CHAPTER – II

ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS - A PROFILE

II.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of research problem, objectives of the study, period of the study, data, methodology used, limitation of the study, chapterisation etc., have been discussed in the previous chapter. A complete profile of the study area i.e. Andaman and Nicobar Islands is given in the present chapter.

II.2 ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS (A & N Islands)

Andaman and Nicobar Islands by virtue of its strategic geographical location in the Bay of Bengal and rich Natural Resources attracts and receives great attention. The Bay Islands as it is also know, constitute the remotest region of our country. The inky, blue waters of the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea, once coined as KALAPANI\(^1\) (the Black Water) indication the dreaded transportation punishment of the British Government of India and the overwhelming grandeur of vast, could ridden
skies make them a domain of unsullied nature. **KALAPANI** is all that many have heard of a term that for centuries conjured up the dark vision of forbidden land surrounded by vast sheets of deep waters, unapproachable and hostile. The inhabitants of these Islands are scattered over the entire Island for flung and wide over a distance of 720 Kms. Some of them are found established well in a few towns and innumerable small villages. But due to the location of these small villages, inhabitants are cut-off from civilization and sources of supply of essential commodities. The towns and small villages have been provided in these Islands and slow progress of shipping and other transport facilities. A & N Islands is a green paradise which stretches its long arm of welcome to the mainland across the sea an outpost pulsating some pioneering activities.

**II.3 LOCATION**

A & N Islands is situated in the Bay of Bengal and it is located between 6° and 14° of North Latitude and 92° and 94° of East Longitudes the most isolated part of the Burma, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, constitutes the most isolate part of the Indian Union, Stretching in a North South direction, separated from the Mainland of India by vast stretches of sea. These islands if this territory are a part of the continue further south up to Sumatra. The Southern most tip of territory is Indira point (Previously named as Pygmalion point) in Great Nicobar, which is only 146 Kms
distant from Sumatra. These islands comprise two separate groups, namely, the Andaman Groups and the Nicobar Groups of Islands are separated from Nicobar Group of Islands by the boisterous 10° channel. The said 10° channel is about 145 Kms. wide and 400 fathoms deep. The location of A & N islands is shown in Maps II.1, and II.2. The Seat of Administration of this territory at Port Blair, the capital of A & N Islands which is connected with Kolkata by a sea distance of 1,225 Kms. and with Chennai by 1,191 Kms. and with Vishakapatnam by 1,200 Kms.

II.4 EXTENT

A & N Islands comprising an area of 8,293 Sq. Kms. are a group of picturesque islands. The Andaman Group including the Ritchie Archipelago stretches over 46 Kms. in length and has a maximum of 51 Kms, the average width being only 24 Kms. The land area of Andaman Group is 6340 Sq. Kms. 258 Islands, large and small, constitute Andaman, of these, North Andaman. Interview Islands Middle Andaman, South Andaman. Little Andaman, Rutland etc. are large Islands and 100 Islands are yet to be named. The Nicobar Group covers 293 Kms. between farthest points, the width being 57 Kms. The total land area of Nicobar Group of Islands is 1,953 Sq. Kms 61 Islands large and small, makeup the
Nicobars, of these Car Nicobar, Theresa, Kamorta, Nancowry, Katchal, little Andaman and Great Nicobar are large and 33 remain un-named. It is to be mentioned that in this group, the Great Nicobar has the largest area of about 1.405 Sq. Kms. of the total Islands of A & N Islands, only about are inhabited.

II.5 HISTORY

The history of A & N Islands can be found in the decennial Census Reports, Louis 1912, Bonningtong 1932 and other published works like those Klaus 1903 and Whitehead 1924. The first reliable historic reference to these islands is in the writings of Chinese Buddhist Monk, I' Tsing made in 627 AD, who described these islands as "The land of the naked people". Later, mention of these islands is found in the collections of early Arab notes of the 9th Century of India and China where the people of Andaman have been called "Angamanans" and the people of Nicobar have been called "Lankabalus". Marco polo, who passed by these islands in 1290, on his way to China, called these Islands as "Angamanian". He observed that the local inhabitants "are most cruel generation and eat anybody they can catch if not of their own race". Friar Ordoric, another European traveler who visited the Andamans in 1322, refers to the inhabitants of these Islands as "dog faced" and "cannibals".
East India company has consolidated its hold in southern India by the middle of 18th century and the British were interested in having a place of shelter for ships in distress during the season of monsoon. On 15th January 1845, it was decided by the Governor General in council to establish a penal settlement on the Andamans for the reception in the first instance of convicts sentenced to imprisonment and to transportation for the crime of Mutiny and rebellion and other offenses connected therewith.

