

2. THE PEOPLE

2.1 Social context

The Jarawas have a well-defined society. They are the Ang, the rest of the humankind is divided in two groups; the Eenen and the Yono. The former category includes those people who are neither Jarawas nor one of the other Negrito tribes of the Andamans. The Yono are the non-Jarawa Negrito populations of Andaman islands. However, the generic term Eenen is used to describe the Indian mainlanders; the Mongoloid looking people including the Burmese are called Eenen-tha-a, while other non-Mongoloid non-Indian looking people are called Thode-etule.

The Ang are an endogamous people, who are not even ready to consider possibilities of violating this rule of marriage. They know if they do not observe the rule, they would become bald. The trait of baldness is absent in the Jarawa population.

The smallest social unit among the Jarawas is family; members of a family are husband, wife, and their young children. Those children can be from earlier marriage(s) of the couple or born from their present marriage. Once the children grow beyond the age of six or seven years, they do not share the sleeping space with their parents, but live with the bachelor boys or maidens, depending on their sex. From this age they move from one camp to another independent of their parents. Sometimes they do not depend on their parents for food; they fish and collect bivalves, fruits and tubers along with their mates. Though the Jarawa children often stay away for most part of the day from their parents since childhood, development of their attachment towards kin from both father's and mother's side can be felt.

The boys staying away from parents stay in a group of other such boys, till they get married. Similarly, the unmarried girls also stay together. In case of death of the husband in a family, the unit ceases to exist and the widow, with her young children, if any, stays with the maidens or other such widows. Similar is the case with the widowers; they stay with the bachelors. The young children of the widowers generally stay with some related family, where there is a lady member. A person may leave the children with his brother or sister's family. Once remarried, the widowed people establish their own families once again.

Existence of the above mentioned units at a campsite becomes discernible, when the members share space and food within the unit. Thus, one may come across three kinds of household units; the family units, units of young boys and widowers, units of maidens and widows. The Jarawas refer to a hut or a settlement as *chadda*, and identify the residence of a family as *tutime chadda*, residence of unmarried boys with or without widower inmates as *thorkalang chadda* and a maidens' residence with or without widow inmates as *thorkongo chadda*. Such separate residential units are not used throughout the year, especially during the monsoon months all the social units generally share one common residence, the large community hut. In this hut, however, there would be demarcated sleeping space and hearth for each unit.

A local group consists of several families and some individuals who camp together and move from one place to another while shifting camp. These local groups, however, are not of very permanent nature; they often go through processes of fission and fusion. It may happen that the persons camping together may divide them up in smaller groups and go in different directions and reassemble somewhere at a later date; it may also happen that members of one local group unite with members of another group to camp together for a few days or even a longer period.

The next larger social group is the territorial division; there can be several local groups in one such division. The Jarawas divide the area under their occupation into three territorial divisions. The northernmost part located on Middle Andaman island is called Tanmad, the southernmost territory is called Boiab, and the land lying in between the two is called Thidong. This territorial division is an important level of social identity for an Ang. While talking to the familiar eenens, members of a territorial group would sometimes boast about their respective territory; some would say that the largest pigs are found in their part of the forest, while some others would say that the men of their group are strongest.

There are certain customs governing the rights of a territorial group over its territory. Persons are free to forage within their own territory, but they are not supposed to do so beyond its limit. In case some people are interested to forage in some other territory, they must meet the concerned group and seek their permission. Generally the hosts accompany the guests to pig hunting or honey collection and the foraged item is shared. Whenever a group of persons are on visit to another area, the hosts take the opportunity of inviting them to forage together. This is considered a gesture of hospitality. When the guests take leave, it is customary for the hosts to offer them meat, honey, arrow and such other parting gifts.

Though the territorial divisions enjoy considerable autonomy, the larger group of tribe seems to be quite important for the people. Social interactions take place regularly between all the territorial divisions through marriage and social visits. Members of the Tanmad group know each member of the Boiab group personally, though they live a long distance apart and have another territorial group in between, the Thidong.

Most members of a local group are related to each other either through consanguineal or affinal relations. The Jarawas are strictly monogamous. Usually the parents of a child or elder persons of the family start discussing a match for marriage, when the prospective bride or groom is one or two years old. After attaining the age of seven or eight years, the prospective bride or groom may move from one camp to another with the would be in-laws and share food with them, but stays with the bachelors or the maidens of that particular local group, and not with the family of the would be in-laws. Sometimes such proposed marriages are not finally solemnised.

