

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI) is a Union Territory of India since 1956. It is administered by the President acting through an Administrator presently Lt. Governor. The East India Company developed Andaman Islands in the eighteenth Century for providing safe harbour to its ships during the monsoons. 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. In 1874, the Andaman and Nicobar Regulations placed the settlement under the Govt. of India with Chief Commissioner as the Administrator. In 1979 a thirty member indirectly elected Pradesh Council was constituted by promulgation of the Andaman and Nicobar (Administration) Regulation, 1979 to advise the Administration. In 1982 Chief Commissioner was upgraded to that of Lieutenant Governor. With the passage of 73rd & 74th amendments to the Constitution in 1994, the Municipal Boards Regulation 1957 and the Gram Panchayat Regulation 1961 were replaced by the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Municipal) Regulation, 1994 and Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Panchayat) Regulation, 1994. Andaman and Nicobar Islands sends one Member to Parliament. Till 1967, the Member from the Islands was nominated by the President.

Area & Location

Andaman and Nicobar Islands is the largest archipelago system in the Bay of Bengal. This lies in a crescent that stretches from cape Negroid of Myanmar to Banda Arc of Sumatra (Indonesia). The Andamans are considered to be the extensions of the submerged Rakhine Yomces range of Myanmar, a southward extending branch of eastern Himalayas. The Andaman and Nicobar are separated by **10 Degree Channel**. The Northernmost point is about 901 km away from the mouth of Hugly River and about 190 km from Myanmar. The Southernmost Island is Great Nicobar whose southernmost tip is only 150 km away from Sumatra, Indonesia. A&N Islands is latitudinally situated between 6 and 14 degrees, of the North

Latitudes and between 92 and 94 degrees of East Longitude with 86.93 percent of land being recorded as tropical rain forest.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands comprises 572 Islands, Islets and rocks. However, only 38 Islands are inhabited, 11 islands in South Andaman District, 14 in North & Middle Andaman District and 13 in Nicobars District. Total geographical area is 8249 sq. km. with a coastline of 1962 km. The Northern group of Islands, the Andaman group is 6408 sq.km. and the Nicobar group is 1841 sq.km. Port Blair is the Capital of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Islands are exposed to marine influences and have a tropical climate, warm, moist and equable. 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 Northeast and Southwest monsoons. The average annual rainfall ranges from 3000 to 3500 mm and humidity varies from 66% to 85%. In some years the 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. The rainfall data in the last 5 years is given in Statement 6.1.6.

The dense forest which cover these islands and the innumerable exotic flowers and birds create a highly poetic and romantic atmosphere. Forests cover an area of 7171 Sq. Km. which is 86.93% of the total geographical area. Remaining land is revenue land and is used for human settlement, agriculture and developmental activities. Andaman and Nicobar Islands constituted nearly one fourth of India's coast line. The Islands are located in a region identified under the seismic zone-V, corresponding to high incidence of seismic activity. The ecological sensitivity of ANIs is delicately poised and this circumscribes the capacity of these Islands to sustain human settlements.

People

As per 1901 Census the population of Andaman and Nicobar Islands was 24649. This increased to 30971 in 1951 census and 356151 in 2001 census which 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, Jarawas, Onges & Sentinels, all of Negrito Origin, in the Andaman group of Islands, while the tribes in the Nicobar Islands are Nicobarese and the Shompens, both of Mongoloid Stock. Settlers from the mainland dominate the population of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Tribal population contributes only 8.27 percent of the total population.

Places of interest

These Islands are the paragon of beauty and present a landscape full with scenic and picturesque extravaganza. These islands shimmer like emeralds in the Bay of Bengal. There are many tourist places like parks, beaches and water falls, Gandhi Park, Marina Park and Mahatma Gandhi National Park at Wandoor are some romantic places where tourists and local people can spend their time. Carbyn,s Cove beach, Wandoor beach and Radha Nagar beach in Havelock are famous in attracting the tourists.

The highest point is Saddle Peak in North Andaman with 732 m and Mount Thullier in Great Nicobar with 642 m. Indira Point in Great Nicobar is the Southern most point while *Landfall Island in North Andaman is the Northern most Island* of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Places of tourist interest are shown in Table 16.1.

Administrative Setup

Andaman and Nicobar Islands constituted one district until 31st July 1974. On 1st August 1974, the Nicobar Islands was constituted as a separate revenue district with its head quarter at Car Nicobar. In August 2006 Andamans District was bifurcated into South Andaman District and North & Middle Andaman District. There are 6 Sub-Divisions, 9 Tehsils and 9 Development Blocks. Three-tier Panchayati Raj system exists in the Union Territory comprising 67 Gram Panchayats, 7 Panchayat Samitis and 2 Zilla Parishads. There is a Municipal Council for the Port Blair Town with 18

elected members and 3 nominated members. A&N Islands has one Parliamentary Constituency seat.

