HISTORY OF THE ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

(1756—1966)

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PREFACE

The archipelago of the Andamans and the Nicobars sprawling like an arc in the Bay of Bengal form a natural gateway to India from the East. Owing to the strategic position of these two groups of islands on the trade routes of India, Burma and the Far East, their existence was known to the world from remote times but strangely enough the knowledge of the East and the West about them was extremely limited till the eighteenth century. It was only after the establishment of a penal settlement in the Andamans in 1858 that the people of India began to take a slight interest in them. Even after this period they did not know much about these islands as practically no news was allowed to filter to India by the British authorities for a long period. Consequently the people of the mainland had a vague idea of the Andamans being a veritable 'Hell' for prisoners on earth. To them, these islands were desolate *Kala Pani*, a fearful spot far from civilisation. The mere mention of the name of these islands conjured up in their minds, visions of dark dungeons in inaccessible islands where patriots were transported to waste away in the company of deep-dyed criminals. The isolation and the primitive state of civilisation among the aboriginal inhabitants of these tropical oceanic regions also made it a difficult task for the people to acquaint themselves with the conditions existing in these islands with the result that these islands have always remained unknown to history.

On 15th August, 1947, these islands found themselves like a Rip Van Winkle as a part of almost a strange world. On this fateful day the destiny of these two groups of islands was linked for ever with India. It was soon felt that the people of these islands—local born descendants of the convicts, aborigines and the displaced persons from East Bengal, to whom the Andamans and the Nicobars have offered a new home—would have to make up a lot of headway in case they wanted to take their proper place in the political, social and economic set up of modern India. For the development of these islands it was

essential that the shroud of ignorance, indifference, mystery and dread hanging over these islands from times immemorial should immediately be lifted. Keeping the above object in view an attempt has been made in this book to unveil the past of these islands. It is sincerely hoped that this effort may help in arousing interest about these islands in the minds of the people of the mainland without whose help and cooperation it would be difficult for the inhabitants of these islands to keep pace with the march of progress going on in the country of which they are a strategic outpost.

The study of the history of these islands is also significant from other points of view. The Andaman islands are the abode of the most primitive men, who preserve in their person and customs, the pure characteristics of the culture of one of the oldest races of mankind. The noble-intentioned policy of the British in trying to bring them to the level of civilisation met with devastating results. As a result of their contact with civilisation during the last century their physical and spiritual ruin was complete. Efforts have been made in this work to review the relations of the British with the Andamanese. The history of resistence offered by the Andamanese against British rule has also been incidentally traced along with it. Suggestions, which may help in saving this erstwhile community of hunters and fishers from complete annihiliation have also been made. A study of the customs and manners of the Andamanese and the semi-civilised aboriginal inhabitants of the Nicobars has also been done with a view to acquaint the readers with the state of civilisation in these islands.

To the people of India, these islands are vested with great sentimental significance as they are closely associated with their struggle for independence. In 1858, thousands of rebels who took part in the so-called Mutiny were banished to the Andamans. They passed their lives in silent suffering along with hardened criminals who were transported along with them to Port Blair. Subsequently during the twentieth century many patriots languished within the dingy cells of the Cellular Jail with no hope of returning to motherland. The true story of their sufferings never reached India. Consequently nearly

every section of the Indian public irrevocably condemned the British Imperialists in banishing these patriots to a distant land, for no offence of theirs, except that of fighting for the freedom of their country. An unbiassed study of the system of the management of convicts transported to the Andamans since 1858 along with the treatment of political prisoners has been done in order to place a just value on the policy of the British in carrying out this unique experiment of concentrating a large number of prisoners at one place in a penal settlement situated in a remote island.

The indefinite period of complete isolation and the absence of the knowledge of the art of writing among the inhabitants of these islands has rendered it impossible to write a chronological account of these islands from the very beginning. The scanty and fabulous accounts of the travellers who occasionally touched the shores of these tropical islands during the mediaeval ages are the only sources of information about them till the end of the seventeenth century. Consequently the scope of this book had to be restricted. While an attempt has been made to collect the brief knowledge available in the accounts of these travellers about these islands, it has only been possible to trace the history of these islands from the eighteenth century onwards.

Another difficulty was the paucity of published books on the subject under study. A few books based on the sociological study of the inhabitants of these two islands were available but they were not helpful in tracing the historical events in the Andamans and the Nicobars during the last two centuries, particularly of the relations of the British with the aborigines and the treatment of prisoners in the penal settlement at Port Blair. Similarly articles published in various journals regarding these two groups of islands were more or less of anthropological interest. Hence there was no alternative but to depend on the records of the Government of India and the local administration of these two islands. Unfortunately the records of the Chief Commissioner of the Andamans and the Nicobars were destroyed during the Japanese occupation of these islands in the Second World-War and thus the records of the Government

of India preserved in the National Archives of India are the main source of information in India. With my four years experience as an Archivist and particularly of records relating to the period during which India was under Crown, I have tried my level best to extract relevant materials from this original source. In addition to the original proceedings preserved in the National Archives, Administration and Census Reports of the Andamans and the Nicobars, selection of Records in the Home Department of the Government of India, Reports of the Jail Committee of 1919-20 and other published reports of the Government of India were of great help to me. Brief notes about the value of these sources of information have been given in the bibliography. I sincerely wish and hope that the Government of India will soon allow the genuine research scholars to consult the records of the British administration in India without any restrictions to enable them to review impartially the policies of an alien government which has ruled our country for a sufficient long period.

I owe deep gratitude to Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, Professor of History, Punjab University (now retired) for kindly permitting me to work on this subject. Without his keen interest, cooperation and help, I would not have, perhaps, been able to complete the work. I can never forget the manner in which he devoted himself to the study of the present thesis. The innumerable suggestions offered by him have enhanced the value of the dissertation incalculably.

My thanks are also due to Professor B.A. Saletore, and his successors, R.C. Gupta, T. Roy Choudhry, and K.D. Bhargava who afforded me all kinds of facilities in the National Archives of India. I am also grateful to Shri S. Roy, Deputy Director of Archives. I have been always benefited by his immense knowledge of the contents of Archives and also by the ungrudging help given to me by him from time to time. I also cannot forget my debt to my former colleagues in the Archives for their cooperation and help to me during the course of the work.

I would be failing in my duty if I do not express my gratitude to Mr. Axel Linvald, Director, Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen,

Denmark. He very kindly supplied to me extracts from records in the Danish Archives which throw a great deal of light on the activities of the Danish missionaries in the Nicobars. My thanks are also due to the Planning Commission, the Defence and the Home Ministries of the Government of India in granting me access to some of their unpublished plans and reports on these islands.

I owe deep gratitude to Sterling Publishers (P) Ltd. who have undertaken the publication of this volume. My thanks are due to Dr. S.B P. Nigam (Hist. Deptt. University of Udaipur) who has prepared the index.

In case the present study succeeds in giving a correct appraisal of the administration of the British in the Andamans and the Nicobars, helps in saving the Andamanese race from destruction, and in creating interest in the minds of the people of the mainland about these islands I would feel amply rewarded. I am confident that with the help and cooperation of the people of India, the former veritable 'Hell' for prisoners can be turned into a 'Paradise' for thousands of displaced persons from East Bengal who have started a new life in these islands. With its vast potentialities for development the future of these islands is very bright.

L.P. Mathur

Udaipur

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OF
ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

ONE

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

Geographical Survey in Brief:

(a) THE ANDAMANS

THE Andamans consist of a chain of 204 large and small islands. These islands are situated in the bay of Bengal at a distance of 590 miles from the Hooghly's mouth, 120 miles from the Cape Negrais in Burma and 340 miles from the Northern extremity of Sumatra; within a parallelogram formed by the 10th and 14th degrees of North latitude and 92 and 94 degrees of east longtitude.[1] The main part of the Andaman group is a band of five chief islands—North Andaman, Middle Andaman, Baratang, South Andaman, and Rutland islands. These islands are so closely adjoining each other that they have been known as one *viz.* Great Andaman. Forty miles to the South of Great Andaman lies the island of Little Andaman which is connected with it by a chain of small islands. The principal outlying islands are the North Sentinel lying about 18 miles off the west coast of South Andaman; the remarkable Volcanic Barren island[2] situated at about 71 miles to the north east of Port Blair[3], and the extinct Volcano known as Narcondam at 71 miles east of North Andaman. The extreme length of all the islands of Andaman group is 219 miles with and extreme width of 32 miles of covering a land area of 2,508 square miles.

There are no rivers and very few perennial fresh water streams on these islands. The coasts of Andamans are deeply

[1] Please see the map of Andaman & Nicobar Islands along with India and Burma for the places mentioned here.

[2] For the location of all these islands please see the map of Andaman Islands.

[3] Port Blair is harbour situated on the east coast of South Andaman Island.

indented, giving rise to a number of safe harbours. These harbours with big creeks running off them for miles inland provided shelter throughout the year, not only to those Malays who made Andamans a base for their piracy but to many ships in distress in the past. The capacious Port Blair, with a small island stretched across its mouth leaving a passage into the port on either side, is one of the most perfect harbours in the world. Port Campbell on the east coast of South Andaman, and Port Cornwallis on the east coast of North Andaman are the other principal harbours.[1]

(b) THE NICOBARS

The Nicobars comprising of seven large islands and twelve small islands lie eighty miles South of the Andaman group and ninety one miles north from Sumatra.[2] The seven big islands of Nicobars from north to south are Car Nicobar, Teressa Bompoka, Camrota, Nancowry, Little Nicobar, and Great Nicobar.[3] Some of the islands of Nicobars are not at all inhabited. The extreme length of the sea space occupied by these islands is 163 miles and the extreme width is 36 miles with an aggregate area of 635 square miles. Water supply, unlike that of Andamans, is plentiful as fresh water swamps and perennial streams are found in almost all the islands. The coast of Nicobars has a large number of creeks, bays and anchorages. Nancowry[4] is the finest harbour in the whole of the Andaman and Nicobar group.

The climate of the Andaman and Nicobar islands can be described as normal for tropical islands of similar latitude—always warm with heavy rains and violent weather throughout the year. These islands lie within the full sweep of both the monsoons with the result that some of the southern islands of Nicobar group have rains throughout the year. Due to excessive rains the mass of hills enclosing narrow valleys in these islands are covered with dense tropical jungles. The

[1] Please refer the map of Andamans for location of these harbours.

[2] Please see the map of Nicobars for the location of these islands.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Nancowry Harbour—situated between 8th & 9th latitude and 93 & 94 longtitude. It is surrounded by Camrota, Trinkat & Nancowry islands.

Andamans are very rich in timber. If proper facilities are provided, the produce can be increased to a great extent. The Nicobars also have a luxuriant growth of forests but do not produce Padauk and Gurjan—the most important and valuable of Andaman timbers. In Nicobars large quantities of coconut grow as its soil is eminently suitable for its cultivation. It is believed that these islands contain rich deposits of minerals and other produce including coal, iron gas and precious stones.

There are different theories about the geological connections of Andamans and Nicobars with the Asian continent in ancient times. Kurz[1] and Oldham[2] who visited these islands in 1866 and 1884 respectively considered Andamans as residue above water of submarine subsidence which was still continuing.[3] Portman[4] also believed that in the immediate past there had been subsidence at certain places in Andamans.[5] Sir Temple[6]

[1] Kurz Sulpiz (1833-78) : Native of Ausburg in Bavaria ; Botanist ; joined the army of Netherlands in India in order to study the botany of Malayan Achipelago: appointed Assistant Curator of the Herbarian in the Botanical Gardens near Calcutta from 1864 ; explored Burma and Andaman islands in the interest of Botany ; wrote the "Forest Elora of British Burma" (1877) and many botanical papers in the Journals of various learned Societies. Buckland, p. 239.

[2] Oldham, R.D. (1816-88) : Educated at Trinity College, Dublin ; studied at Engineering School Edinburgh, 1837-38 ; Assistant in the Geological Deptt. in Ireland in 1839 ; Professor of Geology in Trinity College, Dublin, 1845 ; Director of Geological Survey of Ireland, 1846 ; Supdt. Geological Survey of India, 1851-76 ; wrote a number of papers in the Journal of Geological Society of London. Buckland—p. 322.

[3] Census Report, 1931, pp. 1

[4] Portman, M.V. : He remained as Officer-in-charge of Andamanese from 1879 to 1900 and was responsible for establishing friendly relations with the Onges of Little Andaman. In 1899, he published a book entitled 'A History of our relations with the Andamanese'. He also conducted researches into the language, customs ; & manners of the Andamanese.

[5] Portman—Volume I, p. 8.

[6] Temple, Sir Richard Carnac, Baronet (1850-1918) : son of Sir Richard Temple, Bart ; educated at Harrow and Trinity Hall, Cambridge ; entered the army in 1871, Indian Staff Corps 1877 ; Lt. Col. 1897 ; served in Afghan compaign 1878-79 ; Burma 1887-89 ; Chief Commissioner, Andaman Islands 1894-1904 ; Author (with E. H. Man) of Andaman language Editor & Proprietor of Indain Antiquary. Buckland, p. 418

also supported the above theory. Bonnington[1] was, however, of the opinion that the rising and subsidence in the various parts of these islands were purely of a local and superficial character and were mistaken by Kurz and Oldham for a sign of continuous subsidence of the islands.[2] According to another theory advanced by Colonel R.B. Seymor Sewell in his work 'Geographic and Oceanic Researches in Indian Waters', the Andaman and Nicobar islands form a continuous range of lofty submarine mountains extending from Cape Negrais in Burma to Achin Head[3] in Sumatra. This range of lofty submarine mountains is interrupted in places by channels of various depths formed prior to the triassic period which marks the evolution of mammalia.[4]

Boden Kloss[5], after having made a thorough study of the mammalian and avian fauna, holds that there has never been any surface connection between these islands and the continent.[6] Further researches are being conducted by the Government of India to determine the geological origin of these two groups of islands.

Strategic importance of these islands

The chief importance of these islands lie in fact that they possess a central position along the trade routes of India, Burma and the Far East. Their excellent harbours serve both as a refuge in the monsoons as well as a place to replenish the

[1] Bonnington, M.C.C. : He was an officer in the establishment of Port Blair. He took charge of the affairs of the Andamanese in 1903, but due to the reduction of officers at Port Blair, relinquished the above charge in 1905. As Deputy Supdt. of Port Blair, he was ex-officio Supdt. of Census operations of 1931.

[2] Census Report, 1931, p. 1

[3] Achin Head : The northern extremity of Sumatra.

[4] Journal of Asiatic Society, Bengal, Vol. IX, No. 1 cited in Census Report, 1931, p. 1.

[5] Kloss, B.C. : He visited the Andamans & Nicobars for a botanical, Zoological and social study in a Schooner in 1903. He has left a detailed account of his visit in his work 'In the Andamans and Nicobars—the narrative of a cruise in a Schooner'.

[6] Kloss, B.C. : 'In Andamans & Nicobars', pp. 167-68.

water-supply for ships passing along these routes. Great information can be obtained about the direction and intensity of cyclonic storms in the Bay of Bengal and timely warning can be given to ships in these seas. For India, Burma and the Far East these islands are also important from the strategic point of view. A base in these islands can threaten the safety of all these regions. For India, these islands are vested with great sentimental attachment as they are closely associated with our struggle for independence. The first batch of fighters for the independence of India was transported to the penal settlement in Andamans in 1858. Subsequently also many a patriot, the so-called "terrorist' prisoners, languished within the walls of the grim Cellular Jail,[1] in company with habitual and dangerous criminals. In these islands, Indian tricolour was hoisted for the first time by the Azad Hind Fauz (Indian National Army of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose) in 1943.

Past shrouded in mystery

Strangely enough, in spite of their close proximity to India, a country with a glorious past, and their strategic position on the trade routes of India, Burma and Far East, the condition of the aboriginal inhabitants of these islands has not been in any way affected by the civilisation of the east and the west till the eighteenth century. Although ships of most of the big nations of the world have touched the shores of these islands from remote times, yet the knowledge of the outside world about Andamans and Nicobars was extremely limited before the occupation of these islands by the British. The isolation of these two groups of islands alongwith the primitive state of civilization in these tropical oceanic regions has rendered it impossible to unveil its past which is still shrouded in mystery. It is, therefore, a difficult task to write a chronological history of these islands from the very beginning. For the period prior to the establishment of a penal settlement in Andamans in 1858 and the annexation of Nicobars by the British in 1869, one has to depend upon the scanty accounts of travellers who

[1] For the treatment of political prisoners in Andamans, please see Chapter VII.

occasionally visited the shores of these islands. Accounts of an unsuccessful attempt to establish a settlement in 1789 are, however, available in the Archives of the Government of India. The missionaries who tried to propagate Christianity and colonise the Nicobar islands during the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century have fortunately left accounts of their activities in Nicobars. In this chapter an attempt has been made to acquaint the reader with that brief knowledge of the outside world about these islands which was recorded by travellers who touched the shores of these isolated islands before the eighteenth century.

Origin of the name of Andamans

The earliest mention of the Andaman islands and their inhabitants can be traced in the Ramayana, the great epic of India. Lord Rama in his struggle against Ravana was helped by the followers of Sugriva who have been referred to as 'Hanumans' in this Sanskrit epic.[1] The Malays who used these islands for a long time as a base for their piratical activities refer to these islands as 'Handuman'. The word 'Handuman' seems to be a corrupt form of 'Hanuman'.[2] Portman, however, had some doubts about the validity of the above conjecture.[3] According to him the Andamans were perhaps called after the name of Agathodaemon.[4] In the opinion of Portman, there are no indications that the name of

[1] Sir Richar Temple has given a wrong meaning of the word 'Handuman' in the Census Report of 1901 at page 44. According to him 'Handuman' literally means 'monkey people' who were aboriginal antagonists to the Aryan immigrants to India. The correct meaning of the word 'Hanuman' in Sanskrit is 'with chin'. In the Ramayana Hanumans were not antagonists to the Aryan prince Rama.

[2] An explanation of the separation of 'Hanumans'—the aboriginals inhabitants of Andamans from mainland is given in chapter II.

[3] Portman, Vol, I, p. 50.

[4] Agathodaemon : Roman Cartographer and mathematician of the 5th century who drew the maps of the world in accordance with the explorations of Ptolemy.

'Agmatae' or 'Aginatae' used by Ptolemy[1] for certain islands in the Indian Ocean were used for Andamans. As Portman himself is not sure about this point, we may leave aside his conjecture and conclude that the name 'Andaman is a corrupt form of the Malay name 'Handuman' for these islands.

Andamanese described as cannibals by travellers till sixteenth century

From second century onwards till sixteenth century, nearly all travellers, who wrote about the Andaman islands, describe the inhabitants of these islands as cannibals. I 'Ching[2], a Chinese Buddhist monk of the seventh century, mentioning them as cannibals referred to Andamans as 'Andaban'[3]. The Arab travellers of the ninth century invariably mentioned the Andamanese as man-eaters.[4] From their accounts, it is evident that these travellers themselves did not visit Andaman islands and based their narrations on tales current in the neighbouring countries at that time. Subsequent travellers have also made the error of describing the aborigines of Andamans as cannibals. Marco Polo[5] who passed these islands on his way to China, in 1290, refers to these islands as 'Angamanian'. Regarding the

[1] Claudius Ptolemaeus—commonly known as Ptolemy flourished in Alexandaria in the second century. He was a great geographer of the Roman Empire. His 'Geographike Syntaxis' was a laudable attempt in the ancient times to place the study of geography on a scientific basis. Sykes, p. 37.

[2] I 'Ching (I'Tsing) : He started on a voyage in 671 A.D. to India in a Persian ship ; studied Buddhist texts in Sumatra ; continued his voyage in a Sumatra ship and anchored at Nicobar islands ; reached India in 673 and visited many sacred places; finally returned to China and devoted himself to literary work. Sykes, p. 30

[3] Takakasu's edition of I'Tsing pp. 30 and 28.

[4] Pemberton—'Collection of Voyages and Travels' Vol. 7, p. 183.

[5] Polo, Marco : A citizen of Venice ; along with his father Nicolo Polo and uncle Maffeo Polo, Marco Polo started for China in 1260. They were the first travellers to trace a route across the whole longtitude of Asia and were warmly welcomed by Kublai Khan, the chief of Mongols in China. Marco Polo was employed on several missions by Kublai Khan. He returned to Venice in 1295 and wrote an account of his troubles and travels. Sykes, pp. 66-83.

The above extract is taken from Yule's 'Marco Polo'.

inhabitants of these islands he observes, 'They are a most cruel generation, and eat everybody that they can catch if not their own race.' Friar Odoric[1] passed Andamans in 1322 and called the people of Andaman islands as dog-faced and cannibals. Nicolo Conti, who visited Andamans in 1440, mentions the Andaman islands as 'Andamania' which he explains to mean as 'Island of Gold'. He says that the inhabitants of these islands tear the strangers to pieces and devour them[2]. This myth of existence of gold in Andamans existed down to the end of the nineteenth century and led to the unfortunate expedition of Doctor Helfer[3] in 1839. Cesare Federic, a European traveller, who touched the shores of Andamans in 1569, mentioned the ferocity of the Andamanese. An interesting account of the wreck of a ship in the sixteenth century, the crew of which, it is believed were devoured by the savages on the coast of Andamans also repeats the impression gained by travellers during medieval ages about the savage nature of the Andamanese.[4]

From the accounts of all these travellers, the inhabitants of Andamans gained the notoriety that they massacred and devoured the crew and passengers of a ship that happened to reach their island. Their complete hostility to all the strangers who touched their shores became proverbial throughout Asia and Europe. All these notions about the ferocious nature of the Andamanese were subsequently proved to based on hearsay and there was no element of truth in them. In order to keep others away from Andamans, the Malay pirates exaggerated the real dangers encountered by them and spread such tales about the Andamanese.[5] Most of the travellers either did not visit these islands and in case they happened to anchor on the coasts of Andamans for a short while they had no time to verify

[1] Friar Odoric: A European traveller who wandered over Asia and was perhaps the first European to visit Lhasa in Tibet. Sykes, p. 84.

[2] Portman, Vol. I, p. 53.

[3] Doctor Helfer was a Russian Geologist. He visited the Andaman Islands in search of gold. His rashness going alone to the shore cost him his life at the hands of the aborigines of Andamans.

[4] Hamilton's account of the East Indies—'Pinkerton's Collection of Voyages and Travels' Vol. VIII, pp. 430-31.

[5] Portman, Vol. I, p. 53.

the tales circulated by Malay pirates in their own interest. The custom of burning the bodies of their dead enemies among the Andamanese may have lent support to this wrong belief among the travellers who actually did not witness any ceremony of the disposal of the dead bodies. Uptil now no positive instance of their eating human flesh has been seen by any one. It does not appear that they substituted human flesh in place of ordinary food whenever they killed their foes. Such wrong accounts of these islands by the travellers are continuous in some shape or other from sixteenth century onwards till we reach the middle of the eighteenth century, when the commanders of the East India Company and the British Royal Navy began to submit accurate reports of some parts of the coasts of Andaman islands.

Nicobars mentioned as 'Land of the Naked' by travellers in the past

Like Andamans, Nicobars are reported by traders and seafarers through all historic times in their journals of voyages. There are several references to these islands in the geographical works of Ptolemy which can only be referred to Nicobar islands. One is tempted to identify these islands with 'Nagadipa' mentioned by Ptolemy. An alternative identification is the reference to a group of five islands as 'Barussea' by Ptolemy which may be taken to correspond well enough to Teressa and other neighbouring islands of Central Nicobar group. Another more convincing identification of Nicobars is with the mention by Ptolemy of Satyorum Insulae Tres' which means that the inhabitants of these islands are said to have tails. The reference is evidently to the strip of cloth hanging down from the posteriors of the Nicobars, which viewed from a distance might probably be mistaken for a tail.

I'Ching, in his travels of 672 A.D., refers to these islands as the land of the 'Naked people' (Lo-Jen-Kuo). The next reference of any importance is that of two Arab travellers who came in contact with Andamans and Nicobars during a voyage

[1] 'Nagadipa' means an island of the Naked ('Nanga') and not of snakes.

to Southern China in 851 A.D.[1] They refer Nicobars as 'Najabulus' or 'Langabulus' which also mean the land of the naked. In the Tanjore inscription of 1050 A.D.[2] these islands are mentioned as 'Nakavaram'. According to this inscription, the Chola king Rajendra II, in an overseas expedition in the beginning of eleventh century conquered Car Nicobar and Great Nicobar which were known to Indians as 'Kardipa' and 'Nagadipa' respectively.[3] The whole group of islands were known to them as 'Naccavarum.' Marco Polo mentioned these islands as 'Necuveram'[4] in the thirteenth century. Rashiduddin, an Arab traveller at the end of thirteenth century refers to them as 'Nakawaram.' It appears that by this time the name of 'Nakavaram' with which the islands were known to the Indians became current among Arab and European travellers. Friar Odoric[5] who visited these islands in 1322 also mentions them as 'Nicoveran.'

Visit of European travellers to Nicobars during fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

After the discovery of Cape of Good Hope, the expeditions of the Europeans to the East became numerous. These islands were also frequently visited by traders in their ships. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the islands were referred to as 'Nacubar' and 'Nicabar' by the Portuguese pioneers who attempted to christianize them with the help of the missionar-

1 'An account of the travels of two Muhammedans through India and China in the nineth century'—translated by Abbe Renaudot from Arabic—'Pinkerton's Voyages & Travels' Vol. VII, p. 183.

2 Tanjore inscription of 1050 A.D. : This inscription tells us about the conquests of the famous Chola king, Rajendra II.

3 'Overseas Expedition of Rajendra Chola II'—Journal of Indian History Vol. II, 1922-23, pp. 350—S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar, Rajendra Chola II ruled over a vast portion of South India.

4 Nicobars have always been identified with 'Langa-bulus' of the Arabs, 'Naccavarum' of the Hindus and 'Necuveram' of Marco Polo. The name still survives in Nankauri islands.

5 Supra, Footnote 2, p. 8 Chapter I. Friar Odoric wrote a chapter on Nicobars. He appears to be an author with a very imaginative mind as his account consists of a mass of the wildest fables utterly unworthy of credence.

ies. Unfortunately no account of the attempts of these missionaries is available now. But the accounts of many European travellers visiting these islands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are available in their memoirs. In 1566, Captain Fredrick touched the shores of these islands. Sir James Lancastar[1] made several voyages to the East Indies and visited the Nicobar islands in 1601 along with Captain John Davies[2]. The next traveller to Nicobars of whom we have any record was Keoping, who visited these islands in 1647[3]. Keoping's narration, though evidently wrong, is interesting. His men perceived the inhabitants of the Nicobar islands as having tails like those of cats. He also attributed cannibalism to the Nicobarese because five of the sailors of his ship, who went ashore never returned and their bones were found strewn over the beach on the next day. Keoping evidently committed the same mistake which induced Ptolemy to assume that the inhabitants of the islands of Nicobar were gifted by nature with anatomical tails. The account of Dominic Fernandez[5] repeats the wrong belief of Keoping that the Nicobarese devour any European whom they are able to catch alive. He also believed that there was a well in Nicobars in which whatever metal was put turned into gold[6]. Captain William Dampier[7] during his voyage round the

[1] Sir James Lancastar : He was deputed by the East India Company, London (which was granted a Charter by Queen Elizabathe on Dec., 31, 1600) to command the ships sent to Spice Islands for trade. Sykes, p. 155.

[2] Captain John Davies : In 1585 he sailed along the Western Shores of Greenland and by crossing Davies Strait, named after him, discovered Cumberland Sound. He made two other voyages to Greenland in 1585. In 1600 The East India Company secured his services for the above expedition. Sykes, pp. 145 & 155.

[3] Keoping : A Swede who went to the East Indies on a Dutch ship which anchored off the Nicobar islands in 1647.—On Nicobar Isles' Nicolas Fontana, Selection from Records. Vol. 77, p. 61.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Dominic Fernandez : A Spanish missionary, who visited the Nicobars on the board of a ship during his voyage from Malacca to Madras in 1669.

[6] Calcutta Review ; October, 1870, p, 266.

[7] Captain Willim Dampier : He made several voyages in different parts of the world in the last decades of seventeenth century. The accounts of voyages were published from London in 1729 entitled as 'A Collection of Voyages—Captain Dampier's voyage round the world.'

world was compelled to leave a mutinous crew on board and land on one of the Nicobar islands in 1688. From this island, he made a voyage to Sumatra in a canoe. His account[1] of the aborigines of Nicobars is quite free from fictitious elements which are generally abundant both in the preceding and the subsequent narrations about the islands. He has given a correct estimate of the character of the inhabitants describing them as honest, civil and harmless. He has also mentioned the presence of two Christian missionaries at the island of Camrota for converting the islanders. After this period, the activities of the Christian missionaries in Nicobars increased considerably. In the eighteenth century, several unsuccessful attempts were made to christianize and colonise these islands. An attempt has been made to describe the activities of these missionaries in a subsequent chapter of this work.[2]

[1] Appendix A : Census Report, 1901, pp. 221—225.

[2] Chapter VIII of the book contains an account of the activities of the missionaries in Nicobars.

TWO

LIFE AND MANNERS OF THE ABORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF ANDAMANS

Ethnological Origin

(a) DESCENDANTS OF NEGRO SLAVES

THE aborigines of the Andaman islands may be described as a race by themselves. They present something of an enigma to the anthropologists. It is very difficult to determine the origin of this race which is found only in these islands and has no affinity with other races on the sub-continent of India. Several ideas have been put forward on the subject by the British administrators of Andamans and anthropologists who have made systematic study of these people in the last two centuries. One such idea, old and frequently repeated, even by Blair,[1] is that the Andamanese are descendants of the Negro slaves. These Negro slaves were carried by Portuguese in a ship which was cast away many centuries ago on the shores of the Andamans leaving the unfortunate Negros on these islands without any means to go anywhere else. This tradition does not carry us back to a very remote past as the Portuguese first arrived in the Indian Ocean in the first half of the fifteenth century. Apart from the inherent improbability of the above story, this theory can be rejected forthwith in view of the fact that all the accounts of the travellers who happened to visit these islands from second century onwards say that the Andaman

[1] Archibald Blair : He was deputed by the Governor General in Council to make a survey of Andamans in 1788. On his recommendations, a settlement was established in Andamans. He remained in-charge of the settlement in these islands till March, 1793. Port Blair, the greatest harbour of Andamans is named after him.

[2] N.A.I., Secret Deptt., O.C. No. 6—29, 30 December, 1789

islands were inhabited by aboriginals who were cannibals. The Malayas had known and made slaves of the Andamanese from times immemorial. Blair's theory is also untenable in the light of the anthropological examination of the race. The true physical characteristics of a Negro—thick lips, broad nose, frequent dolichocephaly, proportions of the body peculiar to them especially the development of throat, shoulders, arms, legs etc., are not found in the Andamanese ; nor can the comparatively short period of life in the Andamanese conditions account for the fundamental differences found between them.[1] The Andamanese also differ fundamentally, spiritually as well as materially from every people to be found in Africa. This theory of origin from ship-wrecked Negro slaves is also proved false after a glance at the Kitchen-middens[2] found all over these islands. Many of these Kitchen-middens are of such dimensions and stratifications as to show that they date back to millenniums.[3]

(b) ANDAMANESE BELONG TO THE NEGRITO STOCK

The theory generally accepted by modern anthropologists is that the Andamanese belong to the Negrito stock. It is believed by some geologists that at some remote period the Andaman islands were joined with Cape Negrais in Burma and were thus part of the mainland of Asia. A Negrito race, then, existed over an enormous extent of the South Eastern portion of the Asian continent and its outlying islands. The

[1] 'On the Origin of the Andamanese'—Dr. Lidio Cipriani ; Appendix F, to Census Report, 1951, P. LXVI—LXXI. Dr. Cipriani, formerly Professor of Anthropology in the University of Florence, visited Andamans in 1953 for anthropological studies of the Andamanese.

[2] Kitchen-Middens : The Andamanese are a nomadic race. A small group of thirty to forty persons, in its wanderings, is in the habit of reaching a place at a particular part of a year and stay there for some time in encampments. They frequent the same spot for forty to fifty days in a year. Empty shells, refuse of food and other waste materials are thrown at a fixed place with the result that huge accumulations of rubbish have been formed. According to Cipriani, many of these middens required a long period for their formation.

[3] 'On the Origin of the Andamanese'—Dr. Lidio Cipriani ; Appendix F, to Census Report, 1951, P. LXVI—LXXI.

Semangs[1] of the Malay peninsula and the Aetas[2] of the Phillippines still represent the relics of the Negrito race. These two tribes, about whom it can be said with certainty that they belong to the Negrito race, resemble the Andamanese in physical and cultural characteristics. The stature, pigment, colour and growth of hair, as well as colour and shape of eyes are of similar types among the Semangs and the Onge-Jarawas, a tribal group[3] of the Andamanese.[4] A comparison of photographs of the Semangs with the photographs of Onges exhibit a similarity of general physical features, stature, physiognomy, and expression. This comparison proves that both the groups are closely related and undoubtedly indentical in origin.[5] Amongst cultural similarities the most important is that of habitations. In all its detail the Andamanese communal hut shows only extensions and improvements on the original Negrito shelter.[6] Like the Andamanese the Semangs lead a typical nomadic life—ever in search of food and game. Hunting animals, catching fish, collecting roots, fruits and honey in the forests are for the Semangs and the Aetas, as well as the Andamanese the only way of getting food. All these three tribes do not possess shields for defensive purposes, traps for animals, poison for arrows, fishing hooks or other stone implements.[7] Their weapons are similar—harpoon arrows used by all of them do not seem to be used in other regions of Asia. The shape of the bow still obtainable in Little Andaman and Great Andaman islands is common to all bows of the three widely separated groups although it has undergone a considerable evolution in other parts of the islands.[8] Like the Semangs, the Jarawa tribe of Andamans, has completely forgotten the art of hallowing canoes known to their forefathers.

[1] Semangs : An aboriginal tribe found in the interior of the forests of Malay Peninsula.

[2] Aetas : An aboriginal tribe still found in the interior of Philippines.

[3] Onge-Jarawa group : Infra p. 20 of this chapter.

[4] Census Report, 1901, Appendix A, P. 67.

[5] Ibid, 1931, p. 20.

[6] Ibid, 1901, p. LXVI-LXXI.

[7] 'On the Origin of the Andamanese'—Dr. Lidio Cipriani, Appendix F to Census Report, 1951, p. LXVI-LXXI.

[8] Ibid.

The archaelogical excavations carried out in Andamans during 1952 and 1953 reveal that the Andamanese did not use pottery in the earliest times. Pottery was also unknown to the original Negrito, who only used wooden pots and basketry[1]. Iron is a recent acquisition for all Negritos and hence the Andamanese are unable to work it, they simply rub it in a cold condition against stones to obtain the shape they wish. The Semangs like the Andamanese of the Northern islands bury their dead. Both races place food on the grave to give nourishment to the spirit, to make violent demonstrations to frighten away the evil spirit of the dead. Like the Andamanese, the Semangs immediately after a death, desert the spot but return after a fixed period of mourning to celebrate a feast for the dead person.[2] The Semangs and the Andamanese also possess certain similarities in their types of beliefs. In 'kaeri' the 'Thunder God' and 'Ta Pedu' the Creator of the Semangs we have the Pulga or the Omniscient Creator of the Andamanese who unites both functions in one person.[3] Like the Semangs and Aetas, the Onges of the island of Little Andaman do not practice tatooing but paint themselves with clay.

Time of separation from main Negrito stock

All these affinities described above are definitely not chance similarities among these three tribes. The resemblances certainly arose because there was contact between these peoples in ages long ago. Although the date of separation of the Andamanese from their parent Negrito stock cannot be exactly determined, it can be said that this event happen before the extermination of the Negrito race by higher types took place in Asia. Since then and till the end of eighteenth century the Andamanese have remained in a state of geographical isolation which was rendered more complete by the solitary nature of

[1] 'On the Origin of the Andamanese'—Dr. Lidio Cipriani, Appendix F to Census Report, 1951, p. LXVI-LXXI.

[2] Census Report, 1931, p. 20.

[3] Ibid, p. 21.

[4] 'On the Origin of the Andamanese'—Dr. Lidio Cipriani, Appendix F to Census Report, 1951, p. LXVI-LXXI.

the race. They have remained, possibly, for many thousand of years in their primitive condition preserving the habits and customs, as well as the physical characteristics of their original stock. This is amply proved by a scientific study of the kitchen-middens existing at various places in the islands. On the basis of the habit of the Andamanese in staying at a place for a particular part of year for forty to fifty days in groups of thirty to forty persons we can presume that many of these Andamanese accumulations, often huge, required a long period for their formation—a period to be calculated in thousand of years, perhaps five or six thousand years. Fossilised shells found in the lower strata of kitchen-middens also lend support to this theory. The tradition of a great cataclysm among Andamanese in which it is stated that a greater part of the land was submerged in ancient times also takes us to a pre-historic period. Even in the absence of great land mammals in the Andamans, the Andamanese in their traditions have names for certain big animals which they cannot describe. Although much reliance cannot be placed on such types of legends, they certainly indicate that the Andamanese lived in these regions when they were connected with the mainland.[1] To determine the antiquity of the Andamanese race on these islands since their separation from their main stock on account of segregation of these islands from the mainland, a sequence of excavations, geological and zoological researches and a detailed study of kitchen-middens is absolutely necessary.[2]

(c) Andamanese are Kirats

There is yet another theory which can be commended to the professional anthropologists who generally accept that the Andamanese belong to the Negrito stock. According to

[1] Portman, Vol. I, p. 16.

[2] 'On the Origin of the Andamanese'—Dr. Lidio Cipriani. Appendix F to Census Report, 1951, p. LXVI—LXXI.

S. K. Gupta[1], the Andamanese are Kirats[2]. The Kirats are described in the Ramayana as

'AMAMINACANASHTATRA KIRATAH DWIPABASINAH'

'अमामीनास्तत्र किराताः द्वीपवासिनः'

(There you will find a land in which dwells Kiratas who live on raw meat and fish)[3]. The passage of thousand of years does not seem to have changed the diet of the Andamanese in the slightest degree as they still eat raw meat and fish. Most of the names of the Andamanese tribes seem to have phonetical similarities to Kirats[4]. The word 'Boan' spoken by Onge tribe of Andamanese has phonetic similarity with the Santhal word 'Bonga'. Both these words signify 'God' or 'Supreme Being'. As Santhal is also a Kirat, it can be argued that the above similarity points to an ethnic affinity between the two tribes. As regards the separation of the Andamanese race from the original stock of Kirats, Gupta points out that some tribes of Kirats appear to have drifted away to these islands in their frail crafts and the cataclysm prevented them from returning to the mainland. The validity of this theory does not appear to be convincing in view of the strong proofs and arguments in support of the theory of the Negrito stock. However further light on the subject will be thrown by the researches which are still being conducted in these islands by the Anthropological Department of the Government of India.

Tribal Divisions and Groups

The aboriginal population of the Andamans is divided into twelve tribes. These tribes are sub-divided into three groups on the basis of differences in language, customs and weapons

[1] S.K. Gupta was Dy. Commissioner of Andamans & Nicobars and Ex-Officio Supdt. of Census Operations in 1951.

[2] Kirat : In the epic of Ramayana, Kirats have been described as shiny black people with a copper coloured head of hair bulging eyes and strong teeth. Santhals, an aboriginal tribe of India are Kirats. They live in dense forests near Ranchi and Tata Nagar in Bihar.

[3] Census Report, 1951, Appendix A. p. XLVI.

[4] Aka-Kora (da), Aka-Kea (da) and Aka-Kol (da) tribes of Andamanese have phonetical similarities to Kirats.

used by them[1] The classification and names of the tribes are as under :—

Yerewa group	Bojigngiji group	Onge-Jarawa or other group
Aka-Chariar (da)	Aka-Juwai (da)	
Aka-Kora (da)	Aka-Kol (da)	Onge
Aka-Toba (da)	Aka-Bojigyab (da)	
Aka-Yere (da)	Aka-Balawa (da)	Jarawa
Aka-Kede (da)	Aka-Bea (da)	

Tribal Sub-divisions

Some of the tribes are further sub-divided into septs,[2] each sept having a separate chief, but all speaking the same language. Before the establishment of a settlement of convicts at Port Blair in 1858[3] these tribes always restricted themselves to a certain more or less well defined area. A distribution map showing the tribal territories is appended to explain the areas which a particular tribe inhabited from remote times. Although the Andamanese like to cling feebly to their respective areas a grad-

[1] The above classification is based on the researches of E.H. Man who was an officer in Andamans for a number of years and was the first to make a systematic study of the Andamanese. The classification given by Portman in his book at page 21 to 26 into 12 tribes omits Kora and Toba tribes while Jarawas are divided into 3 tribes inhabiting South Andaman, Rutland and North Sentinel islands. In the Census Report of 1921 at p. 11 the Yerewa and Bojigngiji groups have been classified as Northern section group while Onges and Jarawas have been shown as Southern section group.

[2] Sept is a kind of sub-division of a tribe. The members of a sept intermarry with members of another sept of the same tribe. Portman has tried to classify septs of some of the tribes but his classification is incomplete in absence of authentic information about the people of the Andamans at that time. Before this information could be gathered some of the septs had died out while the remaining individuals of Yerewa and Bojigngiji groups had begun to intermarry irrespective of tribes and septs.

[3] Infra, Chapter III.

ual modification of the boundaries started in 1858 as a result of the appropriation of a large part of South Andamans by the settlement authorities and the virtual disappearance of certain tribes[1]. On the establishment of a settlement in their territory, the Jarawas were gradually displaced from the vicinity of Port Blair and shifted to a position to the north west on the borders of the settlement. Rutland island which had been the home of a section of Jarawas was occupied few decades back by the Onges from the North of the Little Andaman. The dwindling numbers of the majority of the tribes of Yerewa and Bojigngiji groups have forced them to intermarry with the result that it is now no longer true to talk about separate tribal areas in this connection.

The Andamanese are further divided into "Ar-Yauto" or "Coast-dwellers" and "Eremtaga" or "Jungle-dwellers[2]. The habits and capabilities of these two differ owing to their surroundings irrespective of tribe. The Aryautos reside chiefly on the coast and obtain their food from the sea. They are expert in swimming and diving, fish shooting etc. They possess a better knowledge of fishes and marine life. The Eremtagas are more expert at tracking through the jungle and pig hunting. They possess a better knowledge of the fauna and flora of the islands. Some tribes *viz*. Aka-Toba, Aka-Juwai, Aka-Kol and the Jarawas of the South Andamans are entirely Eremtaga while the Aka-Balawa, the Aka-Chariar, and the Jarawas of the North Sentinel are entirely Aryauto. The Aryautos and Eretagas inter-marry. A third division of the Andamanese according to their habits is made by the Andamanese themselves into 'Adajig' or 'Creek-dwellers' who live on the shores of many inlets of the sea on the coast of these islands.[3] The habits of Adajig are practically the same as those of Aryautos.

Inter-relations among tribes

As stated before, these twelve tribes adhered to their own recognised territorial limits before the establishment of a penal

[1] Census Report, 1911, p. 76.
[2] Portman, Vol. I, p. 25.
[3] Census Report, 1901, p. 51.

settlement in Andamans by the British in 1858. They practically had little or no communications with each other. The internal relations of the race can be described as under[1] :

Most friendly within their families.

Friendly within their septs.

Fairly friendly within their tribes.

On terms of courtesy with the members of other tribes of the same group, if known.

Hostile to the tribes within their own group whom they do not know, to all other Andamanese, and all strangers.

The sympathy and antipathies exhibited by the Andamanese are strictly primitive and are governed by heredity. Even two septs of the same tribe fought with each other on occasions. Similarly Aryuoto and Eremetaga of one tribe did not mix much in olden times. These inter-tribal relations have now undergone considerable modification through the influence of the 'Andaman Homes' established by the British Government[2] where members of the different groups met on common ground. Relations are now so cordial among the dwindling tribes of Yerewa and Bojigngiji groups that tribal barriers are in a sense disappearing among them. Though the tribe to which an individual belonged is never in doubt, intermarriages are common. The offsprings from these marriages belong to the fathers' tribe.

Physical and mental characteristics

The Andamanese possess the typical physical characteristics of the Negrito race. The average height of an Andamanese adult male is 4 feet 10½ inches while that of an adult female is 4 feet 6 inches. Their mouths are large and highly arched with lips well formed. Their hands and feet though well made are small. Eyes are generally dark but prominent with slightly elevated outer angles and become dull with age. Teeth, except among the Onges are white, good and free from disease. The teeth of the Onges are irregular and diseased. The skin of the

[1] Portman, Vol. I, p. 26-27.

[2] For full details of 'Andaman Homes,' please see Chapter IV.

Andamanese is smooth, greasy and varies in colour from intense black to a reddish brown on the collar bones, cheeks and other prominences of the body. The Andamanese of the Bojigngiji group are the darkest in colour. Jarawas are distinctly fairer than the rest. The faces of the Onges are partly reddish brown. The colour of the hair of the Andamanese varies from black to dark, light brown, yellowish, brown and red but the general appearance is sooty black or yellowish brown. Except on the head, hair is scanty on the body. The figures of men are muscular and well formed. Their looks are hampered by the habit of smearing themselves with red and white pigments. Females are not so pleasing in appearance. They possess an early tendency to stoutness and are ungraceful in figure. An Andamanese attains full growth at 18, begins to age at 40 and lives upto 60 or 65 if he reaches old age.[1]

An Andamanese possesses bright intelligence in childhood which he maintains in his youth. His capacity for grasping matters entirely foreign to his natural state is considerable but this intelligence becomes less after they pass the age of forty. They then become more savage and quarrelsome in disposition. The Andamanese are gentle and pleasant to each other but there being no fear of legal punishment or other restraint on their passions, they are easily roused to anger[2]. They are cruel, jealous, treacherous and vindictive at times. They have short memories for either good or evil. They are short tempered and have little or no idea of gratitude. They are bright merry companions, talktative, inquisitive and restless. They are keen sportmen, busy in their own pursuits and absorbed in the chase for the sheer love of it. Although the Andamanese are intelligent, they soon become mentally tired and are apt to break down physically under mental training.