About the early history of the Nicobar group of Islands, very little is known. The Chola king of South India who had maritime interests came in contact with these islands. In the Great Thanjavur Inscription of 1050 AD, of Chola kings, the Nicobar Islands were referred to as "NAKAVARAM" which means the Land of the Naked. During the Second World War, the islands were under the Japanese occupation from March 1942 to October 1945 again, these islands were occupied by the British. When India gained her independence in 1947, A&N Islands remained annexed with her. The A&N Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribals) Act was passed in 1956, under which entry into tribal areas was prohibited and no outsider could carry on trade or industry in the islands without the license of the A&N Administration. Since November 1956 A&N Islands were constituted into a Union Territory of India. Though geographically these islands are far apart from the mainland (of India), they constitute a part
of the Indian Union and are administered by the President of India through Chief Commissioner upto 1983 and from 1984 onwards through Lt. Governor whose Head-Quarter is at Port Blair.

II.6 CLIMATE

The Climate of A&N Islands can be described as tropical and warm. But this is tempered by pleasant sea breeze. As far as the humidity is concerned, it is very high for the most part of the year. The Islands have been exposed to both the monsoons and experience north westerly winds from November to December and South easterly gale from May to October. The weather is normally smooth from January to the middle of February and to a less extent in October. From February to May is the hot season and April is the hottest month. From the point of view of comparison, the climate of the Nicobar islands is different because of the difference between the rainy and the dry season in the Nicobar group. However, there is not much variation in the climatic conditions of the two groups of Islands.

II.7 WATER RESOURCES

The water resource consists of two types namely surface water and ground water. Only a few streams of a few kilometers length are seen in
the islands. The streams are locally called as nallahs, meaning streams or small rivers. As far as the Ground Water Resource is concerned, the geography of A&N Islands is such that there are difficulties in the development of ground water resources. Saline aquifers (the interior rock zones having water) are encountered at shallow depths.

II.8 FOREST RESOURCES

The forest forms one of the most important natural resources of a region. A&N Islands abound in forest wealth. The forests of A&N islands provide adequate variety and quantity of trees. Some high quality hard wood trees, which are scarce or not seen in the mainland are found in these islands in abundance. The forest area of this territory is 7,171 Sq.kms. Which is about 86 percent of the total land area of A&N Islands.

II.9 PLANTATION RESOURCES

Plantation resources of A&N islands include coconut, areca nut, rubber, red oil palm and other plantations like cashew nut, nutmeg, cinnamon etc. The area under coconut cultivation in these islands is about 22,000 hectares with a production of about 7.3 crores of nuts per annum. Nearly 2,020 hectares are under areca nut plantation and these plantations have a production of about 3,030 tons per annum. Areca nut is grown both
in the Andaman as well as in the Nicobars. Areca nut is mainly sent to the mainland. The other plantation crops like rubber, pepper, cloves, nutmeg, cashew nut, cinnamon etc. are being tried on an experimental basis in South Andaman. Pepper, cloves, rubber and cashew nuts are showing encouraging results.

II.10 MARINE RESOURCES

The marine resources of A&N Islands may broadly be divided into two groups as fish and shell. The assessed fishery resources in this area are between 5 to 10 lakhs tonnes of fish per annum. Sardines and Mackerels, the two important varieties of fish, are found towards the shore and can be exploited by the small boats using pursesuines and other nets. Out of nearly 40 species available, 6 species are of high commercial value which could yield substantial foreign exchange. About a dozen species of prawns are also found in these waters. As far as the Shells are concerned TURBO and TROCHES, the two species having high commercial value, are collected in plenty and are sent / exported to the mainland.
II.11 TOURISM RESOURCES

There is no doubt that A&N Islands is a Tourist's paradise. The Natural Scenic Beauty, serpentine creeks, palm fringed sandy beaches, corals and unpolluted environment are great attractions for the tourists - both domestic and foreign. Tourism is the only scope of this territory.

II.12 POPULATION

As per the 2001 census, 38 islands of this territory were found to be inhabited. These 38 islands include Ross Island, which is completely under the occupation of the Defence Authorities and Chatham Islands, which is connected by a bridge with Port Blair but is not treated as a part of Port Blair. Out of these 38 islands, 25 islands are located in Andaman District and 13 in the Nicobar District. The population of these islands is a heterogeneous one, with a mixture of diverse communities from the mainland. So A&N Island is a miniature India. People of all the states in India live in these Islands in harmony with their own culture. The population of A&N Islands is discussed under the following sub-heads.