After attaining thirteen fourteen years of age the adolescent ceremony of a boy, *lepa*, is celebrated. The boy is supposed to hunt a wild pig with his own endeavour (he is assisted by his certain kin in that) and offers it to his kin and others. The *opemame* ceremony of a girl is observed when she attains puberty. As per custom the Jarawas rename their children during or after the adolescent ceremony. Though age is not counted in terms of years, generally the age at marriage is eighteen to twenty years for the boys and fourteen to fifteen years for the girls. If the proposed husband of a girl dies before the marriage is solemnised, many a times such a girl is found to be compelled to marry some widower.

Consent of both bride and groom is taken before solemnising a marriage. It is prohibited to marry a kin. Kinship for the purpose is traced to the extent they can remember the relationship. Marriage with cousins like father's sister's daughter, mother's brother's daughter, mother's sister's daughter, father's brother's daughter are not allowed. Marriage can take place within a territory or even a local group, if the bride and the groom are not related. Inter-territorial marriages are common; a person of Boiab can marry a person from Thidong or Tanmad. Widow and widower remarriage is prevalent. During the present study six marriages took place, in four cases boys of Thidong area got married to girls of Tanmad area, one widower of Boiab area got married to a girl of the same area, and one widower of Thidong area got married to a widow of Tanmad area. Age is not given much importance in case of a remarriage; a widower of twenty or thirty years of age can marry a widow of the age of forty years or above.

Kinship plays a significant role in Jarawa society. This can be seen in ways the kin extend their cooperation in constructing a small family hut or a large community hut, in foraging activities, in movement from one campsite to another.

The Jarawas generally refer to and address their kin by using kinship terms and not by using personal names. Their kinship terms are mainly descriptive in nature. In reference the kinship terms are prefixed with pronouns like *ma*, *u*, *wa*; thus *kaya* (mother) becomes *wakaya* (my mother), *aamume* (father) becomes *wamume* (my father); *mau-mame* (father's father) becomes *u-ma-a*; so also *kaya-ume* (mother's father) becomes *u-ma-a*, while *maya-waya* is the term for mother's mother.

In address, they simply use the term *kaya* for mother, *aamume* for father. The elder ones refer to younger brothers and sisters as *aaikota*, while elder sibs, irrespective of their sex, are called *maapo*. The younger ones are addressed by name. The classificatory term *da* stands for son or boy, *do-e* stands for daughter or girl, and these terms also refer to grandchildren.

2.2 Demography

2.2.1 Age-sex distribution: The smallest demographic unit among the Jarawas is family, next larger is the local group, then the territorial division. There are three such divisions among the Jarawas.

During the first phase of study the survey team could meet 244 Jarawa individuals in all the three areas - Boiab, Thidong and Tanmad; during the subsequent two phases the team altogether met 256 and 266 persons respectively (Table 2.1). It is also evident from the Table that Tanmad accounts for as high as 38.87% of the population, followed by Boiab (31.69%) and Thidong (29.43%).

Table 2.1 Enumerated Jarawa population during different phases

Area	Post monsoon			Dry			Monsoon		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Boiab	32	41	73	38	42	80	39	45	84
									(31.69)
Thidong	37	25	62	56	42	98	45	33	78
									(29.43)
Tanmad	47	62	109	39	39	78	51	53	103
									(38.87)
Total	116	128	244	133	123	256	135	131	266
									(99.99)

During the second phase we could meet such individuals who could not be contacted during the first phase of the study. In Tanmad, however, the number went down from what it was in the first phase. This happened because a number of persons from that area had gone to the other two areas, particularly to Thidong, during that period. Such movements might also result in enumeration of some persons more than once at different locations by different study teams. The margin of differences was definitely not very high. However, necessary corrections have been made after the final phase of study. It should also be noticed, while the total number of males has increased, the number for females has become smaller. The probable reason for this is that the survey team could not contact all the individuals during the second phase whom we met during the first. Some of the camps were abandoned during the dry season due to scarcity of water. During the post-monsoon period the Jarawas were in occupation at the Hutukunu *chadda* of Thidong area. In dry season the camp was totally abandoned due to non-availability of water as the near by stream was completely dry. During the monsoon period we could contact all the Jarawas, since they were camping at fewer camps. The age-sex distribution of the Jarawa population is presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Age-sex distribution of total enumerated Jarawa population

Age groups (in yrs)	Male		Female		Total		Sex ratio*
	N	%	n	%	N	%	
0-4	14	8.27	14	7.32	28	7.81	100
5-9	19	15.79	28	22.76	47	19.14	147
10-14	28	21.80	26	17.89	54	19.92	93
0-14	61	45.86	68	47.97	129	46.87	111
15-34	46	33.08	35	32.52	91	32.81	76
35-44	10	11.28	10	14.63	20	14.84	100
15-44	56	44.36	45	47.15	111	45.70	98

45+	18	9.77	18	4.88	26	7.42	100
Total	135	99.99	131	100.00	266	99.99	97

*Sex ratio indicates number of females per 100 males.