[1] Census Report, 1901, p. 54-59.
Sir Richard Temple has described the above physical characteristics of the Andamanese on the basis of fifteen unpublished volumes containing the results of researches of Portman and Molesworth.

[2] There is no machinery to settle the disputes. The Elders of the tribe have little authority, and hence an Andamanese feels offended at a slight pretext. For details of internal government and justice, please see p. 26-27 of this Chapter.

Their senses of smell and hearing are very keen, much keener than that of the civilised races. They can smell fire or hear the sound of dancing from a great distance. In matters of jungle craft, their hearing is abnormally sharp.

The intelligence of women is good, though not as a rule equal to that of men. In old age they exhibit considerable mental capacities. Women live on an average to a greater age than men, and when aged, keep excellent health and the full use of their faculties. Like men they do not become peevish and quarrelsome in old age but retain the bright and merry nature of their youth.

An Andamanese can normally remain twentyfour hours without sleep, though they have known to go without sleep for four consecutive days and nights on the occasion of big dances. They can also endure thirst hunger, fatigue and bodily discomfort when they are busy in hunting and merry-making. They dislike and fear cold but not heat. They, however, avoid exposure to Sun. By habit, they go stark naked and with head uncovered except that the women wear as covering one or more leaves in front and a branch of leaves tied round the waist behind or a tassel of leaves all round. The Jarawas of both sexes remain entirely naked. The wearing of cloth had an adverse effect on the health of Andamanese when contacts were established with them by the British after the establishment of a penal settlement at Port Blair in 1858.[1]

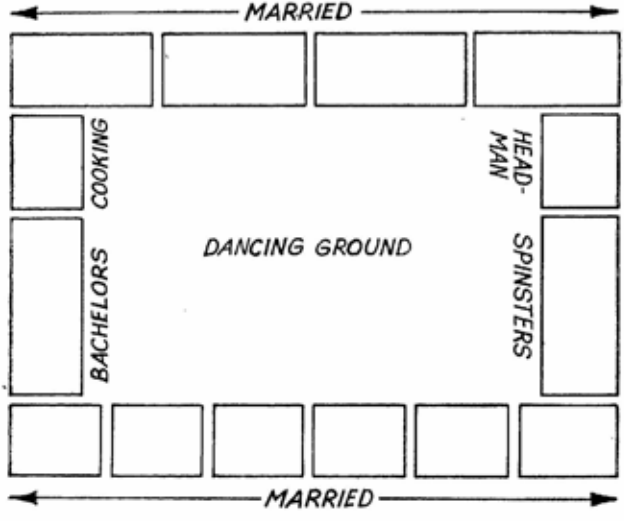
They are good climbers, rapid walkers and runners moving with a free and independent gait and can travel considerable distances. The Eremtagas have proved to be good trackers. The Andamanese as a race are unadventurous seamen. They never go out of sight of land. They had never visited the Cocos, Narcondam and Barren Islands[2]. They had no knowledge of the existence of the Nicobars before the arrival of the British.

[1] Infra, Chapter IV.

[2] Coco Islands : Situated at the north of Andaman islands at a distance of 30 miles. For location of Narcondam and Barren islands, infra p. 1, Chapter I.

Nomadic Character

The race except the Onges and Jarawas is nomadic, having generally speaking no fixed dwellings. The Onges of the Little Andaman have semi-permanent villages. The Jarawas have communal huts of a more or less permanent nature for the accommodation of the whole sept, but these are only occupied at certain seasons of the year. It may therefore be said that the majority of the race is nomadic for the greater part of the year. Each tribe or sept is broken up in small parties or camps which roam about from place to place within their territories. These parties erect rude huts or shelters for their accommodation at places where they make their temporary encampment. At these encampments, usually fixed in sheltered spots, they erect about fourteen temporary huts capable of holding from fifty to eighty persons. The plan of the huts is usually as below :—



A hut in the encampment is merely a thatch about 4 feet long and 3 feet wide, sloping upwards from a height of 8 inches

at the back to 4½ feet in front placed on four upright and some cross pieces without walls. These temporary encampments are abandoned when the food supply in the neighbourhood is exhausted or the sanitary condition of the camp renders a move imperative. They throw the refuge of their foods and other waste materials on a fixed spot thus forming a kitch-midden.

Among the Onges each sept occupies a large circular communal hut which is generally built on the sea shore, but it is not unusual for all its occupants to take to the jungle when the coast is exposed to the full force of the monsoon or when the season for collecting fruit and honey is in full swing. These huts are ingeniously made with a frame of circular cane work rising to point. Over this frame, thatching is neatly bound. Around the hut are a series of small raised cane platform used for sleeping purposes. Trophies of the chase by way of ornament are suspended from the roof of the hut. Buckets made of logs and sometimes of giant bamboo are found suspended in the huts along with nets and baskets. Although much is not known about the Jarawas, it is certain that they also construct communal huts similar to Onges which have a capacity of accommodating eighty to a hundred persons. These huts are better built and are of a more permanent nature.[1]

Occupation

The Andamanese are collectors of food and have no occupation except those connected with the procuring and preparation of food which is available to them in plenty from nature. Their food consists of fish, pork, turtle, wild cat (Paradoxurus), shell fish, turtle eggs, certain types of larvae, and a great variety of fruit, seeds, root and honey. The sea and the forests provide them with even more than what they regard as necessaries of life. Due to availibility of food required by them in an easy manner it was found extremely difficult to induce those Andamanese living at the Andaman Homes to learn cultivation of which they are quite ignorant.[2] The Andamanese never starve though they are habitually heavy

[1] Census Report, 1911, p. 88.

[2] Administration Report, 1878, p. 37.

eaters. Food is always cooked and usually eaten very hot. The Andamanese are expert cooks and adept at preparing delicacies from parts of animals and fishes. It is the duty of the bachelors and spinisters to go in for search of food.

Internal Government

The Andamanese possess no idea of Government. In each tribe and sept there is a recognised head, who attains this position by willing consent of others on account of some admitted superiority—mental or physical. He grows to this position gradually and there is no election or formality for this purpose. He commands a limited respect and such obedience as the self-interest of the other individual members of the sept or tribe dictates. He has certain privileges in the shape of tribal influence and immunity from drudgery. His wife also commands the same position among women and at her death if she is a mother and not of young age, retains her privileges. Each sept possesses a stretch of territory or hunting ground with definite recognised boundaries. Any intrusion to this hunting ground is regarded as a sufficient occasion for the outbreak of inter-sept warfare, even if the different septs are related by marriage. The isolation of the Andamanese into their various communities is due to this 'constitutional peculiarities of jealousy'[1]. Apart from trespassing the recognised territories by a member of another sept, the Andamanese among their particular sept recognise murder, theft, adultery, destruction of property, and assault as the principal crimes. In such cases the aggrieved party takes the revenge by either wounding, murdering or destroying the property of the offender without more active interference on the part of others than is consistent with their own safety. These actions are taken without any fear of consequences except vengeance of the friends of the other side, and even this is usually avoided by disappearance till the short memory of the people has obliterated wrath. Thus every man is a law unto himself although the elders of the tribe have a certain authority[2].

[1] Portman, Vol. I, p. 40.
[2] Ibid.

The land and property are communal. The ideas as to individual possession are only rudementary. Andamanese will often readily part with ornaments or any such thing to any one who asks for them. Therefore, taking another's property without leave is permitted. There is only an incipient taboo about the property belonging to the chief of a tribe.

Man has aptly described the above internal system of government as 'Communism modified by authority'; a feature common to most primitive tribes. The authority of the chief and elders is due to their capacities and age. It is, however, nominal and is only obeyed when it is manifestly in the interest of the individual to do so.

Beliefs and Practices

The religion of the Andamanese is a subject of considerable interest and one which still occupies the attention of the ethnologists. Their religion may be described as simple animism. There is an anthropomorphic deity, 'Pulga' who does not dwell on the sky but lives on the top of the Saddle Peak, the highest mountains in the Andamans.[1] Directly or indirectly this deity is the cause of the existence of everybody and everything. 'Pulga can be identified with some definiteness to the storm (Wuluga).[2] As 'Pulga' has so many attributes, we may call him as a 'God'.[3] He has a wife, one son and many daughters. He transmits his orders through his son to his daughters who are his messengers. He has no authority over the evil spirits and contents himself by pointing out to the Andamanese the particulars of offenders against himself. He punishes, causes storms, and in fact corresponds in many ways with the child's idea of a deity[4]. He is not propitiated in any manner and there is no idea of sacrifice, prayer of worship. There is no love for the Deity but the Andamanese only fear him. In order to escape the consequences of his wrath, the Andamanese refrain from doing acts which they know would displease him.

[1] Saddle Peak : It is situated in the Rutland Island at a height of 2,400 feet.

[2] 'Wuluga' means Storm in the language of Andamanese.

[3] Census Report, 1901. p. 62.

[4] Portman, Vol. I, p. 44.

In addition to 'Pulga' there are the evil spirits of the wood and the sea. The spirit of the forest is called 'Erem-Changa' and that of the sea as 'Jurwin' Like 'Pulga' both have wives and families. The minor evil spirits are 'Nila' and a numerous class, the 'Chol', who are practically spirits of diseases. The Andamanese believe in the continued existence in spirit form of the dead relatives. Their beliefs prompt them to do or abstain from doing certain acts which they conceive to be annoying and displeasing to these spirits.

The Andamanese idea of the 'souls' arises out of his reflection in water and not out of his shadow which follows him. His reflection is his spirit which goes after death to another jungle world, 'Chaitan', under the earth. 'Chaitan' is considered to be flat and supported by an immense palm tree. There is an aerial bridge between this earth and the 'Chaitan' which serves as a way. The soul of the man rests in this jungle world under the earth. It is believed that every child had a prior existence. The theory of metempsychosis also appears in many other superstitions, namely in naming a second child after a previous dead one because it is believed that the spirit of the former babe have been transferred to the present one. The Andamanese have no idea of a Heaven or a Hell, or of any other such places meant for reward or punishment after death.

The superstitions and mythology of the Andamanese are the direct outcome of their beliefs in relation to the spirit. They always carry fire with them to frighten 'Erem-Changa'. Although they do not worship the Sun and the Moon, they believe that the Sun is the wife of the Moon and stars are their children. Hence they avoid offending the Sun and the Moon by remaining silent at their rise. 'Pulga' shows himself in storm and so they appease him by throwing dried leaves on the fire. They also try to deter him by burning beeswax because he does not like the smell of it. Earthquakes are considered as a play of the ancestors. There are a few lucky and unlucky actions. The Andamanese have much faith in

[1] Census Report, 1901, p. 63.

dreams which sometimes control their subsequent conduct. Dreamers of prophetic dreams are supposed to be gifted with second sight and power to communicate with spirits. Such 'wise men' can bring good and bad fortune by practising magic and witchcraft. The Andamanese also believe in omens and charms. Animals and birds are credited with human capacities. Many strangers murdered by Jarawas have been found with heavy stones placed on them. Stones have been found placed along the pathways where they were murdered. This was done to give a warning to the birds not to tell others that a man had been murdered and that the murdered had passed along the path.[1]

There is a variety and abundance of legends and mythological stories differing among the different tribes but the great bulk of the Andamanese mythology turns on 'Pulga' and his doings with 'Tomo'. 'Tomo' is considered to be the first ancestor. 'Pulga' brought fire for him and his wife. He taught them all the arts and created everything for them[2]. Everything natural which appears new to them is attributed to 'Pulga.' The Andamanese after visiting the volcanoes on the Barren Island for the first time at once christened it as 'Molatarchoria' (smoke Island) and said that the fire was located by 'Pulga'.[3]

The next most important element in the mythology of the Andamans is the story of the cataclysm which was caused by 'Pulga.' It engulfed the whole islands, destroyed the fire and separated the population from the main stock. Fire was afterwards stolen by 'Luratut' the king of Fishes and restored to the people. Since then fire had never been allowed to become extinct. It is also believed that the population previous to the cataclysm became the 'Changa' *viz*. ghostly ancestors.

Many other legends relate in a fanciful way the origin of their customs of tattooing, dancing, harmful spirits, articles of food and other subjects. An important subject for ethnological study is the existence of the ideas of metempsychosis and of

[1] Census Report, 1901, p. 63.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

metamorphosis.[1] According to the belief of the Andamanese the animals known to them are ancestors changed supernaturally into animals.

The Andamanese are, however, of too happy and careless a nature to be very much affected by their superstitions.[2] They only care to avoid such acts which according to their traditions may displease the 'Pulga' or the evil spirits.

Social ceremonies and customs

Among the Andamanese the social unit is the family. They move in family groups to places where game and fish are easiest to obtain. These family groups generally remain isolated in the territories of their particular sept. This isolation, however, did not result in much differences in their customs and manners. Only the Onges and Jarawas have somewhat different customs and habits. The basis of the family system among the Andamanese is the patiarchal system. The wife after marriage accompanies the husband who is generally the member of the same sept. She has to perform all the household duties which includes providing of shelter and a matting for lying upon, cooking the food, procuring water and shell fish, carrying loads when changing from place to place, shaving her husband and taking care of him while he is sick. The husband has to protect his wife, make canoes, build implements for hunting pigs or turtle, and occasionally catching fish by spearing them. He sometimes obtains food, in case it is not provided by the bachelors or spinsters.[3] In spite of the inferior status of the women in society, they have a great deal of influence and are under no restrictions.[4] The old women among the Andamanese are often very capable and are highly respected.

There are certain peculiarities about the names of the Andamanese. A name of every child, which sticks to him or her for life, is chosen by the mother from twenty conventional names without reference to sex, immediately on her pregnancy

[1] Census Report, 1901, p. 63.

[2] Portman, Vol. I, p. 64.

[3] Day F, 'Observation on Andamanese', Journal of Asiatic Society, Bengal, 1870, p. 153-157.

[4] Portman, Vol. I, p. 34.

becoming evident to her. This 'womb name' is called the "Teng-l'ar-ula" or proper name.[1] When the child is born "Ota" (which means testicles) is added for a male child and 'Kata' (female organ of generation) for a female. These two words are only used during babyhood as a rule. A nickname, varying occasionally as life proceeds, is added from personal peculiarities and sometimes flattery or reverence.[2] Only one nickname is used at a time. Girls are also given 'flower names' after one of the sixteen selected trees which happen to be in flower at the time they reach puberty.[3] This name which is used before the Teng-l'ar-Ula is not discarded until she becomes a mother or is elderly. The Andamanese people are now ignorant of the origin of the flower names or the reason for the selection of the name of particular trees for naming the girls.

Honorifics 'maia' and 'mam' are prefixed out of respect to the names of elder males and 'Charia' to all names of married women. Girls are addressed by flower names and elders by honorifics. Names are not much used in addressing each other except for naming the absent person or in calling them. Initiatory ceremonies are held when a man or woman reaches the age of puberty and considered fit for marriage. On reaching puberty or the age of twelve to sixteen years, abstinence from six kinds of food, each in turn is voluntarily commenced and continued for some years[4]. At the end of each abstinence, there are a few ceremonies and dances. At the end of the last of these fasts, the man or woman is considered to be grown up. Portman tracing the origin of this custom of limited voluntary taboo observes that, 'It is probable that puberty was originally the cause of these, and the wish on the part of the aspirant to show that he was capable of maintaining a family'.[5] After this initiation, a honorific name is applied to an individual. There is nothing religious about these ceremonies of initiation. A curious custom associated with these ceremonies is that in after life,

[1] Portman, Vol. I p. 36.

[2] Consus Report, 1901, p. 64.

[3] Ibid, p. 64 and Portman, Vol. I, p. 37. Portman has given the list of the trees along with the name of the month in which they blossom.

[4] Census Report, 1901, p. 64.

[5] Portman, Vol. I, p. 42.

men who have gone through the initiatory ceremonies together will not fight or quarrel, nor call each other by name. They will show great friendship but would try to avoid each other with a mutual shyness.

Among the Andamanese the relations between the sexes are unrestricted before the marriage. As a rule among the tribes of Great Andaman marriages are contracted at the age of twenty-five by men[1]. But among the Onges they marry while very young, the girls being ten or eleven years and not even developed.[2] The Onges children seem to know all about sex matters due to their living in communal huts as well as to the actions exhibited in their dances.

As a race the Andamanese by choice are monogamous. They are exogamous as regards septs and endogamous as regards tribe or more strictly groups.[3] In recent times there has been a change in these practices. The tribes of the Yerawa and Bojigngiji groups now inter-marry freely. Seventeen such inter-marriages were witnessed by the Census party of 1911 during their tour.[4] Among the Onges, the marriage is usually exogamous as regards sept. The men select their partners from an area situated at a great distance from their territory.[5] Sometimes the wives go with the husbands to live with them and other times the husbands join the sept of their wives. One or two cases have been also noticed where men and women are of the same sept.

The marriage ceremony is very simple. It does not vary much among the different tribes and groups. As soon as it is known that a young couple is anxious to be married the elders take the bride to a newly made empty hut. The bridegroom on seeing the bride sitting in the hut runs away into the jungle but after some struggle and pretence of hesitation, he is brought in

[1] Census Report, 1911, p. 84.
[2] Ibid, 1931, p. 10.
[3] Ibid, 1901, p. 65.
[4] Ibid, 1911, p. 84.
[5] Ibid, 1911, p. 84.

the hut by force and made to sit on the bride's lap.[1] Among the Onges there is no such elaborate ceremony. An elder of the sept takes the wrist of his daughter and places it in the hands of the young man of the visiting sept. The girl then becomes his wife. The bridegroom is free to take her provided the girl does not release herself and runs away in the interior of the forest before he reaches a canoe: If the girl succeeds in releasing herself from the grasp of the bridegroom, she is free to go back to her family, much to the annoyance of the would-be husband.[2]

Among the Andamanese divorce was very rare and quite unknown after the birth of a child.[3] But since the beginning of the twentieth century when a number of marriages were infructuous, divorces and remarriages became more common than was formerly the case.[4] Several instances of general laxity in the marital relations of the Andamanese have been noticed in the last three decades. In one instance the Yere wife of a Bojigyab had been married several times and had no children by any one of the husbands.[5] Among the Onges, deserting of a wife is considered a breach of tribal morality. An Onge who had deserted his wife was scolded by an old woman of the sept when the man returned to his sept to live with his former wife.[6]

Sexual relations among the Andamanese are not satisfactory from the point of view of the civilised people. The Andamanese children specially the Onges seem to know all about sex matters. Some conventional precautions are taken by them to prevent the free intercourse between the sexes but generally it cannot be stopped. Even after marriage, if a woman loves

[1] The above marriage ceremony has been described by Portman in his book at p. 42. Homfray and Dey have narrated the ceremony in a different manner. According to them 'with the consent of the guardian of the girl, who is generally the chief of the tribe, a marriage is arranged. At their first meeting the bride and the bridegroom stare at each other. In the evening the chief takes the pair to the jungle where they spend their honeymoon.' (See Portman, Vol. II p. 545-46 for Homfray's account and for an article of Dey, see journal of Asiatic Society, Bengal, 1870, p. 153-157).

[2] Census Report, 1931, p. 18.

[3] Ibid, 1901, p. 65.

[4] Ibid, 1911, p. 85.

[5] Ibid, 1911, p. 85.

[6] Ibid, 1931, p. 18.

another man and her husband raises an objection it is the lover who takes offence. In one such incident which occurred in May 1892, a lover, when caught by husband of his beloved, wounded the husband in an attempt to murder him.[1] However, such cases seem to be very rare.

Polyandry, polygamy, bigamy and incest are unknown among the Andamanese. The widows generally remarry among the Andamanese except among the Onge group where a widow has no place in society. They even murder widows by drowning.[2]

Funeral Customs

Death occasions loud lamentation from all concerned with the deceased. Babies are buried under the floor of their parents' hut. Adults are either buried in a shallow grave or, which is considered more honourable, are tied up in a bundle and placed on a platform up in a tree.[3] Wreaths of cane leaves are then fastened conspicuously round the encampment to mark the vicinity of a corpse. The place where such canoe-burials are done is usually deserted for about three months. Mourning is observed by smearing the head with grey clay and refraining from dancing for the above period. At the end of this period the relations and the friends of the deceased, disinter, or take down the bones of the dead person and make them into ornaments, to which great importance is attached, as relics of the deceased. It is believed that those ornaments stop pain and cure di eases by simple application to the diseased part.[4] It seems that preservation of the bone of the dead, which is the only part of the human body with comparative permanence, also gives them psychological satisfaction of close material proximity with the beloved dead.[5] The skull is worn down the back by tying it round the neck, by the widow, widower, or nearest relatives of the deceased.[5a] The Onges, Jarawas, and

[1] Portman, Vol. II, p. 684.
[2] Census Report, 1951, Appendix A, p. XLIX.
[3] Ibid, 1901, p. 65.
[4] Ibid, and Portman, Vol. I, p. 43.
[5] Ibid. 1951, Appendix A, p. XLIX.
[5a] Ibid, 1901, p. 66.

Sentinelese have never been found to carry the complete skulls of their relations with them. They only carry part of the jaw-bone and other small bones[1]. The mourning closes with a ceremonial dance and the removal of clay. The ceremonies connected with the disposal of the dead are conventional, reverential and elaborate in details.

Social Emotions

The Andamanese have no words for ordinary salutation, greeting or expressing thanks.[2] On meeting they stare at each other for a long period. This period of silence is broken by the younger person with commonplace remarks. It is followed by an eager telling of news which an Andamanese delights in hearing. Relatives, however, sit on each other's laps closely huddled together weeping loudly and demonstratively when they meet after a long separation.[3] This process lasts for hours. The Onges are less demonstrative. Among them at the time of meeting of the members of a sept with their friends, the visitors sit on their laps and embrace each other for several minutes without saying a word. The visitors then pass on from one person to the next until all have been embraced, both men and women.[4] At the parting, the Andamanese take each other by hand and blow on it exchanging sentences of conventional farewell. At other times the Andamanese do not generally express social emotions and are undemonstrative.

Dress and Ornaments

Andamanese men, but for certain waistbelts, necklaces etc. which may be considered ornamental, go entirely naked. The women of the South Andamanese group of tribes wear a bunch of five or six leaves over their private parts. The women of the North Andaman Group of tribes wear a sort of loose tassel of narrow strips of bark.[5] The Onges possess no broad tasselled

[1] Census Report, 1931, p. 9.
[2] Ibid, 1901, p. 60
[3] Ibid, 1901. p. 60.
[4] Ibid, 1931, p. 10.
[5] Portman, Vol. I, p. 45.

belts which is common among the tribes of Great Andaman. Their women folk wear a tassel of yellow fibre in front in the place of the leaf worn by the women of the Great Andaman coastal tribes. The yellow dried skin of a dendrobium orchid is used by the Onges for decorative purposes while white clay is smeared by both sexes on their faces and body, sometimes in ornamental patterns.[1] The tribes of the Great Andaman cover themselves over with clay pigments which are of three principal kinds[2]:

(a) Plain grey clay, mixed with water, which is smeared in coarse patterns.

(b) White clay, which is delicately touched on in fine patterns.

(c) Red ochre mixed with turtle, pig, or almond oil, which is smeared over the body coarsely.

This covering of the body is a substitute for clothing. Bunches, stripes of fibres, fringes of shells, straw-coloured wreaths of hammered and roasted dendrobium bark, bones, skulls and jaw bones of deceased relatives are used as ornaments by the Andamanese. The only ornaments to dwellings and huts are the heads of turtles, pigs, iguanas, paradoxures killed in hunting which are hung up partly as trophies also.

Tattooes

Like all other primitive tribes the Andamanese also have systems of tattooing prevalent among them. The tribes of South Andaman group cut their bodies with small flakes of quartz or glass in patterns of zig-zags or straight lines running up and down the body or limb. Each cut is about a quarter of an inch in length and is merely superficial. To make a pattern of straight lines, a line of cuts is made, the incisions being end to end, and about an eight of an inch apart. Another line parallel to these and about an eighth of an inch is then cut. Twelve or fourteen such lines are required to make the pattern. In the zig-zag pattern only two lines are made, the cuts being incised at obtuse angles to each other, and thus forming like a 'dog-tooth'

[1] Census Report, 1931, p. 18.

[2] Portman, Vol. I, p. 45.

pattern. The making of the patterns depend upon the individual taste of the women cutting them. The face, ears, genitals, arm and knee pits are never cut. The first cutting is made from the navel to the pubis. The 'dog-tooth' patterns are often cut on either side of a line drawn from the sternal notch to the navel, thus rounding off the remainder of the tattooing, and imitating as it were the edges of an open waistcoat. Women are tattooed in the same way as men.[1]

The North Andaman group of tribes have a different system of tattooing. The cuts are made by the man with the head of a pigarrow and are severe and deep. They are made across the body or limb, and are not placed end to end but parallel to each other. They are about an inch in length and half an inch apart, and as a rule three lines of cuts are made one in the centre of the back from the nape of the neck to the buttocks, and one on the other side of this from each shoulder to half way down the buttocks. These lines are about three inches apart. Occasionally four or five lines of smaller cuts are made. Three to five similar lines of smaller cuts about two inches apart are made from collar bones to the pubes. Other smaller lines of cuts are made down, and sometimes circling round, the arms and legs, the cuts being on a slope like the series of slats of a half open blind.[2] The women of this group are, as a rule, only tattooed when they become elderly. No tattoo is observed by the Onge group of tribes.

Amusements

The great amusement of the Andamanese, indeed their chief diversion after the life of the chase, is the night dance. This takes place every evening when a few are gathered together. It generally continues for hours together. Occasionally they have special meetings of tribes of septs for dances which assume a ceremonial form and last for days continuously.[3] The aborigines of the coast of Great Andaman usually use bunches of leaves with which they strike the ground in their turtle dance,

[1] The above description of tattooing is given in Portman ; Vol. I, p. 35.
[2] Portman, Vol. I, p. 35-36.
[3] Ibid, p. 48.

hopping all the time on both feet in a bent down posture with the knee protruding.[1] The hopping of the feet is accompanied by the drumming of a special sounding board like a shield, and the clapping of hands and thighs in harmony. The observers sing a song which is more or less limited to four semitones and intermediate quarter-tones.[2] Both sexes take part in the dance.

The Onges also dance in the open. The men and women stand near each other and bend their knees forward lifting their heels at the same time. Like other Andamanese, they do not use the specially scooped out pieces of board, for beating when they assemble for dancing.[3] The Jarawas generally do not use this hollow wooden drum although a Jarawa women has been seen using a hollow tree to dance on.[4] They dance in their communal huts where they always keep a large number of bundles of small leaf branchlets for this purpose. All such dances of the various tribes of Andamanese have sexual inspiration.

The Andamanese appreciate rhythm but not a pitch or tune. They can only sing in unison which does not turn into a chorus. They can never sing in parts. The key in which a song is started is quite accidental. Every man who respects himself is a composer of songs and sings without action or gesticulation and always to the same rhythm.[5] The songs relate only to travel, sport and personal adventure and not to love, children and usual objects of poetry. The wording is enigmatic and excessively elliptic. The women have lullabies for their babies. Their music is vocal only.

Implements and Weapons

The only stone cutting implement known to them is the quartz flake. The quartz is chopped off and is never sharpened by rubbing it on another stone. It is held between the fingers

[1] Census Report, 1931, p. 9.
[2] Ibid, 1901, p. 64.
[3] Ibid, 1931, p. 9.
[4] Ibid, 1931, p. 9.
[5] Ibid, 1901, p. 64.

for shaving and tattooing.[1] Shell and fish bones are used for small blades, arrow points, scraping, and cutting. A cyrene valve is the ordinary knife and scraper. Stones found in the shape of anvils, hammers and ovens are used in their natural shape. During the last century, they learnt to use the ends of glass bottles and iron obtained from the wrecks of ships.[2] The implements of the Andamanese are on the whole very coarse and rough.

Like their implements, the utensils are also very primitive. The utensils are made from a special clay which is only found in certain parts of the island. They are moulded by hand, sun-dried and half baked in the fire and are not glazed.[3] A few wavy lines are attempted in the form of ornamentation. These cooking pots slightly differ in shape among the different groups of tribes. While some tribes have utensils of pointed bottoms, others have round bottoms on their pottery.

The weapons of the Andamanese are bow and arrow, harpoon, fish spear, and pig-spear. The bow of Jarawas, Onges and Sentinel islanders is a curved long bow while that of the remaining southern tribes is S shaped.[4] This bow is identical with the bows used by the Semangs.[5] The bow of the North Andamanese is also shaped S but is somewhat different from that of the southern Andamanese. It is invariably inverted when unstrung. The Jarawa bow though considerably longer, broader, and heavier is similar to the Onges, the only difference being that their bows have patterns marked on them, while the Onge bow has no special markings.[6] There are two kinds of arrows one very long with a straight head, pointed and barbed, for ordinary shooting; and a peculiar shorter arrow with a detachable head having a broad heavily barbed blade for pig shooting. The Onge group and occasionally the North Andaman group use arrows with two, three or four heads for shoot-

[1] Census Report, 1901, p. 66.
[2] Ibid, 1901, p. 66.
[3] Portman, Vol. I, p. 47.
[4] Census Report, 1931, p. 9.
[5] Ibid, p. 20.
[6] Ibid, 1931, p. 9.

ing fish and birds. The Andamanese are good shots at short distance. Harpoons with loose heads are used for catching and pulling up game in the jungles and marking turtle or large fish. The way in which they shoot fish darting about in the surf is really wonderful and defies imitation. They have no hooks or lines for catching fish but use a large net for driving turtle and catching them unwounded. Hand-nets are used for prawns and small fish. These nets are made of inner bark of creepers and are neatly twisted. The blades of fish spear and the pig spear are never poisoned. Sometimes the injuries from these spears become dangerously sceptic due to dirt.

Their household articles consist of rude earthen-ware cooking pots, small nets, baskets and water-vessels. The baskets of the Onge-Jarawa group have a pointed bottom and are coarsely woven while the rest of the Andamanese make a basket with a 'Kink' in the bottom. The finish of these woven basket is five. A basket found on the island of North Sentinel in 1927 was of very fine workmanship.[1] Water vessels which we may call as buckets are hollowed out of wood or cut from the joints of the bamboo.[2]

The Andamanese do not venture far from land and would certainly not go out of sight of land.[3] Therefore, their canoes are of most primitive form, being merely the trunk of a tree hollowed out. Portman has described two varieties of canoes used by the Andamanese. The oldest type of canoe has an outrigger. This type of canoe was used by the people of Great Andaman. The Onges who in former days had no prow in their canoes copied this method from aborigines of Great Andaman.[4] The canoe of the northern group is superior in technique and the finish from the rest. The Sentinelse have a different type of canoe altogether, which turns upwards and is cut off short at both ends. Their canoes are not good sea-boats and can only be used on the shallow reefs surrounding the island. The Jarawas have no canoes but build rafts for crossing

[1] Census Report, 1931, p. 9.
[2] Ibid, 1901, p. 66.
[3] Portman. Vol. I, p. 47.
[4] Ibid, Vol. I, p. 47.

the straits.[1] The Andamanese have two modes of propelling these canoes, one by paddling with small paddles resembling small wooden spades. This mode is used in the deep water. The other mode of rowing is by poling. It is used in shallow water. Owing to their lightness these canoes travel a short distance at a considerable speed. As the Andamanese have no idea of steering by compass or stars, and do not know the art of storing water for a long voyage ; they never attempt to go even as far as thirty miles.[2]

Languages

The Andamanese language is extremely interesting from the philological stand point on account of its isolated development. They have no written language or means of communication by signs. Each tribe has a dialect of its own. These dialects are mutually unintelligible to each other except where fusion of the dialects has occurred on conterminous borders. An examination of the languages of different tribes, however, reveals the fundamental identity and common origin of languages of Yerewa, Bojigngiji and Onge-Jarwa groups.[3] The different dialects have most of the roots in common, but with different intonations, prefixes and suffixes. The Andamanese languages are purely colloquial and capable of expressing only the simplest and most direct thoughts. Only those words which are absolutely necessary are usually employed and the speech is jerky, incomplete, elliptical and disjointed.[4] The narration is nevertheless clear, in proper consecutive order and not confused. Intense anthropomorphism exhibited in the language confirms that it is the language of undeveloped savages[5]. It may, however, be admitted that though the Andamanese languages are savage in nature, and limited in range to the requirement of a people

[1] Census Report, 1931, p. 9.

[2] Portman, Vol. 1, p. 4.

[3] Census Report, 1901, p. 116-17. (Sir Richard Temple in the Census Report of 1901 has made a detailed study of the languages of the Andamanese. This study is based on researches of Man, Portman, Colebrooke, Ellis and Sidney Ray).

[4] Ibid, 1901, p. 96.

[5] Ibid, 1901, p. 96.

capable of but few mental processes, they are far from being 'primitive'.[1] In the evolution of a system in order to intimately connect words together, to build up compounds, to indicate back references and in a limited exhibition of the ideas of concord by means of post-inflexion of pronouns, these languages indicate a development as complete and complicated as that of an advanced tongue.[2] The languages are agglutinative in form and follow the grammar of agglutinative languages. All the affixes to roots are readily separable. All analyses of words show a very simple mental mechanism and a low limit in range and richness of thought along with development of ideas.[3] As is common with every other language, foreign words have lately been fitted into the grammar with such changes of form as are necessary for absorption into the general structure of Andamanese speech.

State of Civilisation in Andamans

It is a strange phenomenon that the Andamans, situated as they are near India and other civilised countries of the East, have been able to maintain their pristine culture in its purest form. Although the Negrito race has exterminated elsewhere in south-east Asia, the Andamanese have preserved the Negrito culture of the past ages without any material change.[4] Their archaic cultural level gives us an organically complete, complex and typical sequence of manners,of immense, if not mysterious antiquity showing extremely clear Asiatic connections with peoples that are already a race by themselves.[5] They still represent truly one of the oldest race existing on the face of the earth of which they are the last pure remnant. If anyone wishes to make a study of the culture of the Negrito race during Stone Age, he should visit Andamans for this purpose. He can still see the Onges of Little Andaman doing turtle hunting with formidable harpoons in frail canoes swirling round and round

[1] Census Report, 1901, p. 96.
[2] Ibid, 1901, p. 96.
[3] Ibid, 1901, p. 96.
[4] Brown, A. H., Andaman Islanders, p. 492.
[5] 'On the Origin of Andamanese'—Dr. Lidio Cipriani, Appendix E, to Census Report, 1951, p. LXVI-LXXI.

and the huge turtle trying to make its escape. It will be a pleasant sight for him to see the Andamanese climbing up tall coconut palms without any aid. Their primitive huts can be seen in many parts of the interior of the islands. They still use the dancing board while dancing in their ancient fashion.

But such sights are very rare now. With continued contact of the Andamanese with the foreigners during the last two centuries the character of their pristine culture has changed. This contact with civilisation has resulted in the physical and spiritual ruin of the Andamanese race. This ruin is so complete that the elimination of Andamanese tribes except the Onges and Jarawas is almost certain. Although the noble intention of the British towards the Andamanese cannot be questioned yet the result of their policy has been a thorough decadence of the aborigines of the Andaman island. Efforts are being continuously made by the authorities of the Government of India to save the little community of hunters and fishers from complete annihilation. A detailed discussion of the relations of the Andamanese with the British during the last two centuries, the effect of the foreign contact on the aborigines of Andamans and measures taken to preserve the race and its culture has been done in subsequent chapters of the present book.[1]

[1] See chapters IV and X.

THREE

ANDAMANS FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH

Necessity of a safe harbour in Bay of Bengal realised by the British

The East India Company after having established its authority in the Deccan by the middle of the eighteenth century always wished to have a harbour east of Coromondel for shelter of ships in distress or at the time of shifting of monsoon. The islands situated near the coast of Bay of Bengal were not explored as quarrel with the residents of these islands was apprehended. The failure of the attempt to establish a settlement on the island of Negrais in 1752 also discouraged the authority of the East India Company from embarking on such an exploration.[1] In the year 1777 one John Ritchie, who was engaged in a survey of the islands of the Bay of Bengal, wrote to Warren Hastings and members of the Council of Fort William that after a cursory survey of the eastern part of the Andaman islands he was of the view, "that in whatever light these islands are considered a thorough knowledge of them will appear to be a matter of great utility."[2] The members of the Supreme Council after considering the letter from Ritchie decided to defer the survey for the time being.[3] Captain Thomas Forrest drawing the attention of the East India Company in 1783 to these islands requested the Governor General to provide him with a ship on freight for proceeding to Andaman islands with the purpose of having an intercourse with the aborigines. He was the first man to point out that all the inhabitants of the islands were not hostile to strangers as was generally believed at that time.[4] His infor-

[1] N.A.I., Home Department, Public Branch, O.C. No. 44, 28 April, 1783.

[2] Ibid, Miscellaneous Volume, No. 77, Volume of Public Department records obtained from India Office, year 1777, p. 41.

[3] Ibid.

[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 43-44, 28 April, 1783.

mation was based on the experience of one C. Lamoy of Southampton who was assisted by the Andaman while he anchored on the coast of one of these islands. In 1788 Captain Buchannan again drew the attention of the Governor General to the necessity of exploring and surveying Andaman islands. He had an opportunity to see the coast of Great Andaman islands at some places.[1] This time the authorities at Fort William took up the matter seriously. Lieutenant Archibald Blair of the Indian Navy was given detailed instructions to survey the Andamans. He was given two ships 'Elizabathe' and 'Viper' under his command for this purpose.

Instructions to Blair for the survey of Andaman

In a letter dated 19 December, 1788, Lieutenant Blair was given certain instructions for the survey. In this letter it was stated that, "The primary view of the Research being, as already stated, the acquisition of an Harbour where fleets in time of war can refit by any means, on leaving the coast of Coromondel upon the approach of stormy monsoon, or to which any part or the whole may retire in the Event of a disastrous conflict with an Enemy and so obtain a Central position in the Bay, whence the ship may return to the Scene of Action, as soon as possible."[2] It was also pointed out that the west coast of the Andamans would not be suitable for such a harbour as due to the force of the south-west monsoon it would always be risky for a ship to move out of the harbour during that part of the season. It was, therefore, desired that examination of the south and east ends of the islands must first be made. Further instructions as given below were given to Blair:

1. He should enquire as to what places on the coast possess harbours which would be a safe retreat in bad weather for a fleet and were capable of being fortified against the attempts of a superior naval armament with the help of a small land force.

[1] N.A.I.; Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 30, 10 March, 1788.

[2] Ibid, Secret Deptt., Proceedings Volume, 22 December, 1788, p. 4788 to 4808 (Number of O.C. not given).

2. If time permits, he was to obtain minute description of adjacent heights, general surface of the ground, the respective extent of the variations of ground, the quality of the soil and its capacity to be put into cultivation.

3. He was also directed to ascertain about natural and vegetable production, reigning winds and currents, rise and set of tides, variation in atmosphere, changes in climate due to stormy weather, availability of fish, wood, water, clay, lime and stone. Commercial possibilities of timber and sea-shells available in large quantities in Andamans was also to be determined. Seeds and fruits of such trees not known outside the islands were to be brought as specimen.

4. He was asked to prepare descriptions and drawings of such animals, birds and fishes not found in any other part of the world.

5. Blair was also instructed to explore the possibility of extracting Tin or any other metal from the islands.

6. It was believed that Sulphur would be available in abundance in these islands. Blair was instructed to examine the volcanoes without putting his party in danger.

As regards the aborigines he was advised to adopt a conciliatory attitude and endeavour by pursuasion, presents, and other allurements to prevail upon some of them to come on board the vessels where kind and attentive treatment to them may remove the apprehensions of the inhabitants in general. The object of the Governor General was to attempt a social communication with the Andamanese which may afford them the comforts and advantages of civilized life.[1] The Government desired that if possible two or three aborigines may be induced to come to Bengal with the party for promoting intercourse.

Survey Report of Blair

An exhaustive survey of the Andaman islands was made by Blair. He submitted his report to Lord Cornwallis in a letter dated 9 June, 1789.[2] This excellent report is in the form

[1] N.A.I., Secret Deptt., Proceeding Volume, 22 December, 1788, page 4788 to 4808 (O.C. Number not given).

[2] Ibid, No. 6 to 29, 30 December, 1789.

of a narrative of events from 20 December, 1788, the day on which he left Calcutta for Andamans till his return to the above city. Blair reached the Interview island[1] on 29 December, 1788. Here one of the ships named 'Viper' damaged her main mast and the ship had to be taken to Port Andaman[2] for repairs. Blair, meanwhile, surveyed the island and the above harbour. On 11 January, 1789 while examining the coast to the southwards Blair reached a small island just in sight of Port Andaman. The ship was visited by a few aborigines who hasitatingly accepted some knives and looking glasses as presents. While surveying Port Campbell[3] in South Andaman a party of the explorers had to suffer many insults from the aborigines and were frequently obliged to quit the shore to avoid a conflict. In spite of their conciliatory attitude the party of Blair was suddenly attacked by a group of Andamanese. In this surprise attack a Burmese was wounded. To defend themselves the party fired wounding one of the Andamanese. After some days an aborigin, who along with two others was seen in canoes, treacherously attacked the party. A canoe left by the above aborigin was burnt by the surveyors. The party then surveyed Rutland island.[1] Blair after surveying Port Cornwallis (now known as Port Blair)[5] though near Ross island, was of the opinion that it was hardly possible to conceive a more secure and perfect harbour in Andaman islands. At the above harbour an aborigin shot an arrow on the party but subsequently became friendly when a knife was thrown as gift with a gesture of goodwill. The survey of Port Cornwallis was completed on 15th March, 1789. Thereafter Lieutenant Blair examined the shores of South Andaman and Baratang.[6] He reached Barren island[7] on 24 March, 1789 and found it in a violent state of eruption. Travel-

[1] Interview island—situated between 12 & 13 degrees of latitude on the north west coast of Andamans.

[2] Port Andaman—a harbour of the Interview island.

[3] Port Campbell—a harbour on the west coast of South Andaman.

[4] Rutland island—it is the southern most big island of Great Andaman.

[5] Port Blair—A harbour on the east coast of South Andaman.

[6] Baratang—An island situated between Middle & South Andaman islands.

[7] Barren island—A Volcano mountain on the North East of Port Blair.

ling southwards he proceeded to Prince of Wales island[1] to reinforce supplies and to repair ships. After staying in this island for twenty days the surveying party left for India via Acheen[2] on 22 April, 1789 and reached Calcutta in the first week of June, 1789.

Blair's report of his survey of the Andamans islands merited and obtained much praise for the clarity with which it was written, and the intelligible manner in which the various operations of the survey party was described. The chief geographical features of the islands were delineated with a fidelity that has secured the praise of subsequent explorers. For them indeed in many important points little was left to do, unless it might be in some cases to fill up the details, the great outline of which had been sketched by a careful hand.[3] He supplied valuable information about the land, vegetation, climate, flora and fauna, winds and monsoons, availability of fish, food and water in the islands along with his observations on other details mentioned in the instructions given to him. His report was accompanied by charts and maps wherever necessary. In one respect his report differed from all previous accounts of these islands. The inhabitants were described in such a manner as to leave a much more favourable impression on the minds of the readers as to their character, manners and customs than the narratives of any former writer were calculated to impart.[4] Although the aborigines were invariably described as aggressors in all the skirmishes with Blair's party and exhibited their wild and ferocious nature in attacking any one who landed, yet Blair hoped that, "it would not be difficult to establish a friendly entrance with them, and that with proper attention and management they might be made useful to settlers."[5] In his opinion the deep rooted prejudice against strangers was due to the activities of Malaya pirates and this sentiment could be overcome gradually by adopting a policy

[1] Prince of Wales Island—situated near Sumatra in the East Indies.

[2] Acheen—A harbour on the northern extremity of Sumatra.

[3] Fredrick J. Mount-Adventures & Researches among the Andaman Islanders, p. 17.

[4] Ibid.

[5] N.A.I., Secret Deptt., O.C. No. 6 to 29, 30 December, 1789.

of reconciliation in which no attempt should be made to harm their interests. He found the inhabitants of the Andamans in the earliest state of civilization. The only appearance of civilization according to Blair was their being formed into tribes and some attention which they paid to their chiefs. The favourable impression conveyed by the report of Blair on aborigines led the authorities to take measures for the formation of the first settlement on the Andamans.

Decision to establish a settlement on the Andamans

Blair attended a meeting of the Governor General in Council on 12 June, 1789 in which it was decided to colonize the islands.[1] The main object of the Government was to fortify at the least expense a harbour in Andamans which could afford shelter to such of His Majesty's Squadron which may be driven to Bay of Bengal in the event of a naval conflict or in distress.[2] It was also hoped that the colony would serve as a refuge to crew of wrecked ships and prevent their massacre by the aborigines. A settlement in the Andamans would also considerably check the activities of the Malaya pirates in the Andaman seas. The Government of India decided that the settlement which was to be established in the Andamans was not to be a penal colony. It was to be run on the lines of several such establishments already in existence at Penang and Sumatra where labourers and artificiers were sent to clear the land. Doctor Fredrick John Mouat[3] the President of the 'Andaman Committee' of 1858, however, believed that the Government was feeling the necessity of a suitable penal settlement to which more heinous offenders convicted by courts in India may be transported, and that Blair was entrusted with the task of establishment of the first convict colony in Andamans.[4] Even after a careful search among the

[1] N.A.I., Secret Deptt., Progs. Volume, 12 June, 1789 (O.C. No. not given).

[2] Ibid, No. 6 to 29, 30 December, 1789.

[3] Mouat, Fredrick John (1816-97)—Educated at University College, London, Paris & Edinburg Universities; F.R.C.S., 1844; served in India as local Govt. Inspector & Dy. Inspector General, Bengal Army, was deputed to survey Andamans in 1858; author of 'Adventures and Researches among Andaman Islanders', 1864; Buckland, p. 301.