(a) Groups of Population
(b) Growth of Population
II.12.1 GROUPS OF POPULATION

As already mentioned, in A&N islands people from different regions, religions, races, faiths etc. continue to live together in a peaceful manner.

Some were invited to these islands and some came to these islands on employment and some started some economic activities of Trade, Commerce and Industry. So the population of these islands can be broadly divided into two groups. They are 1) Tribals, 2) Non-Tribals.

II.12.1.1 TRIBALS

The aboriginals or the tribals of these islands are the original inhabitants of these far flung islands. The total number of the tribal population as per 1991 census was 26770 which is 9.5 percent of the total population of A&N islands. The tribal population and its decadal growth are given in Table II.1. The growth of tribal population is also shown in the form of Diagram.
Table II. 1

Growth Rate Of Tribal Population Of A&N Islands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
<th>% to the total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>12145</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>14672</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>18102</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>22361</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>26770</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>29530</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tribal population of these islands is divided into two namely,

I. Andaman Tribals      II. Nicobar Tribals.

A brief of these tribals is given below

II.12.1.1.a ANDAMAN TRIBALS

The aboriginals or the tribals of the Andaman Islands are known as Andaman tribals. They are of Negrito stock/race. Their main occupation is food gathering. Andaman tribals are of four types namely: Jarawas, Sentinalese, Onges and Great Andamanese
II.12.1.1.b NICOBAR TRIBALS

The aboriginals or the tribals of the Nicobar Islands are known as Nicobar Tribals. They are completely different from Andaman Tribals. Their main occupation is also food gathering. Nicobar Tribals are of two types namely, Nicobarese and Shompens.

Growth of Tribal Population in Andaman & Nicobar Islands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>15000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>15000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>20000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>25000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>30000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>35000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II.12.1.2 NON – TRIBALS

This category of the population consists three types namely

I. Local population,
II. New Settlers and
III. Government Employees.

II.12.1.2.a Local population

Local population consists of people who originally came from the Mainland of India and settled in Andaman and Nicobar Islands on different reasons like freedom fighters, settlement, and on employment. They were described as the Andaman Indians in the 1951 census. The freedom fighters and convicts formed the major portion of the population.

II.12.1.2.b New Settlers

The New Settlers include colonizers who are mainly refugees from East Bengal, Bihar and Kerala. They settled permanently on cleared forestland which is suitable for agriculture and pastoral occupations. By and large, the settlers lead a very happy life in these islands.

II.12.1.2.c Government Employees

This group of population includes persons who have come over to these islands from the mainland on government employment, transfer, deputation etc.
11.2.2 GROWTH OF POPULATION

Actuals And Growth Rates

The information about the Population of these islands is absolutely essential for this study because it is closely related to the activities of the Demand for the Products. Even information about the Tribal Population is also essential to this study. The total population of A&N Islands as per 2001 census was 3,56,265 consisting of 1,92,985 males and 1,63,280 females and the same was as per 1991 census was 2,80,661 constituting 1,54,346 males and 1,26,292 females. Table II.2 indicates the changes in the population of A&N Islands since 1901.

There was a steady and slow growth of population from 1911 to 1941, but there was a sudden decrease in population in the decade 1941-51 both in the Andaman District and in the Nicobar District. This is shown in Diagram Fig. II.2. The reason for the sudden decrease might be due to the Second World War. Table II.2 and Table II.3 show the growth rate of population in A&N Islands from 1901.

A remarkable decennial growth rate of 93 percent was recorded during the decade 1971-81 for A&N Islands as against the growth rate of
24.75 percent registered for the country as a whole. But during the next decadal year 1981-91, its growth rate was 48.7 percent in A&N Island as against the growth rate of 23 percent registered for the country as a whole.

