as A. R. Brown. Though the author is popularly known as A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, but for this particular reference, the pattern/style of the original book has been followed.

Only in recent years (2000 onwards) researchers came to know from the Jarawa that they call themselves *Ang*. It has been argued that Aka-Bea, one of the Great Andamanese tribes used to refer the *Ang* as 'Jarawa'.

AAJVS (Andaman Adim Janjati Vikash Samity) is an organisation for the direct welfare of the all PVTGs (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups) of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Table 1: Population of Andaman Tribal Communities since 1901 to 2013

Year	Great Andamanese	Onge	Jarawa ( <i>Ang</i> )	Sentinelese	Total
1901	625	672*	585*	117*	1999
1911	455	631*	114*	117*	1317
1921	209	346*	114*	117*	786
1931	90	250*	70*	50*	460
1941	-	-	-	-	-
1951	23	150*	50*	50*	273
1961	19	129	500*	50*	698
1971	24	112	250*	82*	468

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1981	26	97	250*	100*	473
1991	45	95	280*	100*	520
2001	43	96	240	39*	418
2013**	58	112	425	50*	645

\* Estimates

\*\* AAJVS (2013)

Source: Census of India, Pandit (1990) and UNESCO (2010)

Table 2: Year and State of origin of Settlers (family) in Andaman during 1949 –1961

Year	West Bengal	Kerala	Madras	Burma	Mahe & Pondicherry	Ranchi
1949	202					
1950	119					
1951	78					
1952	51					
1953	97					
1954	438	35		5		
1955	390	37	4			
1956	357	42				
1957	221	5	8		4	
1958	194	6				
1959	217		14			120
1960	250	44	17			64
1961	235	14				13
Total	2849	183	43	5	4	197
Grand Total						3281

Source: Dhingra (2005)

Table 3: Year wise rehabilitation programme in South Andaman

Year	Number of villages established	Number of families rehabilitated	Population settled	Area allotted for paddy cultivation (acres)
1949	6	202	830	1530
1950	10	265	1165	1765
1951	4	114	554	625
1952	8	123	595	789
1953	-	-	-	-
1954	3	97	400	575
1955	5	130	620	735
Total	36	931	4164	6019

Source: Rehabilitation in South Andaman, unpublished report of Andaman Administration (1956)

Table 4: Year wise rehabilitation programme in Middle Andaman

Year	Number of villages established	Number of families rehabilitated	Population settled	Area allotted for paddy cultivation (acres)
1953	3	198	812	1439
1954	12	438	1810	1905
1955	7	264	1157	1725
1956	8	400	1729	1884
1957	-	-	-	-
1958	1	88	807	400
1959	1	9	39	45
Total	32	1397	5854	7398

Source: Rehabilitation in South Andaman, unpublished report of Andaman Administration (1961)

Table 5: Assessment of land available for allotment in Great Andaman in 1949 (in acres)

Name of Island	Flat land for Paddy	Slopping land for terraced paddy	Grazing & Garden land	Land for coconut farming	Total
North Andaman	7490	13500	14290	4430	39710
Middle Andaman	25305	28600	13600	4525	72030
Baratang	2160	7500	5600	2040	17300
South Andaman	3100	5550	4200	1300	14150
Total	37785	55150	37690	12295	142920

Source: Dhingra (2005)

Table 6: Population details of Jarawa in 2013

Age Group	Male	Female	Total	Sex Ratio
0-10	95	80	175	842
11-20	57	49	106	859
21-30	29	30	59	1034
31-40	25	18	43	720
41-50	11	20	31	1818
51 and Above	08	03	11	375
Total	225	200	425	888