[4] F. J. Mouat—'Adventures & Researches among Andaman Islanders' p. 18.

records of the East India Company preserved in National Archives of India, I have not been able to trace any directions from the Governor General in Council about the establishment of a penal settlement by Blair. It was only incidentally that some convicts were sent to Andamans at that time to help in the development of the settlement established by Blair.[1]

Blair establishes a colony in South Andaman

Blair sailed for Andamans in September, 1789 with some artificiers, labourers and a few soldiers. He was asked to establish a settlement at Port Cornwallis (now called Port Blair), after clearing the ground at a spot selected by him.[2] He was instructed to examine all the islands of Andaman group and survey the harbours. As regards the policy to be followed towards the aborigines the Governor General in Council wrote, "It will be as much as your wish as it must be ours to attach them and secure a friendly intercourse with them with humane and conciliatory methods and to avoid the use of force against them in any case except that of necessity."[3] Blair was advised to follow the orders given to him by Commodre Cornwallis,[4] Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Squadron in India. Blair on reaching Andamans established a settlement at Chatham island near Port Cornwallis in South Andaman, which now bears his name. The Governor General in Council also ordered Captain Alexander Kyd,[5] the then Surveyor General of India to conduct an extensive survey of Andamans and Nicobars along

[1] Census Report, 1901, page 358.

[2] N.A.I., Secret Deptt., O.C. No. 6 to 29, 30 December, 1789.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Cornwallis, Sir William (1744-1819)—Brother of Lord Cornwallis, Governor General of India; entered Navy in 1755; saw action in North America, Mediterranean & West Indies; Naval Commander in Chief of India, 1791; returned to England 1794. Buckland, p. 95.

[5] Kyd Alexander—(1754-1826); Cadet 1775; Ensign December, 1775; Lieutenant October, 1778; Captain 1781; Major 1793; Lt. Colonel 1797; Colonel 1805; Major General 1810; Lt. General 1819. He was Town Mayor of Fort William in 1787; Surveyor General in 1790; remained in-charge of the settlement in Andamans from March, 1794 to 1796; Chief Engineer at Calcutta, 1807. Hodson, Volume II, page 613.

with the survey of other harbours in the Bay of Bengal.[1] He was asked to take with him Lieutenant Colebrook. Colebrook and Blair thoroughly surveyed the coast of all the islands. Colebrook subsequently published a monograph[2] on the Andamanese which is of considerable importance and can be treated as the first really careful and trustworthy account of the people.[3] Blair sailed entirely round the islands of Great Andaman group making in the course of his survey several important and useful discoveries. He examined numerous inlets which penetrate the shore of these islands. He fixed the position and described the figure and extent of those coral roofs by which the shores of the islands are in so many places rendered more than usually dangerous. By minutely exploring these islands he rendered significant service to the commercial marine. His examination of Port Campbell, Port Andaman and Port Cornwallis was done with his usual accuracy and trustworthiness.

Progress made by the settlement under Blair

While surveying the island Blair was also devoting attention to the establishment of a settlement. By 25 October, 1789 he was able to clear some land and make a redoubt on which British colours were hoisted in order to announce the position of the island by the British.[4] By August, 1790 these settlers had cleared the greater portion of the site selected by Blair in Chatham island and had planted vegetables and fruit trees on it. The number of settlers at this time was one hundred and nineteen.[5] Their general condition was good. Except some old men, who were immediately replaced, the settlers continued

[1] N.A.I., Secret Deptt., O.C. No. 6-29, 30 December, 1789. Colebrook, Robert Hyde : Ensign 1778 : Lieutenant 1778 ; Captain 1796 ; Major 1801 ; Lt. Col. 1803 ; served in Mysore War 1781-85 ; remainder of service in Survey Deptt., Surveyor General 1789.

[2] Journal of Royal Asiatic Society in Bengal, 1794. (It appears that the original M.S.S. was not available to Portman. It has been traced by me in the records of the Surveyor General of India which have been recently transferred to National Archives of India).

[3] Portman, Volume I, p. 65.

[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 3, 3 February, 1790.

[5] Ibid, ABC, 22 September, 1790.

in general to be healthy.[1] Blair seems to have at once attempted to open a trade in timbers by sending some specimen to Calcutta. In February, 1791 construction of a wharf was completed at Chatham island,[2] to facilitate the landing of naval stores. By this time the settlers, who had paid visits to Calcutta in batches for their private affairs, were allowed to take their families to the new colony. In March, 1792 Blair reported that the settlement had been so healthy as to suffer no injury from the absence of the surgeon who had been to Calcutta on leave.[3]

Blair's dealings with the aborigines

Blair now found reasons to modify the opinion he had earlier expressed regarding the inhabitants of Andamans. A few days after the establishment of the new settlement a party of aborigines plundered the belongings of the settlers from their camps. In order to avoid the probability of panic being created in the minds of the settlers force was used against the aborigines. In the skirmish that followed a sepoy was wounded and two young aborigines were taken prisoners with the intention of gaining a knowledge of their customs and language through them.[4] On 13 April, 1790 four fishermen from among the settlers were found missing. After three days bodies of two of them were found at a place on the beach with marks of inhuman barbarity.[5] One day during June, 1790 about forty aborigines collected for an attack on the settlement but their attempt was frustrated by seizing their canoes.[6] According to Portman the aborigines with whom the settlers came into contact at that time perhaps belonged to the Aka-Bea (da) tribe and that Blair was not able to perceive their real intentions.[7] The above mentioned tribe occupied the northern half of Port Blair at that time and was hostile to the Jarawa tribe which resided in the southern portion.

1 Ibid, 20, 6 July, 1791.
2 Chatham Island : A small island on the east coast of South Andaman.
3 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 13, 18 April, 1792.
4 Ibid, O.C. No. 3, 3 February, 1790.
5 Ibid, No. 5, 19 May, 1790.
6 Ibid No. 26, 26 August, 1790.
7 Portman Volume I, page 83.

Apparently Blair did not know that he had more than one tribe of aborigines to deal with in the harbour, and hence it is difficult to ascertain the real motives of the aborigines because after the above acts of hostility, we find Blair reporting that the Andamanese have again become inoffensive. Two young Andamanese, whom Blair met accidentally, voluntarily accompanied him on a visit to a portion of the harbour but in the night, frightened by some thing, they slipped away in a boat.[1] The Andamanese were now practically giving no trouble to the settlers. In March, 1792 Blair reported, "That the native have been perfectly inoffensive for a long time and are becoming every day more familiar, they seem now convinced that our intention towards them are pacific."[2]

It appears that the settlement established by Blair was a great success, both from a sanitary and a political point of view. The sick and death rate in the settlement was very low. Blair had made considerable progress in making the settlement self-sufficient. He had planted a garden which was yielding fruits and vegetables. Store houses, huts, hospital and a wharf had been constructed. He was successful, with the least possible trouble, in establishing friendly relations with at least one tribe of the aborigines. Even on one occasion he successfully induced an Andamanese to go to the vessel and take as many coconuts as he pleased. Trifling presents were offered to them whenever any settler met them accidentally. Blair believed that this mode of treatment will tend to conciliate and civilize them.[3] He now confirmed his opinion that their ferocity was due to the ill treatment they had received from the Malays.[4] The Government of India, however, did not allow Blair to proceed on with his success in the settlement at Chatham island although his administration in Andamans proved him to be a man of first rate ability and exceptional gifts.

Colony shifted to a new site

In November, 1792 a change in the site from Port Corn-

[1] N.A.I. Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 26, 26 August, 1790.

[2] Ibid, No. 13, 18 April, 1792.

[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch., O.C. No. 13, 18 April, 1792.

[4] Selection of Records, Volume 24, p. 93.

wallis near Chatham island to a harbour in the north-east of North Andaman was made at the suggestion of Commodore Cornwallis, who after visiting the site of a new harbour had formed a very favourable opinion of it.[1] He considered this new harbour vastly superior for a fleet of war than Port Cornwallis in South Andaman. The Governor General in his minute dated 5 November, 1792,[2] while appreciating the services of Blair appointed Captain Alexander Kyd to be the Superintendent of the settlement at the new site suggested by the Commodore. Blair was instructed to effect the transfer and look after the settlement till Kyd arrived in Andamans. The harbour in north-east of North Andaman island where the colony was now shifted was named as Port Cornwallis and the old site where Blair had established a settlement in 1789 came to be known as Port Blair instead of its old name,—'Port Cornwallis.'

Blair arrived at the new settlement with 360 settlers on 30 December, 1792. By this time an advanced party of settlers had constructed a double line of huts, three bunglows, a smithy and a pottery kiln after clearing a space, the area of which was six hundred by one hundred yards.[3] He had also made arrangements for water by digging wells before Kyd arrived in Andamans. Kyd took charge of the settlement on 5 March, 1793 with instructions to establish a naval arsenal in the harbour which could give refuge to warships, which may be employed in the protection of Company's possession in India.[4] Like Blair he was also requested to exercise utmost degree of forbearance towards the aborigines and that force was not to be used against them except in case of self defence.[5]

Unhealthiness of the new site

Immediately on reaching Andamans Kyd found that majority of the settlers employed on clearing the jungle were on sick-

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 4-4A, 13 July, 1791.
[2] Ibid, No. 1, 5 November, 1792.
[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 14, 1 February, 1793.
[4] Ibid, No. 3-7, 18 February, 1793.
[5] Ibid.

list due to sores and other complaints.[1] He was, however, very hopeful about the success of the settlement and wrote in a most sanguine manner about its future. Inspite of all precautions the health of the settlers continued to deteriorate in the next two months. During this period twenty one settlers expired on account of forest sores an aggravated by scurvy. Out of the remaining labourers nearly half of them were unfit for any work.[2] With the advent of monsoon the sick list increased to an enormous extent. The principal complaint which rendered about one fourth of the workers unfit for any kind of duty were remittant fever and general debility with splenalgia.[3]

In the beginning of 1794, the general health of the settlement improved but it was feared that during the coming rainy season sickness would again prevail to a great extent. The only hope was that perhaps, "the place would become more salubrious in proportion as it is cleared."[4] The unhealthiness of the site was considered to be due to the proximity of dense forests and it was feared that the habitations of the settlers were hardly a proof against the intemperance of the weather. It was expected that if sufficient progress could be achieved in clearing the land and improving the huts, the number of sick persons would be less. In the beginning such hopes were fulfilled as the settlement was much more healthy than it was during the last rainy season.[5] The real reason, however, was not that the people were better accommodated or more land adjacent to the settlement was cleared but that the monsoon was less severe in 1794.[6]

Comparison of Andamans with Prince of Wales island by Kyd

Meanwhile the Governor General in Council, in view of the continued unhealthiness in the settlement, had requested

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 6-8, 27 March, 1793.

[2] Ibid, No. 2, 17 June, 1793.

Ibid, No. 7-15, 7 October, 1793. Splenalgia : A disease with pain in regions of spleen.

[4] Ibid No. 2, 2 June, 1794 and No. 7, 4 July, 1794.

[5] Ibid, No. 3, 4 August, 1794.

[6] Ibid, No. 1-2, 21 April, 1794.

Kyd to report whether the causes which created diseases were of a permanent nature or which could be removed by industry and exertion.[1] Kyd after visiting Prince of Wales island submitted an exhaustive report to the Governor General in Council.[2] In this report Kyd observed that he had visited Prince of Wales island to study the comparative advantages of the infant settlement of Andamans as a port or refitment with those of Penang in Prince of Wales island. He preferred Prince of Wales island as it possessed a fine harbour which was capable of accommodating about fifty thousand people. The soil of this island was also good and water was available in plenty. The harbour could serve as a place for refuge to merchant ships in distress. The great disadvantage of Prince of Wales island was that it was situated at a considerable distance from any of the Company's possession, so that it could not be quickly reinforced with troops, supplies, and ammunition. Its communications with Bengal was not rapid and certain and hence it would give numerous advantages to the enemies specially to the Dutch, in the event of a war. The climate of Prince of Wales island was also not suitable for Europeans as it was too hot. The advantages of Andamans, as stated by Kyd, was the unrivalled position of the harbour as a naval arsenal where speedy communications with any of the Company's possession in India could bring reinforcements and supplies in time. The greatest defect of the Andaman islands was its climate, which was tempestuous and irregular for the greater part of the year. Its effect on the settlers and the crew of ships of war was harmful and in some cases fatal. Another disadvantage was the dependence of the settlement in Andamans on its supply from Bengal or some foreign port. The raising of extensive works for the settlement was also too expensive as labourers from India and other places could only be induced to go to Andamans on higher pay for

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 1-2, 21 April, 1794.

[2] Ibid. No. 1, 23 March, 1795. According to Portman the report of Kyd was available only at the India Office, London and not among the records of the Government of India. (p. 93, Vol. I) After a careful search among the records in N.A.I., the report in question has been traced by me in the above mentioned original consultation. It was also published in Vol. XXVIII of Indian Antiquary for December, 1899.

construction work and as it was not possible for them to do any work for the major part of the year. Kyd was, therefore, of the opinion that Prince of Wales island was infinitely preferable to Andamans for a settlement.

Decision to close the settlement

Before the Governor General in Council could consider the above report of Kyd, the rains again brought sickness to the settlement. The great spell of rain in 1795 adversely affected the health of the settlers. In addition to majority of the labourers the surgeon of the establishment and other officers also fell ill.[1] Fifty deaths occurred in the colony. Every one among the settlers, depressed by climate and sickness, wished to leave the settlement. In January, 1796, the new surgeon expired due to illness. Kyd reported in his letter dated 4 February, 1796 to the Secretary to the Governor General in Council about the continued unhealthiness of the settlement.[2] Ultimately a decision to abandon the settlement was taken. The Board in their minute dated 8 February, 1796 observed, "Considering the great sickness and mortality of the settlement formed at the Andamans which it is feared is likely to continue, and the great Expense and Embarrassment to Government in maintaining it and in conveying to it supplies, at the present period, it appears to the Governor General in Coun c [illegible] with a view to humanity and economy to withdraw it."[3] It was decided that the withdrawal was to be completed before the advent of the monsoon. The Marine Board was asked to take immediate measures for the removal of convicts, who had been sent there for helping in developing the settlement, to Prince of Wales island and for bringing back the stores and settlers to Bengal. In view of remote possibility of a foreign nation taking possession of the island during the temporary withdrawal from Andamans it was resolved to keep a small vessel at Port Cornwallis to maintain the British claim on Andamans. A vessel

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 3, 13 July, 1795.
[2] Ibid, No. 1-3, 5 February, 1796.
[3] Ibid, No. 5, 8 February, 1796.

was, however, not subsequently kept at Port Cornwallis.[1] The settlement was finally abandoned in May 1796 by sending provisions and stores to Penang. At the time of closing the settlement there were 270 convicts and 550 men, women and children including the European artillery and Sepoy guards residing in the colony. They were sent to their proper places with their property.[2]

Causes of failure of the settlement

In this manner the first recorded attempt to establish a settlement on the soil of Andamans by a foreign nation ended in failure. The main cause of the abandonment of the settlement was the ill health of the settlers due to malaria. Portman discussing the causes of the failure of the settlement observes, "It was unfortunate that Commodore Cornwallis, who was the brother of the Governor General, should have been so much taken with the present Port Cornwallis (though he of course regarded it from a strategic point of view only) as his word carried great weight and caused the moving of the Settlement to the Northern Harbours on the 12 November, 1792."[3] According to Portman who remained as an officer for a number of years in Andamans. Port Cornwallis was perhaps the most unhealthy spot in the whole of island and the selection of this harbour led to the failure of the settlement. After observing Blair's success at the southern harbour (now known as Port Blair) the Government had come to a wrong conclusion that other harbours in Andamans would be equally healthy and well suited for a settlement. No doubt the main cause of the failure of the settlement was the unhealthiness of Port Cornwallis but it should not be forgotten that even the penal settlement established in 1858 at Port Blair did not prosper as it also proved to be extremely malarious.[4] Any settlement at any place in the Andamans in the eighteenth century would perhaps have not flourished. It is only in recent times

[1] Portman, Vol. I, p. 92.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 30, 23 May, 1796.

[3] Portman, Vol. I, p. 92.

[4] Report of the Indian Jail Committee, 1919-20, para 547, p. 275.

that with the progress of medical knowledge the root causes of malaria have become known and measures have been taken for their eradication.

Cases of ship-wrecks on the coasts of Andamans from 1796 to 1856

After the closing of the settlement of Port Cornwallis in 1796 the Andaman islands seem to have been left alone for a considerably long period. In 1802 the British officials of the East India Company drew up a formal resume of information about these islands. Thereafter the notices of Andamans in records and narrations of the travellers are very few. Although the ships passing along the trade routes of India and the East touched the shores of these islands but records of the majority of such visits and of wrecks which occurred on the coasts of Andamans are not available. The Malays seem to have resumed their slave trade during this period. Accounts of few private individuals show that in some cases Andamanese were captured by the Malays and taken to Penang. In 1819, a mixed crew of Chinese and Burmese while collecting trepang[1] in Andaman Sea captured two aborigines and took them to Penang. One of them died on board and the other one lived for some time in the service of Captain Anderson[2] in Penang.[3] In 1824 the fleet formed for an attack on Burma made its rendezvous at Port Cornwallis. The crew did not encounter any aborigines who appear to have been frightened by the number of ships and people assembled, and hid themselves in jungle. After some years an Andamanese family consisting of a man, woman, and two children were brought to Penang. Lieutenant James Edward Alexander[4] attached to the British Envoy at Tehran during his

[1] Trepang : A Malay name for a species of Holothuria i.e. a creeping plant found on the shores of the ocean with large oblong fruits. It is much esteemed in Burma and China as a food delicacy.

[2] Anderson, John (1795-1845) : Joined the East India Company as a writer in 1813, after many appointments in Penang became senior merchant and Secretary to the Government at Penang ; wrote several books on Malayan Peninsula-Buckland, p. 13.

[3] Portman, Vol. I, p. 116.

[4] Alexander, James Edward : Lieutenant of His Majesty's 13th Light Dragons and attache to the Suite of Col. Macdonald Kinnier, Envoy Extraordinary to the Court of Tehran in 1825.

travels from India to England visited the island of Little Andaman in November 1825. He wrote an interesting account of the above island and its inhabitants[1]. In their visit to the shores of Little Andaman his party encountered groups of aborigines at two places. In spite of the friendly gestures of the crew and an offer of presents they were attacked by the aborigines on one occasion. In this attack one soldier was killed and three were wounded. One gentleman named Piddington anchored at the coast of Landfall island at the north end of Andaman group in 1830. Sir John Malcolm[2] in his travels in Southern Asia touched the shores of Andamans on 12 February, 1836. Doctor Helfer was murdered by aborigines just in the north of Port Cornwallis in 1839.[3] Two troopships 'Runneymede' and 'Briton' were wrecked simultaneously on the night of 11 November, 1844 on the shores of Sir John Lawrence island[4] in the Andaman archipelago when hit by a cyclone.[5] Due to these wrecks six hundred and twenty souls were cast on a most inhospitable and proverbially unhealthy island. They were deprived of every provision and comforts, exposed to heavy fatigues under a tropical sun and were constantly wet. They were pestered and annoyed constantly by Andamanese. They remained on the island in this state for 54 days. During their stay on the island only seven adults and a few children died. They were attacked by the Andamanese several times who appeared on the site occasionally. The inhabitants of Little Andaman when remind-

[1] Portman, Vol. I, p. 118-124.

[2] Sir John Malcolm (1769-1833) joined the service of East India Company in 1782, served in various capacities in Military till 1803 when he was nominated as Pesident in Mysore, served in Marahtha Wars of 1803 ; sent by Lord Minto on a mission to Persia in 1808 ; again sent to Persia in 1810 ; wrote 'Political History of India' 1811, 'History of Persia', 1815, Political Agent to the Governor General in the Army of Deccan in Marahtha Wars of 1817-18, administered Central India & Malwa, returned to England in 1822, Governor of Bombay 1827, left India in December, 1830, Buckland, p. 270.

[3] Dr. Helfer: supra, p. 9, Chapter I.

[4] John Lawrence island : situated between 12th & 13th latitude and 93 & 94 longitude on north coast of Port Blair.

[5] The account of the above wreck was published in 'Englishman', a newspaper of Calcutta in 1845. It has been reproduced by Portman at p. 156, in Vol. I of his book.

ed of the above wrecks boasted of killing many soldiers but in reality they could only plunder the wrecks of the ship after the parties had been rescued by another ship.

Before the Andaman islands again became the field of official activity, the Coco group of islands[1] were the scene of a private attempt at colonisation. In the early part of 1849, two Australian adventurers were left by a ship on Great Coco for founding a settlement there. A second batch of settlers consisting of about fourteen Australian men, women and children and four Burmese joined them in July 1849. They remained on the above island for about six months. During this period due shortage of provisions, ill health and other discomforts the settlers fell a prey to despondency which in some cases almost amounted to mental derangement. Seven of the settlers died and the remaining were rescued in October 1849 in an utter state of destitution. Had not timely aid been rendered perhaps the whole batch of settlers would have perished in the Coco islands.[2]

In 1850, a resident of Moulemein named Quigley[3] published a misleading account of Coco and Interview Islands. He described the inhabitants of Interview island as friendly to strangers. Mouat[4] who judging from Quigley's statement went to the Interview island in 1858 with the hope to find the aborigines there more friendly disposed was thoroughly undeceived.

Attention of the Government of India again drawn towards Andamans

In 1849 the wrecks of two ships 'Emily' and 'Flying Fish' off the west coast of Andaman islands drew the attention of the Government of India to the problem of affording shelter to ship-

[1] Coco Islands : situated in the north of North Andaman at a distance of 20 miles. (not shown in the map.)

[2] Portman, Volume I, p. 158-164.

[3] Quigley : A trader from Moulemein in Burma, who went in a vessel to Andamans in or about 1850 to obtain coconuts. He published a pamphlet entitled 'Wanderings in the Islands of Interview. Little and Great Coco ?

[4] Mouat, Fredrick John : Supra, p. 56, Chapter II.

wrecked crew on the coasts of Andaman islands. The second officer of the ship 'Emily' was murdered by aborigines on the board. The wreck of the above ship was also plundered by the aborigines. The Government of India now decided to leave their apathy. Apparently the responsibilities of such untowards happenings lay on the shoulders of the Government of India. During the first half of the nineteenth century special precautions were not taken by them for keeping a government vessel cruising in the neighbourhood of Andamans. This may have afforded protection to the innocent travellers who were forced to touch the Andamans in distress from being massacred by the Andamanese. The aboriginal inhabitants of Andamans could also be saved from the cruelties of Malays who kidnapped them for their slave trade.

Discussions on the establishment of a settlement in Andamans

Serious attention to the above problem was devoted by the Government when the detailed reports of the wrecks of 'Runneymede' and 'Emily' reached them. In one of their despatches[1] the Court of Directors commenting on the above subject instructed the Governor General in Council to consider the matter with the importance it demanded. The Government of Bengal from whom suggestions were invited by Secretary to the Government of India forwarded a letter of Captain Henry Hopkinson,[2] Commissioner of Arrakan.[3] Hopkinson agreed with the remarks of Government of India contained in their letter to the Government of Bengal quoted above that the only effectual remedy was to establish a convict settlement on the south west part of the islands. He was also of the opinion that, "Any project for the occupation of the Andamans should also comprehend arrangement for the exercising from them a surveillance over the

[1] Court of Directors Despatch No. 47 dated 29 August, 1855 of the Marine Deptt.

[2] Hopkinson, Henry (1820-99): Joined Indian Army 1837, Political Officer in 1847-48 in expedition against Koladyne hill tribes, served in Sikh wars 1848-49, Burmese war 1852-53, Commissioner in Districts of Burma 1853-63, Commissioner of Assam 1866-73, General in 1889.

[3] Arrakan and Tenessarim are provinces in Burma.
N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 82 dated 6 August, 1858.

neighbouring group of the Nicobars." While Hopkinson's letter was under consideration, the Government of India received papers from Moulemein containing an account of the murder of eight Chinese traders in the Andaman islands.[1] Lord Canning, the then Governor General, after making a thorough study of papers expressed his opinion against the occupation of the Andaman islands.[2] According to him only two inducements in favour of the measure were put forward by different authorities consulted on the subject. These two reasons were :—

(i) The establishment of a penal settlement and thereby turning to account a possession hitherto unprofitable.

(ii) The obligations to make the islands safe for those who may be cast on them.

As regards the first object, he was of the opinion that in view of the penal settlement of Singapore, Arrakan and Tenessarim there was no need of a new penal settlement situated in an unsalubrious climate, with all its first risks, and considerable expenditure of life and money. He was not convinced by the argument of Hopkinson of the savings in expenditure by taking work from the convicts. In his opinion the establishment to guard them would be considerably heavy. With regard to the second inducement he could not understand how by simply establishing a penal settlement in one corner the object could be achieved. For achieving this aim it was essential to civilise the natives, a task which would take generations to be accomplished with the help of convicts. He also did not place much value to the strategic importance of the islands. According to him this new outlying point of defence established at considerable expense would perhaps not be strong enough to protect itself. Moreover, in view of the naval strength of the British no foreign power would dare to establish herself on Andamans. Three members of the Governor General in Council *viz.*, G. Anson,[3]

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 83, 6 August, 1858.

[2] Ibid, No. 79, 6 August, 1858 (Minute dated 15 March, 1856).

[3] Anson, George (1797-1857) served at Waterloo, member of the English Parliament from 1818 for many years, appointed to a command in India in 1853, Commander in Chief, Madras Army, 1854, Commander in Chief, India, 1856. Buckland, p. 15.

J. Dorin,[1] and J. Low[2] agreed to the views expressed by the Governor General. Another member J. P. Grant,[3] however, held a different opinion. He considered Andamans a more suitable place for a penal settlement in comparison to Tenessarim, Arrakan, Singapore and Hongkong as convicts will have no chance of escaping from Andamans, but in his opinion the time had not yet come for opening such a settlement in one of the Andaman islands in view of Governor General's objections enumerated above.

The Court of Directors considered it expedient for the Indian Government to re-assert their rights after the deliberate abandonment of the island for the last sixty years to prevent persons other than British subjects from settling within its limits. In the opinion a harbour or harbours of refuge at a convenient part of one or more of these islands would be conducive to the security of traffic and to the general interests of humanity.[4] Before taking a final decision regarding the establishment of a penal settlement the Court of Directors desired to be supplied with more information than was available at that time. The Court of Directors wrote to the Governor General in India, "It would be expedient, therefore, in the first

[1] Dorin, Joseph Alexander (1802-72) : I.C.S., educated at Henley and Haileybury, joined the Financial Deptt., of Govt. of India in 1821 which he never left, first Financial Secretary, 1843, member of Supreme Council from 10 May, 1853 to 1 May, 1858. Buckland p. 121.

[2] Low, John (1788-1880) educated at St. Andrew University, entered the Ist Madras Regiment in 1805, served in Marahatha Wars of 1817-18, Resident with Baji Rao ex-Peshwa at Bithur 1819-25, Political Agent, Jaipur 1825, Gwalior, 1830, Lucknow 1831-42, Agent to the Governor General for Rajputana 1843-52, Resident Hyderabad 1852-53, Military Member to the Supreme Council, 1853-58. Buckland p. 254.

[3] Grant, John Peter (1807-93) I.C.S., educated at Eton, Edinburgh, Haliybury, joined service of the East India Company in 1828, served in the North West Provinces 1828-32, Secretary to Board of Revenue in Calcutta 1832, Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal 1848-52, Secretary to the Govt. of India in the Home & Foreign Deptts. 1852-54, Member of the Supreme Council of the Governor General 1854-59, Lt. Governor of Bengal, 1859-62, Governor of Jamaica 1866-73. Buckland, p. 176-77.

[4] N.A.I., Despatch No. 37 of 1856 from Court of Directors dated 1 October, 1856.

instance, that steps should be taken to explore them and to report upon the sites which they may offer, both for the construction of harbours of refuge on the coast, and for the establishment of penal or other settlements, not only on the shores, but also in the inland parts of the islands."[1] The Court of Directors requested the Government of India to collect information about Nicobars also as the contemplated object would be very imperfectly obtained without the occupation of Nicobars.

Appointment of "Andaman Committee" to survey Andamans

The Governor General in Council informed the Court of Directors that the exploration of these groups of islands was deferred till next season as it was inexpedient to organize an expedition at this advanced season of the year.[2] The above correspondence between the Court of Directors and the Governor General in Council leaves no doubt in one's mind that the idea of establishment of a penal settlement in Andamans was under consideration before the outbreak of mutiny in India. In fact the conduct of the Andamanese in massacring ship-wrecked crew had made it imperative to establish a settlement in one of the islands for affording shelter to such people. The subject was again submitted to the Governor General in Council after the mutiny with a suggestion to transport a large number of mutineers to Andamans. The Government of India who were faced with the problem of finding accommodation for thousands of rebels sentenced to life imprisonment desired an early decision of the issue. A committee known as "Andaman Committee" was appointed by them on 20 November 1857 "to examine the shores of the Andaman groups of Islands and select the best site which may be found there for the establishment of a Penal Settlement."[3] Doctor Fedrick John Mouat was appointed as the President of the committee with Doctor G.R. Playfair and Lieutenant J.A. Heathcote as members with

[1] N.A.I., Despatch No. 37 of 1856 from Court of Directors dated 1 October, 1856.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 85, 6 August, 1858. (Despatch dated 8 April, 1857 from Governor General in Council).

[3] .A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 14-27, 15 January, 1858.

instructions to complete their survey immediately.

Report of the Andaman Committee

The ship carrying the members of the Andaman Committee reached the Port Cornwallis on 11 December 1857. They examined Port Cornwallis, Steward Sound[1], Andaman Archipelego, Barren Island, Port Blair the old harbour, Rutland, and Cinque islands.[2] They discovered a new harbour now called Port Mouat in the south west of the South Andaman. Port Campbell, Middle Straits and Interview islands were also explored. The Committee left the shores of Andamans on 1 January 1858 and submitted an intelligent and exhaustive report to the Government of India.[3] In this report after discussing the merits and demerits of all sites in Andamans the Committee considered the old harbour to be the only place which possessed a great number of requisites for a penal settlement. They admired the judgement of Blair in selecting the spot and suggested that the name of the old harbour may be changed to Port Blair in honour of that distinguished officer.

The Committee also paid special attention to the problem of opening an amicable intercourse with the aborigines but unfortunately from beginning to the end the Andamanese rejected every attempt at conciliation. They either avoided or forcibly opposed all attempts of the party to hold communication with them. In their first meeting with the Andamanese the survey party was surprisingly attacked by a party of twelve aborigines inspite of the friendly gestures shown by Mouat's men. Arrows were again showered on them after a few hours. This attack was immediately repelled by a volley of musketery which did no damage but frightened away the aborigines. On four other occasions the Andamanese attacked the party visiting the shores and were repelled without bloodshed. On two other occasions the Andamanese disappeared leaving their huts with

[1] Steward Sound : Situated between North Andaman and Middle Andaman on the east side between 12 and 13 latitude and 93 and 94 longitude.

[2] Cinque islands : situated on the south of Rutland island above Duncan passage, between 11 & 12 latitude and 92 & 93 longitude.

[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 19, 15 January, 1858.

fires still kindled in them. Their bows, arrows, nets and such of their utensils or weapons as were calculated to throw light on their customs were taken and presents were left in the huts. In their last meeting with the aborigines near the southern extremity of Interview island, the party was attacked by surprise with arrows by the Andamanese and in self defence fire had to be opened upon them. A military officer, a seaman and Mouat's jemadar were struck with arrows while three Andamanese were killed as a result of the fire. One aborigin was captured alive with an intention to take him to Calcutta.

Andamanese prisoner taken to Calcutta :

The objects of taking this captive Andamanese to Calcutta were as follows :[1]

(i) It was expected that through him the aborigines could be persuaded to understand that no harm was intended to them.

(ii) It was hoped that through this individual it may be explained to the Andamanese that if persons who were cast away on the shores were treated with kindness in future, they would be awarded while murder and violence would be severely punished.

(iii) A knowledge of manners, customs and the language of the Andamanese was to be gained through him.

(iv) The 'Andaman Committee' also hoped to find means of reclaiming and restoring the Andamanese to a place in the human family, which they did not occupy at that time.

In the opinion of the 'Andaman Committee'. "All these objects could only be accomplished through the instrumentality of a native of these islands, old enough to be acquainted with their manners, customs, language and traditions, if any exist, and not too old to be beyond the reach of instruction."[2]

The Governor General in Council approved the action of the 'Andaman Committee' in bringing the captured aborigines to Calcutta.[3] This policy of having a useful medium of communication between the officers of the British Government

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch A, Progs. No. 19, 15 January, 1859.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid, No. 26, 15 January, 1885.

and the Andamanese could not be put to trial at that time as the health of the captive suffered so much since his arrival in Calcutta that it was thought advisable to send him back.[1] He was left in January 1858 on the site of his capture in a very bad state of health. He was supplied with useful articles *viz.* carpenter's tools, knives, cotton cloth, thread, cords, axes, metal pots, beads and looking glasses etc. as presents with an ardent hope of making a favourable impression on the minds of the Andamanese. The effort, however, did not prove successful. The inhabitants of the Interviewee island continued to be hostile to the settlers in Andaman for a long period.[2]

Decision to establish a penal settlement

On the recommendations of the 'Andaman Committee' the Governor General in Council decided on 15 January, 1858, "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 crimes of mutiny and rebellion and for other offences connected therewith, and eventually for the reception of all convicts under sentence of transportation whom for any reason it may not be thought expedient to send to the Straits Settlement or to the Tenassarim Provinces."[3] Captain H. Man,[4] was appointed as Superintendent of the Penal Settlement to be established at the old harbour which was to be distinguished by the name of Port Blair in honour of that officer who discovered it by about eighty years ago.

1 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch A, Progs No. 19, 15 January, 1858.

2 In 1863, Mouat published a detailed account of the customs and manners of the inhabitants of Andamans in his book 'Adventures and Researches among the Andaman Islanders.' For a long time his information was accepted as authoritative and decisive on matters relating to Andamanese. Many of his conclusions were, however, subsequently found to be incorrect. As for example, Mouat wrongly believed that all Andamanese belonged to one tribe and spoke the same language. Similarly his surmise that the interiors of the islands were un-inhabited was wrong.

3 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 21, 15 January, 1858.

4 Captain H. Man : He was Executive Engineer and Superintendent of convicts at Moulemein in 1858. For some months, he remained incharge of the new settlement at Port Blair. From March, 1868 to 16 March, 1871 he worked as Superintendent, Port Blair.

FOUR

RELATIONS OF THE BRITISH WITH THE ANDAMANESE (1858—1947)

POLICY TO BE FOLLOWED TOWARDS ANDAMANESE

The Court of Directors while approving the establishment of a penal settlement in the Andamans expressed an earnest desire, 'that all possible precautions may be taken to protect the aboriginal inhabitants of the Andamans from these collisions with the convicts, which, it is only too probable will be provoked on both sides and which once commenced are so likely to end in the extermination of the weaker race.'[1] The proposal of the Government of India to arm some of the convict sepoys for purposes of self defence was, therefore, not approved by them. It was hoped that gradually efforts would be made to befriend the Andamanese so that the mariners who touched the shores of the Andamans may be saved from the hostile actions of the Andaman islanders. The Government of India also sincerely hoped that with their contact with civilisation the aborigines of the Andamans may be uplifted from the low scale of civilization to the comforts and advantages of civilised life. Keeping the above objects in view, the Government of India instructed Walker, the Superintendent, Port Blair, "that you will adhere strictly to the conciliatory line of conduct which has hitherto been observed towards the aborigines, that you will absolutely prohibit any aggression upon them, and that force on no account be resorted to unless it be absolutely necessary to repel their attacks."[2] It is apparent from the above orders of the Government of India that while they wanted

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 88, 6 August, 1858.
[2] Ibid, Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 10, 16 July, 1858.

to afford every protection to the Andamanese from the aggressive actions of the settlers at Port Blair, they did not wish to leave the settlers entirely at the mercy of the natives of the Andamans.

Skirmishes between aborigines and settlers

The establishment of a settlement at Port Blair in 1858 was naturally resented by the original inhabitants of these areas. There were several affrays between the aborigines of the Andamans and the new settlers in the beginning. In February, 1858, two English officers and one Indian officer of a surveying vessel were killed by aborigines on one of the small islands of the Andaman group.[1] Majority of the convicts who escaped in large numbers from the settlement at Port Blair in its first year of existence lost their lives in the forests at the hands of the Andamanese.[2] On 5 March, 1858, a collision took place between the Andamanese and men of the surveying brig 'Nutlah' in which one officer was killed. The quarrel seems to have been started by a midshipman of the vessel.[3] On 25 April, 1858, due to unprovoked aggression[4] on the part of the colonists another skirmish took place in which several Andamanese were wounded. A large party of aborigines armed with bows and arrows suddenly, attacked an unarmed party of sailors on 9 June, 1858 but fortunately no body was killed.[5] Walker's patience seems

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 10, 16 July, 1858.

[2] Infra, Chapter V.

[3] Portman, Vol. I, p. 265. The midshipman of the above vessel seems to have offended the natives of the Andamans by his imprudent conduct. Walker, the then Supdt. of Port Blair, stopped his pro motion.

[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 26, 29 July, 1859. During the course of survey some Andamanese were noticed on the beach with fires lighted by them and few of them launching a boat. The party of settlers without any provocation and warning fired shells on them. In return the Andamanese showered arrows on the surveying party which was answered by musketry. The Secretary of State remarked on this incident, "That for no offence than that of lighting a fire in their own woods, or of launching a boat in their waters, British officers fired shells and rockets among the Islanders."

[5] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 6, 16 July, 1858.

to have been exhausted by this time. Commenting on the above skirmish, he wrote to the Government of India, "The hostility of the aborigines to the settlers continues unabated, and there seems not the slightest chance of being able to effect anything with them by a conciliatory policy."[1]

Aggressive action against Andamanese by British Officers

The above feeling of Walker was shared by his subordinate officers in the settlement. They felt that the 'weaker race' was the convicts and the settlers and not the Andamanese as the Government of India appeared to think. The instructions of the Government of India to show a conciliatory spirit towards the Andamanese was henceforth not followed by them strictly. On 5 July 1858, Lieutenant Templer of the Indian Navy on duty in the Andamans chased some canoes of the Andamanese when an aborigin in one canoe tried to get away from the armed boat of the settlers. Naturally the Andamanese, in his fright, shot an arrow on the party which was returned with fire, killing the unfortunate man. Three canoes were seized by Templer who rushed to the encampment of the Andamanese near the beach where several huts were destroyed by his men. In this action five or six Andamanese were killed.[2] After obtaining permission from Walker, Templer destroyed about forty huts of the Andamanese.[3]

The Government of India considered this attack on the Andamanese as 'unprovoked and without justification.' In their opinion it was natural for the Andamanese to establish an encampment in their area without in any way exhibiting special intention of causing annoyance to the settlers. There was also no reason in giving a chase to the frightened Andamanese. The Government of India, therefore, considered the capture of the canoes and destruction of the habitations as an act of retaliation and revenge.[4] The Secretary of state expressed

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 6, 16 July, 1958.
[2] Ibid, No. 8, 27 August, 1858.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid, O.C. No. 8, 27 August, 1858,

severe displeasure over the above proceedings and considered the policy followed by Walker utterly at variance with policy prescribed by the Court of Directors in 1858. In his opinion the officials of Port Blair instead of conciliating the natives have acted in such a way, "as to excite and to perpetuate the hostility of the people by unprovoked and unmeaning acts of aggression."[1]

Walker, now suggested a plan to the Government of India for the protection of convicts from the aborigines.[2] He wanted the southern most part of Great Andaman to be isolated by a military cordon and to expel the aborigines from this part with the help of the Military Guard. His proposals were not approved by the Government of India as it involved the use of force against the aborigines to drive them out from that part of their motherland.

Organised resistance by the Andamanese

Uptil now the Andamanese had not made any organised attempts to drive the settlers. Only there were several affrays between them and the settlers and that too when they accidently met each other or when unprovoked attacks mentioned above were made on the aborigines. The skirmishes that took place in 1858, the first year of the settlement, were, therefore, accidental and unorganised. Perhaps the Andamanese believed that these settlers have come to the islands for a short period and will abandon them without any special effort on their part. Within one year they seem to have been convinced that the settlers had come with an intention to stay. They were also alarmed and enraged in the manner in which their country was cleared and appropriated on all sides. The unprovoked aggression on the part of officers under Walker appears to have strengthened their determination to make organised efforts to frighten the settlers so that they may abandon the settlement for ever[3]. The year 1859, therefore, marks the second phase of

[1] N.A.I. Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 26, 29 July, 1859.
[2] Ibid, No. 7, 10 December, 1858.
[3] Ibid, No. 8, 27 August, 1858.

the struggle for the liberation of their motherland by the original inhabitants of the Andamans. Three pre-meditated attacks on the settlement were made by the aborigines within a short period of five weeks during April and May, 1859.

The first organised attack was made by the aborigines on 6 April, 1859 when 248 convicts employed in clearing the jungle were attacked by about two hundred aboriginals armed with bows and arrows. Three convicts were killed on the spot and six were wounded out of which one died subsequently in the hospital. The Andamanese carried off a considerable number of tools, cloth and cooking utensils of the convicts.[1]

On the noon of 14 April, 1859, a very large number of Andamanese estimated at about 1500, armed with knives and small axes in addition to their primitive weapons suddenly attacked the convicts.[2] The convicts were hopelessly outnumbered and could not offer any resistance. Three convicts were killed on the spot and six were severely injured. The convicts tried to retreat towards the sea in order to reach the Naval Guard Boat which had come to their rescue. The Andamanese remained in possession of the encampment for two hours. During this period some of them were busy in plundering utensils, clothings and implements of the convicts; other groups of aborigines forced many convicts to dance with them simply for amusement. In this attack it was surprisingly noticed that the aborigines had no disposition to attack anyone with a mark of imprisonment, such as iron ring round the ankle; but they showed a strong desire to attack and murder the gangsman—convicts who did not wear any ring and were distinguished by wearing a red turban, brass badge and coloured belt. The attackers called upon the fettered convicts to stand aside in order to enable the attacking party to proceed towards the sea to attack the Naval Guard in the boat. It is apparent that the Andamanese had noticed the helplessness of the fettered convicts and considered them as harmless.[3] The Andamanese

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 32, 29 July, 1859.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Portman, Vol. I, P. 278. Portman verified the correctness of the above surmise from some Andamanese who took part in this attack.

did not pursue the success achieved by them in this attack. They did not possess the intelligence and shrewdness to realise the importance of the concentrated effort made by them in this attack.

Battle of Aberdeen

In the third big attack on the settlement[1] which took place on 17 May, 1859 at Aberdeen,[2] the authorities of Port Blair were lucky in getting advance information from Dudhnath Tewary[3], a convict who had escaped from Ross Island on

[1] Ibid, No. 34, 29 July, 1859.

[2] Aberdeen : The capacious Port Blair has many ghats and places where small settlements were established. One of the settlements at Port Blair was called Aberdeen.

[3] Dudhnath Tewary : Son of Thakoor Tewary ; a Sepoy of the 14th Regt. of Bengal Native Infantry. He was sentenced on 27 Sept., 1857 by the Commission of Jhelum to transportation beyond seas for life with labour in irons for crimes of 'Mutiny' and desertion. He was received into the penal settlement at Port Blair on the 6 April, 1858. He escaped from Ross Island on 23 April, 1858 and after a residence of one year and twenty-four days in the forests of the Andamans voluntarily returned to the convict station at Aberdeen on 17 May, 1859 to convey the information of the attack on the settlement. Dudhnath Tewary had given an interesting account of his sojourn in the Andamans during the above period summarised as under :

After ten days of wanderings, his party of escaped convicts was joined by another party in the interior of the Andaman forests. After another fourteen days of wanderings in the jungle during which many escaped prisoners died from want of food and water, the convicts were attacked by the aborigines. Dudhnath wounded at three places in the body by the arrows of Andamanese fled along with two other convicts. Next day, these three convicts were attacked by the Andamanese in another part of the same forest. The two companions of Dudhnath were killed in this attack. Dudhnath was also wounded in his left arm. In another attack he was wounded on the left waist. This time the aborigines took pity on him.

During the first four months the Andamanese regarded Dudhnath with suspicion. He was, then, married to two Andamanese girls. During his stay with the Andamanese, Dudhnath had to travel from islands to islands. He gave a detailed description of the customs and habits of the Andamanese in a statement on his return. Dudhnath was subsequently granted pardon on the recommendations of Captain Haughton, Supdt. Port Blair, vide N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 39, 5 Oct., 1860 as a reward for his timely information which saved the convict settlement of Aberdeen.

23 April, 1858 with about ninety other convicts. He was fortunate to survive from hunger and three attacks of the aborigines who ultimately took pity on him. He lived with them for more than a year. He came to know about the attack on Aberdeen ten days before the date of occurrence. On that day he noticed a party of aborigines arriving in a boat to the encampment in which he was living. These two boats were filled with axes, implements and utensils used by convicts which were evidently plundered in their recent attacks on the settlement. Dudhnath concluded that their intention was to attack the settlement with the object of plundering tools and utensils. A party of about 250 men started in twenty canoes from the place where Dudhnath was living with the natives. After landing on the main island, they were joined by another party of aborigines, accompanied by another escaped convict named Sadloo.[1] The party encamped two miles off Aberdeen on the afternoon of 16 May, 1858 with an intention to attack on the next morning. Dudhnath and Sadloo quietly slipped away from the encampment at night and arrived at the convict station of Aberdeen at about 2 A.M. on 17 May. The warning given by them was immediately communicated to Walker who had hardly time to act upon the information before the attack of the aborigines commenced. Walker instructed Lieutenant Colonel Hellard, commanding the Naval Guard in the Andamans, to proceed to the guard ship and also sent Lieutenant Philbrick to render assistance with his guns. The convicts were instructed to bury all spare implements and assemble on a hill-top near the coast for retreating to the ships. The progress of one party of aborigines which was approaching along the shore was stopped by gunfire but another party succeeded in reaching the station in-spite of constant firing by Hellard who had in the meantime reached the guard ship. The successful party of aborigines remained in possession of the convict station for about half an

[1] Sadloo was another convict on whom the Andamanese took pity. He escaped about ten weeks prior to the attack of Aberdeen from the settlement of Port Blair. Dudhnath during his wanderings with the Andamanese met him sometime in April, 1858. The particulars of Sadloo are not available in the records of the Govt. of India.

hour until they were driven from that position with the help of Lieutenent Warden's party, who had come to the rescue of the convicts. During this period the aborigines picked up everything they could find worth carrying off. Several of them were killed and seriously wounded but no serious injury was caused to any of the settlers.