Table II. 2
Population of A&N islands since 1901 (in No.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CENSUS YEAR</th>
<th>ANDAMANS</th>
<th>NICOBARS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>% OF DECADAL VARIATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>18138</td>
<td>6511</td>
<td>24649</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>17641</td>
<td>8818</td>
<td>26459</td>
<td>(+) 7.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>17814</td>
<td>9272</td>
<td>27086</td>
<td>(+) 2.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>19223</td>
<td>10240</td>
<td>29463</td>
<td>(+) 8.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>21316</td>
<td>12452</td>
<td>33768</td>
<td>(+) 14.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>18962</td>
<td>12009</td>
<td>30971</td>
<td>(-) 8.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>48985</td>
<td>14563</td>
<td>63548</td>
<td>(+) 105.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>93468</td>
<td>21665</td>
<td>115133</td>
<td>(+) 81.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>158287</td>
<td>30454</td>
<td>188741</td>
<td>(+) 63.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>241453</td>
<td>39208</td>
<td>280661</td>
<td>(+) 48.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>314239</td>
<td>42026</td>
<td>356265</td>
<td>(+) 26.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II. 3

Growth Rate of Population in A & N Islands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>A&amp;N Islands</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911-21</td>
<td>(+) 2.37</td>
<td>(+) 0.98</td>
<td>(+) 5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-31</td>
<td>(+) 8.78</td>
<td>(+) 7.91</td>
<td>(+) 10.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-41</td>
<td>(+) 14.61</td>
<td>(+) 10.89</td>
<td>(+) 21.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-51</td>
<td>(-) 8.28</td>
<td>(-) 11.04</td>
<td>(-) 3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-61</td>
<td>(+) 105.19</td>
<td>(+) 158.33</td>
<td>(+) 21.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-71</td>
<td>(+) 81.17</td>
<td>(-) 90.81</td>
<td>(+) 48.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-81</td>
<td>(+) 63.93</td>
<td>(-) 69.35</td>
<td>(+) 40.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-91</td>
<td>(+) 48.70</td>
<td>(+) 52.54</td>
<td>(+) 28.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-2001</td>
<td>(+) 26.90</td>
<td>(+) 30.20</td>
<td>(+) 7.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The districts of A&N Islands recorded a growth rate of 52.54 percent and 28.74 percent respectively, during the decade 1981-91. The population of the entire territory which was 115133 in the year 1971 increased to 2,80,661 in the year 1991, an increase of over 140 percent in two decades which was much higher than the All India bi-decadal growth rate of 54 percent.

This spurt in population, which was much higher than the normal growth rate, was due to large-scale influx of people into A&N Islands in search of employment opportunities, induction of families for settlement under various rehabilitation programmes and increase in the strength of defense personnel stationed here.
II.13 ECONOMY

The economy of A&N Islands consists of Tourism, Agriculture, Trade, Commerce and Industry. Tourism is the only major commercial activity having its scope for the economic development of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. At present, very little quantity of paddy, sugarcane, banana, sweet potato, papaya, rabbit pulse and vegetables are cultivated. Among the Andaman cash crops namely cashew nut, coconut, areca nut are grown. Some other vegetable like tomato, potato, cabbage, onion, cauliflower, beans, carrot, green chilies etc. are brought from the mainland.

As far as the trade and commerce is concerned, all types of trade dominated by the Tamilians and Punjabis. But they purchase things from the mainland only. However, the inter-islands traders purchase goods from the Port Blair traders only.

As far as the industry is concerned, all types of industries are found in A&N Islands. Majority of the industrial units are based on wood. They satisfy the tourist with their handicrafts. But they are also facing a lot of problems due to the want of raw materials.

Tourism is the only hope for the economic development of these islands. The status of the economy is not even developing but is at its infant stage with the full scope of growth and development. Tourism Industry is the only possible sector in this territory, which can develop the economy of the A&N Islands.
Figure II.2

Growth of Population in Andaman & Nicobar Islands
II.14 ADMINISTRATIVE SET-UP

A&N Islands, being a Union Territory, are under the direct rule of the President of India through the Lt. Governor as the Administrator, who is assisted by The Chief Secretary, Secretary (Planning)-cum-Development Commissioner, Finance Secretary-cum-Chief Pay and Accounts Officer, Judicial Secretary, Secretary Shipping and Transport. The A&N Administration continues to conduct its business in 19 major departments namely, Forest, Police, Public Works Marine, Civil Supply, Transport, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Co-operative, Industries, Education, Medical & Public Health, Revenue, Justice, Electricity, Labour, Rehabilitation and Pay & Accounts. Besides this, there are also a number of Central Government Departments such as Andaman Harbour Works, Field Publicity unit of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Anthropological Survey of India, Lighthouses and Lightships Department, P&T Department, Zoological Survey of India, Botanical Survey of India, Meteorological Department, etc. in A&N Islands. Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and the Chief Engineer, APWD are functioning as Ex-Officio Secretaries to the Administration. Pradesh Council was constituted for A&N Islands on 20-6-81 on the pattern of the erstwhile Arunachal Pradesh Council, having functions of advisory nature. The council consists of an Administrator and 29 members.