



## NICOBARESE TRIBE: GEOGRAPHY / TRIBES

**NEWS:** New study decodes when the Nicobarese people came to the island

### WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

New genetic research revises the Nicobarese migration timeline to around 5,000 years ago, linking them to the Htin Mal community from the Laos-Thailand region while highlighting differences with the Andamanese tribes. The study uses advanced genetic techniques like admixture analysis and PCA to trace ancestry, revealing unique insights into early human migration.

#### 1. Early Human Migration

- Over 500,000 years ago, human ancestors began migrating from Africa in search of food and better living conditions.
- Eventually, humans spread to all habitable parts of the world, though some migration patterns remain unclear.

#### 2. New Genetic Findings on Nicobarese Migration

- A research team analyzed **1,559 DNA samples** from South and Southeast Asia.
- The **Nicobarese share genetic links** with the Htin Mal community from the Laos-Thailand region.
- They have retained their **Austroasiatic linguistic roots**, specifically from the **Khmuic branch**.

#### 3. Revised Migration Timeline of the Nicobarese

- **Previous studies** estimated the Nicobarese arrival at **11,500 years ago**.
- **New genetic research** using **DNA mutations and sequencing techniques** refines the timeline to **around 5,000 years ago**.

#### 4. Differences Between the Andamanese and Nicobarese

- **Geographical separation:** The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are divided by the **Ten Degree Channel (150 km wide)**.
- **Genetic and physical distinctions:**
  - **Andamanese tribes (Onge, Great Andamanese)** preserve two ancient **maternal genetic lineages (M31 and M32)**, dating back **50,000–70,000 years**.
  - The **Nicobarese have different genetic ancestry**, linking them to **Southeast Asian populations**.



## 5. Genetic Research Methods Used

- **Biparental Genetic Markers:**
  - Inherited from **both parents**, covering **autosomal chromosomes**.
  - Helps analyze overall **genetic makeup and ancestry**.
- **Uniparental Genetic Markers:**
  - **Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA)** – inherited maternally.
  - **Y-chromosome** – inherited paternally.
  - Useful in tracing **direct maternal and paternal ancestry**.

## 6. Advanced Genetic Techniques Applied

- **Admixture Analysis:**
  - Determines **ancestry proportions** from different **source populations**.
  - Helps understand **historical mixing events**.
- **Principal Component Analysis (PCA):**
  - A statistical method used to **visualize genetic diversity**.
  - Identifies **population structures and relationships**.

## 7. M31 and M32 Maternal Lineages

- Found in **indigenous Andamanese tribes** (Onge, Great Andamanese).
- **Dating back 50,000–70,000 years**, these lineages reveal **ancient migration patterns**.

## 8. Htin Mal Community Connection

- A **Laos-Thailand region** community with **genetic ties to the Nicobarese**.
- Suggests **historical migration and admixture** between **Southeast Asian and Nicobarese populations**.

## Great Nicobar: Geographic and Ecological Significance

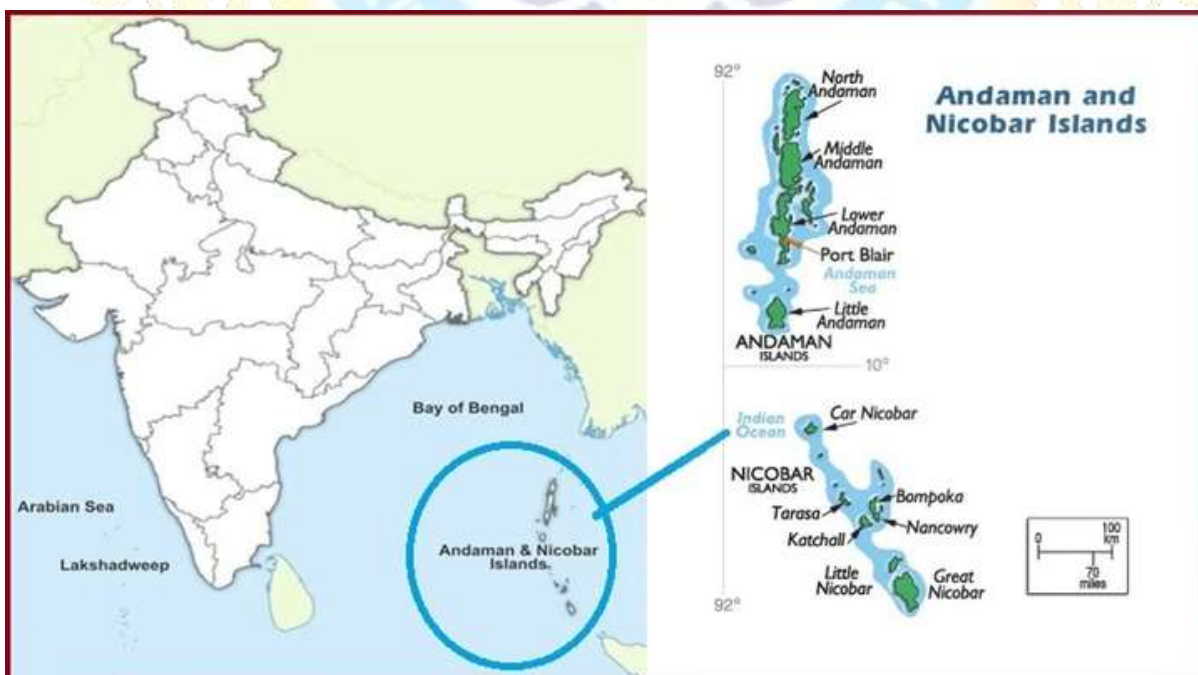
- **Southernmost island** of India, part of the **Andaman and Nicobar Archipelago**.
- **910 sq km**, covered with **rainforests, mangroves, and Pandan forests**.



- **Biodiversity hotspots, home to:**
  - **Giant leatherback turtle (endangered).**
  - **Nicobar megapode.**
  - **Great Nicobar crane.**
  - **Nicobar crab-eating macaque.**
  - **Nicobar tree shrew.**
- **Climate:** Receives **3,500 mm annual rainfall.**

## Political Background of Nicobar

- **Post-independence policies** protected Nicobarese from external exploitation.
- **1956: Protection of Aboriginal Tribes Regulation** restricted entry to Nicobar Islands.
- **1960s:** **330 ex-defense personnel** were settled in de-reserved areas of Great Nicobar.
- **1974:** Nicobar declared a **separate district** with headquarters at **Car Nicobar.**
- **Governance:**
  - **Great Nicobar** has **Panchayats and Panchayat Samiti.**
  - **Other Nicobar Islands** governed by **Tribal Councils.**





## Facts About Andaman & Nicobar Islands

- **Southernmost island:** Great Nicobar, 150 km from Sumatra, Indonesia.
- **Highest peaks:**
  - Saddle Peak (North Andaman) – 732m.
  - Mount Thullier (Great Nicobar) – 642m.
- **State animal:** Dugong (gentle sea cow).
- **Rare fruit:** Pandanus (Nicobar Breadfruit).
- **Only active volcano in South Asia:** Barren Island (Andaman & Nicobar group).
- **Southernmost point of India:** Indira Point (Great Nicobar).

**Source:** [https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-  
ws/th/th\\_delhi/issues/117663/OPS/GAHDTMUB0.1+G6TDTMVC8.1.html](https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-<br/>ws/th/th_delhi/issues/117663/OPS/GAHDTMUB0.1+G6TDTMVC8.1.html)