Statement of Dudhnath

On the basis of the statement[1] given by Dudhnath after the incident, Walker tried to prove that the main aim of the Andamanese in all these three attacks was to plunder the tools and utensils of the settlement. This conclusion does not seem to be convincing enough. From the statement of Dudhnath it is apparent that he was not fully conversant with the language of the aborigines. Besides, it does not appear probable that the Andamanese should take so much of trouble only for the sake of implements which were of no use to them except that some axes could be used against the settlers in their subsequent attacks. In fact, their willingness to sacrifice their lives, knowing fully well that their bows and arrows were no match against gunfire, proves that their object was definitely something higher than plunder. Their demonstration of hostility towards the gang officers and Europeans and sympathy with fettered convicts leads us to conclude that they wanted to frighten those in authority so that the British may abandon the islands taking with them the helpless convicts. They greatly resented the destruction of the jungle by convicts under the orders of their

[1] Dudhnath made a lengthy statement to Walker. Portman could not find a copy of his statement in the records of the Govt. of India as stated by him on P. 279, Vol. I, of his book. I have been able to trace the above statement as an enclosure to Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 35, 29 July, 1859 in the records preserved in National Archives of India. The information about the customs and manners of the Andamanese as given by Dudhnath in his statement, was regarded as exaggerated by few contemporaries. Portman believes that much of the information given by Dudhnath was correct.

officers[1]. The Government of India appreciating this view point of the aborigines wrote to the authorities at Port Blair that, "the aborigines are apparently unable to conceive the possibility of the two races co-existing on the islands, except on terms of internecine hostility."[2] Apparently the intention of the aborigines in making these organised attacks was not plunder but to exterminate the settlers.[3]

The attack on Aberdeen afterwards came to be known as 'Battle of Aberdeen' in the settlement of Port Blair. There is no doubt that it was the most serious collision between the settlers and the Andamanese. It was most desperate and determined attack ever made on the settlement.[4] The attacks by the Andamanese particularly when of such magnitude as the 'Battle of Aberdeen' and showing such implacable hostility and power of organisation against the settlement on a large scale became a serious feature in the administration and had to be reckoned for in all future arrangements.[5] But fortunately for the British no such concentrated effort was made by the aborigines after their attack on Aberdeen. Perhaps the Andamanese, by this time, realised the futility of such actions.

Causes of failure of Andamanese

The failure of the Andamanese in these attempts to drive out the foreigners from their motherland can be traced to the internal rivalries among the different tribes of the Andamans. Their attempts, though organised by some tribes, did not include all the indigenous population of the Andamans. In the second big attack on the settlement on 14 April, 1859 about fifteen hundred aborigines participated while in the 'Battle of Aberdeen' there were about three hundred persons who took part. The

[1] Portman, Vol. I, P. 278. Portman had a talk with few Andamanese who took part in the battle about their object in attacking the settlement. The above view was conveyed by them to him.

[2] Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 8, 27 August, 1858.

[3] Portman, Vol. I, P. 422.

[4] Ibid, P. 279 & 422.

[5] Portman, Vol. I, P. 286.

aborigines were quite ignorant about the strength and determination of the settlers and were under the misapprehension that only by frightening them they would be able to drive them out. Moreover, with their primitive arms and methods of warfare, they could not have possibly succeeded in their aim.

Change in the attitude of the authorities after the departure of Walker

A new phase in the history of relations with the Andamanese begins after the departure of Walker in 1859. The aborigines did not avoid intercourse with the settlers and gradually friendly relations with eleven out of twelve tribes[1] were established. Captain Haughton, (Superintendent of Port Blair from Oct., 1859 to May, 1862) attached much importance to the establishment of friendly relations with the Andamanese. He laid down certain rules for the guidance of the officers and convicts regarding contact with the aborigines. He issued directions that the aborigines should never be molested except when plainly intending to attack the settlement or parties working in forest. He also discountenanced visits to places which they were known to frequent. The exploring expeditions which were likely to bring the settlers in contact with the aborigines were stopped by him.[2] He was, however, determined to deal sternly with those Andamanese who unprovokingly attacked the settlement. Haughton also expressed his desire to use his best endeavours to conciliate the aborigines in every possible way. His line of action in dealing with the Andamanese was approved by the Government of India.[3] Before the above policy outlined by Haughton could be put in practice by the authorities of Port Blair, the aborigines had attacked few escaped convicts on 13 November, 1859. In this attack several convicts were wounded. A similar attack on a party of Naval Guard was

[1] All the tribes mentioned in Chapter II except the Jarawas became friendly to the British by the end of the nineteenth century.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 17, 2 March, 1860.

[3] Ibid, No. 18, 2 March, 1860.

made by the Andamanese on 27 December, 1859. This attack was repulsed by firing on the natives.[1]

Signs of friendship with the Andamanese

After these untoward incidents, faint signs of commencement of friendly relations with Aka-Bea-da tribe were observed. The first friendly intercourse with them took place on 27 February, 1860. A party of aborigines on Chatham Island[2] encouraged by signs of friendship shown by a party of settlers led by Doctor Gamack,[3] came near to them. They were much pleased with the trifling presents made by Gamack.[4] On the next morning, Gamack was again successful in offering presents to a few Andamanese.[5] In these two meetings, the aborigines did not show any sign of hostility. Lieutenant Hellard had the same kind of experience on 29 February, 1860.[6] On this occasion the Andamanese seemed to be much gratified with the presents but were always on the alert. The Government of India expressed much satisfaction over the friendly disposition shown by the aborigines for the first time and wished that it should be extended. They, however, warned the authorities at Port Blair to take every precautions for the safety of those officers who held intercourse with the Andamanese. Inspite of the above warning, Gamack in his eagerness to follow up the successful commencement he had made in opening friendly relations with the aborigines exposed himself to an attack by them. On 23 March, 1860 in a meeting with a party of Andamanese he was treacherously attacked and wounded by two men.[7] These two men were strangers to Gamack. In this attack it was observed that the Andamanese did not fear the

[1] M.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 17, 2 March, 1860.

[2] Chatham Island : An island on the South-east coast of South Andaman. Three islands viz. Viper, Chatham & Ross are situated in Port Blair.

[3] Doctor Gamack was the Civil Assistant Surgeon of the Settlement of Port Blair.

[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 3, 7 April, 1860.

[5] Ibid, No. 4, 7 April, 1860.

[6] Ibid, No. 5, 7 April, 1860.

[7] Ibid, No. 9, 19 May, 1860.

convicts but dreaded the European officers. Most of the arrows showered by the two Andamanese were aimed at Gamack.[1]

The meetings of the settlers and the Andamanese during May, 1860 indicated that the behaviour of the Andamanese was generally peaceful, although there were some signs of hostility on their part.[2] Such action on the part of the Andamanese continued for sometime. On 30 May, 1860, a few aborigines carried off some articles of trifling value from a camp of the settlers. On the next day a boat was sent to watch the encampment of the aborigines. A gun was fired to scare these aborigines when they showed signs of enmity. On 19 June, 1860, a party of aborigines landed in a friendly manner on Viper Island. They were well treated by the settlers. This was followed by another visit of the Andamanese to the same place on the next day. On this occasion, too, friendly treatment was given to them. After four days a shot was accidently fired on a group of Andamanese but they were pacified and dismissed in a friendly manner.

Real feelings of the Andamanese showed by their hostile actions

From the above meetings with the Andamanese from May, 1860 to November 1860 it would appear as if they had become more friendly but actually such was not the case. In reality the Andamanese felt that the settlers were too strong for them and they could not possibly overcome them by open fight. Hence, in order to obtain fruit and the metals which they wanted, the Andamanese cunningly put on a show of friendliness.[3] In case the settlers refused to give them such presents they made violent attacks on them. On 15 and 17 December, 1860, two parties of settlers were attacked at different places by the Andamanese. In these skirmishes two settlers were slightly

[1] M.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 10, 19 May, 1860.

[2] Ibid, No. 3, 7 December, 1860.

[3] Portman, Vol. I, P. 302. Portman ascertained the facts of the above period from the aborigines. He was acquainted by them with the real feelings described above.

wounded[1]. On 31 December, 1860, a party of aborigines willingly accepted bananas offered to them by the settlers. But on the next day the settlers were suddenly attacked by a few Andamanese to whom bananas were being distributed as present. In this attack one sailor was wounded. He subsequently died of the wounds.[2]

Haughton seems to have understood the real feelings of the aborigines. He issued instructions that the aborigines should only be allowed to land when they deposited their arms on the shores opposite to Chatham Island.[2] They were not to be encouraged to pick up themselves articles meant for presents to them, but the articles should be distributed among them. Inspite of these orders, the Andamanese could not be prevented from taking things in accordance with their sweet will from the settlement. On January 9, 1861 eight aborigines came to Viper Island. They were fed and dismissed as usual with a sufficient quantity of bananas. The demand of the aborigines for more bananas was not met with by the convict officer present at the spot under the standing orders of Haughton. This refusal aroused the anger of the aborigines who began to pick up the bananas. They were subdued without violence and were asked to depart.[3] Next day a large group of aborigines began to carry things from the settlement of Viper Island without caring for the presence of the armed guard. Three aborigines were captured by the guards, while the remaining fled away when shots were fired on them.[4] On 14 January, 1861 a party of eight Andamanese took a few tools of convicts working in Navy Bay.[5] Next day a convict party was again attacked at the same place. The aborigines could not do any harm to the settlers as sufficient guard had already been provided for the protection of the convicts. In this attack, three aborigines were captured.

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 59, 18 March, 1861.
[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 59, 18 March, 1861.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Navy Bay : A small bay near Port Blair in South Andaman.

A male[1] and a female convict were supposed to have been murdered by the aborigines during the period.[2]

Treatment with the captured aborigines

The above hostile actions of the aborigines were the cause of much anxiety to Haughton. He was in a dilemma as to what course of action he should adopt in dealing with these people. While explaining his future line of action towards the Andamanese he wrote to the Government of India, "If too much encouraged, our people were liable to be plundered, killed or wounded—on the other hand without some encouragement we must for ever remain strangers and, it would seem at war with them."[3] Haughton had hitherto endeavoured to follow the golden mean "—at all times to avoid aggressive attacks and bloodshed, to treat them kindly and at the same time not to mislead them into plundering and killing our people."

Out of the six aborigines captured by the authorities of Port Blair, one named 'Punch'[4] fled away on the night of 15 January, 1861. As a punishment for their hostile actions, Haughton proposed to keep two old captive aborigines for some time in the settlement. The remaining three prisoners were to be sent to Burma for a few months for training in English in order to use them as medium of inter course with the aborigines after their return to the Andamans.[5] The above proposals of Haughton were entirely approved by the Government of India. This arrangement seemed to be most judicious. At that time it was the only step which could be taken to befriend the Andamanese for it was essential that they should have a glimpse of civiliza-

[1] The male convict belonged to Punjab. He fled with his convict wife in a canoe from Viper Island on 18 January, 1861. On 24 January, an Andamanese wearing a garment was seen in a canoe. On being fired upon, the Andamanese abandoned his canoe. A tin of ghee was found in the canoe. It was presumed that the garment and the tin belonged to the above couple and they were murdered by the aborigines.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 59, 18 March, 1861.

[3] Ibid.

[4] The sailors named the above Andamanese prisoner as 'Punch Blair'.

[5] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 59, 18 March, 1861.

tion, realise to some extent the greatness of the British power and their own weakness.[1]

The two old Andamanese prisoners were released on 15 February, 1861 with some presents. The other three captives, who were less advanced in years were sent to Moulemein. These three were named Crusoe, Jumbo and Friday. Jumbo expired after a brief illness, nearly a month after his arrival at Moulemein. Crusoe and Friday also did not keep well and showed signs of consumption. They were sent back to the Andamans on 12 September, 1861.[2]

Change in the attitude of the Andamanese

Although Crusoe and Friday did not learn anything during their stay at Moulemein, the kindness shown to them in Burma proved beneficial. Their narrations about their newly acquired knowledge made profound impressions on their countrymen. They began to realise the immense strength of the Britishers.[3] During the period these prisoners were at Moulemein the aborigines had several times attacked different parties of settlers with

[1] Portman, Vol. I, P. 306.

[2] Lieutenant Colonel Albert Fytche, Commissioner of the Tenasserim and Martban provinces of Burma has written an account of the stay of the above three Andamanese in Burma. The three Andamanese felt extremely dejected on their arrival at Moulemein in May, 1861. They were, however, much pleased to meet a Burmese named 'Moung Shway Hman' in the streets. The above Burmese had lived in Port Blair for a number of years. As he knew English, he was placed in charge of the Andamanese. Soon after the three prisoners made unsuccessful attempt to escape in a small raft. Jumbo's condition became worse after his exposure in the flight. He died on 12 June, 1861. Crusoe and Friday also complained of headache and cough. It was feared that if they were retained for a longer period in Burma they would never be able to go back to their motherland. The three Andamanese did not learn anything during their stay in Burma. It was also noticed that they were very fond of tobacco. They were always pining to return to the Andamanese. It was not possible to learn the language of the Andamanese either from these prisoners during their short stay in Burma—Portman, Vol. I, P. 320—333.

[3] Portman, Vol. I, P. 322.

the object of plundering tools and implements.[1] But a distinct change in their attitude was noticed soon after the return of Crusoe and Friday from Burma[2]. Their account of the kind treatment afforded to them influenced their tribesmen so much that they were ready to accept in a similar spirit and friendly overtures which might be made to them.[3] Some escaped convicts who returned to the settlement also stated that they were treated with kindness by the aborigines. Thus Haughton before his departure from the settlement in May, 1862 had laid the foundation for future friendly relations with the Andamanese. It must not, however, be forgotten that through these two aborigines only one sept of the Aka-Bea-da tribe was influenced. Considerable time was naturally taken in convincing all the other Andamanese of the Aka-Bea-da tribe about the friendly disposition of the settlers and in extending good relations with other tribes in the Andamans.

Murder of Pratt, a sailor, by the Andamanese

As a result of Haughton's policy in the first half of the year 1862, the Andamanese living in the vicinity of Port Blair had ceased to attack the settlement and murder convicts whom they accidently met in forests. Colonel Tytler,[4] Superintendent of Port Blair (May, 1862—February, 1864), encouraged by such attitude on the part of the Andamanese sent small parties of sailors to their encampments.[5] On one such visit on 28 January, 1863, a sailor named Pratt tried to rape an Andamanese woman. Two aborigines took strong offence to the above action of Pratt and murdered him on the spot.[6] The other

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 50, 21 February, 1862.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Portman, Vol. I, P. 359.

[4] Colonel Tytler : Tytler Robert Christopher (1818—72). Cadet 1835, Ensign Dec. 1835 ; Lieutenant Sept. 1837 ; Captain Feb. 1846 ; Major May 1858 ; Lt. Col. Jan. 1862 ; Saw action in First Afghan War (1840—42) ; escaped to Karnal from Delhi during Mutiny ; served in the seige of Delhi.

[5] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 33, 11 February, 1863 and Portman, Vol. I, P. 359.

[6] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 16, 24 June, 1863.

European sailors fired on the aborigines and returned to the settlement. Tytler without making proper enquiries accepted the version of the sailors accompanying Pratt and considered it as an act of cold-blooded treachery on the part of the Andamanese. Consequently he asked for the permission of the Government of India to follow a policy of revenge towards the Andamanese. He suggested that the convicts be armed with muskets to protect themselves. He also asked the permission to make a general hunt of the aborigines with a view to catch the two culprits for transporting them to some other island.[1] His proposals were not accepted by the Government of India. In their opinion, "if when the unfortunate seaman was shot, two or three of the Natives had been instantly seized as hostages instead of indiscriminate fire being begun upon a party of savages among whom women were present, the interests of humanity and civilisation would have been better consulted."[2] The alleged murderers of Pratt described as Snowball and Jumbo by the sailors were captured in February, 1863. Before arrangements for transporting them to Burma were completed, it was discovered that the fault lay with Pratt, and not with those two aborigines who acted under strong provocation.[3] The Government of India expressed its severe displeasure over the manner in which investigations were carried by Tytler in the Pratt murder case. They directed him to release Snowball immediately as he was only present at the murder of Pratt by Jumbo. Jumbo was to be kept in confinement for seven months more to impress upon him that it was no trivial matter to inflict any injury to any person belonging to the settlement.[4] Snowball was released on 5 July, 1863 while Jumbo was allowed to return to forest on 12 October, 1863 on account of his good behaviour.

Establishment of the 'Andaman Home'

The unfortunate detention of Jumbo and Snowball for no fault of their own, however, was beneficial in one way. One

[1] Ibid, O.C. No., 32—34, 14 March, 1863.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 35, 14 March, 1863.

[3] Ibid, O.C. No. 16, 24 June, 1863.

[4] Ibid.

direct result of their detention was the establishment of an Andaman Home. When Snowball and Jumbo were under detention a few Andamanese including Topsy (a nickname given to the wife of Jumbo) visited the settlement and expressed a desire to meet the prisoners.[1] Tytler allowed them to meet Jumbo and Snowball. The visiting Andamanese were also given a large quantity of coconuts and bananas as presents.[2] The above action of Tytler proved to be extremely judicious. It convinced the Andamanese about the safety of the two captive aborigines. On the tribe as a whole, it made a profound impression.[3] Tytler, observing the satisfaction of the Andamanese induced Topsy and an Andamanese boy to live in a new habitation on a spot near his residence in Ross Island. This habitation was a collection of huts with an enclosure surrounded on all sides by a bamboo fence. Corbyn[4] was given the charge of this establishment which came to be known as Andaman Home. In a short time Corbyn persuaded twenty-eight aborigines to live in the Andaman Home.[5] An officer selected from convicts of good behaviour was placed in the direct supervision of the Home under Corbyn. The Government of India sanctioned an allowance of Rs. 100/- per mensum for its upkeep.[6]

The aim of Tytler and Corbyn's policy was to civilise the Andamanese in the Home. Tytler considered the establishment of the Home as a measure which was likely to be of lasting benefit to the settlement from a political point of view and for all those who might by unforeseen circumstances be compelled to visit these unfriendly shores.[7] The inmates of the Home were instructed in English with the object of acquiring means of mutual understanding with them. The aborigines staying at the Home were also employed in clearing forests.

[1] Ibid, O.C. No. 40, 23 May, 1863.
[2] Ibid, O.C. No. 41, 23 May, 1863.
[3] Portman, Vol. I, P. 365.
[4] Corbyn : He was the Christian Priest at Port Blair.
[5] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 17—20, 31 July, 1863.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.

Corbyn's expedition in the interior to open communications with other tribes

Corbyn undertook several expeditions[1] into the interior of many of the Andaman islands for opening friendly communications with other tribes of the aborigines. In these expeditions he was accompanied by naval brigadesmen and a few of the Andamanese inmates of the Homes. In seven expeditions which Corbyn undertook during June 1863, principal attention was paid by him towards inducing the aborigines to visit the Andman Home. He was successful in this objective to a great extent, partly due to his good behaviour and partly due to the fact that the aborigines came there to see Snowball and Jumbo who were then in captivity. Corbyn was careful enough in not allowing anybody to touch the belongings of the Andamanese. He also instructed that nobody should ask the aborigines to part with their bows, arrows, and other implements which were necessary for their subsistence. During his expeditions in june, 1863 on one occasion Corbyn along with his assistant Homfry was surrounded by about two hundred hostile aborigines but they were saved on account of the intervention of Topsy[2]. Soon after his release in July, 1863, Snowball expired due to illness. In one of the expeditions to the south of Viper Island, the aborigines accompanying Corbyn informed him about the existence of a tribe which was even hostile to the remaining Andamanese

[1] Corbyn submitted three exhaustive narrations of the expeditions undertaken by him from June, 1863 to February, 1864. In these narratives he also reported on the progress of the Andaman Home. These narratives are included in N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 17-20, 31 July, 1863, O.C. No. 37-41, April, 1864, O.C. No. 24-26, 28 July, 1864.

[2] The hostile Andamanese armed with bows and arrows formed a semi-circle round Corbyn and Homfray with a view to attack them. These two Englishmen took Topsy by hand and advanced towards a man whom they took to be the chief. Topsy implored the man not to discharge arrows and eventually induced him to give his bow and arrow to Corbyn—although an Andamanese does not feel safe after parting with his weapons. The other hostile aborigines followed their leader.

tribes[1]. During these expeditions Corbyn was successful in extending friendly relations with the tribes of South Andaman islands and the Labrinth islands.[2] In October, 1863, Corbyn took eight Andamanese with him to Calcutta among whom there were Jumbo and his wife Topsy.[3] In December, 1863, a party consisting of six other Andamanese was taken on a visit to Rangoon and Moulemein.[4] During this period, the sept of a tribe[5] living in south of Port Blair started their raids on the settlement. Two aborigines of the above sept who appeared to be the ringleaders were captured and kept in irons under Corbyn's care. A message was conveyed through friendly Andamanese to the sept that no harm was intended to them and they were only kept as hostages.

Escape of Andamanese inmates of the Home

Corbyn was much satisfied with the progress of his work in establishing friendly relations with the Andamanese.[6] He now proposed that a wooden building containing accommodation for about one hundred Andamanese may be constructed. He felt that a large number of aborigines were anxious to visit the Andaman Home and avail of the comforts of that place for a few days. However, circumstances as regards the Andaman Home were not as bright as Corbyn wanted to depict. Even

[1] This is the first mention of the Jarawas in the records of the Govt. of India. Topsy and other friendly Andamanese implored Corbyn not to proceed further in the south.

[2] Labrinth Islands : situated on the south-west coasts of South Andaman between 11th and 12th latitude and 92nd and 93rd longitude.

[3] The eight Andamanese stayed in a small house in the compound of Town Hall of Calcutta. The citizens of Calcutta came to see them in large numbers. They were taken to see the museum and other places of interest. Corbyn noticed a favourable change in their temper after their return from Calcutta. N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch A Prog. No. 10, 11 January, 1864.

[4] During their journey from Andamans to Burma, the Andamanese rendered most useful service in supplying the want of a sufficient crew on board. In Rangoon and Moulemein, they were taken round the cities.

[5] Perhaps they were members of another sept of the Aka-Bea-da tribe who afterwards moved to northern side of Port Blair.

[6] N.A.I. ,Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 10, 11 January, 1864.

from his narratives it is clear that the forty-three Andamanese living at the Home complained of discomforts.[1] The immediate result of employing them on the work of clearing sites, making bamboo frame work and helping construction of huts was the outbreak of illness among them. The Andamanese, from the very beginning, hated the presence of the convict guards over them. These guards watched and restricted their movements.[2] They did not allow them even the liberty of a walk in the islands. Although Corbyn in his reports to the Government had claimed at several places that no restraints were put on the liberty of the Andamanese staying at the Home, it is clear that the Andamanese were kept under strict surveillance at the Home.[3] The condition of the Andaman Home was pitiable. The only dwelling in the Home was a small cow-shed which the inmates shared with cattle. In this shed they slept on a raised bamboo machan (platform). They did not relish the food, which mainly consisted of coarse rice. They were also forced to wear cloths and forbidden to paint themselves with clay. This practice had harmful effects on them. The learning of English was a hateful task to the Andamanese. Corbyn should have taken greater care in affording facilities to the Andamanese inmates of the Home. A sheltered spot similar to those built in their own villages would have given them a feeling of homeliness. Corbyn's principal mistake in dealing with the Andamanese was that he and Tytler "appear to have been so much taken up in guarding against the ill-doings of the Andamanese, that it never occurred to them to take any precautions against the misconduct of the Naval Brigadesmen and the convicts who were associated with

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 38, April 1864.

[2] Ibid, O.C. No. 15, December, 1864. This was admitted by Major Ford, the successor of Tytler.

[3] Corbyn alone is not to be blamed for these restraints. As early as 30 June, 1863 Tytler in a letter to Corbyn had written, "It is very desirable, even in a political point of view, keeping these people in our custody as hostages, for it undoubtedly secures the better behaviour of these inhospitable people towards our settlement,"

the savages in the Home."[1]

The inevitable result of the semi captivity of the Andamanese at Home was their decision to flee from the Home. On the night of 1 March, 1864, a fortnight after Major Ford had taken charge of the Port Blair settlement as Superintendent, forty Andamanese inmates of the Home including women and children escaped to the mainland from Ross Island. Topsy in her attempt to swim over to the other side was drowned. She had been in ill health and probably could not muster sufficient strength to gain the opposite shore.[2]

Change in Policy towards the Andamanese

The above incident led to a change in the policy to be followed towards the aborigines. Corbyn wanted to use force for capturing the escaped Andamanese. He actually put Jumbo in fetters.[3] Ford after due consideration came to the conclusion that, "it was impolitic to restrain them on Ross Inland; they must be free to go and come amongst us."[4] The Government of India agreed with the recommendations of Ford. In their opinion the forcible detention of Andamanese in the Home would not yield any good result.[5] Accordingly two outposts on the north and south points of South Andaman opposite Ross Island were established to maintain contact with the aborigines. Convicts who were friendly to the aborigines were stationed in these outposts. They were permitted to feed and conciliate any Aandmanese by presents. If anyone of them wished to come to Andaman Home on the Ross Island, he was to be escorted to that place. Ford proposed to utilise friendly Andamanese in recapturing escaped convicts. Corbyn seriously objected to this proposal of Ford. In his opinion it would give the Andamanese a sort of police control over the convicts. The aborigines would then ill use them at times.

[1] Portman, Vol. I. P. 480.
[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 24, 28 July, 1864.
[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 38, April, 1864
[4] Ibid, No. 41, April, 1864.
[5] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 24, 28 July, 1864,

Break up in friendly relations with the Andamanese

Before the above policy could be fully implemented an occurrence took place at the North outpost which broke all friendly relations with the Anadmanese for a short period.[1] On June, 1864, two of the Andamanese visiting the North Outpost, became angry with a sub-gangsman named Gilbur Singh. The gangsman did not allow them to enter the upper storey of the hut where food was kept and when they tried to take some coconuts he raised his musket to intimidate them. As soon as his back was turned he was shot dead by two Aandamanese with arrows. While making an attempt to run away, these two Andamanese showered arrows on convicts obstructing their path and wounded three of them. Out of the wounded convicts one subsequently died of his injuries. Other Andamanese, who were present on the scene, did not take part in this affair. The Andamanese aggressors were Jacko and Moriarty (nickname given by sailors) who had been on friendly terms with the authorities.[2]

As a result of the above incident, Ford ordered the two out-posts to be closed. He also prohibited the supply of food to the aborigines. Henceforth no favours were to be conferred on the Andamanese visiting the settlement. They were to be treated with coolness during the next three months.[3] Corbyn considering this course as impolitic and unjust resigned from his charge of the Andamanese.[4] After the expiry of three months,

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 3-5, 28 July, 1894.

[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 3-5, 28 July, 1864.

[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 15, 9 December, 1864.

[4] Ibid, A Progs. No. 1-6. March, 1865. Although Corbyn has been blamed for placing restrictions on the Andamanese, the critics of his policy, however, ignore the fact that Tytler was prejudiced against the Andamanese after the murder of Pratt. Although Corbyn's policy terrified the savages who escaped from the Home but his ideas on the subject were correct. His policy overrawed them and gave them a sense of the power of the British which made subsequent dealings with them easier. Inspite of the short-comings of Corbyn's policy, it must be admitted that he laid the foundation of friendly relations with the Andamanese by gaining their confidence and regard. His zeal and earnestness was appreciated by all,

during which no aborigin was allowed to land on any part of the settlement, they were permitted to visit the settlement under fixed rules. Food was to be supplied to them only in exchange for bamboo-thatching leaves or other articles of jungle produce. They were to be treated in a friendly manner but with certain coolness in order to impress upon them the fact that the murders at North Post had neither been forgiven nor forgotten. The two culprits, Moriarity and Jacko were not allowed to visit the settlement area.

By the end of December, 1864 about one hundred Andamanese were living in the Home on Ross Island. No restraint was put on them. They were free to go to the forest whenever they wanted but nobody was allowed to leave the Home after committing a theft.[1] Homfray, the successor of Corbyn, collected some Andamanese boys on Ross Island. He taught them to be orderly and obedient. They worked in a vegetable garden and cooked food for themselves. They were taught to refrain from picking up things that they saw and desired. Homfray rightly considered that such an education was of primary importance for the aboriginals. He deferred the teaching of English to a later stage.[2]

During January, 1865 Ford strongly urged on the Government of India the importance of opening a small settlement at Port Mouat[3] and of connecting it with Port Blair by road. This arrangement was proposed with a view to separate the Northern and Southern tribes of South Andaman in order to enable the authorities at Port Blair to identify the tribe of the person or persons that gave trouble to them in any particular instance. At that time the people on the south side were most troublesome. Ford did not know at that time that this hostile tribe was of the Jarawas. The above proposals of Ford were accepted by the Government of India.[4]

[1] According to the Andamanese custom, the taking of the articles of others without their permission is not considered as a theft.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 18-20, 19 May, 1865.

[3] Port Mouat : A harbour on the south-west coast of South Andaman.

[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 17-18, March, 1866.

Ford was the first officer at Port Blair to realise that it was dangerous to keep the Andamanese in the Home under the charge of convicts. His suggestions for employing an Army School Master with his wife for the instruction of Andamanese children and for keeping an European in immediate charge of the Home were not accepted by the Government as they were considered to be too expensive.[1] It was really a pity that the aborigines were not kept away from the convicts. The disastrous results of this policy have been discussed in the end of this chapter.[2]

Extension of friendly relations to other tribes

In January, 1865, Homfray visited the group of Archipelago Islands[3] for the first time. During his visit he could not meet any of the original inhabitants of these islands. An aborigin[4] of the 'Puchikwar' sept of Aka-Bojigyab tribe from the Middle Straits[5] visited the Home in this month of his own accord. The friendly reception given to him started friendly relations with the sept. During February 1865 more aboriginals from Archipelago Islands and Middle Straits visited the Home[6]. In May, 1865 Ford and Homfray using the friendly Aka-Bea-da tribe as intermediaries visited many interior villages of Aka-Balawa tribe.[7] In June 1865 Homfray claimed to have succeeded in establishing friendly relations with the North tribe of South Andaman, South tribe of South Andaman, aboriginals of Port

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 18-20, March, 1866.

[2] Infra,

[3] Archipelago Islands : These islands are situated on the east side of South Andaman and Baratang. The principal islands of this group are Henry Lawrence, Johan Lawrence, Havelock, Nicholson, Peel and Outram.

[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 18-20, March, 1866.

[5] Middle Straits : The straits between South Andaman and Baratang Islands on the east side is known as Middle Straits.

[6] N.A.I., Home Deptt. Public Branch, A Progs. No. 12, June, 1865.

[7] Ibid, A Progs. No. 4-5, September, 1865.

Mouat area and the inhabitants of Rutland Island.[1] The representatives of these four septs were living amicably at the Andaman Home. In August, 1865 Homfray took an Andamanese, his aboriginal wife and five children to Calcutta with him.[2] This visit greatly increased the confidence which the Andamanese reposed in Homfray.[3] The gradual establishment of friendly relations with the septs accounts for the absence of violence on the part of Andamanese towards any of the inhabitants of the settlement during this period. The Andamanese also proved useful in affording information regarding the course of creeks, streams and forest tracks. They also helped in recapturing those convicts who fled from the settlement.[4]

By the end of March 1866 good understanding with eight septs had been established by Homfray.[5] During April 1866 an Andamanese child was born for the first time at the Home. In May 1866 with the opening of a new settlement at Port Mouat the Andaman Home was shifted to that place from Ross Island. The septs of Aka-Bea-da tribes inhabiting Port Blair area did not approve of this change.[6] Therefore, in August, 1866, a separate Home for the septs of Port Blair area was built at Ross Island on Tytler Ghat.[7] In November, 1866, Homfray convened an assembly of friendly Andamanese. In this assembly the sept from North Campbell made their appearance for the first time.[8] In an agricultural exhibition held in March, 1867 at Ross Island,

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 21-23, September, 1865. In fact Homfray has mistaken in mentioning these as tribes instead of septs. The area surrounding Port Mouat and Rutland islands was occupied by Jarawas after some time but at that time septs of Aka-Bea-da tribe were living in these areas.

[2] Ibid.

[3] The visiting Andamanese were taken round Calcutta. They were shown such places which interested them. Homfray and the Andamanese on their return were given a warm reception by a large number of Andamanese.

[4] Administration Report, 1865-66. Chapter on Aborigines.

[5] Portman, Vol. I, P. 506.

[6] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 48-50, August, 1866.

[7] Ibid, A Progs. No. 94-96, December, 1866.

[8] Ibid, A Progs. No. 2-3, February, 1867. Port Campbell : A harbour above Port Mouat on the west coast of South Andaman near Defence Island.

the Andamanese exhibits of fibre were awarded prizes.[1] During this month Homfray visited North Sentinel Island[2] for the first time. He was informed by the friendly Andamanese accompanying him that in the westward interior of that island, Little Andaman and other islands lying in the south of Rutland Island a hostile tribe known as 'Jurrahwallas' (Jarawas) lived. In May 1867 Homfray visited North Andaman island for the first time. His party was surprisingly attacked at Port Cornwallis by the aborigines of that place. Consequently, contact with the inhabitants of that island could not be made.[3] However the party was received in a friendly manner at interview Island by members of Kede tribe although this was the first visit paid to these people since Doctor Mouat had a hostile encounter with them in December, 1857. Immediately after his return from the islands in the north, Homfray proceeded to Little Andaman in an expedition for searching ship-wrecked mariners. The party was attacked by the aborigines of Little Andaman. Two members of the party were wounded before the Onges of Little Andaman could be frightened away by a volley of musketry.[5] Another expedition was sent in the same month to trace the sailors of the ship supposed to have been wrecked on the coast of Little Andaman. As soon as this party landed on Little Andaman, they were attacked by Onges in large numbers. The party also returned fire as a result of which about thirty aborigines were killed[6]. The party found bodies of four Europeans, evidently

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 21-22, July, 1867.

[2] North Sentinel Island : Situated in the south-west of South Andaman between 11th and 12th latitude and 92nd and 93rd longitude.

[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 75-76, August, 1867.

[4] Ibid. For Mouat's hostile encounter with the aborigines of Interview Island —Supra of Chapter III.

[5] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 75-76, August, 1867. This was the first visit to Little Andaman by the British authorities after the establishment of a penal settlement in 1858. The Onges who belong to the Southern group of Andamanese, inhabiting Little Andaman were hostile to every stranger during this period.

[6] Ibid. The number of aborigines killed in this expedition is estimated at thirty by Homfray. An Indian Zemadar who was with Homfray at that time stated that about one hundred were killed.

sailors of the wrecked ship 'Assam Valley' buried near the shore. The British authorities at Port Blair were, however, succesful in starting friendly relations with the Kol tribe. About eight members of the Kol tribe visited the Andaman Home for the first time in December, 1867.[1]

Beginning of sickness and increased mortality among the Andamanese

Although Homfray had progressed considerably in extending friendly relations to several tribes of Andamanese, a new problem confronted him. There was a great deal of sickness and many deaths among the Andamanese in the forests in June, 1866.[2] Out of the fifteen births that occurred in the Andaman Home from August, 1866 to October, 1866 not a single child survived.[3] The years 1867 and 1868 were also a period of sickness among the Andamanese.[4] The reasons for this abnormal increase of diseases and mortality among the aborigines of the Andamans at that time were as follows :

1. Due to the clearance of forests, the aborigines living in the vicinity of the newly established settlements fell an easy prey to malaria. This was admitted by Homfray himself.[5]

2. The Andamanese were forced to live in a different manner at the Andaman Home from one to which they were accustomed. They were forced to wear cloth and eat rice at the Home to which they were not used.[6] Even the diet given to them at the Home was scanty.[7]

3. The aborigines learnt vices at the Andaman Home. Several of them had acquired the habit of smoking tobacco.[8]

Homfray feared the gradual extinction of the aboriginal inhabitants of the Andamans. He wrote, "Extinction must conse-

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 144-47, 7 March, 1868.
[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 42-43, August, 1866.
[3] Ibid, A Progs, No. 118, February, 1867.
[4] Ibid, A Progs. No. 40-41, 29 August, 1868.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid, A Progs. No. 96-99, 26 September, 1868.
[8] Ibid, A Progs. No. 40-41, 29 August, 1868.

quently follow, which has already shown itself some years now and should be at once rooted out, otherwise it is no use trying to do them any kindness from which no good might be expected in return."[1] He also observed, "Civilization was not advancing as fast as he would wish it."[2] Homfray was also handicapped by the lack of funds. He could not proceed to several expeditions on account of shortage of money. He could not also pay his full attention to the aborigines as most of his time under the Superintendentship of Man (March, 1868—March, 1871) was spent in administering the settlement of Port Mouat.

Andaman Orphanage

Homfray was so much interested in the welfare of the Andamanese that he was spending on them from his own pocket.[3] He kept several Andamanese children at his home. In September, 1869 an Andamanese orphanage was established to look after these children.[4] In the absence of a sanction from the Government of India in the beginning for its expenditure, voluntary subscriptions were collected from the people residing in the settlement.[5] Subsequently a grant of Rs. 100·00 per month was sanctioned by the Government of India.[6] The above grant was not sufficient to meet the expenses of the orphanage[7] which was still dependent on charities. The Andamanese children were given instructions in the alphabets and in numeration. Efforts were made to teach them English but as most of their time was spent in the company of their Indian attendants, they learnt

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Br., A Progs. No. 118 February, 1867.

[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 144-47, 7 March, 1868.

[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 64-65A, 18 December, 1869.

[4] Portman, Vol. II, P. 846.

[5] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 45-47, 26 February, 1870.

[6] Ibid, A Progs. No. 58, 6 August, 1870.

[7] The name 'Andamanese Orphanage' given to this home is not appropriate. Among the Andamanese, no child becomes orphan even after the death of his parent. The other members of the sept look after him.

colloquial Hindustani.[1] Due to lack of proper official supervision, the aboriginal boys living at the Orphanage were learning many evils from their convict attendants who were closely associated with them. The Orphanage remained practically empty after 1874 as its inmates always ran away after staying there for a few days.[2] The conditions of restraint in which they had to pass their days in the Orphanage were not liked by them. Homfray's attempt to civilise a few Andamanese, when they were too young, did not succeed. Similarly his attempt to persuade adult Andamanese to learn and adopt cultivation was a failure. Although a few Andamanese staying at the Home helped the convicts in planting yams and bananas they did so under compulsion.[3]

Increasing mortality of Andamanese children at Andaman Home

Homfray continued his good work, inspite of lack of funds and time, in extending friendly relations to the interior tribes. In November and December, 1868 new men from Interview Island and Middle Andaman visited the Andaman Homes.[4] In February, 1869 Homfray visited Neil Island and found the aborigines friendly.[5] In June, 1870 several aborigines from Middle Andaman repeated a friendly visit.[6] Through them, aborigines from North Andaman visited the Homes for the first time.[7] Homfray was, however, not successful in making contacts with Jarawas, a hostile tribe. Duing this period his main worry was not to extend friendly relations with all tribes but to check the increasing mortality among the Andamanese at the Homes. From 1864 to 1870, "no less than 150 births had taken place at the Homes but none of the babies lived for more than two

1 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 14-15, 6 May, 1871.
2 Administration Report, 1874-75, P. 44.
3 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 54-55, 4 June, 1870.
4 Ibid, A Progs. No. 62-63, 20 February, 1869 and No. 34-35, 13 March, 1869.
5 Neil Island : A small island of the Eastern Archipelago situated in east of South Andaman between 11th and 12th latitude and 93rd and 94th longitude.
6 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 1-2, 10 September, 1870.
7 Ibid, A Progs. No. 107-108, 14 January, 1871.

years."[1] The death rate of the adult Andamanese had also increased to an abnormal extent. In order to check sickness among the aborigines, Homfray wanted to prohibit them from visiting Port Blair so that they may not be able to procure tobacco to which many of them were addicts.[2] He also discouraged the Andamanese from visiting other stations of the settlement in order to prevent intimacy between them and the convicts.[3] He allowed the aborigines to visit only six Homes established in forests by the authorities. His policy could not be put into practice before he relinquished charge of the aborigines in 1874.

Expeditions to befriend the interior tribes

Major General D. M. Stewart,[4] Superintendent of Port Blair (March 1871-75), took personal interest in extending friendly relations to the interior septs of the Andamanese. Before he could proceed on an expedition along with Homfray for this purpose, the Jarawas made an attack on some of convicts near McPherson Straits.[5] During 1873, Stewart along with Homfray made a tour round the coasts of the Andaman islands.[6] He had friendly meetings with aborigines of Stewart Sound and Port Cornwallis, and with septs of North Andaman living on the

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 31-32, 4 March, 1871.

[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 98-99, 29 October, 1870.

[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 31-32, 4 March, 1871.

[4] Stewart, Donald Martin (1824-1900) Field Marshal: Educated at Kings College, Aberdeen; Ensign Bengal Army, October, 1840; served during Mutiny; Chief Commissioner Andamans and Nicobars 1871-75; led Southern Army to Kandahar in Afghan War, 1878-80; Military Member of the Supreme Council, 1880-81; Commander-in-chief of India, 1881-85.

[5] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, A Progs. No. 7, August, 1873. Although the existence of the Jarawas was known to the authorities for a long time (Infra, of Chapter IV, Foot-note No. 1), yet no direct contact was established with them. This attack was the first meeting of the Jarawas and the settlers after 1858.

McPherson Straits is situated between Rutland and South Andaman Islands.

[6] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 34, May, 1873.

east coast.[1] Friendly relations with the Ar-Yauto sept of North Andaman were also cultivated.

The expeditions carried out in 1873 for befriending the Onges of Little Andaman did not succeed.[2] In their expedition in April 1873, the party led by Stewart could not find any of the aborigines in their huts which were evidently abandoned on their approach. The cause of the second expedition to Little Andaman in April, 1873, was the murder of five Burmese by aborigines on their island. These five persons were the crew of a junk trading between Moulmein and the Straits settlement and they had landed on Little Andaman in search of water. As soon as the expedition party landed on the shore it was attacked by the Onges. In this skirmish one member of the expedition was killed. The above party found proofs of the murder of Burmese sailors. As a punishment for their act of murder many huts of the Onges were burnt. The aborigines again attacked the party but were driven back by gunshots. In this skirmish about twelve Onges are reported to have been killed. One of the Onges was captured and taken to Port Blair.[3] Two Jarawas were captured at this time by Homfray's men. They were detained in the settlement for a fortnight during which they were treated with kindness and were released at the place of their captivity with presents.[4] In fact these prisoners were Onges and not Jarawas as supposed by Homfray. Hence this act had no effect on them and raids of the Jarawas on the settlement continued for a pretty long time.[5]

Stewart led another expedition to Little Andaman in April, 1874.[6] The party which included Homfray, while tracing the Onges on the shore was surprisingly attacked by them. In the

[1] Ibid, Stewart Sound ; the north-east coast of Middle Andaman.

[2] Administration Report, 1873-74, P. 12.

[3] Ibid. The captive Onge died shortly afterwards. Many unsuccessful attempts were made to learn his language. Inspite of kindness shown to him he gradually became ill and died of sickness. He always used to stare in the direction of his island and appeared to be pining away.

[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 7, August, 1873.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Administration Report, 1874-75, P. 43.

skirmish which ensued, one Onge was killed. In November, 1874, a visit was paid to Middle Andaman, Archipelago islands, Steward Sound and Interview island.[1] In this expedition friendship was established with a sept of Kede tribe living on the east Coast of Middle Andaman. A visit in December, 1874 to Port Cornwallis in North Andaman was unsuccessful as the inhabitants of this place showed such fierce determination to oppose the landing of the party that the idea had to be abandoned.[2] This was the last expedition in which Homfray took part as officer-in-charge of the Andamanese.[3]

Cases of syphilis among the Andamanese detected

Tuson who succeeded Homfray as incharge of the relations with the aborigines realised that the Andamanese inmates at the Andaman Homes were not liking the work on which they were employed. The Andamanese were, therefore, relieved of such work. The pleasure exhibited by them in reverting to their former life clearly indicated the impossibility of striving to keep a primitive nomadic people to a civilised and settled life. Unfortunately this fact was not appreciated by the Government of India and authorities of Port Blair who persisted in their efforts to induce them to adopt the ways of civilised life.[4]

In January 1875, Tuson noticed that an Andamanese woman at Andaman Home at Gopala-Ka-Bag[5] was suffering from a bubo. He suspected that it might be syphilitic but no further action was taken in this matter.[6] Tuson did not realise the magnitude of the disease which was prevalent among the Andamanese for the last three or four years. In February 1876 his

[1] Administratinn Report, 1874-75, p. 43.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Homfray was transferred to the Nicobars in December, 1874 for six months. On his return to Port Blair, he was posted as incharge of Ross Island. His interest in the aborigines of the Andamans continued till his death on 25 February, 1883.

[4] Portman, Vol. II, P. 602. Man, the successor of Tuson, made such attempts but it was soon felt by him that the Andamanese hated the work.

[5] Gopala-Ka-Bag : A convict settlement in South Andaman on the East Coast in the North of Port Blair.

[6] Portman, Vol. II, P. 597 and Administration Report, 1874-75, P 43.

successor Man discovered that some of the inmates at the Andaman Homes were suffering from syphilis.[1] As a result of an enquiry it was discovered that they were suffering from this disease for the last three or four years. They had contacted it from the convict-incharges of the Homes. A convict-officer named Shera proved to be the chief offender.[2] The Andamanese women had to yield themselves to their convict-officers who might have always threatened them with grave consequences in case this matter was brought to the notice of the British officers. It is also probable that some of those women might have been tempted by rewards offered by convicts. It must be, however, borne in mind that among the Andamanese there is no idea of chastity. 'Free love' is the rule among the unmarried women and even married women are far from chaste according to the moral standards of civilised people.

The authorities at Port Blair did not realise the extent to which the disease had spread among the race, though the fact that three years old children were infected with it showed that it must have been of some years' standing.[3] Although Man did all in his power to check the spread of this infectious disease by bringing the sick promptly and giving them all the care and attention that was possible,[4] the disease could not be checked as it had infected the members of distant tribes in Middle Andaman[5] besides the friendly tribes of South Andaman. The Andamanese who suffered from syphilis were afraid to bring their sickness to the notice of the authorities of Port Blair because they disliked the restraints put on them in the hospital. They were also prevented from telling about it by the convicts who were afraid of being punished.[6]

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, B Progs. No. 30, July, 1876.