The age-sex distribution of the studied population indicates that 46.87% of their population was below 15 years of age, while 45.70% belonged to the most economically and reproductively active population group (15 to 44 years). Only 7.42% of the Jarawas are 45 years of age and above. The females outnumber the males in the pre-reproductive age categories (below 15 years), except in the early childhood category of below 5 years. The overall sex ratio of the Jarawa population was estimated to be 97 females per 100 males, suggesting a rather balanced state.

A large number of families are made up of only two members (30.51%), followed by four (23.73%) and five members (16.95%) (Table 2.3). Families comprising six and seven members are 8.47% each. The average family size of the Jarawas was estimated to be of 3.75 persons. While nuclear families are common among the Jarawas, joint families are uncommon. Nomadic way of life of the Jarawas might be the primary reason for this nuclear family norm.

Among the Jarawas the girls generally get married by 15 years of age. Only seven girls above this age were found unmarried; this might have happened due to death of their prospective husbands or non-availability of suitable mates. Widowhood does not affect the childbearing potentiality of females in this society, since widows/widowers are generally remarried.

Table 2.3 Distribution of the family size

Family size	Number of families	
	N	%
01	00	0.00
02	18	30.51
03	06	10.17
04	14	23.73
05	10	16.95
06	05	8.47
07	05	8.47
07+	01	1.69
Total	59	100.00

Though the Jarawas are strictly monogamous, subsequent marriages are common among them. Almost three fourth of the males and females were married once only, while little less than one fourth of the married persons married twice, while about two percent of the males and females married thrice (Table 2.4). Marriage age incompatibility was also found among them, although to a limited extent. It is interesting to note that in some cases the husbands are younger to their wives.

Table 2.4 Frequency distribution of remarriage among the Jarawas

Frequency of marriage	Male	Female
Married once	38 (74.51%)	43 (76.79%)
Married twice	12 (23.52%)	12 (21.43%)
Married thrice	1 (1.96%)	1 (1.78%)
Total	51 (100.00%)	56 (100.00%)

2.2.2 Fertility: There are several methods of assessing the fertility rate of a population. It was difficult to apply most of the methods in case of the Jarawas; interviewing them to reconstruct their reproductive performance was not an easy job due to limitation of knowledge of Jarawa language among the field investigators. To overcome the difficulty, the reproductive performance of the Jarawa women according to live birth of their surviving children during the entire study period was recorded.

Hence, reproductive performance of fifty-six married women was documented. It was noted that 30.36 % of them had no children (Table 2.5); in fact majority (about seventy percent) of the childless women were newly married, who were yet to record their reproductive potentiality. Ten (17.86%) out of 56 married women had at least one live birth and 15 (26.79%) had two children. It is estimated that about 3.57% of the total married women had no issue even at the end of their reproductive span. The average number of surviving children per mother is estimated to be 2.51, while it is estimated to be 1.78 per married woman. The reproductive index, as revealed from the child-woman ratio among the Jarawas, was estimated to be 1.51. During the entire field investigation in all the areas four Jarawa women (7.14%) were reported to be at various stages of pregnancy; in one of those cases a stillbirth was reported.

Table 2.5 Number of surviving children among the Jarawas

Number of surviving children	Number of married women	
	N	%
0	17	30.36
1	10	17.86
2	15	26.79
3	3	5.36
4	7	12.50
5	3	5.36
5+	1	1.79
Total	56	100.00

Mean surviving children per married women = 1.75

Mean surviving children per mother = 2.51

2.2.3 Mortality: It was very difficult to estimate the mortality rate of the Jarawas. However, attempt was made to estimate the percentage of mortality by enumerating all the live births and deaths that took place during the entire period of study (from December 10th 2001 to September 9th 2002) a period of exactly nine months. During this period the total number of live births was ten. During the same period four children below one year of age died. Thus the infant mortality was estimated to be

about 40%, which was relatively high for this small population. This high percentage of infant mortality is corroborating the actual age-sex structure of the present day population. The male infant mortality was relatively higher than that of the females, suggesting greater survival for the females.

The high proportion of young individuals, reasonably balanced sex ratio, higher proportion of fertile women, proper replacement of prospective mothers suggest a progressive population trend among the Jarawas.