

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

A & N Islands a profile:-

Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI) is an Union Territory of India since 1956. The Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands is one of the remotest part of Union. An archipelago extends over an area of 8249 Sq km comprising of approximately more than 608 islands, islets and rocks with a coastline of 1912 km (approx 1/4th of total coastline of India). Of these only 31 islands (as per census 2011) and are inhabited having total population of 380581. These Islands are situated in the Bay of Bengal between 6th and 14th north latitude and 92 to 94 east longitudes surrounded by deep Sea. Almost 94% of land is under forest.

The chain of islands forms a continuous row of islands from North to South with an extent of more than 800 km approx. and divided into two groups Namely Andaman group of islands and Nicobar group. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are separated by **10 Degree Channel** in the middle. The Southernmost Island is Great Nicobar whose southernmost tip is only 150 km away from Sumatra, Indonesia. Indira Point in Great Nicobar Island is the southernmost tip of India.

Port Blair is the Capital of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Andaman group of Islands stretches over 467 km in length with maximum width of 52 km and average width being 24 km only. The biggest and smallest islands are the Middle Andaman Island and Curlew Island with an area of 1536 sq km and 0.03 sq km respectively. The total area in Nicobar group is 1841 sq. km with total 259 km of length and max. width of 58 km. The dense forest covering these islands with rich flora and fauna creates a poetic atmosphere.

The ecological sensitivity of Andaman and Nicobar Islands is delicately poised. During British Empire, these Islands were chosen as the most suitable area for penal settlement as these Islands are completely cut off by the vast sea from Mainland. These Islands then were known as Kalapani (the black water).

In 1874, the Andaman and Nicobar Regulations placed the settlement under the Govt. of India with Chief Commissioner as the Administrator. In 1982, Post of Chief Commissioner was upgraded to that of Lieutenant Governor.

The East India Company developed the Andaman Islands in eighteenth century for providing safe Harbour to its ships during the monsoon. Subsequently in 1858, the British founded a penal settlement here. Many freedom fighters were deported from mainland and kept in the seven-pronged three storied massive jail with 698 cells. That is why it was called as Cellular Jail and it is a National Monument since 11th February 1979.

Climate

The climate of these islands can be generally described as tropical and warm. These islands are exposed to marine influences. The temperature ranges from 18°C to 35° C. The proximity of the sea and the abundant rainfall prevents extremes of heat and these Islands experience both the North East and South West monsoons. The average annual rainfall ranges from 3000 to 3500 mm and humidity varies from 66% to 85%. In some years, these Islands have experienced rains during all the months of the year. Cyclone occur during the monsoons, accompanied by very strong winds mainly during May and November and in some years during mid April. The normal rainfall of Port Blair town is 3180 mm. These islands fall in the seismic zone V, thus prone to the severe earthquake. On 26th December 2004 a devastating Tsunami struck these islands after a massive earthquake measuring 8.9 on Richter scale.

People

As per 1901 Census, the population of Andaman and Nicobar Islands was 24649. This increased to 30971 in 1951 and 380581 in 2011 Census, that accounts for 0.03 percent of the total population of India. Since pre-historic times, these Islands have been the home of aboriginal tribes namely, the Great Andamanese, Jarawa, Onge & Sentineles, all of Negrito Origin, in the Andaman group of Islands, while the tribes in the Nicobar Islands are Nicobarese and the Shompen, both of Mongoloid Stock. Major portion of population is of Settlers from the mainland. Tribal population in 2011 Censes is 28530 which is only 7.5 percent of the total population.

Places of interest

The Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands with its exotic greenery and flora has immense scope for promotion of tourism in these Islands. The Andaman and Nicobar Administration has the vision to develop these islands as an up-market Island destination for eco-tourists through environmentally sustainable development of infrastructure without disturbing the natural ecosystem with the objective of creating more employment opportunities and synergetic socio-economic development of these Islands. The Andaman tropical evergreen rain forests, beautiful silver sandy beaches, serpentine mangrove-lined creeks, marine life abound with rare species of plants, animals, corals etc. provide an immemorial experience to the tourists. The environment lover finds absolute peace and tranquility in the lap of Mother Nature. There is tremendous scope for enjoying nature in the beach resorts, water sports and adventure water sports, adventure tourism like trekking, island camping, nature trail, scuba diving etc. There are many tourist places like Parks, Beaches and Water-falls. Gandhi Park & Marina Park at Port Blair and Mahatma Gandhi National Park at Wandoor, South Andaman are some romantic places where tourists and local people can spend their time. World famous beach, the Radha Nagar Beach is in Havelock island. Carbyn's Cove Beach at Port Blair, Wandoor Beach and Chidiya Tapu (bird island) in South Andaman and Ross and Smith in North Andaman are famous in attractive points for tourists.

The highest point is Saddle Peak in North Andaman (732 mtr), Mount Thullier in Great Nicobar(642 mtr) and Mount Harriet(365 mtr) in South Andaman. Indira Point in Great Nicobar is the Southern-most point while East Island in North Andaman is the Northern-most Island of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Administrative Setup

Andaman and Nicobar Islands was constituted of one district until 31st July 1974. On 1st of August 1974, the Nicobar Islands was constituted as a separate revenue district with its head quarter at Car Nicobar. In August 2006, Andaman District was bifurcated into two districts namely South Andaman and North &

Middle Andaman. At present this Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands has 3 districts. There are 9 Tehsil and 9 Development Block. Three-tier Panchayati Raj system exists in the Union Territory comprising of 70 Gram Panchayat, 7 Panchayat Samiti and 2 Zilla Parishads(District Panchayat). There is a Municipal Council for the Port Blair Town with 24 elected members from 24 wards and 3 nominated members. Port Blair is the only statutory town in A & N Islands. 7 tribal councils and 52 tribal village councils are functioning in tribal villages.

A&N Islands has one Parliamentary Constituency. To have a participating planning process at grass root level there is a District Planning Committee in each district to consolidate and integrate the urban and rural development plans. The plan developed by the gram Panchayat and Panchayat samiti are discussed with sectoral departments at the District Planning committee meetings. The District Planning Committee has representatives of PRIs (Urban & Rural) and other Government Officials as members with chairperson of Zilla Parishad as the chairperson. There is a State Planning board headed by the Hon'ble Lt. Governor as Chairperson.