[2] Ibid. Convict Shera was the Chief Officer of the Andaman Homes. He was declared to be suffering from syphilis in its worst form. He was attached to the Homes for many years without any suspicion against him. He died from the effects of this disease in the earlier part of 1876.

[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, B Progs. No. 30, July, 1876.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Portman, Vol. II, P. 605.

[6] Ibid, P. 606.

Spread of epidemics of Opthalmia and Measles

In addition to the constant preventive measures to check the spread of syphilis, Man was also busy in combating an epidemic of opthalmia which broke out among the Andamanese in July, 1876. It lasted till the end of the year and left many of the aborigines partially or entirely blind.[1] Hardly had he finished dealing with the epidemic of opthalmia, when measles broke out in March, 1877. It originated at the settlement of Port Blair among the convicts, some of who probably brought it from the mainland. The boys living in the Andaman Orphanage caught it and passed it on to their people before Man became aware of its existence.[2] Inspite of all precautionary measures to segregate the patients, they suffered so severely that before the epidemic had run its course no less than fifty-one deaths had occurred in the hospitals.[3] Unfortunately on the very day, the outbreak of measles was discovered by Man, a party of eighty Andamanese from Middle Andaman had mixed with other aborigines, among whom three were suffering from measles. Attempts were made to quarantine them but they fled to the forest carrying the infection with them. Many of the patients dreading the restraints also fled from the hospitals. Within three years, almost the whole of the population except the Jarawas, inhabiting the West Coast of South Andaman between Port Campbell and Middle Straits, had died of its effect.[4] The effect of this epidemic on the race of Andamanese was so serious that it can be said that from 1876 to 1878 at least half of the original inhabitants of Great Andaman islands died of measles.[5] The blame for the extinction of a large number of aborigines lie on the medical authorities of Ross Island where the measles originated. Due precautions were not taken by them to prevent the infection of the epidemic until it had been carried to different parts of the

[1] Administration Report, 1876-77, P. 29.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Portman, Vol. II, P. 610.

[4] Ibid, P. 614.

[5] Ibid.

islands.[1] Even Man. the Officer-in-charge of the Andamanese, was informed about the spread of epidemic by the authorities of Ross Island at a very late stage. The gradual extinction of the Andamanese race was now certain. Inspite of stringent measures and restrictions to save the remnant of the race no beneficial result could be obtained. Measles and syphilis spread throughout the islands and became the cause of the destruction of the race. According to Portman, "The epidemic of measles was the most serious disaster which has befallen the Andamanese. Owing to the effects of it our treatment of them underwent a change, all attempts to force them to settle down to an agricultural life were abandoned and our efforts were directed to keeping such of the race alive as we could, and to strengthening the constitutions of the delicate and syphilitic children."[2]

Beginning of the Jarawa raids

Apart from sickness, Man during his tenure of office (1874-79) as Incharge of the relations with the Andamanese, had chiefly to deal with the people of North and Middle Andaman and the Jarawas, who had commenced their raids on the settlement in 1873. In March, 1876, he visited the coasts of North and Middle Andaman and found the inhabitants of these places quite friendly. His next expedition in August, 1876 was to visit Barren Island, Narcondam, Port Cornwallis and Stewart Sound. At the last two places, he was surprised to notice the friendly attitude of the aborigines.[3] He visited these places again in November, 1876. The results of these two visits were extremely satisfactory considering the fact that two years ago it was not possible to land at Port Cornwallis without the fear of being attacked by the aborigines.[4] Some-time after, four aborigines from North Andaman visited the settlement and were kindly treated.[5] In September 1877,

[1] Portman, Vol. II, P. 614.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Administration Report, 1876-77, P. 29.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

'Chaur Mio' an aborigin of Kede tribe from the North west of the Middle Andaman visited the settlement. He was the first man from his sept to do so.[1] The friendly relations with the people of North and Middle Andaman was thus established by Man successfully. A visit of several septs from Middle Andaman during the next years proves his success in this direction.[2] He was, however, completely unsuccessful in inducing the Jarawas to give up their hostile attitude. In 1876, several expeditions were sent against the Jarawas. In these visits the Jarawas always fled from their huts before the arrival of the expedition parties. Although no contact with them could be established, presents were left in their abandoned huts as gestures of good-will.[3] It was, however, a wrong policy on the part of the British authorities to take away the belongings of the Jarawas from their huts. The presents in no way compensated them for the loss of their belongings as the use of such articles was not known to the Jarawas. Similar expeditions were carried out during the next two years under the command of Man[4] but no contact with the Jarawas could be established.[5]

Gradual extinction of Andamanese race due to the ravages of syphilis and other epidemics

The main duty of Portman, the officer-in-charge of

1 Administration Report, 1876-77, P. 29.

2 Ibid, 1878-79, P. 39.

3 Ibid, 1876-77 P. 29.

4 Man, E.H. : Officer-in-charge of the aborigines of the Andaman from 1874 to July, 1879. He was the first man to make a systematic study of the Andamanese during his stay in the Andamans. From 1882 onwards, he contributed several papers to the Anthropological Journal (See Bibliography) which were later on published in a book form under the title of 'Andaman Islander'. Although this book contains a few unimportant errors, it is the first account of the Andamanese race recorded in a scientific manner.

5 Administration Report, 1878-79, P. 39.

relations with the aborigines, for the next twenty-one[1] years was to attempt to cultivate friendly relations with the Onges and Jarawas who were still hostile and to save the remaining friendly tribes from extinction. Portman made frequent tours to the different groups of the Andaman islands to persuade the infected Andamanese to come to the hospital for treatment. During his first visit to the South, Middle and North Andaman in January 1880, he noticed that the whole coast was deserted as the majority of the people had died from the effect of measles.[2] Colonel Cadell (Superintendent Port Blair, 1878-92), Portman and Homfray during an expedition to Middle and Homfray Straits were very much struck with the diminution in the number of the aborigines due to ravages of syphilis and measles among them.[3] In his next visit to Stewart Sound in April 1880, Portman met a large number of Andamanese suffering from syphilis. Out of those diseased persons only a few could be induced to come to Port Blair for treatment.[4] Next year many more cases of syphilis were noticed in different parts of islands including North Andaman and North Sentinel Islands.[5] An estimate of intensity of the disease can be had from the observations of Cadell during this period. Cadell wrote to the Government of India, "The ravages among the inhabitants of the North Andaman are distressing to witness." He further observed, "It is feared that the disease has spread throughout the group of islands and that it will before many years are over, be the cause of the extermination of the aborigi-

[1] Portman remained incharge of the 'Andaman Homes' from 10th July 1879 to 1900 excepting for five brief intervals when he was on leave. The following officers worked in his absence on leave for the period noted against each :—

(i) Godwen Austen—16 Dec., 1880 to April, 1881, July 1881 to February, 1882.

(ii) O.H. Brooks—April, 1881 to July, 1881.

(iii) E.H. Man—May, 1883 to Oct., 1883.

(iv) Metcalfe—Oct., 1886 to March, 1888.

[2] Administration Report, 1879-80, P. 51.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid, P. 52.

[5] Ibid, 1880-81, P. 50-51.

nal inhabitants."[1] Symptoms of hereditary syphilis began to appear among the Andamanese children.[2] The population of the Andamanese race decreased every year. There were no Andamanese children coming up to fill the places of the old and middle aged who were dying in large numbers. The Government of India noticed with regret the gradual extinction of the Andamanese race and considered the matter "to be one which was beyond the powers of the Government to remedy."[3] However, the humane efforts of the authorities of Port Blair continued in inducing the diseased Andamanese to come to the hospitals for treatement. A tour of the east and west coast of Andaman islands was made in April-May 1884 for this purpose and many cases of syphilis were brought to the hospital.[4]

To make matters worse an epidemic of mumps attacked the Andamanese with all possible complications. It spread throughout the islands in August, 1886. Although no deaths occurred from it, this epidemic affected their already weakened constitution very much.[5] While the spread of syphilis among the Andamanese had not decreased even to a small extent, influenza in an epidemic form broke out in April, 1890 among them. The infection of this epidemic, like syphilis, was contacted from the convicts who appeared to have brought it from the mainland. It spread rapidly throughout the island.[6] The Andamanese could not resist the effects of influenza and died in large numbers.[7] Portman writing on the effects of influenza on the Andamanese observed in his report for 1890—91, "The present generation may be considered as the last of the aborigin's of the Great Andaman."[8] Another disease which attacked the Andamanese

[1] Administration Report, 1879-80, P. 51-52.
[2] Ibid, 1882-83, P. 62-65.
[3] Ibid, 1883-84, P. 70-77.
[4] Administration Report, 1883-84, P. 70-77.
[5] Portman, Vol. II, P. 669.
[6] Ibid, P. 673. The epidemic of Influenza originated in Russia. It spread in Asia during 1890. Convicts coming to these isolated islands brought the infection from India.
[7] Administration Report, 1890-91, P. 31-32.
[8] Portman, Vol. II, P. 673.

at this time was gonorrhea. It first spread in an Andaman Home in July, 1892.[1] Prompt measures were taken to separate the husband and wives and to treat them properly with the result that it was checked.

From 1875, the year of detection of syphilis among the Andamanese, the letters sent to the Government of India by the Superintendent of Port Blair and the Administration Reports of these islands are full of details of spread of syphilis and other epidemics among the Andamanese. Inspite of the best efforts of the authorities of Port Blair, the number of friendly Andamanese continued to dwindle. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Andamanese were only a sickly remnant of a race. The British authorities at Port Blair were forced to abandon all ideas of training them to agriculture or altering their mode of life. They had only one problem before them i.e. to keep alive such of the Andamanese as remained and to prevent, if possible the entire extinction of the race.[2]

Establishment of friendly relations with Onges

The greatest achievement of Portman during his tenure of office was his success in establishing friendly relations with the Onges of Little Andaman. The early history of relations with the Onges presented a series of fruitless attempts at conciliation.[3] The hostile attitude shown by the Onges in the expeditions of 1867, 1873 and 1874 were a source of much worry to the settlement authorities. Due to the outbreak of epidemics among friendly Andamanese, no attempt was made to cultivate friendly relations with the Onges for a number of years. In 1880, Portman renewed the efforts to befriend the Onges of Little Andaman. In March, 1880 Cadell and Portman paid a visit to Little Andaman.[4] At one place on the shore they were attacked by a large number of the Onges inspite of signs of friendship extended to them. In another visit to Little Andaman in Sep-

[1] Portman Vol. II, P. 684.
[2] Ibid, P. 699.
[3] Supra, Chapter IV.
[4] Administration Report, 1879--80, P. 52.

tember, 1880, they could not establish any contact with the Onges on account of their hostile attitude.[1] Surprisingly enough on their return they found the people of east coast exceedingly friendly. This was the first demonstration of friendship on the part of the Onges. Numerous presents were left behind to encourage peaceful intentions shown by this party of the Onges. The expedition party did not meet with the same kind of experience. A group of the Onges seen further up the coast attacked the party sent to meet them forcing them to retreat to the sea.

Portman now desired to capture few Onges for conciliating them with humane treatment and release them with presents as messengers of goodwill. With this object in view, the Superintendent, Port Blair visited Little Andaman Island in April, 1881 for a short time but did not succeed in his aim.[2] It was now realised that expeditions of short durations were not proving fruitful and that nothing but a lengthy stay at Little Andaman would give any prospect of success in the efforts to make friends with the Onges.[3] But the paucity of administrative staff in the Andamans did not make such a visit possible. Hence short visits were continued to be paid during the next three years. In these expeditions it was noticed that although the Onges had no hesitation in accepting the presents left for them, their bows and arrows were always handy.[4] A lengthy visit was paid in April, 1884 to several places in the island without coming into contact with its inhabitants.[5] It was followed by another expedition in November, 1884 with the same results.[6] In an expedition January, 1885, Cadell and Portman were able to capture one Onge youth of Little Andaman when a party of Onges surprisingly attacked them. An old Onge, who was taken to be

1 Administration Report, 1880-81, P. 51-52.
2 Ibid, 1881-82, P. 70.
3 Ibid.
4 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 63, Feb., 1885.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.

Jarawa was captured in South Cinque Island.[1] While returning from Little Andaman, the expedition party noticed a large party of the Onges in the above island. A rush was made on them by the members of the party and the whole party of the aborigines consisting of eight men, six women and ten children was captured.[2] Out of the twentyfive captives, the old man and other fifteen aborigines were released next day while the remaining four unmarried men, two married men with their wives and one child were taken to Port Blair. Portman believed that the captured party belonged to the Jarawa tribe as they talked to a captured Jarawa boy but subsequently it was found out that they were Onges who had come to Cinque Islands during their wanderings. By kind treatment and donation of many presents, the mistrust of the captured Onges was gradually overcome by Portman. They soon became very friendly to him. In his trip to Little Andaman in May, 1885, Portman released four Onges.[3] The rest were released in November, 1885 with suitable presents.[4] There is no doubt that after their release they must have conveyed their favourable impressions to fellow members of their tribe.

As a result of this friendly gesture, the period from December, 1885 to March, 1886 was of neutrality in the history of relations of the British and the Onges of Little Andaman. The people of Little Andaman were neither against the British authorities nor for them. They were unable to shake off their old hostility entirely and were in a state of mingled timidity and distrust. But the years 1886 and 1887 marked the definite conciliation of the tribe, the credit for which must go to Portman. He made several trips to Little Andaman and on one occasion stayed there for two and a half months, successfully accomplishing a coastline survey.[5] The Onges everywhere showed great

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 63, Feb., 1885. Cinque Islands : A small island situated on the South east of Rutland Island between 11th and 12th latitude and 92nd and 93rd longitude.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 69, June, 1885.

[4] Administration Report, 1885-86, P. 8.

[5] Ibid, 1885-86, P. 76-81 and 1886-87, P. 75-80.

friendliness to his party. During the course of this lengthy expedition, his party was attacked on one occasion only. In this attack which occurred in March 1887 one elderly Onge severely wounded an English sailor, who subsequently recovered. The reason for the assault being probably the man's disappointment at not having received any presents. This incident did not disturb the friendly relations with the Onges. During the next four years Portman made frequent visits to Little Andaman. In these visits presents were always offered to the Onges. On several occasions Onges youths were taken to Port Blair and after kind treatment were returned to their places with presents. Portman took for the first time four Onges to Calcutta with him in 1892.[1] Hereditary syphilis was also noticed to be prevalent among the Onges by Portman. This seems to be an incorrect statement of Portman. According to Doctor Hutton, Portman mistook yaws for syphilis.[2] As this tribe has not dwindled in numbers to a great extent like other tribes of the Andamans who were friendly to the British in the ninteenth century it can be assumed that Portman's conclusion was wrong. Recently the numbers of the Onges has decreased considerably on account of a variety of pulmonary diseases, malaria dysentry and skin diseases.[3] Attention is being paid to revitalise the dying race and schemes have been framed for achieving this object. The future of this friendly tribe is, however, difficult to predict.

The sentinelese, an off-shoot of the Onge-Jarawa tribe living in the North sentinel Island are extremely hostile like the Jarawas. Few visits were paid to these people, who never leave their island but either they ran away or showed hostility. Serious attempts to conciliate them has not been made so far on account of the distance of these islands situated about forty miles off the Western coast of the island of south Andaman. They also, for the same reason do not interfere in the activities of the people.

1 Administration Report, 1892-93, P. 42.

2 Dr. Hutton : He was the Census Commissioner of India in 1931. He toured these islands and published his conclusions in an appendix to Census Report of 1931.

3 Census Report, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 1961, Part IV and V, Page 105.

It can be said that this is the only Andamanese tribe which is pure as it has remained practically aloof from any type of contact with civilisation.

Hostility of the Jarawas

Portman was, however, not successful in taming the Jarawa tribe. Contact was first made with the Jarawa in 1790 during the foundation of the first settlement.[1] They then occupied the south side of Port Blair and strangely enough were more disposed to friendly relations with the settlement than with the Aka-Bea-da tribe who occupied the north side. On the foundation of the second settlement, the Jarawas owing to their decimation by disease introduced by Blair's men, had been ousted from the vicinity of the harbour by the Aka-Bea-da tribe.[2] The partiality shown by the administration to the Aka-Bea-da tribe provoked the Jarawas who became hostile to the settlement as well as to the above Andamanese tribe. The clearing of their jungle in the vicinity of Port Blair was also resented by them. These areas belonged to the Jarawa tribe who like other primitive people considered their territorial division to be sacred. The presence of this hostile tribe was first noticed by Homfray in 1863 during an expedition in South Andaman.[3] In the year 1872, the Jarawas made their first raid on the settlement.[4] From that day till the present day, scarcely a year has passed without raids being made on the settlement by them. Before Portman had taken over charge in 1879, several expeditions against the Jarawas had proved unsuccessful.[5] Portman tried to pursue the same policy with the Jarawas which was successfully followed by him in befriending the Onges of Little Andaman. Just after his taking over charge in 1879, he organised search parties to capture few Jarawas. In an expedition in January, 1880 his party was able to capture a Jarawa woman and four children. These captives were kindly treated at Port Blair and were releas-

[1] Supra Chapter III.
[2] Census Report, 1931, P. 14.
[3] Supra, Chapter IV.
[4] Supra, Chapter IV.
[5] Supra, Chapter IV.

ed after some time with presents.[1] A few days later, an old Jarawa with his wife and four children were taken as prisoners. They were kept at Portman's house for a few days. The old man and his wife soon died of sickness and the four children were released with gifts.[2] In May 1880 an Andamanese of Port Campbell was killed by Jarawas. Portman after a long search for Jarawas was able to capture an old man, three women, and six children who were taken to Port Blair. These prisoners soon fell ill and were released.[3] Several unsuccessful expeditions were undertaken by Portman in the last months of 1880 and the year 1881 to search for the Jarawas.[4] In 1882, the Jarawas gave more trouble by attacking the settlements. In April, 1882, two convicts were killed in forests by the Jarawas. In December, 1882, two other convicts lost their lives at the hand of the Jarawas.[5] Similar attacks on settlers who ventured far into jungles were made by the Jarawas in the subsequent years.[6] In the expeditions sent from 1883 to 1894 to trace such offenders several Jarawas were captured by the settlers. These prisoners were always released after kind treatment for a few days at the settlement at Port Blair. The policy, however, had no effect on the Jarawas. It was a great problem for the authorities of Port Blair to establish contacts with them.

At last Portman had to intensify his activities in meeting the menace of the Jarawas. From 1894 onwards parties of friendly Andamanese along with some convict officers were constantly sent to Jarawa areas near Port Blair. They were instructed to show signs of goodwill by leaving edibles and other articles liked by the Jarawas as presents in their huts. No signs of hostility was to be shown to them. During the

1 Administration Report, 1879-80, P. 53.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid, 1880-81, P. 50-52.
4 Ibid, 1881-82, P. 70-73.
5 Ibid, 1881-82, P. 70-73.
6 Ibid, 1882-83, P. 62, and 1883-84, P. 70-77.

last six years of his tenure of office (1894-1900), Portman[1] was again able to capture several young Jarawas. By his kind treatment he tried to convince them of the friendly attitude of the British so that after their release they may convey this impression to their tribesmen. All these efforts proved fruitless. The captured Jarawas invariably fell ill at Port Blair and consequently they had to be released within a very short period.

Hostility of the Jarawas increased

In the beginning of the twentieth century the intensity of the attacks of the Jarawas on the settlement increased considerably. In 1901, a convict was shot dead by the Jarawas with arrows and another was wounded.[2] The Census party of 1901 killed a Jarawa in self defence on account of his irreconcilably hostile attitude.[3] The raids of the Jarawas in November, 1901 and January, 1902 on convicts working in jungles compelled the Port Blair authorities to send Vaux on an expedition to discover their hiding places in the jungle. This expedition unfortunately resulted in his death.[4] It also proved that the attacks of the Jarawas were not accidental collisons but were deliberate attempts to kill the settlers. It also improved the knowledge of the settlement authorities about the interior of the Jarawa lands. In 1903, the Jarawas killed few convicts near Port Blair. A pursuit party sent to track out the offenders, burnt a few huts of the Jarawas as a punitive measure.[5] In 1905, a Bush-Police of selected friendly Andamanese was formed with

[1] After the retirement of Portman in 1900, the Andaman Homes came under the administrative charge of the Deputy Commissioner, Port Blair. P. Vaux, who took charge from Portman was killed in a skirmish with the Jarawas in 1902. After him C.G. Rogers remained in charge of the Andamanese till 1903 when M.C.C. Bonnington took charge. In 1905 the reorganisation of the official set up in the Andamans reduced the number of five Assistants to two and consequently no officer could be deputed to look after the Andamanese. The remaining two officers had no time to take special interest in the affairs of the aborigines.

[2] Administration Report, 1900-01, p. 36-37.

[3] Ibid, 1901-02, p. 43-44.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid, 1903-04, p. 34-35.

a Burmese Jemadar as Incharge to be always ready to hunt the Jarawas and runaway convicts.[1] In 1908, orders were issued that the convicts should not be employed in jungles at distances from the settlement and in proximity to the Jarawa country unless escorted by police.[2] During 1909 and 1910 the Jarawas were more hostile than ever. On six different occasions between April 1909 and March 1910 they attacked the convicts and killed four convicts and one policeman. Three convicts and one policeman were injured in these attacks.[3] A punitive expedition, first of its kind, traversed the Jarawa territory from one end to another, visited almost all of their habitations and destroyed many communal huts of the Jarawas. Although the hostile activities of the Jarawas were checked for some time as a result of this retaliatory measure,[4] their hatred towards the settlers increased considerably. In 1907 they made a number of daring raids. In one of such raids a tram carrying timber on the Gopalakabag steam tram line was held up.[5] The British authorities of Port Blair did not realise the harmful effects of the punitive expedition of 1910 and sent another such expedition in 1918. Again the Jarawas did not trouble the settlers for two years but in the winter of 1920 they were as active as ever.[6] On one occasion the Jarawas attacked a camp of convicts employed on collecting canes in a part of the country which had always been looked upon as well outside the territorial limits of the hostile tribe. In this attack they killed five men and wounded three.[7] Another punitive expedition organised in the spring of 1921 made the Jarawas more hostile. They now began to come into the settlement and waylaid people on the roads and in the fields. In the next three years twenty-one convict settlers were killed by them.[8] The menace grew so

1 Ibid, 1905-06, p. 47-49.
2 Ibid, 1908-09, p. 43-44.
3 Administration Report, 1909-10, p. 44-45.
4 Census Report, 1921, p. 5.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid, 1931, p. 15.

grave that a punitive expedition on a large scale was sent in 1925.[1] The expedition party was divided into number of patrols which started operations simultaneously at several places. During the four months of their stay in the Jarawa territory, these patrols came into contact with the hostile aborigines on four occasions. In this expedition the party claimed to have shot thirty seven Jarawas.[2] This expedition also did not overawe the Jarawas who continued their raids on the settlement. Henceforth, all the convicts and guards living in the forest camps in the Jarawa territory were armed. Fortunately there were no raids in 1930 and 1931 probably because the Jarawas found the men in the vicinity invariably armed. But as soon as they found an unarmed party or an individual they did not lose an opportunity to attack them.[3] The Jarawas continue to raid the settlement in the above manner uptil now. Seventy six encounters have taken place between 1946 and 1961 in which fifteen lives were lost on the side of the settlement and many Jarawas were killed.[4] Even the national Government of India has not been able to win over this hostile tribe. Efforts are being made to win them over by gifts of goodwill dropped in the areas inhabited by them.[5] In order to restrict the Jarawas in their homes and prevent their incursions into the inhabited area, a string of fourteen Bush Police posts with a strength of 140 men was established along the eastern harbour of their area.[6] From the above account of the relations with the Jarawas since the beginning of this century it is apparent that the British authorities of Port Blair had pursued an entirely wrong policy in sending expeditions to punish the Jarawas. Had Portman's policy of sending friendly expeditions and treating kindly the captured Jarawas been followed for a longer period,

[1] Ibid.

[2] Census Report, 1931. p. 15.

[3] Ibid, 1931, p. 16.

[4] Ibid, 1961, Part IV and V p. 104.

[5] Andaman & Nicobar Second Five Year Plan : Proposals for the development plan for 1959-60, p. 103-04.

[6] 'The Andaman & Nicobar Islands'—Publication Division—Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. (1957) p. 13.

perhaps the Jarawas like the Onges would have been a friendly tribe long ago. However, it is now hoped that a conciliation would be soon effected with this tribe who was kept away from the civilisation so far.

Change of policy towards the Andamanese after Portman

After the retirement of Portman there was a change in the policy to be followed towards the Andamanese specially towards those who visited the Andaman Home. Portman had attached less value to the Andaman Homes than his predecessors. He had kept many Andamanese at his house during twenty years he remained incharge of the Andamanese. In his opinion education was a failure with the Andamanese as they always tended to relapse into their savage state. Portman also maintained that they were sounder morally and physically either when they were in their primary savage state or when they relapsed back to it. He considered the Homes which were established with best of intentions to be most deleterious, for in them the Andamanese learnt to smoke, contracted new diseases and were given new food to which they were unaccustomed.[1] Although the Homes in the settlement were not closed entirely, the policy adopted after Portman's departure was to enforce several restrictions upon the inmates of the Homes so as to discourage them in acquiring bad habits from convicts. In 1906 instructions were issued that gifts in cash and kind to an Andamanese should not be made without the permission of officer-in-charge.[2] Sir Reginald Craddock in his inspection report of 1914 doubted very much whether present methods were really civilising the Andamanese to any profit. In his opinion "it is quite impossible for them to improve either physically or morally under such a system and the sooner they are brought under a mission the better."[3] His proposals of placing them under a mission were not accepted by the Government of India. The Government after a review of the existing position decided that care

1 Portman, Vol. II, p. 874.
2 Administration Report, 1906-07, p. 41-42.
3 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 34, April, 1914.

should be exercised in not repeating the mistakes of the past. They outlined a new policy to be followed towards the Andamanese which was based upon the following principles :[1]

Firstly, the contacts of the aborigines with the convicts should be avoided, as far as possible.

Secondly, attempts to educate them should be of the simplest and most natural character.

Thirdly, they should be allowed to continue in the surroundings to which they are accustomed and in which they remain physically and morally fit. They should be allowed to follow the same occupations. Attempts at change and reform should be made with extreme caution.

Fourthly, it was desired that they may be isolated in reserved areas.

Abnormal decrease in the population of the Andamanese

In pursuance of the above policy all the Homes except one at Dundas Point in Port Blair were closed[2]. This Home was maintained to serve as the headquarters of the Bush Police consisting of the friendly Andamanese and other aborigines were not allowed to visit it. The friendly aborigines were requested to stop their visits to Port Blair.[3] In case they wanted to make any contact with the civilisation, they were instructed to visit a forest settlement at Bonnington in South Andaman. As a result of these measures, the number of the Andamanese residing at the Andaman Homes gradually decreased. In 1924-25, the daily average of the Andamanese taking their meals in the Home was only ten as compared to a daily average of 49·87 in 1915-16 and 34.9 in 1922-23. Within five years of 1920 the admissions of sickly aborigines in the hospitals of the settlement also dropped from 50 to nil.[4]

Unfortunately all these belated efforts could not save the race from gradual extinction. The devastating fall in the

[1] Ibid, A Progs. No. 32, October, 1914.
[2] Administration Report, 1914-15, p. 39.
[3] Administration Report, 1922-23, p. 4.
[4] Ibid, 1925-26, p. 4.

numbers of the Andamanese after their contact with civilisation can be measured from the following table.

Estimated Number in

Sl. No.	Tribe	1858	1883	1901	1911	1921	1931	1951
1.	Chariar	100		39	36	17	9	
2.	Kora	500		96	71	48	24	
3.	Toba	200		48	62	18	6	
4.	Yere	700		218	180	101	46	
5.	Kede	500	2,000	59	34	6	2	33
6.	Juwai	300		48	9	5	—	
7.	Kol	100		11	2	—	—	
8.	Bojigyab	300		50	36	9	1	
9.	Bea	500		37	10	1	—	
10.	Balawa	300		19	15	4	2	
11.	Onges	700	1,250	672	631	346	250	150
12.	Jarawa	600		585	231	231	120	50
	Total:	4,800	3,250	1,882	1,317	786	460	233

Note: Portman estimated the total numbers of the aborigines in 1858 to be 8,000 but Sir Richard Temple regarded it as too high. In his Census Report of 1901, Temple estimated it to be 4,800. The figures for 1883 are based on an estimate of E.H.Man. The figures for 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931 and 1951 are taken from the Census Reports of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands for their respective years. In the Census Report of 1951, the total figure is given as 233. As a result of subsequent investigations, it has been estimated as 1,000. All the figures of the Census Reports are based on certain datas instead of actual enumeration, it can be presumed that the figures of previous Census Reports are also comparatively less.

The distribution of population of various tribes found in these islands in 1961 is as follows :[1]

	Tribal Community	Population	Remarks
1.	Andamanese (other than three tribes noted below)	19	Living in great Andaman alongwith civilised population.
2.	Jarawas (hostile)	500	(Estimated) living in the Western coast of Middle and South Andaman.
3.	Onges	129	Living in little Andaman.
4.	Sentinelese (hostile)	50	(Estimated) living in North Sentinel Islands.

In the present remnants of Great Andamanese only six out of twelve tribes are represented. Among them a great change has taken place during the last decade. Although sub-tribal affiliations are still recognised, these are no more valid for social and marital relations. Now marriages and social contacts freely take place among the sub-tribes and sometimes even with outsiders particularly Burmans. It will not be surprising if most of the present Andamanese turn out to be half castes.[2]

The social and religious life of the present Great Andamanese is completely disorganised.[3] The special characteristics of their life *viz.* communal huts, communal dances, feasts and festivals, folk lores, traditions and ancient customs are gradually forgotten. There is practically no social cohesion among them as they live as isolated bits of humanity. Their close

[1] Census Report, Andamans & Nicobar Islands. 1961, Part IV and V, p. 102.

[2] Ibid, p. 103.

[3] Ibid, p. 103.

contacts with the Burmese have influenced them to a great extent.

The number of effective procreating adults and birth rate among them is still alarmingly low. The fear of their extinction still exists.

Review of the British policy towards the aborigines

A review of the British policy regarding the Andamanese keeping in view their objects is essential after the study of their relations with the aborigines of the Andamans. The objects of the British Government of India in establishing friendly relations with the Andamanese appear to be threefold, *viz.* :—

Firstly, to save the mariners of wrecked ships from massacre at the hands of aborigines.[1]

Secondly, before friendly relations were established with all tribes of the Andamans it was necessary to protect the settlers at port Blair from the attack of the Andamanese in order to maintain progress in the settlement,[2] and

Thirdly, the British Government also considered it a sacred duty to bring the Andamanese, who had become British subjects from the low scales of civilisation to the comforts and advantages of civilised life.[3]

Through the Andaman Homes the British succeeded in establishing good relations with all the Andamanese tribes except the Jarawas. The cases of attack on mariners of wrecked ships on the Andamanese coast or the attacks of aborigines on helpless convicts became a thing of the past in the twentieth century except the sporadic attacks of the Jarawas. But the British could not succeed in civilizing the community of hunters and fishers. The effects of Andaman Home on the Andamanese race were disastrous. As a result of their contact with civilisation through the Andaman Homes some of the friendly tribes *viz.* Juwai, Kol, Balawa, Bojigyab are now extinct

[1] Supra, p. 72, Chapter III.

[2] Court of Directors' despatch No. 19 of 1858 in the Political Deptt., dated 18.5.58.

[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 10. 6 July, 1858.

while the numbers of the remaining tribes except the Onges and the Jarawas is steadily declining. Von Eickstedt has, therefore, rightly observed that "The Andaman Home was the door of death to the Andamanese race."[1] The validity of the above conclusion of Von Eickstedt is apparent from the following study of the causes of the destruction of the Andamanese race.

Infant mortality among the Andamanese

The first cause of gradual extinction of Andamanese race as a result of British policy was the increase in infant mortality. The surroundings of the Andaman Homes had a harmful effect on the vitality of the Andamanese infants. The high infant mortality among the children born at the Andaman Home during the Homfray's time was noticed with regret by him.[2] It was attributed to the extraordinary conditions under which women were living at that time in the Home. Portman's orders some years later to send pregnant women from the Homes to give birth to children under natural conditions in the jungles where the infants had a better chance of survival clearly proves that the British authorities recognised the harmful effects of the contact of the civilisation on the Andamanese race.[3] But even then in their own interests they did not leave the Andmanese to live in isolation.

Increasing sterility among the Andamanese

Besides the increase in infant mortality, the Andaman Homes were responsible for increasing sterility among the race. It is probable that the Andamanese were at no times prolific. There was probably always a tendency towards infertility as a preventive to over population but this natural tendency was aggravated to an alarming extent by the introduction of sy-

[1] Census Report. 1951, Appendix A. p. XLVI. Von Eickstedt is a German Anthropologist who visited the Andamans in the beginning of the twentieth century.

[2] Supra, Chapter IV.

[3] Portman, Vol. II, p. 862.

hilis in the Homes through convicts. Although the existence of syphilis was first discovered among the Andamanese in 1875, sufficient measures were not taken immediately to prevent the spread of the disease among the aborigines of these islands.[1] Similarly the authorities of Ross Island were not vigilant in the beginning to prevent the spread of the infection of measles among the Andamanese. Actually these diseases got a firmer hold on the aborigines than was at first suspected by the British authorities. As was to be anticipated in the case of a race like the Andamanese who are ignorant and careless of consequences and among whom sexual relations before marriage are unrestricted, syphilis spread very rapidly—principally among the Bojigngiji group and the tribes in the North. As a result of the spread of this veneral disease sterility was more or less universal among them. Consequently the number of births were very few among them and even those born could not survive long.

Increase in death rate

The third cause of the extinction of the race was the increase in death rate among the adult Andamanese. It was due partly to the unfortunate effects of civilisation on them but principally to the introduction of contagious and hereditary diseases as syphilis and pulmonary complaints. There is no doubt that these diseases were contacted at the Homes. It is a well known fact that up to 1876, the population of the Andamanese was not so much adversely affected. After this year as a result of introduction of measles among them through the Homes there was a sudden and considerable drop in their numbers. This decline grew rapid as these diseases gained a firmer hold on the race. Perhaps under natural conditions the Andamanese would have recovered from the effects of these epidemics and regained their former numbers. It was realised too late that the Andaman Home was a sort of prison to these nomadic tribes and the normal habits of the aborigines were just the opposite of what was being inducted to them. Before a change

[1] Supra, Chapter IV.

in the policy was made, the decline was so rapid that there was no doubt that many of the tribes will disappear with the next generation or at the most two. Efforts to dissuade the Andamanese from visiting the Homes were taken as late as 1914 and even then the Homes were not closed.[1]

Learning of vices by the Andamanese from convicts

The Andamanese by their contact with civilisation through Homes acquired certain bad habits. In these Homes they learnt to smoke, to drink and to take opium, when they could get it. According to Major Wooley excessive tobacco smoking to which both sexes of the Andamanese were equally addicted was a cause contributing to the high death rate among them.[2] Inspite of frequent protests by the different officers-in-charge of the Andamanese the temporary residents and visitors gave money to the Andamanese with which they purchased these intoxicating drugs. Orders of Chief Commissioner in 1895 making it a penal offence to sell intoxicants to the Andamanese stopped this evil to a certain extent,[3] but even then liquor was given to them by officials who should have realised the effects of their action better than other people.[4] The officials of Port Blair, acting in such an irresponsible manner cannot be absolved fully from the responsibility of expediting the decline of the aboriginals of Andaman islands. However, inspite of this irresponsible action of officers, the whole blame cannot be put on their shoulders. Even if these people had been prevented to give money to the Andamanese, matters would not have been so much different. In the Homes the Andamanese would have acquired vicious habits from convicts with whom they were regularly coming into contact. The authorities at Port Blair in civilising the Andamanese should have taken care

[1] Administration Report, 1914-15, p. 13.

[2] Census Report, Andamans & Nicobars, 1911, p. 22. Major Wooley was the Senior Medical Officer of Port Blair in 1911.

[3] Settlement Order of the Chief Commissioner of Andamans cited in Portman, Vol. II, p. 870-71.

[4] Portman, Vol. II, p. 870.

from the very beginning to avoid their intermingling with convicts most of whom were persons of bad character. From the convict officers of the Homes the aborigines learnt all these bad habits and contacted diseases which led to their ruin.

Effect of clothing and shelter

In the Andaman Homes the Andamanese acquired other habits which if not exactly bad in themselves had disastrous effects on the physique of the race. By nature the Andamanese goes naked and is habituated to live in a rude shelter of leaves which gives access to fresh air affording him best possible protection from wind and rain. At the Homes which they visited from time to time, they were housed in civilised dwellings. These dwellings were, however, draughty without being well ventilated. The stay of the aborigines in such dwellings adversely affected their health. In these Homes they were encouraged to wear clothing and use blankets which proved undoubtedly harmful to their constitution in the long run. They felt the need of them when they returned to forest life and consequently fell easy prey to pulmonary and bronchial complaints which tended to encourage higher rate of mortality than was natural in the race.

Natural causes of increased mortality

Although the Andaman Homes were responsible for expediting the extinction of the Andamanese race, it must be borne in mind that there were other factors already in operation which contributed towards high death rate among them. The absence of any fresh blood among them and their continued in-breeding due to their isolation for centuries together weakened their constitutions.[1] According to an accepted theory a race which does nothing towards increasing or conserving the natural food supply of the country which it occupies, and has at the same time to live on what it can get out of the country, requires a very large area per head of popu-

[1] Portman, Vol. II, p. 874.

lation to wander if every man is to get enough by hunting and fishing.[1] In such cases if the area over which the race can spread is restricted, it is expected that nature provides some automatic check on overpopulation. Some such natural check existed among the Andamanese, whose area is restricted, is proved by the fact that they have never resorted to artificial means of preventing overpopulation, such as polyandry, child murder, or the procuring of abortion.[2] In the absence of vital statistics it is impossible to say what form this check took, but the end was probably achieved through a high death rate, and a tendency towards sterility. Probably the former was the principal factor. However, it cannot be denied that when the Andamanese came into contact with the civilisation and were admitted in the air of the outside world they lost their vitality which was perhaps wholly dependant on being untouched. The immediate result was the enormous reduction in the numbers of the friendly tribes. The Onges and the hostile Jarawas who have come in less contact with civilisation did not suffer from the rapid decline in population.

Defence of British policy in the Andamans—'Andaman Home' the only method for befriending the Andamanese

Some officials of Andamans in order to meet the criticism of Von Eickstedt regarding the Andaman Home advocated that the efforts to conciliate and befriend the Andamanese and to maintain a close contact with them could not have been achieved without some such institution as the Home. According to them this method was without alternative. In support of their contention the case of the Onges was cited by them. With the exception of one or two septs of the North East coast of Little Andaman the Onges, who had become friendly in the last decades of the nineteenth century, could not be trusted regarding the safety of ship-wrecked sailors although at the time of visits of the officials to their islands these responded in friendly manner. Confidence in all the septs of the Onges

[1] Census Report, Andaman & Nicobars, 1921, p. 14.
[2] Ibid.

could only be gained when they began to visit the Homes. Contrary to this more than half of the west coast of Great Andaman inhabited by the Jarawas and the coast of North Sentinel is still unsafe because the people of these areas could not be induced to visit the Homes. The only safe places where any assistance is given to distressed sailors are those parts, which are populated by the friendly tribes of Great Andaman who were encouraged to visit the Homes. The advocates of this contention, however, forget that the relations with the Onges, even without the aid of Homes have considerably improved during the last two decades. Doctor Cipriani lived with the Onges in Little Andaman for about three months in 1953 and moved freely all over the island.[1] An expedition was recently welcomed by the Onges.[2] Such improved relations with the Onges indicate that the method was not without alternative.[3]

Tendencies of revival generally noticed among aboriginals after decline

Another defence can be put forward in support of the British policy. Previous experiences of contacts of aborigines with advanced culture proved that at first in all cases these contacts result in a serious decline of population among them. In case the particular tribe which came into contact with civilisation was fortunate enough to be saved from extermination for a period long enough to adopt itself to the change in its environments, the tendency of decline seemed to give way to one of increase in its case. The aborigines of Tasmania became extinct in this process while the Maoris of New Zealand after a decline in population gradually revived. It was, therefore, a risk worth taking. It was also felt by the British authorities that in the case of Andamanese the period required for adaptation and revival was likely to be abnormally prolonged as compared to Maoris of New Zealand on account of the

1 Census Report, 1951, Introduction, p. X.
2 Andaman and Nicobar Information, June 1957, p. 1-10.
3 Census Report, 1951, Appendix A, p. XLVI.

exceedingly long period during which these islands remained isolated in a peculiar environment of their own. Unfortunately such tendencies are not at all visible in the case of the Andamanese. There are practically no hopes of revival of the tribes who were friendly to the British. Hence the failure of the British policy towards the Andamanese is beyond any doubt and the above contention seems to be an after-thought. This failure of the British policy in the Andamans has been candidly admitted by Bonnington, a British officer of the Andaman establishment. In his opinion, "the well-meaning attempts to civilise the Andamanese were contrary to the experience." According to him, "local history and general experience elsewhere clearly showed that once a contact with civilisation is established the dying out of a primitive race like the Negrito is apt to follow in due course."[1]

In order to place a just value on the successful efforts of the British authorities at Port Blair in establishing friendly relations with the Andamanese through the Homes it cannot be denied that their policy was considerably humane and tolerant. Although they were guided by selfish motives *viz.* that of protecting the residents of a settlement established for strategic reasons in these tropical oceanic regions and of saving passengers of wrecked ships from massacre by the aborigines, they always tried to improve the conditions of the aboriginal inhabitants of these islands. If their policy has been disastrous in results the fault is traceable, not to neglect but to the over-enthusiasm shown by them in bringing the inhabitants of the Andaman into the orbit of civilisation. The officers of the Andamans at Port Blair, in their zeal, tried to effect a rapid change in the environment and habits of the people of the Andamans, and did not realise for a long time that the consequences of such an action was harmful. The greatest mistake committed by them in carrying out this policy was to place the convicts in charge of the Andamanese visiting the settlement in a friendly manner. It made the failure of their policy of

[1] Census Report, 1931, p. 14.

[1] Infra, Chapter X for suggestions to save the Andamanese race from extinction.

enlightened selfishness certain and resulted in the ruin of the Andamanese race.

Slight chances of regeneration of the Andamanese race

In less than a century of the establishment of a settlement in the Andamans, the number of aborigines in these islands have decreased to an appalling extent. The British Government in India cannot completely absolve itself of the responsibility of the annihilation of a thriving community. The thorough attempt made by them to domesticate this roving community of hunters and fishers, directly opposed to their ingrained habits, met with devastating results. By the time the Government of India realised the harmful effects of their policy, innumerable disease-spreading bacilli had already gained a firm foothold among the organism of the Andamanese and their ruin, both physical and spiritual, was almost complete. The eventual disappearance of some of the tribes *viz.* Juwai, Koi, Bojigyab, Balawa and Bea is merely a matter of time and the extinction of other five tribes *viz.* Chariar, Kora, Toba, Yere and Kede may take a generation or two. If the Jarawas and the Onges are kept away from the civilisation, probably they may form a nucleus for the repopulation of the islands in future by their original inhabitants. But, however, philanthrophic the administration may be, perhaps it would be impossible for it to continue for ever the forbearing attitude towards the Jarawas if it continues to be, as it is at present, a constant menace to the inoffensive settlers living in these islands. It seems inevitable that with the spread of civilisation in the vicinity of Port Blair, where the hostile tribe of the Jarawas resides, a time would come soon when this tribe will also disappear either by their contact with civilisation or by their continued hostility. The chances of regeneration of the Andamanese as a race are not very bright.

FIVE

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY OF THE PENAL SETTLEMENT IN THE ANDAMANS

Opening of a penal Settlement at Port Blair

One of the main objects of establishing a penal settlement at Port Blair in the Andaman islands was to segregate a large number of 'mutineers' who were sentenced to transportation for life. This system of transporting Indian prisoners overseas was not a new feature of the British administration in India. It had been in vogue since a very early period of British rule in India. As far back as 1787, Indian convicts were sent to Bencoolen in Sumatra, then in British hands to develop that island. On the transfer of Sumatra to Dutch in 1825, such convicts were sent to Singapore and Penang in the Straits. Penal settlements were also opened for Indian convicts in Arracan and Tennesarim, the territories ceded to the British in 1826 by the Burmese ruler. Sir Stamford Raffles[1], Governor of Sumatra, intimated to the Government of India in a despatch of 1818, certain principles which he had successfully adopted for the management of the convicts in Bencoolen[2]. The salient features of his system were—the employment of convicts in any place on any kind of labour necessary for a self-supporting community ; their control by convicts selected from among themselves ; and permission to convicts to marry and settle down in the penal settlement after a given period. On the basis of the rules made by Sir Stamford

[1] Raffles, Thomas Stamford (1781-1826) : appointed as clerk in India House at the age of 14, Assistant Secretary in E.I. Company's service at Pulo Pelang in 1805, Secy. 1807, Lt. Governor of Java 1811, appointed also resident at Bencoolen in 1813, Governor of Bencoolen 1815, retired 1824, wrote History of Java. Buckland, p. 347.

[2] Census Report, 1901, Appendix A, p. 365.

Raffles in Sumatra 'Penang Rules' were framed in 1827 in the convict settlement of Prince of Wales Island. These rules were also followed in the penal settlement of Singapore with minor modifications.