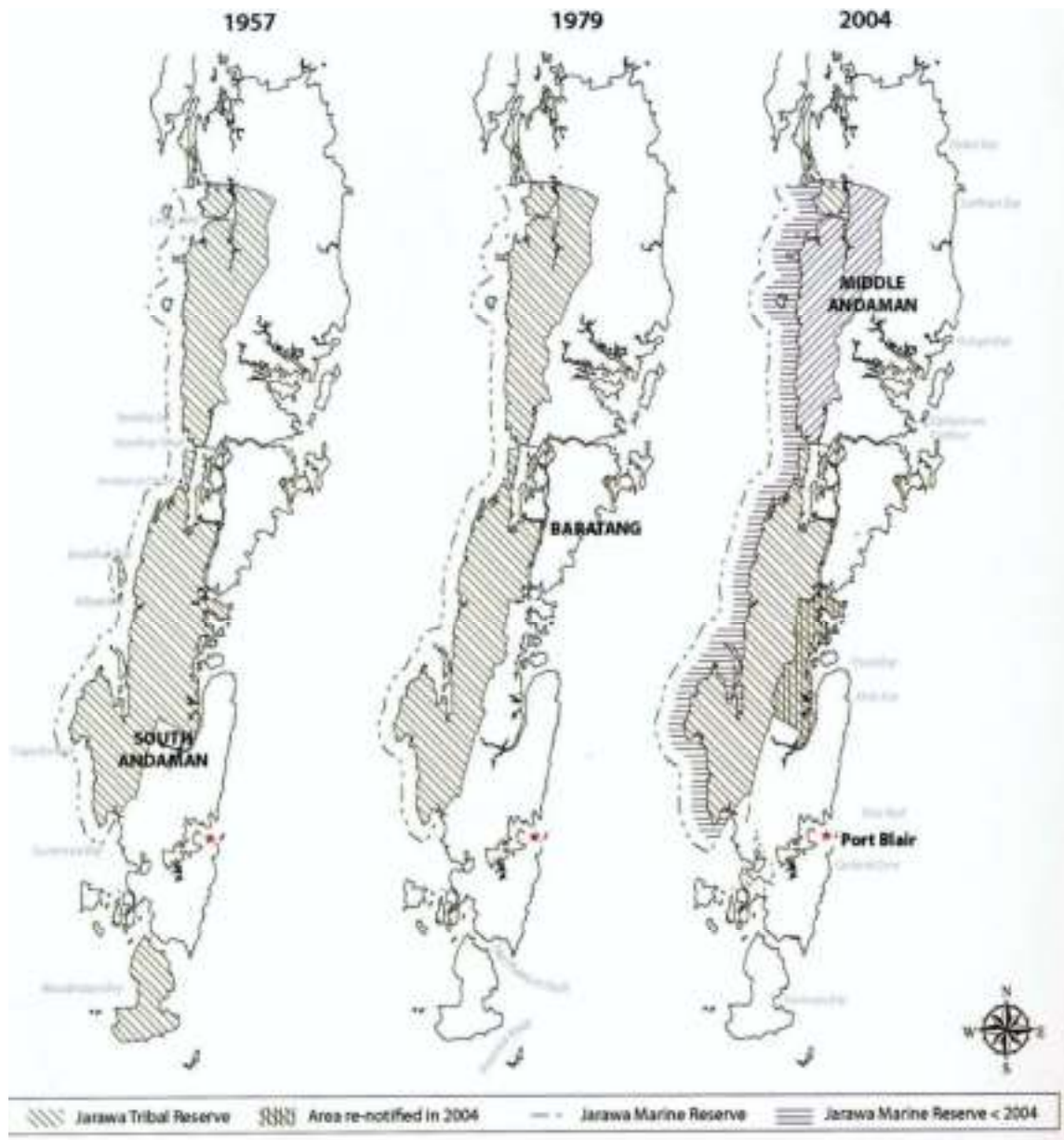
Source: AAJVS (2013)



Map-1: Jarawa Territory of Andaman Islands at Present

(Source: UNESCO, 2010)

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Map-2: Changes of Jarawa Territory Boundary (1957, 1979 and 2004)

(Source: UNESCO, 2010)



Map-3: Tribal Distribution of Andaman Islands Before 1858  
 (Source: Brown, 1922 and UNESCO, 2010)

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