At this time the utility of transportation as a punishment was being questioned by eminent authorities in India. The Indian Law Commission of 1837 expressed an opinion that transportation, when prescribed should be provided for a life rather than a term. The Commission incorporated the above condition in their draft Penal Code. The Committee of Prison Discipline of 1838 agreed with the above opinion of the Indian Law Commission and observed, "that the dread which transportation inspired arose chiefly from the mystery overhanging the convict's fate."[1] In their second report of 24 June, 1847 the Indian Law Commission, however, admitted that the punishment of transportation was no longer regarded as formidable as it used to be some time ago but the Commission was still inclined to restrict the punishment of transportation for life-convicts only. The question was thus settled for the time being. But in the next decade due to 'mutiny' in India, the Government of India found it difficult to accommodate a large number of mutineers in the Straits Settlement and at Moulemein because these places were already overcrowded. This problem forced the Government of India to search for another place where convicts could be deported from India. As we have already seen the choice finally fell upon the Andamans.[2] Before studying the penal system in the Andamans, it would be worthwhile to study in brief the administrative history of the penal settlement, which is merely one of official development, as it would facilitate in the proper understanding of the system of management of the convicts which came into existence in the settlement of Port Blair.

Escape of convicts in large numbers

Captain Man, who had considerable experience of convict

[1] Remarks of the Indian Law Commission Report cited in the N.A.I. Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 28-40, July 1906.

[2] Supra, Chapter, II.

management in Mouleimeiss and other places was appointed as Officer-in-charge of the penal settlement at Port Blair. He was instructed to proceed to Port Blair for laying down the details of a plan for the location, employment and control of the convicts.[1] He was vested with full judicial and executive authority over the whole of Andaman islands.[2] Man remained in this position for only two months. On Doctor Mouat's nomination, James Pattison Walker, an experienced superintendent of jails was selected to be the first superintendent to the Penal settlement at Port Blair[3]. Walker arrived in the settlement on 10 March, 1858 with four European officers and 733 convicts. He cleared the forest in Chatham island and started clearing the forests near Port Blair. He fixed headquarters at Ross island,[4] where they have been ever since. He had to work under enormous difficulties. He had to deal with the problem of continued attempts of escape by the convicts and repeated attacks of the Andamanese on the settlers engaged in clearing the jungles. During March and April, 1858, 228 convicts escaped from the settlement out of which 88 were recaptured and the rest remained at large.[5] 86 of the recaptured prisoners were executed, one was forgiven and one was not tried on account of sickness. According to accounts of the recaptured convicts, it was believed that majority of those who had escaped, were massacred by the aborigines or expired due to starvation and disease. In order to prevent escape and subsequent death, Walker dealt with the escaped convicts very severely as would appear from the fact that 86 escaped convicts were executed under his order on one day. The Government of India, however, did not approve this action of Walker. They were of the opinion, "That the return of so many of these run-aways, to meet any fate that might await them in the settlement after realising the hopelessness of living away from the settlement ; would, if they had been allowed to live,

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, A Progs. No. 21, 15 Jan., 1858.

[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 23, 15 January, 1858.

[3] A list of the heads of administration in the Andamans and Nicobars is given in Appendix I.

[4] Ross island : An island in South Andaman near Port Blair.

[5] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, A Progs. No. 66, July 1858.

have acted as a more certain and permanent warning to the other convicts than the executions of the whole of them.[1]" Walker was also censured for giving provocation to the aborigines who had made repeated attacks on the settlement during his tenure of office.[2] Although Walker's policy of the treatment of the escaped convicts and the aborigines was not approved by the Government it must be said in his defence that he was working under a great pressure during these day. He was under constant threat to his life from the convicts.

Plot of convicts to end British authority at Port Blair

A plot hatched by Panjabi convicts to put an end to the British authority in the Andamans was followed by Walker as he was fortunate in receiving prior intimation about it.[3] The incident occurred on 1 April, 1859. About two hundred convicts hatched a conspiracy to capture power in the Andamans by murdering Walker, his Indian Overseer, Muttra Das and the naval guard. One Panjabi convict named Moti Ram gave prior intimation of the plot to Walker who made necessary arrangements for his safety. The attack of the conspirators began in the afternoon. A convict named Sarvar Shah was caught by Muttra Das when he was aiming at Walker with a gun. In the meantime, another convict named Nuzzer Mohammad attacked Muttra Das. Muttra Das fell unconscious and could not prevent Nuzzer Mohammad from proceeding towards the direction of Walker. Walker realising his unsafe position rushed towards Nuzzer Mohammad but had to retreat as the above convict was in a better position. Walker fled outside from his office pursued by Nuzzer Mohammad. He was saved by two gangsmen convicts, who captured Nuzzer Mohammad. Sarvar Shah was also caught. Other conspirators, who did not take an active part, were also apprehended. In this conspiracy only such convicts who were transported to Port Blair for criminal offences were involved. Prisoners sent to the Andamans for taking part in

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt. Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 10, 16 July, 1858.
[2] Supra, Chapter IV.
[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 32, 29 July, 1859.

the 'mutiny' did not associate themselves with the criminals.

Under such circumstances, Walker was obliged to resort to sterner measures. Moreover, it can be easily understood that immediately after the 'mutiny', British officers who had served through that awful time of trial, could not be expected to treat a body of convicted rebels with any undue leniency[1].

Milder policy towards convicts

Captain Haughton took over charge from Walker on 3 October, 1859. The escape of the convicts were still numerous in the beginning of his terms of office but gradually owing to his milder method of treatment and his general kindness the number of escapes became fewer. By this time the convicts were also convinced that the only result of an escape from the settlement was the sacrifice of their lives in the jungles of the Andamans. Haughton's policy towards the convicts was reformative rather than repressive. During his term of office the system of convict management in the settlement began to develop. In 1861, a Deputy Superintendent was appointed to assist the Superintendent of the settlement.[1] The duties of the Deputy Superintendent were to occasionally relieve the Superintendent from his duties to enable him to visit the different islands for establishing the contacts with the Andamanese in their areas. Haughton stopped the large and indiscriminate clearing of forest so energetically pushed on by Walker. He believed that the extensive clearing of land was of no use because, if unattended to, these clearing again lapsed in a few years into a dense jungle.

Inspection of the penal settlement by Sir Robert Napier

Colonel R.C. Tytler who succeeded Haughton, remained incharge of the settlement for about two years from May, 1862. He continued Haughton's mild policy towards the convicts. He effected a good deal of clearing at Mount Harriet which was

[1] N.A.I.. Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, A Progs. No. 32, 29 July, 1859.
[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 58, 26 September, 1861.

named after his wife. Sir Robert Napier[1] made an inspection of the settlement in 1863, as the Government of India was anxious to know the specific causes of increasing mortality among convicts at Port Blair along with the progress made by the settlement during these five years. Sir Robert Napier drew up a memorandum ; wherein he gave suggestions for the better regulation and improvement of the settlement. He was of the view "that much of the mortality might have been prevented by better arrangements at the commencement of settlement for the shelter of the prisoners."[2] According to him about three thousand convicts required shelter in the Andamans. He recommended that the Public Works Department of the Government of India should be ordered to take immediate measures to supply skilled labourers and materials necessary to put the settlement on a satisfactory footing in this respect. He also recommended the construction of hospitals and barracks. He suggested that proper clothing and food should be supplied to convicts, by maintaining a regular supply of them to the islands at all times. He recommended a systematic extension of the cultivation of fruits and vegetables. His recommendations were accepted by the Government of India and much of what was instituted at his suggestions, remained in force for a considerable long period regarding the arrangement for clothing, sanitation and buildings.

Inspection by Major Davies

On 1 April, 1864, the administration of the Andamans was placed under the supervision of the Chief Commissioner of

[1] Napier, Robert : First Baron of Magdala (1810-90), educated at Addiscombe joined the Bengal Engineers in 1828 at Calcutta, took part in Sikh War, 1848, Civil Engineer to Punjab Board of Administration, 1849, Chief Engineer Punjab till 1856, Lt. Col. 1856, Chief of staff to Outram at the siege of Lucknow 1857, Brigadier General 1858, supressed 'mutiny' in Central India, Major General 1861, Military member to the Supreme Council Feb., 1861—March 1865, acted as Viceroy 21 Nov.—2 Dec., 1863, Commander-in-Chief Bombay 1865-69, Peer 1868, Commander-in-Chief India 1870-76, Governor of Gibralter 1876-83, Field Marshal 1883.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 4, 1 April, 1864.

British Burma.[1] Lieutenant Colonel Ford took charge of the penal settlement in May, 1864 from Tytler. He submitted the first annual Administration Report of the settlement for the year 1864-65. Major Nelson Davies[2] was sent by the Chief Commissioner of Burma to inspect the settlement at Port Blair in May, 1867.[3] He submitted a voluminous report in which he condemned the administration carried out in the penal settlement of Port Blair during the last nine years. After reviewing the existing penal system in detail, he pointed out the absence of definite rules for the management of convicts. He also expressed his concern over the high death mortality of convicts during recent years and traced out certain causes.[4] He also criticised the, self-supporting system[5] which he termed as a failure. In the end he remarked, ".....for nine years the affairs of the settlement have been allowed pretty well to drift, the scheme for making the Andamans a penal colony seemed to be an experiment, which no one was particularly anxious to meddle with."[6] Although Major Davies offered various suggestions for improving the condition of the settlement, his report did not carry much weight with the Government of India because of his all round condemnation of the administration of Port Blair, which inclined the Goverment of India to believe that his relations with the Superintendent of Port Blair were not cordial. At several places in the report, Davies had actually complained about the attitude of Ford. However, the Government of India took several measures to carry out some of the suggestions of Davies. In order to prevent the spreading of malaria to a large extent, the Government of India ordered clearing of jungles and drying of swamps at several places near Port Blair.[7] It was also

[1] Ibid. A Progs. No. 13, 1 April, 1864.

[2] Major Nelson Davies : He was the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Burma in 1867.

[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 89, December, 1867.

[4] Infra, Chapter, VI.

[5] Self supporting system-Infra, Chapter VI.

[6] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 89, December, 1867.

[7] Ibid, A Progs. No. 92, December, 1867.

decided that no convict who was over forty-five years of age or weak in health was to be sent to the Andamans. Measures for increased supply of nutritious diet to convicts were also taken. Messing system was also introduced among the convicts, as an experimental measure. The Superintendent Port Blair was requested to form a code of rules for the management of convicts.

Administrative changes in the penal settlement

In March, 1868, Colonel H. Man, who had ten years ago, founded the settlement was appointed as Superintendent of Port Blair. The administration of these islands was again placed under the direct supervision of the Government of India, as it was felt that, "the placing of the executive administration of Port Blair had not in any great degree contributed to the efficiency of administration, but on the contrary had caused delay, and resulted in an extraordinary increase in correspondence between the Superintendent and the Government of India.[1]" On 16 April, 1869, the islands of Nicobar group were placed under the control of Superintendent, Port Blair, after their formal occupation by the British. A penal settlement was also established at Nancowry harbour, which was placed under the charge of an Assistant Superintendent. Colonel Man formally introduced the methods of convict management of the Straits Settlements in the Andamans. He prepared a set of rules for convicts and thus formed the foundation for the laws and rules which were followed with modifications in the penal settlement till its abolition in 1945.

Inspection report of Campbell and Norman

Colonel Man left the settlement on 16 March, 1871. After an interval, during which Major F.L. Playfair held charge as officiating Superintendent of Port Blair, Major General D.M. Stewart was appointed as Superintendent of the Andamans and the Nicobars. The designation of the Superintendent, Port

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 224, Dec., 1868.

Blair was changed to Chief Commissioner of the Andaman and Nicobar islands from 29 July, 1872. It was, however, decided that the Superintendent will not be designated as Chief Commissioner in official correspondence. The new title was conferred on him for judicial reasons only. Thus Donald Stewart became the first Chief Commissioner of the Andaman and Nicobar island. Lord Mayo took keen personal interest in the affairs of the settlement. He visited Port Blair and it was during this visit that he was murdered by a Pathan convict named Sher Ali at Hopetown Jetty at the foot of Mount Harriet on 8 February, 1872. In the next year, Scarlett Campbell[1] after an inspection of the penal settlement submitted a report to the Government of India. In accordance with his recommendations, the grade of the Superintendent was revised to Rs. 2,500—100-3,000 and that of the Deputy Superintendent to Rs. 1,000-100—1500.[2] The Governor General in Council declared that, "The main and primary object for which the Settlement is maintained is to secure that the sentence passed upon convicts is properly carried out under a well regulated system of discipline, and to this object the profitable employment of the convicts and the development of the resources of the islands must be considered subordinate."[3] Campbell also made various suggestions about the improvement in the management of convicts. The Government of India deputed Sir Henry Norman[4] to proceed to the Andamans to confer with the Superin-

[1] Scarlett Campbell ; He was secretary to the Home Deptt., Government of India at that time.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch A Progs. No. 1, February, 1873. A separate branch styled as 'Port Blair' was opened in the Home Deptt., to deal with the matters relating to these two groups of islands.

[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 1, Feb., 1873.

[4] Norman, Sir Henry Wylie (1826-1904) : Educated at Addiscombe, joined the E.I. Company as Adjutant 1844 ; served in 'mutiny' in 1857 ; Major & Lt. Col. 1859 ; officiating Adjutant General April-Nov., 1859 ; Secy., to the Govt. of India, Military Deptt. 1862 ; Military member of the Supreme Council of India—1868 and 1870-77 ; Lt. General, 1877 ; Member of Council of India 1878-82, General 1882 ; Governor of Jamaica 1882-87, Governor of Queensland 1889-95 ; refused the Viceroyality of India (between Lord Lansdowne and Elgin-1891) ; Field Marshel 1902. Buckland, p. 317.

tendent on all matters connected with the welfare of the settlement and specially as to the proposed rules for the management of convicts.[1] He submitted a very lengthy report[2] in conjunction with Stewart dealing with all aspects of the question. On his suggestions the Government of India made radical changes in the system of penal servitude. Term convicts were for the first time permitted to be transported to the Andamans. Provisions were made for the release of life convicts after a stay of twenty or twenty five years by introducing the remission system.[3] On the basis of the rules framed by Man, formal regulations known as the Andaman and Nicobar Regulations were formed in 1876.

General C.A. Barwell arrived in the settlement in 1875. He was very much worried over the increasing mortality of the convicts. It was during his period of administration that severe epidemics began to destroy the Andamanese race. The disease of syphilis was discovered among the Andamanese in 1876. It was followed by an epidemic of opthalmia in 1877. Measles and influenza also claimed a heavy toll of life, among the aborigines of the Andaman islands.[4]

Inspection Report of Lyall and Lethbridge

Colonel T.V. Cadell's[5] administration of the penal settlement of Port Blair is a memorable one in the administrative history of the convict colony. In 1886, Sir Alexander Mackanzie[6] made an inspection of the Andamans to review the whole working of the penal settlement. In his report[7] he recorded many

1 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 72, August, 1874.

2 Ibid, A Progs. No. 75, August 1874.

3 Ibid. A Progs. No. 80, August 1874.

4 Supra, Chapter IV.

5 A. Cadell Thomas : educated at Edinburgh University and Sunderland, served during Mutiny in Delhi and Oudh, entered Political Deptt. and served in Central India and Rajputana, Chief Commissioner, Andamans and Nicobar islands.

6 Macakanzie, Alexander : He was Secretary to the Government of India in the Home Deptt. at that time.

7 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs No., 98-102, July 1886.

improvements which had been effected in the settlement and offered various suggestions. Before his suggestions could be carried out, the Government of India deputed C.J. Lyall[1] and Surgeon-Major A.S. Lethbridge, Inspector General of Jails, Bengal to confer with the Superintendent on matters connected with the working of the settlement and examining closely the conditions of labour and the discipline of the convicts. The main object of their enquiry was to ascertain whether the regulations at the settlement were sufficiently stringent in character in securing the full deterrent effect of the sentences of transportation or, if not, in what way they could be made so.[2] Lyall and Lethbridge[3] visited Port Blair in January 1890 and submitted their report on 26 April, 1890.[4] They were convinced that the existing penal system in the Andamans had no deterrent effect on the criminals. The convicts in India preferred transportation to Andaman islands than their imprisonment in an Indian jail. In the opinion of Lyall and Lethbridge, the abolition of extra-mural labour and the strict confinement of prisoners within jail walls in India had made their sentence more severe than it used to be. They recommended that term convicts should not be sent in future to Port Blair. They were in favour of encouraging released prisoners to settle in the Andamans, instead of allowing them to return to

[1] Lyall, Sir Charles James : I.C.S, educated at King's College and Balliol College Oxford, joined Bengal Civil Service and posted to N.W.P. in 1867. Asstt. Secy. to the Govt. of India in the Foreign Deptt. 1872, Under Secy. in the Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce Deptt. 1873-80, Secy. to the Chief Commissioner of Assam 1880-83, Judge & Commissioner Assam 1883-84, Secy. to the Govt. of India 1886, Assam 1887-89, again Secy. to Govt. of India in Home Deptt. 1889-94, Chief Commissioner Central Provinces 1889-94. Secretary at the India Office in Judicial & Public Deptt. 1898. Buckland p. 256.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 133, Sept. 1891.

[3] Lethbridge, Sir Alfred Swaine : educated at King's College London & Aberdeen, M.D., entered the Bengal Medical service in 1867, Lt. Col. 1887, served in Burma and Bengal, Inspector General of Jails Bengal 1878-92, General Supdt. for the supression of 'Thagi' & 'Dakaity' 1892, Additional member of the Governor General's Legislative Council 1895-97, Retired 1898. Backland, p. 250.

[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 74, June, 1890.

India. To increase the severity of confinement in the Andamans, a separate confinement in cells in preliminary stages and confinement in a limited area in the second stage, was recommended by them. A classification of habitual and non-habitual criminals was also suggested by them. They were in favour of segregating female convicts. The Government of India concurred with their suggestions mentioned above. Effective measures were taken in the direction of maintaining discipline and the penal character of transportation. Thus fundamental changes were introduced in the system of management of convicts prevailing at Port Blair. The number of term convicts was gradually reduced. The construction of Cellular Jail was taken up in 1896.

Proposals to abolish the penal settlement

Colonel N.M. Horsford remained in the settlement as Superintendent for less than two years (1892-94). He started implementing the recommendations of Lyall and Lethbridge but it was chiefly during the administration of Colonel Sir Richard Temple,[1] who took charge in 1894 that the recommendations of Lyall and Lethbridge were fully implemented. The building of the Cellular Jail was completed during his tenure of office. Clearance of the south point of the swamp at Aberdeen was started at the end of his period. It had far reaching effects on the health of the colony.

W.R.H. Merk, the Superintendent of Port Blair from 1903, submitted a note in 1904[2] in which he expressed an opinion that time had come when transportation to the Andamans should be stopped in view of the fact that the life of the prisoners in these islands except for a short period in the Cellular Jail was much more free and unrestrained than that of a prisoner in an Indian Jail.[3] In his opinion it was extravagant on the part of the Government to spend a considerable amount on a convict by sending him to a penal settlement which had lost its

[1] Sir Richard Temple : Supra Chapter I.

[2] N.A.I. Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs No. 28-40, July, 1906.

[3] Ibid.

reformative value. The Government of India, while referring the matter to the state governments for opinion observed that, "They were opposed to the total abolition of penal settlement as a place for reception of criminals.[1] In their opinion, the Andamans had obvious advantages for maintaining them as places for exile, particularly for the deportation of habitual criminals or specially dangerous offenders. The Government of India was, however, inclined to restrict gradually the number of convicts by retaining long term prisoners in Indian Jails. The suspension of male term prisoners till further orders was decided by them. Merk was succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel Browning in 1906. During his term of office, the future of the penal settlement was under discussion with the provincial governments. The transportation of political prisoners in 1910 also aroused considerable interest among the Indians about the working of the settlement.[2]

Resolution to appoint a Jail Committee

The provincial governments generally concurred in the proposals made by the Government of India. They, however, pointed out that in view of the absence of reformative influences in the Andamans, the abolition of the penal settlement was inevitable in future. The difficulty of classification of habitual and non-habitual prisoners was also brought to the notice of the Government of India. The existence of immorality among the convicts to a large extent and the abnormal sick and death rate in the settlement, were also considered against the continuation of the penal settlement. The main difficulty which prompted the local administrations to concur with the proposals of the Government of India, inspite of the defects enumerated above, was the shortage of space in the Jails of different provinces for accommodating a large number of prisoners in case the transportation to the Andamans ceased altogether.[3] Thus the proposals to abolish the transportation of prisoners to the

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Eranch, A Progs, No. 28-40, July, 1906.
[2] Infra,.Chapter VII.
[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 80-93, December, 1910.

Andamans were shelved for the time being. In 1911, the Government of India restarted the transportation of term prisoners as the authorities at Port Blair were finding great difficulties on account of shortage of convicts for construction work.[1]

Colonel Douglas's period of office as Superintendent of Port Blair from 1913 to 1920 was momentus in the history of these islands. The mounting interest of the public in India regarding conditions in Andamans demanded that the people should be acquainted with facts about the state of affairs in the Andamans. Surendra Nath Banerjee[2] in a speech on 24 February, 1914, in the Council of the Governor General of India demanded that non-officials should be allowed to inspect the settlement. Vijay Raghavachari[3] wanted a commission to be appointed to investigate the whole system of prison administration in India including the penal system in the Andamans.[4] Sir Reginald Craddock, the Home Secretary to the Government of India, accepted the resolution moved by Rama Rayaninagar[5] that a jail commission of officials and non-officials be appointed to investigate the whole system of jail administration. He also informed that he had recently visited the Andamans and was convinced that a thorough examination of the penal

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 42-45, May 1911.

[2] Banerjee, Surendra Nath: Second son of Durga Charan Banerjee, educated at Doveton College Calcutta ; B.A. 1868 ; passed the competitive examination of the I.C.S. in England 1869 ; went to Bengal as Asstt. Magistrate Sylet, 1871, ceased to be a member of I.C.S. in 1874 ; became a Professor of English in Metropolitan Institute, 1876 ; joined the Free Church Institution and Duff College, 1882 ; Founded Ripon College, 1882 ; Proprietor of the 'Bengalee' Weekly ; established the Indian Association 1876, represented the Calcutta Corporation in the Bengal Legislative Councils, 1893, President of the Indian National Congress at Poona, 1895, and at Ahmedabad, 1902. Buckland, p. 26.

[3] Vijay Rhaghavachari : A prominent leader of South India. He was an Engineer and later on became the Prime Minister of Mysore, a State in Southern India. He is remembered as the maker of modern Mysore.

[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 2-2A, March 1914.

[5] Rama Rayaninagar : He was a prominent nationalist leader of South India at that time. He was a member of the Legislative Council in 1914.

system in Andamans was necessary. In his report[1] he dwelt at length on nearly all aspects of the settlement. He was in favour of drastic changes in the system of penal servitude prevailing in the Andamans and recommended the appointment of a jail commission to investigate the whole subject of jail administration with a view to suggest improvements in the light of the experience of the west. As the completion of the work entrusted to Jail Committee was likely to take a long time, several temporary reforms were suggested by Craddock.

Report of Craddock

The report of Craddock made great impression on the Government of India. It was now being considered with seriousness whether the administration of the Andamans as a penal settlement, was susceptible of improvement with material changes or whether the continuance of the settlement in its present shape in itself was expedient.[2] The Government of India also consulted the local governments whether they favoured inquiry into prison administration in India and found that opinion was unanimous in favour of such an undertaking. Consequently the Secretary of State, sanctioned the appointment of officials and non-officials for the proposed inquiry, but before steps for the constitution of such a committee could be completed, the First World War began and the project had to be abandoned for the time being. Meanwhile, after consulting the local governments several temporary measures were carried out in the penal system as suggested by Craddock.

Appointment of a Jail Committee

After the conclusion of the war, the Government of India resolved with the concurrence of the Secretary of State to take up the matter again. Accordingly it was decided to appoint a committee to investigate the whole system of prison administration in India with special reference to legislation and experi-

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 34, April, 1914.

[2] Government of India, Home Deptt. Resolution No. 63 Jails of 28 April, 1919.

ence in western countries.[1] The committee was to pay special attention in judging the efficacy and appropriateness of the existing prison administration and restraint on liberty in India including the Andamans, in order to strengthen the reformatory influences of prisons and to devise best means of assisting prisoners after release to regain a position in the society.[2] Sir, Alexander Cardew was appointed as the Chairman of the Indian Jail Committee with five officials and two non-officials as members.

The Indian Jail Committee after visiting foreign countries, the Andaman islands and several jails in India submitted their report to the Government of India in 1920. The Committee came to the conclusion that the retention of transportation to the Andamans at the present scale, even if an increased and improved staff was provided, was undesirable and should not be attempted.[3] In their opinion the deportation to the Andamans had lost its deterrent effect, involved increased expenditure and exposed the prisoners to depressing climatic conditions. The Committee, however, realised the importance of the Andamans as a place of secure custody for dangerous and habitual criminals and therefore advocated that deportation to the Andamans should cease except in regard to such prisoners as the Governor General in Council may by special or general rule direct.[4] Until sufficient accommodation was available in Indian jails, deportation of prisoners usually sent to the Andamans was to continue but to a diminishing extent every year.

Decision to abolish the penal settlement

The revelation of the Indian Jail Committee regarding the state of affairs in the Andamans was such that the Secretary of State felt that the Andamans could not be retained as a penal settlement even for selected dangerous prisoners.[5] He advised the Government of India to announce a decision to

[1] Govt. of India, Home Deptt. Resolution No. 63, Jails, 28, 1919.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Report of the Indian Jail Committee, para 563, p. 285.
[4] Report of the Indian Jail Committee, para 566, p. 286.
[5] Legislative Assembly Debates, 11 March, 1921, p. 956-60.

abolish the penal settlement in the Andamans altogether, and to start a speedy return of prisoners from these islands to the Indian Jails. The Government of India was also instructed to introduce all possible reforms during the process of withdrawing the convicts from the Andamans. Accordingly, Sir William Vincent, the Home Secretary to the Government of India, announced in the Legislative Assembly on 11 March, 1921, the decision of the Government to abolish the penal settlement altogether.[1] He also informed the members of the Assembly that as the withdrawal of about twelve thousand convicts transported to the Andamans, would take some time due to the difficulty of providing accommodation to them in the jails of different provinces in India, the closing of the penal settlement would take some time. The provincial governments were asked to stop deportation of prisoners to the Andamans and to construct jails for the additional number of convicts. Meanwhile, the Government of India decided to take measures to give effect to the recommendations contained in the report of the Jail Committee for the amelioration of conditions of convicts in the penal settlement.[2]

Colonel Beadon who remained in the Andamans as Superintendent from 1920 to 1923 took measures to carry out the above policy of the Government of India. All unmarried female convicts were immediately returned to India. No more female convicts were sent to the Andamans. Deportation of fresh batch of prisoners to these islands was to cease gradually according to the availability of accommodation in the jails of different provinces of India. A beginning was also made in the abolition of the rigours of discipline and in shortening the preliminary stages of convicts' sentences at Port Blair.

Abandonment of the scheme of abolition

During the tenure of Colonel Ferrar as Superintendent, Port Blair (1923—31), the plans for immediate abandonment of the settlement were given up. The main difficulty in implement-

[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid, 11 March 1921, P. 959-60

ing the recommendations of the Indian Jail Committee, was the paucity of accommodation in the Indian jails. About twelve thousand convicts confined in the Andamans had to be accommodated in the jails of the Indian provinces. The local governments of the United Provinces, Panjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Burma and Madras expressed their inability to provide for the increased number of prisoners in their existing jails. The construction of new jails in these provinces was not possible in immediate future on account of their limited finances.[1] In view of the over crowding of prisoners in the jails of above provinces, the Government of India again decided to renew the transportation to the Andamans, of all kinds of prisoners except female convicts, political offenders and those suspected of a tendency to unnatural vice.[2] The Governments of Madras and Panjab were allowed to send their prisoners immediately to the Andamans while it was decided that similar permission was to be given to any other province whose circumstances may justify such a course.

The policy of the Government of India was now directed towards the conversion of the penal settlement into a self-supporting community.[3] They encouraged the ex-convicts and their families to remain in the islands. Transportation was also open to such convicts from India who volunteered themselves for the Andamans. As a special measure the transfer of Moplah (Mapilla) convicts[4] from Madras to Port Blair was sanctioned to relieve congestion in the jails of Madras province.[5] The Moplah prisoners were either given the status of self-supporters or were employed as labourers in plantations or in the Forest Department. Those Moplah prisoners who desired to have their family with them were allowed to do so. These families

[1] Legislative Council Progs. 17 January, 1922. Reply by the Home Secretary to Sir Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana, a member from Panjab.

[2] Legislative Council Progs. 17 January, 1922.

[3] Home Deptt. Resolution No. 20/26 Jails, 27 February, 1926.

[4] Moplah—The Moplahs of Malabar on the south coast of India revolted against the British authority in 1921. After the suppression of the rebellion a large number of Moplah rebels were concentrated in Madras Jails.

[5] Home Deptt. Resolution No. 188/24 Jails, 4 October, 1926.

were settled in separate Villages. By 1926 out of 1,133 Moplah convicts in the Andamans, 258 had been given the status of self-supporters after their family had joined them. Bhantu[1] prisoners from the United Provinces were also transported to the Andamans on similar terms and conditions. As a result of this policy there was a change in the conditions of the convict population. In 1921, when a decision was announced to close the settlement, 1,168 convicts enjoyed the status of self-supporters out of 11,532 convicts, while in December, 1926, out of a total convict population of 7,740 there were 2,105 self-supporters drawing wages from the Government and 2,272 agricultural self-supporters.[2]

This policy of colonisation and development of the Andamans through the agency of an enlarged population of ex-convicts and their families continued to be followed during the next three decades. The number of prisoners during this period varied from 5,604 to 6,537.[3] In 1932, terrorist prisoners were again reported to the Andamans in large numbers and were confined in the Cellular Jail. There were two hunger strikes by these prisoners which aroused considerable sympathy towards them and indignation against the British government. These prisoners were repatriated to India in 1937 after considerable agitation was done for their return to the mainland.[4] After the reoccupation of the islands by the British in 1945, the convicts in the Andamans were offered repatriation to the Indian Jails. The ex-convicts who settled near Port Blair were repatriated to India at government expense. Nearly 40,000 men took advantage of this offer. With the abolition of the penal settlement in 1945, the system of transportation of prisoners to the Andamans from India came to an end.

[1] Bhantu-A criminal tribe of Eastern United Provinces which claims its origin from Rajputs. The Bhantus are expert in stealing and robbery.

[2] Home Deptt. Resolution No. 20/26 Jails, 27 February, 1926.

[3] Legislative Progs., Vol. IV, 1935, p. 3030, & Debate of the Council of State, 11 September, 1933.

[4] Infra, Chapter VII.

SIX

SYSTEM OF MANAGEMENT OF CONVICTS IN PENAL SETTLEMENT OF THE ANDAMANS

THE ANDAMAN penal system is sui generis *i.e.* it has grown up on its own lines.[1] It has always been independent of the Indian prison system and has been gradually adopted to the requirements of the situation. In the beginning even no definite rules for the management of convicts were framed in the Andamans. Man, Walker and other Superintendents of Port Blair Settlement were guided by general instructions issued from time to time by the Government of India.[2] It was only ten years after the establishment of the settlement that attention was paid to draft a set of rules and ultimately rules of the Governor General in Council for the management of transported convicts under Section 34 of Act V of 1871 (prisoners) were framed on 29 July, 1874. Although these rules were based on the experience of convict management in the Straits settlement but these were quite different from the rules in force at Penang and Bencoolen as these were framed in accordance with the local requirements.

System of classification of convicts—Self supporter system

In the Straits settlement, considerable value was attached to the classification of convicts in various grades as it was thought that promotion of a convict to a better grade induced him to reform his character. The same principle was followed in the penal settlement of Port Blair where a system of the convicts into three different classes was adopted. In the beginning the majority of the convicts on their arrival at the

[1] Census Report, 1901. p. 356.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 89, December, 1867.

penal settlement in the Andamans were placed in the third class.[1] A few convicts whose previous record and behaviour was found to be good were promoted to the second class after a short period. These convicts worked as 'Sirdars' or 'Tindals' (Warders) over other prisoners. Convicts who were found guilty of an offence were degraded to the fourth class. After a satisfactory conduct in the second class for a specified period, they were promoted to first class. Tickets-of-leave were granted to them and they were termed as self supporters. In view of the urgency of making the settlement self-supporting by encouraging cultivation and other technical works Walker suggested in 1858 the grant of ticket-of-leave to many convicts, who had not passed their sentences in the third and second class.[2] His proposals were not sanctioned by the Government of India as it was feared that the scheme would be a failure in the absence of any arrangement of a careful watch over them.[3] However, after two years the Government of India approved the proposals of Haughton to grant tickets-of-leave to convicts of second class after they have passed three-fourths of the period which was prescribed for them in the second class without being guilty of any misconduct.[4] A free pardon at the end of a fixed period after serving his sentence in the first class was also promised. This was the beginning of the self-supporter system in the penal settlement at Port Blair. This concession was also extended to others, who were capable of pursuing any calling which was beneficial to the colony as far as necessities of the settlement were concerned.[5] The convicts who were granted the status of the self-supporter, were not employed in clearing forests, and constructing buildings. They were not entrusted with the duties of a 'Sirdar' of a working gang or a peon. The Government gave them subsistence allowance for six months to enable them to support themselves and after this period they were to support themselves by tilling

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt, Judicial Branch, A progs. No. 21, 15 Jan., 1858.
[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 1-20, 29 July, 1859.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid. A Progs. No. 7-23, July, 1860.
[5] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 1-12, 1 April, 1864.

the land or by following any minor industry. Land was allotted to them free of cost for a certain period. Assistance in materials, poultry, cows, sheep and goats were given to them. The produce of a self-supporter was purchased by the Government at a nominal price. If after some time, it appeared that the self-supporter was not proving profitable to the settlement in any way, he was deprived of the status of the self-supporter by reverting him to gang work. In 1862 the Government of India also allowed female convicts to become self-supporters.[1] Colonel Ford wanted to change the basis of classification of convicts by dividing them according to their proficiency in work.[2] He wanted to place skilled labourers in first class, semi-skilled labourers in second and ordinary labourers in third class. The proposals of Ford were not sanctioned by the Government of India who believed that such a system would not encourage skilled convicts towards good behaviour.

Changes in rules of classification of convicts

A review of the then existing system of classification was made by Major H.N. Davies. In his inspection note of 1867, he remarked that, "the self-supporting system at present in force is carried on under strict conservative rules, and was falling short of its objects.[3]" According to him very few of the cultivators were carrying a thriving business. He disapproved the practice of compelling each self-supporter to adhere to one trade. In the end, he expressed his decided opinion that, "the present system is a failure more or less, and in such cases policy generally dictates a change.[4]" The Government of India after studying the report of Davies instructed the Superintendent to introduce somewhat stricter discipline among the self-supporters and to reduce to the rank of ordinary convicts anyone who seemed to be unable or unwilling to support himself by hard

[1] Ibid, A Progs. No. 12-18, 16 July, 1862.
[2] Ibid, Judicial Branch, A Progs. No. 10, July, 1864.
[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 89-97, Dec., 1867.
[4] Ibid.

work.[1] The self-supporting convicts were now encouraged to follow any profession they liked and no restrictions about the disposal of the produce of their work were maintained by the Government.[2]

Colonel Man who had considerable experience of convict management condemned the existing system of self-supporters in 1869 on the ground that it was attended by two evils viz. uncertainty in punishment and favouritism in administration.[3] He had no wish to disturb the convicts who had already been granted tickets-of-leave but advocated the system of Straits settlement for subsequent cases. According to this system only those convicts who had been in the penal settlement for twelve years or more were to be given lands for cultivation or encouraged to employ themselves in other professions. Some of them were to be given comparative freedom and employed as artificiers, or convict warders. Although his policy was approved by the Government of India, it appears that it was not fully implemented. Campbell in para 24-28 of his report of 1873, pointed out that any convict who was considered to be capable of supporting himself by any profession was given a ticket-of-leave without any regard to the time he had spent on the settlement. Man also expressed his disapproval of the practice of self-supporters and other convicts living in close proximity in barracks. He rightly remarked that the authorities of Port Blair gave preference to the development of the resources of the islands than to the penal character of the settlement. He, therefore, framed fresh rules regarding the classification of convicts. He recommended that after eleven years of good conduct in earlier grades a convict might be promoted to first grade and allowed to become a self-supporter. In case he was unable to maintain himself in his trade or occupation he was to return to the second class. His suggestions were accepted with slight modifications and were incorporated in the rules under Act V of 1871 enacted in 1874[4].

[1] Ibid, A Progs. No. 92, December, 1867.
[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 71-74, 29 February, 1868.
[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 163-169 March, 1869
[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 51-84, August, 1874.

There was no important change in the system of classification of convicts for the next sixteen years. During this period the only concession granted to the convicts was to allow them to call for their families from India. But this concession was of no value as would be seen later on this chapter of the dissertation.[1] During this period the Government of India always laid stress on the enforcement of strict discipline among convicts specially the self-supporters whose movements could not be closely watched by the officers. In one of their letters to the Superintendent of Port Blair, they observed, "The main and primary object for which the settlement is maintained is to secure that the sentence passed upon convicts is properly carried out under a well-regulated system of discipline and to this object the profitable employment of the convicts and the development of the resources of the islands must be considered secondary and subordinate."[2]

Radical changes recommended by Lyall and Lethbridge

After the inspection of the settlement in 1890, Lyall and Lethbridge pointed out a grave defect in the system of classification of convicts. According to them no attempt was made so far to distinguish the habitual offender from a prisoner convicted for the first time of an offence which did not indicate a previous criminal career[3]. They entirely agreed with the opinion of the Jail Committee of 1888 regarding the introduction of complete segregation of all habitual criminals from non-habituals.[4] According to Lyall and Lethbridge "it would be unwise not to establish a system of complete segregation between them and those convicted for the first time or of offences other than those against property.[4] They recommended the segregation of the habitual offenders in separate barracks and stations. Such prisoners were not to be employed on any labour which would

[1] Infra, Chapter VI.
[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 1, February, 1873.
[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 74, June, 1890.
[4] Report of Jail Committee, 1888, Paragraph 36. p. 13.
[5] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 74, June, 1890.

remove them from the close supervision of their convict officers. The commission, however, did not propose to carry out this system of segregation to the grade of self-supporter, because in their opinion, if a criminal had during ten years of his imprisonment shown no tendency to commit offences he could be trusted to live with other self-supporters.[1] Complete segregation of female convicts was also recommended by them.

The commission also recommended radical changes in the rules to make the imprisonment in Port Blair more severe during the earlier stages of a convict's stay in the settlement. In order to avoid a disparity between the discipline imposed upon convicts in India where more restrictions had been placed upon the life of convicts to make his sentence more severe in character, the commission proposed that the convicts in the Andamans were to pass through an experience of hard life during the preliminary stages of their transportation. They recommended that the convicts on their arrival at Port Blair were to be confined for six months in cells in a Jail to be built by the Government later known as the Cellular Jail.[2] This preliminary stage of separate confinement in cells was to be tried only with habituals or specially selected prisoners who had been sentenced for very serious crimes.[3] The advantages claimed by the Commission for this system were:

Firstly, its great effect as a deterrent punishment.

Secondly, the opportunity it afforded for studying the character of each individual prisoner and coercing the lawless spirits who know no control.

Thirdly, the improvement which it could secure in the discipline and work of the prisoners in the settlement. Every prisoner knew that, he would be sent to cell for separate confinement in case he gave trouble.

Fourthly, the preliminary confinement was to become an excellent means of acclimatizing prisoners without exposing

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 74, June. 1890.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] The deputation of Lyall and Lethbridge has been referred to as an appointment of a commission in the records of the Govt. of India.

them to the weather. The health of the prisoners could also be noted with accuracy and their subsequent selection for special work made more easy.

Fifthly, in this stage it would become easy to teach educated prisoners the Roman character, and so increase the number of prisoners qualified to work as writers.

And lastly, it would enable the authorities to dispense with the use of fetters on first arrival or as a matter of punishment.

After the preliminary stage sketched above, Lyall and Lethbridge recommended the introduction of a stage requiring confinement in the barracks of a jail, where the prisoners in association with other convicts could work on inter-mural industries.[1] They were not allowed to move out of that restricted area.[2] A period of eighteen months imprisonment in this stage was recommended. Thus a prisoner was to spend a period of two years before he could move to the third class. This confinement of eighteen months also possessed all the advantages mentioned above. After having passed these two stages of confinement during which he was not allowed to move out of the jail boundaries, a convict was to pass four years in the third grade. In this grade he was to be employed on works outside the jail premises. He was to return to the barracks after finishing his work of the day and thus had comparatively more freedom. At the end of the sixth year of his sentence in the Andamans,[3] the convict could reach the second class. From the convicts of this class, petty officers, writers, servants etc. were to be selected. After ten years of their stay in the penal settlement of Port Blair as sketched above the convicts were to be allowed to become self-supporters.

The recommendations of Lyall and Lethbridge regarding a preliminary stage of separate confinement for a period of six months in cells was accepted by the Government of India.[4]

1 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 74, June. 1890.

2 Later on a jail consisting of barracks was constructed for the confinement of convicts in the second stage. It came to be known as Associated Jail.

3 N.A,I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch. A Progs. No, 74. June, 1890.

4 Ibid, A Progs. No. 133. September, 1891.

Consequently the Superintendent was asked to select a site and submit proposals for the construction of a Cellular Jail to accommodate six hundred prisoners. In view of the practical difficulties of building an Associated Jail for confining a large number of prisoners in a restricted area for eighteen months after their confinement of six months in the Cellular Jail, it was decided to locate only habitual and dangerous criminals separately on Viper and Chatham islands for the specified period.[1] The recommendations of Lyall and Lethbridge regarding the promotion of convicts to third and second class were accepted with slight modifications. Instead of keeping a convict in the third class for six years, it was decided that he or she was to remain in that class for five years including the two years of preliminary confinement in Cellular and Associated Jails and after spending five years in the second class he was to become eligible to the status of self-supporters.

New system of classification of convicts

In consequence of the recommendations by Lyall and Lethbridge and subsequent modifications the following four distinct gradations of prisoners came into existence :—

	Years	Months
(a) Incarceration in the Cellular Jail	—	6
(b) Incarceration in the Associated Jail	1	6
(c) Incarceration in Barracks with extra-mural labour in third and second class.	8	—
(d) Restricted freedom on ticket-of-leave as a self-supporter.	Remainder of the sentence.	

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt.. Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 133, Sept., 1891. Viper and Chatham Islands surround the harbour of Port Blair.

By the beginning of 1897 about 400 cells were ready for occupation in the newly constructed Cellular Jail at Aberdeen.[1] It was, therefore decided to put into effect the system of separate confinement for the first six months. The Cellular Jail was completed by the end of 1910 consisting of 663 cells. However, in practice, the instructions of the Government of India were not followed fully by the authorities at Port Blair. Newly arrived convicts were sent to the Cellular Jail for periods varying from three to six months.[2] In 1905 the Superintendent, Port Blair was authorised by the Government of India to curtail, suspend, or remit such portion of incarceration in Cellular Jail of a convict as he deemed fit and to transfer the convict to the next stage, the ordinary period of detention in the later being lengthened by a period equivalent to that by which the Cellular period had been curtailed.[3] This was done with a view to mitigate suffering to a life-convict who was not an habitual offender. The construction of an Associated Jail as suggested by Lyall and Lethbridge was taken up very late due to the paucity of labouring convicts and of sparing them from other useful works. Its construction was completed in 1916. From this year onwards this jail was also used as a place of confinement for juveniles, for prisoners locally convicted and for any other prisoner for whom there was no accommodation in the Cellular Jail.[4] Henceforth the authorities at Port Blair also tried to follow the instructions of the Government of India regarding detention of prisoners in Cellular and Associated Jails but they made no serious attempt to classify prisoners in the Andamans outside these two jails.[5] Habituals and non-habituals were allowed to live together.

Views of Jail Committee regarding Self-supporter system

The Jail Committee of 1919-20 by recommending that

[1] N.A.I.. Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 45, July, 1896. Aberdeen is a place in Port Blair Settlement.

[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 67-68, June, 1905.

[3] N.A.I. Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 67-68, June, 1905.

[4] Report of the Indian Jail Committee, 1919-20, Para 575, p. 289.

[5] Ibid, Para 614, p. 302.

every prisoner ought to be sent back to India after expiry of his term desired that the self-supporter system should be abandoned.[1] The reasons given against the self-supporter system were :

Firstly, the moral atmosphere of the settlement was unhealthy and had no reformatory influence.

Secondly, there was no effective system of keeping habitual and non-habitual offenders separately after their release from the Associated Jail.

Thirdly, there was a great paucity of female convicts in the penal settlement. It led to unnatural vice among the self-supporters.

And fourthly, there was complete absence of moral and social restrictions in the settlement.

Although the recommendation of the Jail Committee to abolish the penal settlement was accepted by the Government of India, it was not implemented by them till 1945. The fundamental changes were, however, introduced in the system of the management of convicts in the Andamans after 1921. Instead of passing his life in the Cellular and Associated Jails for two years and working as a labouring convict for eight years more in the second and third class, a convict after a few months in the Cellular Jail found himself on a wage basis and freed from other regulations.[2]

The above history of the system of classification of convicts on which the whole penal system of Port Blair was based clearly indicates that it had grown up empirically and not in pursuance of any definite and consistent policy. It definitely failed in its object to help the convict to reform his character and establish himself as a free citizen in that colony. The failure of the self-supporting system actually meant the failure of the penal system in the Andamans and hence the causes of its failure have been discussed in general at the end of this chapter.[3]

[1] Ibid, Para 616, p. 303.
[2] Census Report, 1931, p. 7.
[3] Infra, Chapter VI.

Employment of convicts

The work on which the convicts were generally employed in the beginning of the penal settlement was clearance of jungles at various places and erecting buildings for the settlement.[1] A gang of fifty convicts under a 'Tindal' (warder) used to work at a particular place. A convict had to work for about nine hours a day in the trying climate of these tropical islands at unhealthy localities which resulted in a high rate of mortality among them. In addition, he was also exposed to the attacks of the aborigines who made repeated raids on the settlement. Isolation from their mother land, severity of work, demoralising effect on health, and attacks of the aborigines induced a large number of convicts to attempt escape from the penal settlement only to meet death by starvation or at the hands of the Andamanese in the jungles. Things, however, gradually settled and the convicts realised that they had to complete their work from which there was no escape. After some time all convicts, who were capable of pursuing any beneficial occupation were permitted to follow it.[2] The occupations allowed to self-supporters were fishing, cultivation, milk and butter selling, sweet meet making and those of cobblers, clerks, orderlies, boatman and compounders etc. After deducting the number of convicts employed on special duties, Sir Robert Napier estimated that out of 3,382 convicts which were in the settlement in 1864 about 2,020 convicts remained for ordinary working gangs engaged in clearing the forest. Major Davies attributed the high rate of mortality in the settlement due to the exposure of convicts to working in the forest in extreme heat and rains.[3] On his recommendation it was decided that no convict should be sent to the Andamans who was over 45 years of age and was not in robust health.[4]

By the time Lyall and Lethbridge visited the Andamans

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, A Progs. No, 21, 15 Jan., 1858.

[2] Ibid. A Progs. (Public Branch) No. 4. 1 April, 1864. (Report of Lord Napier).

[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 89, December, 1867.

[4] Ibid, A Progs. No. 92, December. 1867.

in 1890, convict labour was employed in various industries started in the settlement to make itself sufficient. The majority of convicts were employed in the felling of trees for exports of timber and collection of fuel. Husking the coir was a prominent industry. There were tea gardens at Navy Bay and Gopalakabag.[1] Lyall and Lethbridge after reviewing the high death rate among convicts working in forests recommended that the self-supporters were to be entrusted with the clearing of sites where they were to be settled and the labouring convicts were to be reserved for more remunerative industries entailing less exposure.

The following table illustrates the employment of labouring convicts on different types of work during the last two decades of the nineteenth century :

Sl. No.	Nature of employment	Years 1881	1891	1901
1.	Supervising	701	688	1,118
2.	Commissariat	207	186	162
3.	Medical	124	203	125
4.	Marine	562	744	290
5.	Forest	56	438	706
6.	Cultivation	144	562	616
7.	Manufacturing	797	941	1,098
8.	Cloth	631	242	252
9.	Coolies and domestic servants	3,954	4,083	3,642

From the above table it is apparent that the necessity of securing a large number of labouring convicts always remained a problem for the authorities at Port Blair who wanted to make the settlement self-supporting. Prisoners had to be employed on such works as were prejudicial to their health. The Jail Committee of 1919-20, therefore, remarked that "every endeavour should be made to abolish those methods of employment which are prejudicial to the health of the prisoners."[2]

1 Navy Bay and Gopalakabag are settlements in South Andaman islands.

2 Report of Indian Jail Committee, 1919-20, Para 605, p. 299.

Food and Clothing

From the beginning the convicts deported to the Andamans were given subsistence allowance for their maintenance. In 1858, one anna was fixed as daily allowance for an ordinary prisoner.[1] It was subsequently raised in 1864 to one anna and nine pies a day.[2] The convict was supposed to feed and clothe himself with this amount and also to provide for other amenities required by him. The amount was so inadequate that Robert Napier in his inspection note on Port Blair observed, "It is difficult to know exactly how they live on this subsistence allowance." According to him a convict actually spent one anna a day for purchasing grain from the grocer at a scheduled rate and the remaining nine pies were definitely insufficient to admit any indulgences in vegetables and other things because out of this sum he had also to provide for his clothing. The natural result was that the convicts were ill-provided with clothing and they were not able to afford a nourishing diet which was necessary for them for maintaining their health to do hard labour in forests. A lot of sickness among the convicts in the Andamans appeared to arise from want of sufficient clothing.[3] Sir Robert Napier who visited the penal settlement in 1863 remarked, "Nothing has more forcibly struck the President in in Council during his inspection of the penal settlement than the miserable appearance of the working convicts most of whom appear scarcely to have a rag to cover them"[4]. The conditions of convicts who were employed on special duties such as petty overseers, orderlies, mechanics and boatman were somewhat better as they received four to five rupees a month as allowances. Sir Robert Napier, therefore, recommended the abolition of subsistence allowance to the ordinary workers. His suggestion was to supply proper clothing and food to them by the Government. The Government of India, however, did not think it proper to take charge of the messing arrangements of convicts

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, A Progs. No. 37, 7 May, 1858.
[2] Ibid, Public Branch, A Progs. No. 4, April, 1864.
[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 48, 23 December, 1861.
[4] Ibid, A Progs. No. 5, 1 April. 1864.

as it involved various difficulties. The first difficulty was to cater to the different tastes of convicts coming from different parts of India. Another obstacle was the possibility of hurting the religious susceptibilities of a majority of the convicts on account of caste considerations. It was, therefore, decided to raise the subsistence allowance as under.[1]

I class ..... 3 annas per day.
II class ..... 2½ annas per day.
III class ..... 2 annas per day.

Major Davies in his inspection report of the penal settlement in 1867 expressed his doubts as to whether the above scale was sufficient for the support of a convict.[2] He also took grave exception to the system of allowing the prisoners to purchase articles of food from the market. In his opinion the convicts did not seem to realise what type of nourishing diet was required by them. He, therefore, recommended messing system where sufficient attention could be paid to fill up the deficiency of vegetable, milk, fish, ghee and thus avoid malnutrition which was also one of the main causes of high sickness and death among the convicts.[3] He also recommended the supply of clothing to all prisoners by the Government. His recommendations were accepted by the Government of India who sanctioned the introduction of messing system as an experimental measure.[4] A protracted correspondence seems to have followed in connection with the adoption of procedure regarding the messing system. Ultimately in 1869 the Government of India decided to issue dry rations to the convicts in the Andamans except for new arrivals for whom the messing systsm was adopted.[5] Soon after his arrival, Stewart, Superintendent of Port Blair (1871-75) took exception to the supply of cooked food to the fresh batches of convicts coming from India to Port Blair. In 1873, at the time of visit of Sir Henry Norman to Port Blair, the system of

1 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch A, Progs. No. 10-11, June, 1864.
2 Ibid. Public Branch, A Progs. No. 89, December, 1867.
3 Ibid.
4 Home Deptt., Port Blair Resolution No. 79/831-837 dated 2 December, 1867.
5 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, A Progs. No. 139-40, April, 1872.

issuing dry rations to all convicts had been adopted in the settlement.[1] In addition to dry rations and clothing, a money allowance was given to all convicts. The convicts in second class were given rupees eight per mensem while the lowest class received Rupees two per month.

Lyall and Lethbridge in their report on the inspection of the settlement in 1890 expressed their approval of the practice of issuing dry rations to the convicts but strongly recommended the use of a single scale of diet for all prisoners and special attention to unhealthy prisoners.[2] After noticing the great differences of wear and tear of clothes of a convict employed on extra-mural labour and of those who worked under shelter, they recommended a modification in the scale of clothing to be allowed to prisoners employed in these two kinds of labour. The Government of India did not agree to their suggestions. Suitable arrangements were, however, made for the rapid drying of wet clothes of convicts in a drying room.[3]

After the building of the Cellular Jail, cooked food was supplied to prisoners during their preliminary confinement of two years in Cellular and Associated Jails and dry rations were issued to prisoners outside. This practice was being followed till the visit of Sir Reginald Craddock to the settlement in 1914. Craddock in his report pointed out the following defects of the dry ration system :

Firstly, the issuing, weighing and distribution of rations caused immense trouble to the authorities.

Secondly, the issue of dry rations was under the control of convict officers. They had an opportunity to weigh less and thus misappropriate cereals.

Thirdly, many convicts underfed themselves in order to sell a part of their ration in black market. By the money which they gained from this illicit trade they purchased undesirable articles like opium etc.

And lastly, with the varying forms of labour it was impossible to adjust the scale of dry ration.

[1] Ibid, Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 75, August, 1874.
[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 74. 1890.
[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt.. Port Blair Branch, A Progs, No. 133, Sept., 1891.

He, however, urged caution in adopting the cooked food system because in his opinion the dry ration system"...has come to be regarded so much as a previledge that its withdrawal in favour of cooked food would cause the most bitter discontent."[1] Before any action could be taken on his recommendations the Government of India decided to appoint a Jail Committee.

The Jail Committee of 1919-20 was not satisfied with the arrangements for the cooking and distribution of rations as it was not supervised by any responsible officer.[2] They preferred the supervision by a paid staff in place of convict officers. They were in favour of gradually adopting the supply of cooked food to all.[3] The Committe did not think that three suits given to convicts were enough in the wet climate of the Andamans,[4] and suggested measures to ensure that every one had a dry suit to change. Inspite of the criticism and recommendations of the Jail Committee, the problem of adequate clothing and supply of nutritious food to the prisoners in the Andamans remained unsolved till the abolition of the penal settlement. Like other matters connected with the penal settlement, no consistent policy was followed by the Government of India to solve this problem. Inconsistency resulted in high rate of sickness and mortality in the settlement throughout its existence. The convicts working for eight hours a day had no spare clothes to change their wet clothing and consequently they were easy victims to Malaria and other diseases. They also did not get proper nourishing diet in the absence of adequate arrangements for food by the Government. Even the limited quantity of cereals supplied to them were of worst quality and full of worms. Everything was imported from India and was stored in the godowns in the tropical climate of the islands. By the time the cereals reached the convict, they lost all their nutritive value. It was not even possible to eat such worm-eaten cereals

[1] Ibid, A Progs. No. 34, April, 1914.
[2] Report of the Jail Committee, 1919-20, Para 601, p. 298.
[3] Ibid, Para 622, p. 306.
[4] Ibid, Para 600, p. 297-98.

without the risk of exposing oneself to a disease. The main reason which prevented the Government to put this matter on a satisfactory footing was the extra cost needed for the adequate supply of food and clothing to the convicts. The penal settlement was not self-supporting in any sphere and everything had to be imported from India or elsewhere at a great cost. The Government was not prepared to spend more on a convict in Port Blair than what it incurred on a convict in an Indian Jail.

Female convicts and convict marriages

The success of the whole scheme of reform of the convicts sentenced to transportation of life lay in the arrangements of allowing them to lead a family life after going through the normal course of their sentence. For this purpose it was necessary to allow them either to call their family from the mainland or to marry locally. The possible advantages of such a settled family life was recognised by the Government of India from the beginning of the penal settlement. In 1858 the Government of India while considering this aspect had observed that "There is no reason why the same wise consideration which requires that in the case of free Emigrants to our Colonies the Colony should receive a certain proportion of women as well as men, should not be kept in view in the present instance."[1] It was contemplated that eventually the wives and children of some of the mutineers should follow them from India. Accordingly arrangements were made to bring the families of twenty-five Bengalee convicts who expressed willingness to call them.[2] The efforts proved fruitless as none of the females were willing to come to the Andamans for fear of losing their caste and the dread of living in an unknown place, known as 'Kala Pani.' Walker realising the importance of women's presence in the settlement continuously urged the Government of India to send some females to the settlement.[3] In May 1860, the Government

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, A Progs. No. 21, 15 Jan., 1858.
[2] N.A,I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, A Progs. No. 37, 7 May, 1858,
[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 48, 19 May, 1860.

of India issued orders to the Bengal Government to despatch a small party of thirty female life convicts. These females had expressed their willingness to proceed from Bengal to Port Blair. The Superintendent was given full freedom of allowing these females to marry or to become a self-supporter.[1] The male convicts who married a female convict were allowed to become self-supporters. Within a short time many marriages took place. However, after some time the authorities of Port Blair were inclined to discourage the marriages of female convicts as it was noticed that a male term-convict, who married a female life-convict always left his wife after his release. Consequently the Government of India instructed the Superintendent, Port Blair to allow such marriages in case the married male convict expressed his willingness to remain in the settlement even after the date of his release.

There was no appreciable improvement as a result of this measure and the authorities had to discourage such marriages as they were alarmed at the growth of the descendants of convicts. The result of this step according to Major Devies was that "there were about four hundred marriageable women in the settlement who were anxious to get married as soon as permission was given to them."[2] The policy of putting restrictions on convict marriages continued to be followed during Captain Man's administration (1868-71). This resulted in prevalence of unnatural vice to an alarming extent among the convicts. Due to paucity of females in the settlement many women married only in name and were forced to adopt prostitution. However, in view of the counterbalancing advantages it offered to the convict community, Man was not in favour of stopping such marriages but wished to place certain restrictions on them.[3] Accordingly, the Government of India decided to permit only convicts of first class i.e. self-supporters to marry.

Campbell who inspected the penal settlement in 1872 was specially requested to investigate the system of convict marriages

[1] Ibid.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 89, December, 1867.

[3] Letter No. 1337 dated 31 Oct., 1871 from Supdt., Port Blair to the Government of India.

in the Andamans.[1] In accordance with his recommendations male life-convicts were allowed to marry on their attainment of first class i.e. at least after ten years stay in the settlement and the female life-convicts were to be allowed to marry after two years of satisfactory conduct in the first class[2] which meant that she should have spent five years in the penal settlement. Sir Henry Norman laid much stress on the importance of a large proportion of marriages among convicts. In his report he remarked that "it is important to the well being and to the moral condition of the settlement that as large a proportion of both men and women as may be practical may be married."[3] He had no objection to the time limit before which a male and a female convict was not allowed to marry. In order to avoid complications arising out of such marriages he suggested that in every case the contracting parties of marriage should obtain the approval of the Superintendent who should have no power to sanction unlawful marriages. He was not in favour of a marriage of a term convict with a life-convict.[4] These recommendations were accepted by the Government of Indla.[5]

The authorities of Port Blair hoped that with the formation of these rules difficulties would disappear, but a new problem confronted the authorities at Port Blair in connection with the married convicts. A convict sentenced for life imprisonment could be released after completion of twenty years penal servitude and consequently a male convict marrying after ten years might have only ten years to serve while his wife marrying after five years would have fifteen years to pass in the settlement. It was, therefore, decided to give permission to a marriage only when the Superintendent was satisfied "that the tie is one that would be binding on the parties under the personal law applicable to them in their own country" and that "the male convict should be clearly given to understand that he was

[1] N.A.I.. Home Deptt.. Judicial Branch, A Progs. No. 76, April, 1872.
[2] Ibid, Port Blair Branch. A Progs. No. 1, February, 1873.
[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch. A Progs. No. 75, August, 1874.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid, A Progs. No. 80, August, 1874.

contracting a permanent obligation."[1] The Government of India also instructed the Superintendent, Port Blair to remit the unexpired period of sentence in the case of a well behaved female convict whose husband was returning to India after release.[2]

Recommendations of Lyall and Lethbridge regarding marriage of convicts

Even such liberal rules did not result in solving the problem of marriages among convicts, Lyall and Lethbridge were requested to examine the possibility of increasing the number of female convicts in the settlement. In their report,[3] they observed, "provision of more women as wives for self supporters is one of the chief needs of the settlement." In their opinion "not only does the excessive disproportion of the sexes which exists at present lead, directly or indirectly (by encouraging unnatural vice), to nearly all the murders and attempts at murder which occur annually, and to a large part of the other crime ; the impossibility of building up a home and family deters many male convicts from settling in the Andamans who would, if they could get wives, contentedly stay there and add to the productive powers of the colony."[4] According to them the only means by which the number of female convicts in the settlement could be materially increased was by permitting the deportation of female term-convicts from Indian jails to the Andamans. Like the authorities of Port Blair, they did not anticipate many difficulties in actual practice resulting from marriages between convict self-supporters and free or short-term women prisoners. According to them, most of the women who were sentenced in India had no desire to return to their homes and were likely to settle in the Andamans after marriage. The commissioners found the segregation of female convicts was not completely according to the rules. In certain industries e.g. cloth-washing,

[1] Ibid. A Progs No. 9, August. 1881.
[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch. A Progs. No. 9, August. 1881.
[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 74, June. 1890.
[4] Ibid,

tailoring, cleaning wheat and sifting flour the females were employed in conjunction with male convicts.[1] The Government of India consulted the local governments who were found to be generally in favour of the proposals of Lyall and Lethbridge regarding female convicts. Consequently, it was decided to transport female term-convicts sentenced for seven years and upwards to the Andamans, except from Burma in which province comparatively few females were convicted.[2] The Governor-General in Council also agreed with the recommendations of Lyall and Lethbridge to have a complete segregation of female convicts from male convicts.[3]

Low state of morality among convicts

The introduction of the practice of transporting female term convicts to Port Blair did not result in any appreciable change in the state of morality of the prisoners. The number of women in the settlement remaind inadequate for the needs of the large number of male convicts. On 31 March, 1897, out of 2,447 self-supporters, there were only 363 women which gives only a proportion of nearly seven men to every woman.[4] Several instances from the Annual Administration reports of these islands for this period can be quoted to prove that the dearth of women in the settlement led to moral degradation of the convicts. In the year 1894 a convict murdered a local born free boy who was a habitual recipient in unnatural crime.[5] In 1895 one convict named Gurudas was murdered because his wife had an intrigue with another convict and did not wish to leave the Andamans with her husband whose release was approaching.[6]

[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 133. September, 1891.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Administration Report, 1896-97, P. 48.

[5] Administration Report, 1894-95, p. 46. On a refusal by the boy to submit further to unnatural vice the convict felt enraged and murdered him.

[6] Ibid. 1895-95. p. 47. Such intrigues by married females with another man were common in the settlement. The females generally did not wish to accompany the convict whom they married in Port Blair because they knew that they will be abandoned as soon as they reached India.

In 1896, a self-supporter attempted to murder a female convict who was the wife of a neighbour, because she had taken up with other men while she had an intrigue with him.[1] These affairs became so common that in nearly every administration report of the penal settlement unnatural crime in Andamans was noticed as an every day sort of matter. According to Merk, Superintendent of Port Blair (April 1904-April 1906), the state of immorality in the settlement was horrifying.[2]

Sir Reginald Craddock, Home Secretary to the Government of India, in his report of 1914 on the penal settlement of Port Blair dwelt at length on the state of morality in the settlement. He wrote, "As to sexual morality the system directly encourages immorality." Except a few self-supporters no convict was allowed to marry and even this "marriage is generally debased into promiscuous prostitution, the husband living on the proceeds.'[3] Many women in the jail refuse to get married to male convicts because they were forced to live the life of a prostitute after such marriages. Instances were not lacking in which many female convicts were abandoned at sea port in India by their released husbands and the women had no option but to support themselves by prostitution. As regards convicts other than self-supporters who were compelled to lead a life of abstinence, they had no other alternative but to indulge in unnatural vices. Several 'habitual recipients' in unnatural vice existed in the penal settlement. Craddock quoted several instances of murders committed as a result of the low ebb of morality in the settlement. In the end Craddock confessed his inability to suggest any remedy so far as sexual vices and convict marriages were concerned.[4]

The findings of Craddock were confirmed to be true by Colonel Douglas, Superintendent of Port Blair after a full enquiry.[5] According to Douglas, the convict marriage in the Andamans was a complete farce and was only contracted for

[1] Ibid, 1896-97, p. 48.
[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch. A Progs. No. 28-40, July, 1906.
[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 34, April, 1914.
[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs, No. 34, April, 1914.
[5] Ibid, A Progs. No. 17-18, June, 1914 and 55-69, August, 1915.

convenience. Ninety per cent of the union of convicts were dissolved as soon as they left the settlement. Besides the unmarried convicts greatly outnumbered the married one as the number of convict marriages in the Andamans was very less. The natural consequence of such state of affairs was the prevalence of loose living and venereal diseases to a great extent. As a temporary measure till the question of penal settlement was finally settled by the proposed Jail Committee, the Superintendent made the following recommendations on the question of convict marriages which were accepted by the Government of India :[1]

Firstly, a male convict who had a wife in India was not to be allowed to contact a local union.

Secondly, confirmed or habitual prisoners were not to be allowed to marry.

Thirdly, all such marriages were to be published in the home villages of both the parties. At the time of release of a married convict from Port Blair, the fact of his marriage was to be recorded on the warrant of release.

And fourthly, unions were not to be permitted which were manifestly incongruous e.g. in respect of religion and caste.

The result of the implementation of the above recommendations naturally created conditions which were conducive to immorality as very few marriages could be contracted under such circumstances. According to Colonel Douglas, "a system which requires some ten thousand criminals to live in barracks cannot but result, without the closest supervision, in wide spread immorality."[2] After a year he observed, "in a settlement of this description the provision of women to adjust to some extent, the relative proportion of the sexes is absolutely necessary."[3]

Observations of Jail Committee regarding state of immorality

The Jail Committee of 1919-20 took serious view of the existing state of immorality in the penal settlement. In their

[1] Ibid, A Progs. No. 34, April, 1914.

[2] Report of Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Para 552. p. 279.

[3] Ibid.

opinion "no reform would have any chance of being successful unless the introduction of an adequate proportion of women was assured."[1] Accordingly, the first question to which they paid their attention was to explore conditions which may tend to remove the difficulties which had hitherto prevented the presence of a sufficient number of women in the settlement. By correcting past mistakes their idea was to carry out the original conception of a settlement of freed and reformed convicts. After careful consideration the Committee did not think that such an atmosphere could ever be created in the Andamans.[2] In their opinion "In the existing atmosphere of the settlement, the attempt to induce released convicts to bring their wives and families at such a place would not succeed."[3] No self respecting prisoner was likely to give his consent to bring his woman into the polluted atmosphere of the Andamans, even if the woman was ready to come and their relatives allowed them to do so. The Committee, therefore, did not favour the continuance of the penal settlement in the Andamans.[4] They recommended the discontinuance of deportation of convicts to the Andamans except in regard to such prisoners as the Governor General in Council may by special or general order direct. According to them the gradual transfer of other convicts to Indian prisons should begin immediately. They recommended immediate stoppage of deportation of females and return of all female prisoners from the Andamans for distributing them among the provinces to which they belonged.[5] Their recommendations regarding the stoppage of transportation of female to the Andamans were accepted by the Government of India. Necessary arrangements were made for the repatriation of female convicts.

After some time there was a complete change in the policy of the Government of India regarding the presence of families in the Andamans. Contrary to the recommendations of the Jail

[1] Ibid.

[2] Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Para 553, p. 279.

[3] Ibid, Para 548, p. 276.

[4] Ibid, Para 553, p. 279.

[5] Ibid, Para 572, p. 289.

Committee, efforts were made to induce convicts to import their wives and families from India.[1] Female convicts who volunteered themselves for the penal settlement from Indian jail were encouraged to go to the Andamans in case they married a convict in the penal settlement.[2] Within a few years comparative large homogenous cummunities of Mopalas, Burmans, Bhantus, and Sikhs were established[3]. They were allowed to settle with their families in different settlements in the Andamans. By 1941, the numbers of free settlers (those who had come of their own free will from the mainland to settle in the Andamans as well as convicts who had elected to remain in these islands after they had served their terms, and their children) had become an appreciable proportion of the population.[4]

Causes of the failure of the Government to solve the problem of convict marriages

Consistent measures were not taken by the Government of India to provide every prisoner, when released, with the necessaries of a domestic existence with the result that there was no reasonable chance of the convict population becoming the nucleus of a decent community.[5] No serious attempt was made to induce the families of released convicts to join them in the Andamans. Liberal treatment, grant of free passages, and regular propaganda might have induced the convicts in calling their families from India. Instead of this course being followed, local marriages were allowed to be contracted between self-supporting mail convicts and female convicts who had served a certain number of years of their sentences in the penal settlement. Most of these women were too old for child bearing and were often of bad character. Besides, the number of women available for such marriages was always quite inadequate. The result of such a disproportion of the sexes was the wholesale

1 Home Deptt. Resolution No. 20/26 Jails dated 27 February, 1926, p. 8.
2 Ibid, Para 9.
3 Census Report, 1931, p. 7.
4 Ibid, 1951, p. xii.
5 Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Chapter XXI, Para 548, p. 275.

immorality on the part of women.[1] According to a report made by Douglas in 1915, "In the Western District hardly a single woman is reputable and the state of the Eastern District is no better. An additional and more sinister feature is that in the Eastern District the evil is not confined to women but has manifested itself in the form of unnatural vice in which the local boys are victims."[2] Craddock characterised the picture as a dark one and observed "with neither religous, caste, nor family restraints sexual immorality is a certainty and the chances of a respectable man losing all his sense of decency must be very great.[3]" In his opinion social, moral, and religious restraints were essential for the reform of the convicts.[4] He did not foresee any possibility of creating such restraints in a place like the penal settlement of Port Blair, where convicts deprived of female society were concentrated in a large number. In fact the Government of India committed a fundamental error in establishing a penal settlement in an isolated place where there was no public opinion to induce a convict to reform himself. The paucity of women in the settlement made matters worse. Although the Government was alive to the necessity of providing families to the convicts after a fixed period, they were unable to find out suitable remedy for achieving this object. One of the main causes of recommending the abolition of the penal settlement by the Jail Committee in 1919-20, was the existence of bad state of morals in the settlement. Morality was incapable of improvement so long as the number of women bore so small a proportion to the number of men.[5]

System of punishment for local offences

Various types of punishment were given to a convict who committed an offence in violation of the regulations of the

[1] Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Chapter XXI, Para 548, p. 276.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch A Progs. No. 55-69, August, 1915. The convict settlements of Port Blair were divided into four districts.

[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 34. April, 1914.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Para 552, p. 279.

penal settlement. The object of awarding such punishments was to maintain complete discipline in the penal settlement. The maintenance of complete discipline in the penal settlement of Port Blair was a difficult task as compared to a jail of enclosed walls. In the jails it is always easy with a small coercive agency to enforce strictness in observance of rules but in the Andamans it was extremely difficult to have a close supervision over convicts scattered at different places in gang work or in pursuing their own profession as a self-supporter. Another important aim of giving punishment for local offences was to help the convicts in enabling them to support themselves in an orderly way. A system of punishments was, therefore, necessary to provide deterrent and reformative effect.

In the earlier years of the settlement the prisoners were treated with merciless severity.[1] Fetters were put on all convicts even while they were on work. This practice was stopped after a few months of the opening of the settlement.[2] A milder policy towards the convicts was followed by Haughton and Tytler who succeeded Walker as Superintendent of the settlement. Sir Robert Napier who inspected the settlement in 186 was not in favour of changing the mild character of management carried out under Haughton and Tytler to a policy of severity[3]. In his opinion, "it was a terrible punishment to Indians to be separated for ever from every tie and relation; and further severities of the regular jail life would be annihilation to them." However, it was considered necessary to frame certain rules regarding punishment to convicts for offences committed in the settlement. The first scheme of punishment to offending convicts in the Andamans was outlined by Major Ford in 1864.[4] According to his proposals Viper island was to be a place where punishment was to be actually inflicted on offending convicts. In this island all sanctioned means for severe punishment *viz.* solitary cells, lock-ups, stocks, and

[1] Supra, p. 154, Chapter V.
[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 18, 22 October, 1858.
[3] Ibid. Public Branch. O.C. No. 4, 1 April, 1864.
[4] Ibid, O.C. No. 48-49, 14 September, 1864.

whipping posts were to be maintained. Convicts were to be chained together as a measure of punishment.[1] Members of chain-gangs at Viper Island were to be put on the hardest labour. All such punishments were to be awarded after a regular investigation by the Superintendent's Court. The moral effect of such a place, where severe punishment could be safely inflicted, was expected to be great. The fear of being sent to Viper Island was also supposed to act as a check against crime elsewhere. All convicts on their arrival in the Andamans were to be lodged in Viper Island to witness the system of punishment for a month before they were sent to other places in the penal settlement so that the severity of punishment at Viper Island may produce deterrent effect on them. Government of India while approving the above proposals of the Superintendent, Port Blair considered the punishment of working in fetters as a sufficient penalty and advised him to take recourse to chain-gang only in extreme cases. Construction of a jail at Viper was started in 1867 for giving effect to above proposals. The only other form of punishment prevalent in the Andamans was the flogging of convicts by their convict officers. A convict officer could inflict six stripes before any enquiry was conducted by a responsible official.[2]

Campbell after inspecting the penal settlement in 1872 drafted rules regarding the system of punishment to the defaulting convicts. Along with the jail at Viper Island, where, all new arrivals were placed and subjected to strict jail discipline, he suggested the opening of a refractory ward where offenders were to be confined and subjected to special hard labour and low diet. He was not in favour of confining prisoners in solitary cells. The period of detention in Viper Island for the new arrivals was fixed as one year in the proposed rules. The Government of India requested Sir Henry Norman to give his considered opinion about the system of

[1] Ibid, O.C. No. 18-19, October, 1868.
Chain-gang : The convicts sentenced to chain-gang were confined at night by a chain running through their legs through the coupling of irons.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 89, December, 1867.

punishment to new arrivals at Viper Island.[1] Sir Henry Norman was not in favour of putting the newly arrived convicts with the most desperate and intractable of the older convicts who were usually confined in Viper Island.[2] To carry out this policy of segregation of convicts, construction of additional jail buildings at huge costs was necessary for which no funds were available at that time. He, therefore, suggested that "Instead of one year in the jail or chain gang it seems far better to place new arrivals in the lower grade and to require hard labour in gangs with strict confinement to barracks when not at work and no indulgence or luxury whatever for four years.[3]" He also recommended that, subject to special exemption by the Superintendent, convicts on arrival should wear double leg irons for six months and single irons for a second six months, the removal of these irons after each of these periods being dependent on good conduct.[4] The rules finally approved by the Government of India in 1874 were as follows :

Firstly, in addition to the three regular classes there was to be a chain-gang. Any convict could be sentenced to chain-gang under the orders of the Superintendent for such periods as he might think fit. During this sentence they were to be employed on hard labour within the workshops of the jail.

Secondly, in the refractory ward worst offenders were to be confined to do hard labour.

Thirdly, solitary cells for punishment to offenders was also approved.

And fourthly, instructions were issued to clear Viper Jail of the new arrivals.[5]

Lyall and Lethbridge, who had recorded a special report on the Jail in Viper Island considered it as altogether unsuitable for the purpose for which it was originally designed.[6] They desired to have it replaced by a Cellular Jail for separate con-

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 72, August, 1874.

[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 75, August, 1874.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] N.A.I. Home Deptt.. Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 80, August, 1874.

[6] Ibid, A Progs. No. 74, June, 1890.

finement of prisoners in cells. This proposed Cellular jail, in their opinion, was also to provide accommodation for prisoners sentenced to chain gang. The Government of India accepted the above recommendations and ordered the abolition of the chain-gang as soon as the Cellular and Associated Jails were available for confinement of prisoners.[1] The forms of punishment available for labouring convicts and self-supporters were to be separate confinement in Cellular Jail, confinement in solitary cells in the Associated Jail and ordinary confinement in the Associated Jail.[2] Any convict guilty of offences while in confinement in the above jails was liable to further punishments such as the imposition of penal diet, handcuffs and fetters. No convict was to be released from Cellular and Associated Jails until he had earned a certain number of marks which were fixed with regard to the minimum period of confinement in these two jails. All periods spent in Cellular and Associated Jails in excess of six and eighteen months respectively were not to be counted towards final release from the settlement.

The punishment of chain-gang was, however, not abolished inspite of the clear instructions of the Government of India to that effect.[3] As chain-gang prisoners formed an integral part of the available labour in the settlement the withdrawal of even two hundred such prisoners to undergo confinement in the Cellular Jail was severely felt by the authorities.[4] Consequently the Government of India had to modify their orders in 1910. They decided that one month's separate confinement in the Cellular Jail was to be substituted for two months' chain-gang. The number of prisoners to be confined separately in the Cellular Jail was not to exceed two hundred. This limit was fixed with a view to prevent withdrawal of a large number of prisoners from extra-mural labour.

The above orders were also not strictly followed in Port Blair owing to shortage of accommodation in Cellular Jail and paucity of convicts for extra-mural labour. Instead of sepa-

[1] Ibid, A Progs. No. 133, September 1891.
[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 94, September, 1896.
[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 67-68, June, 1905.
[4] Ibid. A Progs. No. 137-38, May, 1906.

rate confinement in Cellular Jail in lieu of chain gang, separate confinement, pure and simple, was adopted for such convicts on whom other punishments had proved ineffective.[1] In view of these practical difficulties the orders of 1910 were cancelled.[2] Craddock while suggesting minor reforms in 1914 till the future of the penal system was decided by the proposed Jail Committee, recommended the final abolition of chain-gang system. According to him a bad character in order to avoid hard work in the gang deliberately committed an offence to be punished in chain-gang. The system was also uneconomical as the convict sentenced to chain-gang gave a lesser output. He was in favour of incarcerating bad offenders in the Cellular Jail where only habituals were to be kept.[3] The Government of India agreed to the proposals of Craddock and abolished the sentence of chain-gang substituting it by confinement in Cellular Jail.[4] Craddock also took strong objection to the practice of awarding punishment in a dark cell instead of solitary cell as provided for in the rules. On his recommendations this unauthorised punishment was also abolished.[5]

The punishments given to female convicts for local offences were to have their task increased, hair cropped close or a close confinement in a refractory ward. Craddock recommended immediate abolition of the punishment of cropping hair. This was accepted by the Government of India.[6]

System of reward to convicts for good behaviour

Along with the system of punishment for local offences by convicts existed a system of giving rewards to criminals for their good work and behaviour. The greatest inducement to a convict to reform himself was the hope of becoming a self-supporter.[7] In addition to this previlege it was considered neces-

[1] Ibid, A Progs. No. 91-94, September. 1910.
[2] Ibid. A Progs. No. 34, April, 1914.
[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 34, April, 1914.
[4] Ibid, A Progs. No. 18-19, July, 1915.
[5] Ibid, A Progs. No. 3, November, 1916.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Supra, Chapter VI

sary to keep alive some sort of hope, however, remote it may be in the hearts of the majority of convicts.[1] Hence the proposals of Sir Henry Norman to grant pardon to those convicts who showed conspicuous gallantry of devotion in the service of the Government and to those who had completed twenty years of sentences at the penal settlement were accepted by the Government of India in 1874.[2] Only those convicts who were considered to be permanently dangerous to society even after their release were to be detained in the Andamans after twenty years. The Superintendent was authorised to reward the good behaviour of first class convicts with indulgences and extended liberty.

Lyall and Lethbridge recommended a system by which convicts officer, artificiers and other prisoners employed on skilled labour in the different departments of the settlement were to be allowed marks to reach the position of self-supporting convicts at an earlier period than ten years—the term fixed for an ordinary labouring convict.[3] In their opinion the rewarding of prisoner by marks could prove a better stimulus to good conduct. According to their recommendation a life-convict, who showed exemplary conduct, was to be granted a remission of one fourth period of his total sentence awarded on the basis of marks and was to be allowed to become a self-supporter earlier than the prescribed limit.[4] The Government of India while accepting the above recommendations, instructed the Superintendent, Port Blair to frame definite rules in this connection. But for a sufficient long period such rules were not framed by the authorities.[5]

In 1896, a rule was prescribed by the Government of India according to which no convict was entitled to a release from the Cellular and Associated Jails until he had earned 365 and 1095 marks respectively which meant the awarding of roughly

[1] N.A.I.. Home Deptt.. Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 75, Feb , 1874.
[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 80. August, 1874.
[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 74, June. 1890.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid, A Progs. No. 133, September 1891.

two marks for a day's good conduct.[1] The practice of granting any remission in the term of sentence for good behaviour was stopped. This was not liked by Jail Committee, which considered it necessary to grant remission in sentence due to good behaviour as an inducement for further good conduct. The Committee, therefore, advocated the introduction of Indian system of remission by which a sentence of life convict could be curtailed if his behaviour had been good.[2]

Failure of Andaman Penal System

The original conception of a penal settlement to which convicts from mainland could be sent and in which after undergoing a necessary period of penal labour they might be released and settled with their families as free citizens was one of great potentialities. In the words of Lyall and Lethbridge "the object of the convict's life in the penal settlement should be to do that which, in our Indian jails, we have been obliged to renounce as impossible of attainment viz. to effect his reformation by removing him for a long period from the scene of his crimes and by placing before him the prospect of substantial advantages which he can earn by continuous good conduct.[3]" The main value of transportation to an unknown place beyond the seas was, therefore, reformative.[4] Along with this reformative aspect, the exile which the punishment of transportation involved was considered to act as the most deterrent feature. The dread of being transported to blue waters called 'Kalapani' was sufficient enough to strike terror in a Hindu or an Indian Muslim in the early days of transportation to the Andamans. Unfortunately the experiment of the penal system in the Andamans did not succeed in achieving its aim of training the out-castes into self respecting citizens habituated to provide for themselves through honest means.

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 18-19. July, 1915, The prescribed period of stay in the Cellular Jail for a prisoner was six months while in the Associated Jail it was eigthteen months.'

[2] Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Para 617, p. 490.

[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 74, June, 1890.

[4] Census Report, 1901, p. 109.

CAUSES OF THE FAILURE

Malarial Climate : The climate of the Andamans was the primary cause of its failure. From the year of the establishment of the settlement at Port Blair, malaria conveying mosquitos proved a cause of great mortality and continuous sickness to its residents. The failure of efforts to establish a settlement in the eighteenth century at Port Cornwallis was mainly due to its insalubrious climate.[1] The problem of abnormal rate of sickness always confronted the authorities in the Andamans from the establishment of a penal settlement at Port Blair in 1858 till its abolition in 1945. There was much sickness and mortality among the convicts during the first year of the settlement.[2] In 1859, the rate of mortality was sixty three percent. The increasing mortality during the first five years of its existence made the Government of India very anxious.[3] In the opinion of Sir Robert Napier, one of the main causes of mortality in the settlement was the prevalence of malaria from the newly cleared forests.[4] Several measures were suggested by him to check the disease but there was no improvement in the situation. In the year 1866 the mortality and sickness in the settlement was again exceedingly high.[5] The convicts who were employed in clearing the jungles soon fell a prey to malaria as they were not provided with nourishing diet, proper clothing and shelter.[6] Moreover, the gradual clearing of jungles made the immediate neighbourhood more malarious for some time. In order to check sickness and mortality among convicts, regular system of clearing was adopted and work was expedited at many places in 1867. Measures were again taken to provide nourishing diet, proper clothing and shelter to convicts. Convicts, who were of robust health and less than 45 years of age, were received from India in the settlement. As a result of

[1] Supra, Chapter III.
[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Judicial Branch, O.C. No. 14, 28 May, 1858.
[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 1, April, 1864.
[4] Ibid.
[5] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 89, December, 1867.
[6] Ibid, A Progs. No. 92, December, 1867.

these measures, there was a drop in the rate of sickness and mortality in the settlement,[1] but this was only a temporary phase. In 1878 again there was an enormous increase in death rate among convicts, there being 575 deaths against an average of 180 mortality for the last five years.[2] In 1880, the Secretary of State expressed his concern over the great mortality among convicts and directions similar to those issued in 1867 were given to the Superintendent, Port Blair.[3] It appears that the settlement authorities did not follow these instructions rigidly. The Government of India and the authorities of Port Blair were not willing to sacrifice the penal considerations for reducing the death rate. Consequently there was no improvement in this sphere.[4] Lethbridge, after an inspection of medical conditions in Port Blair, recommended the keeping away of new arrivals among whom rate of mortality was very high from the work of filling the swamps and reclaiming the forests.[5] His suggestion of the medical examination of convicts before being sent for reclamation work, with a view to eliminate any prisoner unfit for such work, accepted with the condition that the final decision was to rest with the Executive Officer of the settlement. Inspite of these precautions, no appreciable improvement in the situation was noticeable and the rate of mortality in the settlement remained high in the ensuing decades.

From the above it is clear that high rate of sickness and mortality existed in the Andamans due to malaria from the beginning of the settlement to the end. In the beginning, the lack of medical knowledge about the spread of malaria by a species of mosquito Anopheles Ludlowi which bred in the salt swamp bordering the sea coast did not allow any serious measures to be taken to fill up these swamps for checking the disease. To the contrary the settlement was established on the sea shore where this malaria conveying mosquito proved a cause of continued sickness and high death rate. The danger

[1] Ibid, Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 75, August, 1874.

[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 32, April, 1879.

[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 36, October, 1880.

[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 98, July, 1886.

[5] Ibid, A Progs. No. 133, September, 1891.

was further increased when encroachments of the sea brought malarial infection further inland in their train and nearer to villages. Thus swamp reclamation in the Andamans, on which special attention was not paid in the beginning, had an important bearing upon the health of the residents of these islands. The medical statistics of twenty seven years from 1904 to 1931 reveal that other climatic diseases kept pace with malaria which undermined the constitution of convicts and lowered their powers of resistance against other diseases.[1] The prevalence of malaria fever from the very beginning of the settlement to which no proper check could be exercised till the beginning of the twentieth century on account of wrong diagnosis was necessarily very unfavourable to the success of a project for colonisation of the island by a convict population who were imported from different types of climate. Only about 340 persons out of 1000 convicts sentenced for life survived to enjoy the fruit of their so-called reformation and about 660 died before the expiry of twenty years detention required for their release.[2] The convicts, who were fortunate enough to survive at the time of their release, were exhausted by malaria and there was a natural disinclination to remain in the islands which were thus afflicted.[3]

Absence of Reformative Influence

Another cause of the failure of the penal settlement was the complete absence of reformative influence in the settlement. It is surprising to note that the authorities who controlled this experiment laid much emphasis on the reformative value of the penal s stem of the Andamans which actually did not exist. According to the Jail committee, ..."absolutely no attempt whatever to provide any kind of reformative influence on the convict has ever been made."[4] No precautions were taken before 1890 to protect convicts from contaminating influences. The habitual offender and a prisoner convicted for the first time

1 Census Report, 1931, p. 27.

2 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 28-40, July, 1906.

3 Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Para 547, p. 275.

4 Ibid, Para 549, p. 276.

which did not indicate a criminal career were put together. Although the recommendations of Lyall and Lethbridge were accepted by the Government of India in 1891, the Port Blair authorities did not make any serious attempt to classify prisoners outside the Cellular and Associated Jails.[1] Even if the authorities at Port Blair had taken sufficient care to implement the suggestions of Lyall and Lethbridge, no material advantage would have been gained because there was no proper criterion to distinguish between a habitual and non-habitual offender.[2] Differences of opinion existed and would exist always among persons as to who is a specially dangerous criminal or not.[3] A man from the frontier who had committed many murders due to family vendatta may be classified as dangerous and habitual criminal while a person belonging to a gang of thieves and robbers with a single murder may not be treated as habitual offender. The Jail Committee of 1919-20 pointed out that the great majority of the prisoners who were deported to the Andamans did not belong to the worst or most dangerous class of Indian criminals.[4] According to them about two-thirds of the convicts in the Andamans were convicted of murder but the man who committed these crimes were often some of the least corrupted members of the prison population.[5] The above facts clearly demonstrate the difficulties in adopting a correct procedure to distinguish between habituals and non-habituals. Under such circumstances contamination was bound to spread in a penal settlement like Port Blair where there was no supervision except that of a convict officer and where prisoners had to be brought together for labour during the day and locked together closely during the night in barracks.

Reliance on Convict Officers

Another great drawback of the penal system in the Andamans which contributed to its failure to effect reformative

[1] Supra, Chapter VI.
[2] Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Para 549, p. 277.
[3] Ibid, Para 636, p. 312.
[4] Ibid, Para 560, p. 282.
[5] Ibid.

influences among the convicts, was placing much reliance on the convict petty officers. With inadequate number of officers, it was quite impossible for the higher authorities to watch the work of convicts. According to Craddock, "It is the petty officer convict who has the real power over the convicts.[1]" The lack of thoroughly competent and trustworthy officers supported by an adequate establishment made it impossible to exercise an effective supervision over thousands of convicts scattered over different places for work.[2] In these circumstances, it was impossible even for a conscientious convict in the Andamans to reform himself. In case he persisted in performing a full task and neither bribed nor flattered his petty officer or reported the evil doings of his fellows he eventually found himself in the chain-gang for some offence which he had never committed.[3] The result was that "The incentives before the convicts were not incentives which tend to reform but which tend to debase them." Each convict's aim was to get, if possible, a light job, escape punishment and obtain promotion. In the majority of the cases he could only obtain them by gaining the favour of a petty officer. In the words of Craddock, "Bribery or intimidation and sometimes readiness to submit to unnatural connection may afford the royal road to previleges and indulgences according to the character of the convict or the petty officer concerned.[4]" It was in the power of the convict officer to report against those whom he disliked and to connive at breaches of rules in cases of favourites. In fact the settlement of Port Blair was a colony of the slaves controlled by slave petty subordinates and had no chance to succeed as a reforming agency. The Jail Committee of 1919-20 was also convinced about the impossibility of reformation of the convicts in the penal settlement of Port Blair in such circumstances. They, therefore, strongly condemned the employment of petty officers as from among the convicts and

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 34, April, 1914.
[2] Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Para 549, p. 277.
[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 34, April, 1914.
[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 34, April, 1914.

recommended increase in the staff to supervise the convicts.[1]

Paucity of Women

The demoralising effect of the paucity of women in the settlement throughout its existence has already been discussed in detail in this chapter.[2] By the time a convict reached the stage of a self-supporter he was already demoralised to a great extent. He was then released into a community in which there was not more than one woman to seven.[3] Except a few self-supporters no convict was able to marry and even that marriage was generally debased into prostitution, as far as the female was concerned. Under these circumstances, the immorality which prevailed in the penal settlement to an alarming extent could not be suppressed by the settlement authorities and the convict was unable to march towards the path of reformation.

Absence of Moral, Social and Religious Restraints

In the absence of moral, social and religious restraints in the settlement, the failure of the system as a reforming agency was certain. Such restraints could not possibly exist among large bodies of men deprived from female society, without caste influence, with no public opinion and without any religion.[4] But the British Government in India considered that even in the absence of such restraints a prisoner could be reformed. A definite rule was laid down prohibiting convicts from erecting places of worship of any kind and (with trifling exceptions) from taking part in any joint religious observations on account of fears of outbreak of disturbances.[5] No arrangement for the education of the convict was made in the penal settlement. There was no public opinion around him which could deter a convict from checking his demoralising tendencies. To the contrary the public opinion round him was thoroughly corrupt. By the time a convict made up his mind to lead a moral life,

[1] Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Para 613, p. 301.
[2] Supra, Chapter VI.
[3] Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Para 551, p. 278.
[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt.. Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 34, April, 1914.
[5] Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Para 549, p. 276.

he did not receive any assistance from the system of society in which he found himself.[1] Without any of the above restraints and family influences which to a large extent supply some of the chief inducements to mankind for respectable conduct it could hardly be expected that the system could be successful in achieving its aim.

Enormous Size of Convict Population

Another fundamental difficulty in the way of the success of the penal system of the Andamans was the enormous size of the convict population collected from varied and incongrous quarters.[2] The penal settlement was used as a receptacle for criminals from all parts of India without any regard to their race, religion, and language. A common formula applied for reformation of such a heterogenous collection could never create a healthy opinion among the convicts to induce them to accept a path of reform.

Loss of Deterrent Effect of Transportation

One argument in favour of the penal settlement which bulked very large in the minds of those who dealt with this question in the beginning was the supposed deterrent effect which transportation over the sea would exercise on the convicts. Undoubtedly in the earlier years of the settlement deportation to the Andamans was a punishment tremendous in its moral effect and most deterrent to the criminal class in India. In 1858 very few Indians, specially from upper India, dreamt of crossing the seas. The Andamans being unknown, and the mortality very high, the penal settlement was considered dreadful. For twenty years after the opening of the penal settlement no convict was allowed to return to India and such information which filtered to India about the settlement was discouraging to the people in general and to criminals in particular. Gradually the stringency of the early discipline was relaxed to some extent. There was also a small decrease in

[1] Ibid, Para 551, p. 278.

[2] Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Para 557, p. 281.

sick and death rate. From 1878 onwards, released prisoners began to return annually to India in continuously increased numbers to give a correct picture to the people with the result that during the eighties of the nineteenth century the general impressions among the criminals regarding the Andamans underwent a complete change. The committee appointed to enquire into certain matters connected with the Jail Administration in India in 1888 remarked, "it is not possible to ignore the fact that transportation is no longer a deterrent form of punishment."[1] According to Lyall and Lethbridge who were also directed to verify the correctness of the above statement, "The Jail Committee had represented accurately the feelings and views of Indian convicts as regards transportation to the Andamans."[2] The cause which led to this change of opinion in regard to the once dreaded 'Kalapani' was the account of the life of a convict in these islands which showed that as compared to the life of a convict in an Indian Jail the life of a convict in Andamans was subjected to lesser restraints. In the Andamans the great bulk of the labouring prisoners passed their day in open air. The improvements in communications and hopes of their return to India had also mitigated their mental sufferings. In order to make the sentence more stringent in its initial stages and to avoid the evil of diminishing the dread with which expatriation was regarded by criminals in India, Lyall and Lethbridge suggested the system of confinement in Cellular and Associated Jails. The deportation of term convicts started in 1866 was also abolished as the prisoners returning from the Andamans gave a not very repulsive account of the life there.[3] However, these steps were taken when it was too late. It was a well known fact in every prison in India that the lot of prisoners in the Andamans was preferable to that of a convict in an Indian Jail. The convict at Port Blair due to slackness of discipline could get within the boundaries of the settlement (and beyond it on forest duty) far more variety,

[1] Report of the Committee appointed to enquire into certain matters connected with the Jail Administration in India, 1889, Chapter XVIII, p. 137.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 74, June, 1890.

[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 28-40, July, 1906.

change of scene and opportunity for social intercourse and enjoyment of illicit pleasures (tobacco, unnatural vice, opium and ganja etc.) than he could enjoy in an Indian Jail.[1] Craddock discussing the deterrent value of transportation to the Andamans wrote in his report, "In these days when ships carry a number of Indian emigrants to distant colonies like Fiji and British Columbia and when crowded steamers carry labourers from Madras to Burma, from India to Ceylon and Straits, the mere terror of crossing the 'Kalapani' is an exploded bogey."[2] In his opinion any idea that transportation would frighten a man from committing a crime from which imprisonment would not deter him, must be at once dismissed. The feeling of banishment did not at all turn the scale against the comparative freedom enjoyed by the transported convicts in the Andamans. The Jail Committee of 1919-20 also agreed with the above views and remarked "...experience has, however, proved that the deterrent effect, if it ever existed, has long ceased to operate."

Enormous Cost on convicts in Andamans

The enormous cost which was required to maintain the penal settlement was an important factor contributing to the failure of the experiment in the Andamans. The Government of India from time to time expressed grave concern over the increasing cost on the Port Blair Settlement. In 1867 the cost of a prisoner was calculated at Rs. 300·00 per annum. This excessive charge was attributed, by Major Davies, to want of economic management.[3] The settlement authorities always had an eye on reducing the cost even at the expense of sacrificing the object for which it was established. At last the Governor General in Council was constrained to remark that 'their main and primary object was to secure a well regulated system of discipline and that the profitable employment of convicts and development of the resources of the islands must be considered

[1] N.A.I.. Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 28-40, July, 1906.
[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 34, April, 1914.
[3] N.A.I,, Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 89, December, 1867.

secondary and subordinate.[1]" In the report of the Commission of 1889 on jail management in India, it was remarked that "the day is not far distant when, with a better system of jail organisation and of remunerative industrial employment for convicts, it will be felt that this system of sending prisoners beyond the sea is not only deterrent but very expensive and from another aspect, unremunerative.[2]" The objections against keeping convicts in the Andamans at a higher cost as compared to Indian jails was again raised in 1899. Although the average annual cost of a convict in the Andamans based on the figures for the years from 1893 to 1897 was reduced to Rs. 85-10-0 per annum from that of Rs. 300/- per annum in 1867, the basis of objection was that only Rs. 43-15-0 on an average was incurred on a prisoner confined in a jail in India during a year and as such an excess expenditure of Rs. 4,38, 761/- per annum was being spent on 10, 525 convicts in the Andamans.[3] At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were little prospects of the cost per convicts being reduced in the Andamans, to the contrary it was feared that it would increasse by Rs. 4/- per head per annum.[4] Even Sir Reginald Craddock, who condemned the penal settlement in 1914 with all the force at his command, did not recommend the abolition of the penal settlement on account of financial considerations. Although he was considerably disposed in favour of abolishing the penal settlement yet after seeing the large capital sunk (which was estimated at 170 lakhs by the Chief Commissioner) and the natural resources of the islands, he was not inclined to advise its abandonment.[5] No doubt, the authorities always realised that the transportation of a convict involved an extra expenditure but in order to reduce it to the minimum they employed the convicts in such a way as to take maximum work from them for developing the resources of the islands. Every effort was made to keep down the

[1] Ibid, Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 1, February, 1873.

[2] Report of the Commission of 1889 on Jail Management in India—Chapter XXVIII, p. 137.

[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 42, May, 1899.

[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 28-40, July, 1906.

[5] Ibid, A Progs. No. 34, April, 1914.

cost of the settlement. Sufficient supervisory establishment was never provided in the settlement. Adequate subordinate staff, medical men, permanent buildings, and all other necessities of proper administration were conspicuous in the settlement by their absence.[3] The above shortcomings led to most of the evils, about which all unprejudiced observers agree, existed at Port Blair.

Value of the Andamans as a place for transportation of dangerous criminals

While tracing the causes of the failure of the penal settlement at Port Blair, we cannot shut our eyes to the value of the settlement for the transfer of a small class of selected prisoners whose removal from India was in the public interest.[2] According to Jail Committee, "There are and must always exist in all Indian Provinces, though more in some than in other, a certain number of prisoners whose removal to a place of secure custody outside the continent of India is extremely desirable.[3]" It would be a great advantage to the different provinces of India if such men were removed to a place of entire safety outside India such as the Andamans. Probably the prisoners themselves would also benefit by the relaxation of the severity of treatment which is necessary in India but which can easily be dispensed with at Port Blair. However, such a discussion is fruitless now as the Andamans have since ceased to be a place for transportation of criminals of all types.

Abolition of the penal settlement marks the end of an epoch

There is no doubt that the penal settlement in the Andamans could not continue for long. Even with all precautions a stage is reached sooner or later when it becomes necessary to abolish a trans-marine penal settlement. The first stage in the history of all overseas penal settlements is the exceedingly strong effect of deportation to a distant or unknown spot-whether it is Botany Bay, Tasmania, Falkland islands, Singapore or the

[1] Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Para 558, p. 282.
[2] Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Para 566, p. 286.
[3] Ibid, Para 565, p. 285.

Andamans.[1] The removal of men to so far a place produces in itself a profound moral impression. The paucity of convicts in the beginning requires a rigorous discipline and severe labour. But in the next stage more liberty is perforce allowed to convicts as due to the influx of convicts and the difficulties of maintaining a corresponding coercive agency no other alternative is left to the authorities. In the third stage with the disapperance of the terror of distance and of the unknown, laxity of discipline and of labour inherent in local conditions, the transportation loses its effect. At this juncture, the further despatch of convicts is stopped by the Government itself or at the instance of the settlers.[2] This final stage was reached in the Andamans in the beginning of the twentieth century. After this stage, the similarity between the penal settlement in the Andamans and other trans-marine settlement ends. While colonisation in other settlements succeeded to a great extent, the Port Blair settlement did not prosper due to reasons enumerated above. For this failure the Government of India is to be blamed. No doubt the Government was guided by sincere motives but fundamental errors were committed by them carrying out their policy. They established a penal settlement in a place like the Andamans where, "The climatic conditions were always unfavourable to health for convicts drawn from all parts of India." Provisions for reformatory influences such as attendance of religious teachers and education of convicts were not made. In absence of any large free population in the Andamans there was no educated public opinion to restrain the prison authorities or to see that the reforms so undoubtedly necessary in the settlement were properly carried out. Public opinion in India was never taken in confidence till the publication of the report of Indian Jail Committee in 1921. Even after that the policy with regard to inviting healthy criticism regarding the British administration in the Andamans was not liberal. The inevitable result was that the Andamans were

[1] In all these places a penal settlement was established by the British Government but afterwards the descendants of convicts were allowed to settle as free colonists.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 28-40, July, 1906.

described as 'veritable hell' on earth by critics who did not possess correct and full knowledge of the conditions existing in the penal settlemement of the Andamans. The critics did not realise the magnitude of the task. They forgot that in dealing with a large population of convicts, the permanent strength of which could be placed at 12,000, the Government of India was attempting to solve a mighty problem as old as criminality itself. The people who were transported to the Andamans belonged to different provinces and were of different nature. To reform such a hetrogenous element among whom there were persons who had committed heinous offences against person and property—the men of brutal violence, the highway men, the robbers and habitual thieves, forgers, cheats and utters of false coins, in fact some of the most unrestraint temperaments of a continent—was in itself a huge task. Constant attention was paid by the Government of India to solve the practical difficulties confronting them in the penal settlement. The Andaman penal system, though a failure, was developed in the light of the suggestions of ever-increasing experience. Repeatedly tinkered, patched, recast and remodelled the Andaman penal system was still on trial when suggestions for its abolition were made in the beginning of the twentieth century. Nor we can say that it failed altogether as a reforming agency. There are instances which tend to prove that a microscopic minority of convicts was reformed. After returning to India, such convicts passed their lives as useful citizens. They proved themselves not only fit for human society, but well used to submit to the conventions by which society is maintained.

The penal settlement, with which the Andamans have been associated since 1858, was abolished in 1945. Its abolition marked the end of an epoch, in which the name of these islands was tarnished with the name of the penal colony, where not only hardened criminals but many a patriot languished within the walls of the Cellular Jail.[1] A new epoch in the history of the Andamans was started when, with the dawn of independence in India, these islands offered a home and new start in life to

[1] Infra, Chapter VII.

thousands of displaced persons from East Bengal. The very basis of the existence of the people of the Andamans was changed. Since then these islands have been passing through a process of colonisation and planned development.

SEVEN

TREATMENT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE ANDAMANS

Andamans as a place of banishment of political prisoners since 1858

Since the days of the 'Mutiny', the Andamans were used to provide a place of confinement for countless soldiers of freedom from India. Among the prisoners who were transported to the Andamans just after the so-called mutiny as rebels, there were many men of noble character and learning.[1] These prisoners could not have reconciled themselves to humiliations but unfortunately very little is known to us about their opposition to indignities inflicted on them. However, an estimate of their sufferings can be had from the account of the treatment of the convicts in the Andamans as given in the previous chapter.[2] They were transported to a place unknown to them and were forced to pass a life of extreme hardship in an unhealthy climate with no prospects of return to their country. They had to share their lives with many hardened criminals who were subsequently transported to these islands. They were not provided with sufficient food, clothing and shelter. Deprived of social and family life many of them sacrificed their lives in the so-called 'Kalapani' always lingering for returning to their motherland.

Transportation of political prisoners to Port Blair in 1909

Prisoners convicted of political offences were again trans-

[1] 'Galib', the famous Urdu poet mentions that his friend Allama Fazli Haq 'Khairabadi' was transported to the Andamans where he subsequently expired. Maulana Liaqat Aly, a reputed leader of 'Mutiny' also died in the Andamans. One Muslim gentleman named Mir Jafar Ali 'Thaneshwari' returned from the Andamans after under going twenty years' penal servitude. Unfortunately the rolls of the 'Mutineers' sent to the Andamans are not traceable among the records of the National Archives of India.

[2] Supra, Chapter VI.

ported to the Andamans at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. At this time revolutionary propaganda of a very vigorous and extreme nature was being carried out against the British in many provinces of India specially in Bengal. Secret societies for opposing the British rule in India had been formed at many places. The aim of these propagandists was to arouse hatred in the minds of the people against foreign rule by all means—through the press or through fiery speeches or through violent activities. They wanted to inspire the love of the freedom of the Motherland in everybody's heart and subsequently train them to a strict discipline. Many of them openly preached the gospel of freedom. The Government of India in order to stop such activities adopted a repressive policy. Many political workers were imprisoned in the jails of India. Soon it was felt that it was dangerous to keep such prisoners in the Central Jails of Provinces as they did not stop preaching their ideas to fellow prisoners in jails. The only real chance of preventing them from disseminating their ideas even while in prison was to remove them to the Andamans.[1] A proposal was, therefore, sent to the Government of India in 1909 by Sir John Hewett, the Governor of the United Provinces, to sanction the deportation of Ram Hari and Hoti Lal Verma, two political prisoners to the Andamans from his province.[2] Lord Minto, the then Governor General of India, thought it inexpedient to accord differential treatment to prisoners undergoing sentences for political offences and hence the proposal was dropped.[3] In the next year the Government of Bengal urged the Government of India to sanction transportation of six term convicts who were sentenced to transportation in the Alipore Conspiracy

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch, B Progs. No. 81-82, Sept., 1910. (This was the opinion of the Governor of the United Provinces).

[2] Ibid. B Progs. No. 51-52, February, 1909. Ram Hari and Hoti Lal Verma were Editors of 'Swaraj' a nationalist newspaper. They were convicted on account of propaganda against the British Rule in India.

[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch. B. Progs. No. 51-52, Feb., 1909.

case.[1] The reason advanced in support of the above proposal was the same which was given after the 'Mutiny' i.e. it was important to remove this class of criminals from India.[2] This time the Government of India sanctioned the transportation of political prisoners to the Andamans. The Government of India also communicated to other provincial governments that in case the local governments considered it expedient to transport political prisoners to the Andamans, their proposals would be considered.[3] As a result of this circular, political prisoners were sent to the Andamans from the United Provinces, Bengal and Bombay. The Government of India laid down the following principles regarding the treatment of these convicts :—

Firstly that they should be regarded as specially dangerous persons.[4] When Vinayak Damodar Savarkar[5] arrived in the Andamans in 1911, the Superintendent, Port Blair was asked to keep a careful watch over him lest he may try to escape.[6] As regards, Noni Gopal Mukherjee,[7] a prisoner from Bengal, the

[1] Ibid, A Progs. No. 84-87, December, 1909.
Alipore Conspiracy Case : A huge revolutionary conspiracy against the British came to light in Calcutta in 1908. Bombs, cartridges, dynamites were seized from a house. Arbindo Ghose, his brother Barinder Ghose and 39 others were arrested. This conspiracy is known as Alipore Conspiracy Case in which four men were sentenced to transportation for life, three to ten years, seven to seven years and three to five years rigorous imprisonment. Arbindo and a few others were acquitted.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 8, March, 1910.

[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch, A Progs. No. 84-87, Dec., 1909.

[5] Savarkar, Vinayak Damodar : He along with his brother Ganesh Damodar Savarkar were leaders of the revolutionary movement in Maharashtra. V.D. Savarkar, a graduate of the Bombay University studied in London on a Scholarship given by Shyamji Krishna Verma. Gradually he became the acknowledged leader of the revolutionary group at India House. He was arrested in what is called the Nasik Conspiracy Case and sentenced to transportation for life. He was sentenced to more than fifty years of rigorous imprisonment on the charge of waging war against the King.

[6] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch, A Progs. No. 68-160. Feb., 1915.

[7] Noni Gopal Mukherjee : He was sentenced to transportation of life for fourteen years in the Dalhousie Square Bomb Case. He was one of the most troublesome convicts for the authorities. He went on hunger strike on 14 different occasions and refused to work several times, He was never released from Cellular Jail,

Bengal Government wrote, "that it was in the interest of the society that the prisoner be removed for a considerable period from the surroundings which induced him to commit the crime.[1]"

Secondly that they should not be allowed to work in the same gang with each other nor with Bengalee convicts[2] as the number of Bengali terrorist prisoners was larger.

Thirdly that they should not be employed in clerical work.

And fourthly, as a rule they should be given hard gang labour.[3]

Condition of political prisoners in Cellular Jail

All these prisoners were confined in the Cellular Jail where they were not allowed to leave the two corridors reserved for them. They were given all sorts of hard work which usually is allotted to an ordinary convict. Soon after their arrival in the Andamans, one of the prisoners managed to send a letter to India to one of his acquaintances through a released convict. This incident gave chance to the Superintendent, Port Blair to represent certain difficulties to the Government of India. He stated that as the number of the prisoners of this class had increased, it was difficult for him to keep them permanently in Cellular Jail. It was also impossible for him to prevent them from communicating with each other and other convicts. The Government of India gave him the authority to treat the political prisoners at his discretion, but also instructed him to keep them apart as far as possible from each other and to employ them on hard gang labour.[4] The above policy was revised by the Superintendent, Port Blair after a few months as he found it more easier to keep a watch over the convicts if placed together while working than scattered at different places for hard work in different gangs.[5] The political prisoners were employed

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch, A Progs. No. 68-160, Feb., 1915.

[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 84-87, December, 1909.

[3] Ibid, Deposit Progs. No. 1, October, 1910.

[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch, Deposit Progs. No. 88-92, August, 1911.

[5] Ibid, Deposit proceedings No. 1, July, 1912.

by him on the following works :

1. Operation of Coconut and mustard oil mill 2. Husking and opening of coconuts 3. Making Hukka shells 4. Coir pounding 5. Rope making 6. Weaving towel 7. Gardening and 8. Hill cutting and swamp filling.[1]

The political prisoners who belonged to the intelligentsia and had never done manual work, naturally could not finish their daily allotted work which was very hard. The Superintendent, Port Blair, himself admitted that working on oil mills was undoubtedly hard work.[2] The work of coir pounding according to him was liable to irritate the skin. The daily outturn for coir pounding was fixed at three lbs. which the political prisoners were not able to finish in a day. The hardest work was that of hill cutting and filling of the swamps. This work was done in the open—the rains and heat of the tropical islands. They were often punished for less outturn of work and confined in cells. Invalid diets were given to them as a punishment.[3] They also complained about the bad behaviour of the officials. It was alleged by Hotilal one of the political prisoners from the United Provinces, that on account of the ill-treatment of Bari, the Head Overseer of the Cellular Jail, a political prisoner from Bengal named Indu Bhushan Roy[4] had committed suicide in May 1912.[5] No heed was paid to Hotilal's complaint as it was considered to be unfounded. Another political prisoner Ulaskar Dutt[6] who was employed in helping the labourers in constructing a building turned insane on 10th June, 1912. He was at that time undergoing a sentence

[1] Ibid, Deposit proceedings No. 1, July, 1912.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Deposit Progs. No. 1. July, 1912.

[3] Ibid, B Progs. No. 11-31, December, 1912. Ulaskar Dutt a political prisoner was confined to cell with invalid diet as he refused to work on 10th July, 1911. Invalid diet means a diet which does not satisfy the hunger of a man but only keeps his head and body together. According to the authorities of Port Blair it was identical with diet of ordinary patients.

[4] Indu Bhusan Roy : A young terrorist from Bengal. He was convicted under the Arms Act of the Govt. of India.

[5] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch. B Progs. No. 61-64, Oct., 1912.

[6] Ulaskar Dutt : He was sentenced to transportation for life in the Alipore Bomb Case.

of punishment for seven days requiring him to stand handcuffed on account of his refusal to work.[1] Ulaskar Dutt was later on transferred to a lunatic asylum in Madras in January, 1913.

Propaganda in Indian Press regarding harsh treatment of prisoners

The suicide of Indu Bhusan Roy and the insanity of Ulaskar Dutt stimulated a campaign in India for the better treatment and repatriation of these prisoners to India. A section of the press took up their cause. In leading articles in the issues of the 'Bengalee' of 4th, 8th and 20th September, 1912 allegations were made against the government in connection with the maltreatment of political prisoners in the Andamans.[2] It was reported that on slight pretexts, the political prisoners were kept on invalid diets. They were forced to do hard labour in the jungle and in some cases were made to work inspite of sores and ill-health. As a result of hard work most of them had lost their weight and were reduced to skeletons. The ill-treatment by the officials was also brought to the notice of the public by the 'Bengalee.' In an article in the daily 'Tribune' of Lahore dated 3 May, 1912 it was alleged that the political prisoners were treated with undue severity.[3] Such details published in the above newspaper have been confirmed by V.D. Savarkar in his account of his stay in the Andamans,[4] and other jails of India. According to him the political prisoners were given hard work on oil-mills with no rest during the day. There was a great shortage of water in the Cellular Jail and nobody was allowed to drink more than two cups a day. Due to shortage they were not supplied water for bathing. They were only allowed to bathe by drenching themselves in rain. Some times for short output of work they

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch, B Progs. No. 11-31, Dec., 1912.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch, B Progs. No. 11-31, Dec., 1912. 'Bengalee'—It was a nationalist newspaper in Bengali published from Calcutta.

[3] Ibid, Deposit Progs. No. 1, July, 1912.

[4] This account was published in a Marathi Book 'Majhi Zanam Thep' Translation of relevant passages of his experiences in the Andamans is given on p. 261-67 of the book entitled 'Bharat Men Sashtra Kranti-Cheshta ka Romanchkari Itihas' written by Manmath Nath Gupta.

were severely beaten. The Jailor did not accept the advice of the doctor to send prisoners who were ill to the hospitals and forced the sick prisoners to work. The Jailor and the warders always behaved in a discourteous and haughty manner and some times abused the prisoners. The political prisoners were not allowed to pass urine and stools at their own will but only at three fixed times in a day. No books or newspapers were allowed to them. The food supplied to them was full of worms and was of very low quality. There is no doubt that the treatment accorded to political prisoners in the Andamans was worse than the treatment accorded to ordinary criminals. They were not given any of the previleges granted to a political prisoner in the civilised countries at that time. In addition, the previleges given to an ordinary convict were also denied to them. They were not given clerical work for which they were qualified. They could never hope to become self-supporters like the ordinary convicts. Right of earning remission was not given to them. The political prisoners, therefore, rightly claimed that in case they were to be confined in the Andamans they should be allowed to enjoy the previleges given to the other type of prisoners confined there. Such denial of due previleges and the undue severity shown to them gradually drove the political prisoners in the Andamans to undertake a hunger-strike.

Hunger strike by political prisoners

Ladha Ram[1] was the first to refuse food on 7 September, 1912. Noni Gopal Mukherjee also went on hunger strike from the 25th September, 1912.[2] Both these prisoners were forcibly fed twice a day by an oesophageal tube passing through their nose or mouth from the third day of their hunger strike. Both of them were confined in the Cellular Jail. The hunger-strike of these prisoners continued till December. Moni Gopal Mukherjee was on hunger-strike for 72 days. He was kept

[1] Ladha Ram : He did not take any part in terrorist activities but was transported to the Andamans for doing propaganda against the British rule in India, in the capacity of the Editor of 'Swaraj' a nationalist weekly.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch, A Progs. No. 11-31, Dec., 1912.

standing in handcuffs, was deprived of jail dress and his sentence was increased by one year.[1] Other political prisoners also went on a general work strike and refused to work. The Superintendent, Port Blair promised them redress and asked them to resume work pending the final decision of the Government of India. Several of them agreed to his suggestion but other remained obdurate. In consequence the strikers were punished with handcuffs, chains, cross-bar fetters, 'gunny' clothing, invalid diet and separate confinement in the Cellular Jail.[2] But the strikers did not yield. The Government of India deputed Sir Parcey Lukas[3] to hear their grievances and settle the issue which had already taken so much time. After the visit of Lukas a policy of conciliation was instituted in the penal settlement between the jail authorities and the political prisoners.[4] According to the version of the Government of India, these convicts undertook to give no further trouble to the authorities provided they were allowed to leave the Cellular Jail and were given light and congenial forms of labour. Most of them were given the duties of watchmen, two were engaged in broom making and others on miscellaneous light labour. They were also allowed access to certain books. Some of the prisoners who were confined in the Cellular Jail were sent to work outside the jail. Other prisoners also took it for granted that they, too, would be posted to gangs outside the jails.

Alleged conspiracy of political prisoners in the Andamans

Suddenly on 9 August, 1913, all the nineteen prisoners who were outside the Cellular Jail were again ordered to return to their cells. The Superintendent, Port Blair claimed to have unearthed a conspiracy[5] among these 'seditionist' prisoners. According to him the object of this conspiracy was to blow up one or more officials by throwing a bomb. It was alleged that

[1] Ibid, A Progs. No. 12, January, 1914. 'An article published in a newspaper 'India' of London dated 25 September, 1913.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Sir Parcey Lukas was Director of Indian Medical Service at that time.

[4] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch, A Progs. No. 68-160 Feb., 1915.,

[5] Ibid.

the political prisoners had formed a secret society and held frequent meetings to discuss their plans. They were in constant contact with each other and had manufactured a bomb and made a trial of it. It was also noticed by the Superintendent that many self-supporting convicts working in the office, compounders in the hospital and other prisoners in different gangs sympathised with them. It was feared by him that they would be able to provoke hundreds of convicts to commit violent acts. The Superintendent, Port Blair, therefore, proposed to confine the political prisoners in the Cellular Jail for the whole period of their sentences. He wished that only fourteen life-convicts should be sent to Port Blair because the accommmodation in the Cellular Jail was not so much as to accomodate a great number of prisoners permanently.[1] These fourteen political prisoners were to be confined separately in batches of two in the seven different yards of the Cellular Jail.

Visit and report of Craddock

Craddock who visited the Andamans in the cold weather of 1913 discussed the above proposals with the Superintendent personally. He also saw the conditions of these prisoners in the Cellular Jail and interviewed five of them.[2] He characterised the position as a difficult one. According to him in case these terrorists are locked up in Cellular Jail, a harder discipline was necessarily enforced on them. Confinement in Cellular Jail also deprived them of the few previleges earned by an ordinary convict with the result that such treatment was made a ground of complaint. On the other hand, "Once they are outside the Cellular Jail they can count the help and the sympathy of numerous agents both among the convicts and the free-population."[3] "Some of these prisoners according to Craddock, were of a specially dangerous type and had shown qualities of leadership by guiding political and revolutionary movements. These convicts could therefore easily use thousands of convicts as their tools." Craddock was therefore opposed to allow these

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch, A Progs. No. 68-160, Feb., 1915.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

men to enjoy liberties given to an ordinary convict.[1] In case of Savarkar he wrote that it was quite impossible to give him any liberty anywhere. "If he is allowed outside the Cellular Jail in the Andamans he would certainly escape. His friends could easily charter a steamer to one of the islands and a little money distributed locally would do the rest. In case he is sent to an Indian Jail he would certainly manage his escape from there also."[2] It was, therefore, proposed by him that life-convicts should be kept in the Andamans including Savarkar while others should be sent back to such Indian Jails where their sympathisers were not large in number. On his recommendations the Government of India addressed the local governments on the subject bringing the difficulties mentioned above to their notice. The local Governments of Punjab, Madras, the Central Provinces and Bombay agreed to accommodate such prisoners in their provincial jails.[3]

Another strike by political prisoners

Before the prisoners could be repatriated to India sixteen political prisoners struck work on different dates in the month of April 1914[4] as a protest against the non-sanction of remission of sentences which was being given to prisoners in Indian Jails. The officiating Superintendent of Port Blair requested the Government of India to stop the repatriation of such prisoners to India for the time being. He, however, admitted that Colonel Douglas, the Superintendent, Port Blair (who was on leave) had given some kind of assurance in this connection and the prisoners had some reasonable foundation for their grievances.[5] Granting of remission to term-convicts in the Cellular Jail and placing them upon the same footing as prisoners in Indian Jails

[1] N.A.I,, Home Deptt., Political Branch, A Progs, No. 68-160, Feb., 1915.

[2] Ibid.

[3] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch, A Progs. No. 68-160, Feb., 1915. See Appendix II for the list of strikes.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

was recommended by him. The Government of India, however, did not agree with the opinion of the officiating Superintendent that Colonel Douglas had given some kind of assurance to these prisoners in this respect.[1] They, however, did not alter their decision to repatriate the term convicts, even during strike for whom arrangements had already been made. The strike continued even after the departure of such political prisoners to India. Savarkar was described as the ringleader of all the political prisoners in the Cellular Jail. The Superintendent wanted to confine him day and night in a cell (solitary confinement) in order to break the strike.[2] He also requested the Government of India to remove Savarkar from the Andamans as it was dangerous to keep him near other political prisoners.[3]

Sanction of previleges to life term prisoners

As a result of this strike the Government of India sanctioned the substitution of simple imprisonment in place of rigorous imprisonment for political prisoners of good behaviour. It was also realised that such prisoners could not be indefinitely kept on physical labour of an exacting and degrading type. Henceforward light work was to be given to them. They were to be allowed access to carefully selected books. Occasional holidays from work were to be given to them. In matters of clothing and letters the previleges allowed to ordinary convicts were granted to them. They were, however, not allowed to be released from the Cellular Jail unless they passed fourteen years of good behaviour. These life term political prisoners were to be treated on the same footing as ordinary convicts as regards punishment was concerned including liability to flogging.[4]

Resistance by Savarkar, Parmanand and other prisoners and their repatriation to India

Even after the above instructions from the Government

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch, A Progs. No. 68-160, Feb., 1915.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid, Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 141-42, June, 1915.

of India had been received, the treatment of political prisoners n the Andamans did not improve materially. The ill behaviour of the officers continued. Bhai Parmanand and Aushutosh Lahiri,[1] two political prisoners, unable to bear the abuses showered on them by an European Jail officer of the Cellular Jail lifted him and threw him down on the ground.[2] For this offence they were flogged. Thirty stripes were awarded to each. Other previleges were also not enjoyed by the political prisoners in practice. In the solitary dungeons of the Cellular Jail their life was as miserable as before but they continued their resistance.

In their resistance they were joined by the sturdy Sikhs of the 'Gadar' party[3] and convicts sentenced in Lahore Conspiracy Cases,[4] who were transported to the Andamans. Among

[1] Bhai Permanand and Aushutosh Lahiri, revolutionaries from Panjab and Bengal respectively were transported to the Andamans in 1915 and repatriated to India in 1921. After their release from prison. they became the leaders of Hindu Mahasabha, a political party of India.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch, B Progs. No. 467, January, 1916, and 399, June, 1916. (The proceedings were not available to me but the headlines of the Index show that they were flogged. This has been confirmed by Vir Savarkar in his book 'Manjhi Zanam Thep' extract of which is reproduced in Manmath Nath Gupta's book 'Bharat men Sashtra Kranti Cheshta ka Romanchkari Itihas').

[3] 'Gadar Party' : It was organised by Lala Hardyal, an eminent revolutionary, with its headquarters in California, United States of America. He inspired the Sikh immigrants with love of their motherland. A newspaper entitled 'Gadar' was also started by him. The object of the 'Ghadar' party was to expel the British from India by any means. Many Sikhs of the 'Gadar' party returned secretly from America to Panjab after the outbreak of First World-War. Majority of them were captured and convicted of waging war against the King. They were transported to the Andamans in 1915.

[4] Lahore Conspiracy Cases : The conspiracy was organised by Ras Behari Bose, a revolutionary from Bengal and a Muslim patriot Pingley. They had induced soldiers in many Military cantonments of Northern India to revolt on a fixed date and had arranged to procure military aid on the appointed date from foreign countries. Bhai Parmanand was one of the prominent leaders of this conspiracy. The Government of India received prior intimation of the intended rebellion and arrested many revolutionaries. Their trial is known as the Lahore Conspiracy Cases as the Centre of the activities of Ras Behari Bose and Pingley was in Lahore at that time.

them a prisoner Prithvi Singh was confined in a solitary cell for a number of years in the Cellular Jail. Another Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoner, Ram Rakha sacrificed his life after a long hunger-strike as he was not allowed to wear the sacred thread in the Cellular Jail.[1] After some months the number of such political prisoners increased considerably in the Andamans. It became very difficult for the authorities at Port Blair to accommodate them. Savarkar, Bhai Permanand, Aushutosh Lahiri and other revolutionary prisoners confined in the Cellular Jail continuously complained about the discriminatory treatment accorded to them. All these prisoners were ultimately repatriated to India in 1921 after the decision to abolish the penal settlement in the Andamans was taken by the Government of India on the recommendations of the Indian Jail Committee of 1919-20.[2]

Resumption of transportation of political prisoners in 1932

Hardly a decade had passed when the Government of India again sanctioned the transportation of political prisoners to the Andamans. The reasons which prompted the Government to take this decision in 1932 were :[3]

Firstly, it was found that terrorist prisoners in Indian Jails were communicating with the terrorist organisations outside.

Secondly, they refused to submit to any discipline in the Indian jails.

Thirdly, their conduct and views had a very bad effect on criminal prisoners.

And lastly, public sympathy as exhibited in the Press and platform made the administrative work of the government extremely difficult.

The Government of India in defence of their action in sending such political prisoners to the Andamans maintained that inspite of their recommendations to abolish the penal

[1] Extract from Savarkar's book 'Manjhi Zanam Thep' cited in 'Bharat Men Sashtra Kranti Cheshta ka Romanchkari Itihas' by Manmath Nath Gupta, p. 261-67.

[2] Legislative Assembly Debates, 11 March, 1921, p. 959-60.

[3] Ibid, 25 August, 1937.

settlement, the Jail Committee of 1919-20 was in favour of retaining the Andamans "as a place for sending such prisoners as the Governor General in Council may by special or general order, direct if they consider it in public interest."[1] No doubt such a recommendation was made by the Jail Committee in their report but in this category they had only put "the frontier fanatic who has been guilty of a murderous outrage, for which instead of being hanged he has been sentenced to imprisonment for life."[2] They had made no mention of political prisoners. The Government of India in defending themselves really ignored the above fact and was evidently disregarding the recommendations of the Jail Committee.

This time the number of prisoners sent to the Andamans numbered about three hundred. Revolutionary movements in India were at their highest tempo in the twenties of this century.[3] The revolutionary parties were protesting against the policy of repression in the country. A net work of revolutionary youth associations had been formed in many provinces of India. 'Hindustani Praja Tantric Sangh' organised by Sachindra Nath Sanyal which later on was amalgamated with the 'Anushilan Samiti' of Bengal was secretly carrying on extremist propaganda against the British Government in many provinces of northern India. Many conspiracies were unearthed by the government during that period resulting in an increase in the number of terrorist prisoners in the Indian jails. In 1930 the government considered it expedient to send such prisoners[4] to the Andamans for reasons enumerated above.

[1] Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-20, Para 566, p. 286.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Bejoy Kumar Sinha : 'Andamans, the Indian Bastille', p. 81—It was after the Jalianwala Bagh incident in 1919 that the secret revolutionary activities again got the stimulus.

[4] As a result of the decision to send terrorist prisoners to the Andamans there was concentration of such convicts at Port Blair. These convicts were sentenced for their participation in many conspiracies and bomb outrages; prominent among them were "Chittagong Armoury Raid" (1930), Kakori Conspiracy (1924), Lahore Conspiracy (1928), Babbar Akali (1925)—For details of these conspiracies, please see Manmath Nath Gupta's book 'Bharat Men Sashatra Kranti Cheshta ka Romanchkari Itihas.'

Condition of terrorist prisoners in the Cellular Jail

The first batch of terrorist prisoners arrived in the Andamans in the cold weather of 1932. Fresh batches continued to reach the Andamans upto the beginning of 1933. These prisoners had decided to uphold the tradition of resistance offered by the political prisoners who were sent there earlier. On their arrival they found that their sufferings were innumerable.[1] The huge Cellular Jail in which they were confined was dilapidated with crevices in the walls everywhere. The roofs of the dark and dingy cells leaked during rains which were frequent in the islands. Many of them, who were placed in 'C' class, were to lie on the wooden boards on the cold floor and were exposed to mosquito bites. Numerous scorpions and other insects creeped in the cell at night. No latern was allowed to them, nor did the warder on duty come to their help at night. Sufficient water, even for drinking purposes, was not supplied to them. Even the meagre supply of water from two taps which flowed for a limited period was not filtered. Consequently dysentry, constipation and thread worms were general complaints. There were no proper medical arrangements, the doctors were a part of the bureaucratic machinery and had no alternative but to acquiesce in the prison regime. The meals supplied to the 'C' class prisoners in the morning was a cup of coarse rice boiled in water without sufficient salt. In the noon rice, chapaties and dal was given and the same diet was repeated in the evening. The meals were of the worst quality and sometimes contained dead worms. The authorities expressed their helplessness in this aspect as all the cereals were imported from India and were stored in damp godowns. They were given hard tasks. Most of them were allotted coir work. They were not allowed to purchase books nor were they provided with books by the government. There were no facilities for recreation or games. The 'B' class and 'C' class prisoners were not allowed to meet. The letters from their relatives were not handed over to them. The attitude of the authorities was vindictive, callous and discourteous.

[1] Bejoy Kumar Sinha : 'In Andamans, the Indian Bastille'—p. 46-53.

Hunger-strike by political prisoners in 1933

Soon after there were discussions among the political prisoners for going on hunger-strike. Among them there were many prisoners who had previous experience of hunger-strikes. A hunger-strike by few prisoners was started in January 1933 but it was withdrawn on the assurances of the Superintendent, Port Blair. The next three months passed without any grievances being redressed. A written representation was sent to Port Blair authorities but there was no reply. Ultimately a month's notice was given in April 1933.[1] The hunger-strike started on 12 May, 1933 with 29 prisoners.[2] A few terrorist prisoners who were weak in health were asked by their comrades to wait for some time. They, however, expressed their sympathy with the strike by refusing to work. All the hunger-strikers except four were locked up in one yard. The work strikers were also confined in a separate yard. The 'B' class prisoners were demoted to 'C' class. Forced feeding started very early, *i.e.* on fifth day.[3] Mahavir Singh, a valiant comrade of Bhagat Singh in the Lahore Conspiracy Case[4] resisted the Pathan feeders as he knew all the tricks of baffling forcible feeding. Milk penetrated his lungs but Mahavir knowing it remained silent inviting death. This happened at 11 A.M. on 17 May, 1933 and by the evening he was dead in the hospital. His dead body was tied to heavy stones and sunk in the sea.[5] A belated communique of the Government of India dated 28 May, 1933 explained that the cause of Mahavir's collapse was a severe shock

[1] Bejoy Kumar Sinha, 'In Andamans, the Indian Bastille'. p. 54.

[2] Legislative Assembly Proceedings. 23 August, 1933.

[3] The forced feeding was adopted in Indian Jails at a later stage when the prisoners became weak and were unable to resist.

[4] Bhagat Singh was responsible for a murderous attack on Saunders, the Police Inspector who beat Lala Lajpatrai. As a result of this beating, Lala Lajpatrai died. Bhagat Singh with his companion Batukeshwar Dutt, threw a bomb in the Legislative Assembly. He was executed for his part in Saunder's attack commonly known as Lahore Conspiracy Case. Similar funeral was given to Bhagat Singh on the banks of Ravi. Mahvir Singh was sentenced to transportation of life in the Lahore Conspiracy case.

[5] Bejoy Kumar Sinha : 'In Andamans, the Indian Bastille,' p. 55-56.

to his system on account of resistance in weak health.[1] The delay in issuing a communique and that too after persistent demands of the public in India leads one to doubt the correctness of the above statement of the Government of India. In this communique the Government of India admitted that his condition was satisfactory on 16 May, and that he resisted very violently. Apparently contradictory statements had been made in the same communique. The martyrdom of Mahavir caused great excitement among the terrorist prisoners and the number of hunger-strikers swelled. A telegram from Rabindra Nath Tagore imploring them to abandon the strike was sent but in view of the adamant attitude of the Government, the terrorist did not find it possible to terminate it. A proper reply was drafted for Tagore by the prisoners but it never seems to have reached Tagore.[2] With the passing of more days, there was increase of serious cases among the hunger-strikers. The authorities, although adamant, were now slightly nervous. They began to give vague assurances. Forced feeding was adopted in many cases. The story of Mahavir was repeated in the case of Mohit Mohan Maitra.[3] He was removed to the hospital and was kept alive for a few days with the help of injections. In a communique dated 31 May, 1933, the Government of India announced that the death of Mohit on 28 May, 1933 was due to pneumonia as his health was affected by the hunger-strike.[4] Mohan Kishore also followed the example of Mahavir and Mohit by sacrificing his life in the same way.[5] Another terrorist prisoner Man Krishna Nam Das[6] also died of pneumonia on 26 May, 1933.

[1] Legislative Assembly Progs., 23 August, 1933.

[2] Bejoy Kumar Sinha: 'In Andamans, The Indian Bastille'. p. 59.

[3] Mohit Mohan Maitra was a terrorist from Bengal, sentenced under the Arms Act. He was a term prisoner and was due to be released in 1934. If he had wished he could have not even joined the strike.

[4] Legislative Assembly Progs., 23 August, 1933.

[5] Mohan Kishore was a young terrorist prisoner from Bengal and was a short term prisoner like Mohit, sentenced under Arms Act.

[6] Man Krishna Nam Das was a terrorist prisoner from Bengal and was convicted of dacoity.

Campaign in India in support of their demands

The deportation of political prisoners to the Andamans in 1932 had produced great resentment in the country. The death of four prisoners, while on hunger strike, within a single month caused a strong propaganda in the press. The Government of India appeared to be disturbed over the deteriorating situation regarding the hunger-striking prisoners in the Andamans and the sympathy shown by the whole nation. Lieutenent Colonel Barker was deputed to go to Port Blair.[1] A delegation of the members of the Legislative Assembly met the Home Secretary to the Government of India in this connection on 13 June, 1933 and demanded impartial inquiry.[2] Barker arrived at Port Blair on 17 June, 1933. After consultations with the authorities he adopted an adamant attitude. Drinking water was not provided to the hunger strikers for twenty four hours. Many strikers became unconscious but did not yield.[3] Ultimately Barker offered terms.

Improved conditions of political prisoners after the strike

The hunger strike ended on 26 June, 1933, forty six days after its commencement. Most of the demands of the political prisoners were met by the authorities. The political prisoners were to be supplied with bed-sheets, mosquito nets, pillows, towels and bed-steads. The quality of rice, food and vegetables was to be improved. Fish was to be supplied to Bengali prisoners on alternate days. The kitchen was to be left under the supervision of the political prisoners. They were to be allowed to purchase some food articles. A new class of 'Permanently incarcerated prisoners' (P.I.) was formed for them. Facilities for indoor and outdoor games were to be given to them. The Government of India recognised the right of the prisoners to subscribe prescribed newspapers and magazines. A few magazines were to be purchased at Government expense. Frequent commu-

[1] Legislative Assembly Progs. 23 August, 1933.
Barker : He belonged to the Indian Medical Services. He was Inspector General Police, Panjab at that time.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Bejoy Kumar Sinha: 'In Andamans, The Indian Bastille', p. 64.

nications between 'B' and 'C' class prisoners was permitted. The lock up in the cells which was previously started at about 6 P.M. was to start from 8 P.M. The greatest victory of the hunger strike was a change in the attitude of the jail officers who became more courteous.[1] In short, the life of the political prisoners in the Andamans was made somewhat tolerable.[2]

Social life of prisoners in Cellular Jail

For the next three years the life of the political prisoners in Andamans was not so miserable as it was before the hunger strike although some of the facilities which were promised were not afforded.[3] The prisoners devoted themselves to study and discussions. Regular classes were started by them in the coridors of the Cellular Jail. All kinds of subjects were studied by them. Prisoners who had studied in the university taught others. Books were supplied by the government and also purchased at the expense of the prisoners from the money which they received from their relatives. The 'political' prisoners started a hand written magazine 'Call' in which articles on current topics were published. Interesting debates were organised. There was a great demand for books. There were discussions, and interchange of ideas in small meetings. The narration and experiences of the different terrorist organisations were related in group meetings. This interchange of ideas helped the prisoners to a great extent in the task of self-criticism and correct appraisal of the terrorist movement in India.[4]

Other facilities were also allowed to the political prisoners during this period. They celebrated Durga Puja festival with great enthusiasm for three years. Dramas were held on these occasions. In a small football ground about three hundred terrorist prisoners played in turn. Indoor games were also organised. In short, the social life in all directions was organised.[5] The prisoners deprived of family and social environments

[1] Bejoy Kumar Sinha: 'In Andamans, The Indian Bastille', p. 71.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Supra, Chapter VII.
[4] Bejoy Kumar Sinha: 'In Andamans, The Indian Bastille', p. 73.
[5] Ibid, p. 163,

formed themselves into a community. This social life provided a sort of relaxation for these prisoners who were intensely busy in reviewing their past and formulating programmes for the future.

Occasional disputes with the authorities of Cellular Jail

The above picture of the social life of the terrorist prisoners in the Andamans does not mean that they were enjoying easier life as compared to Indian Jails. During this interlude there were many clashes with the authorities in which the prisoners always tried to fight for their legitimate rights. On a rough handling of a prisoner, by a jail warder in 1934, for no offence of his, there was a work strike by the terrorist prisoners. The Superintendent tried to threaten them by stopping all privileges but after observing the futility of his action, he restored the status-quo.[1] A new Superintendent of the Cellular Jail, who arrived at Port Blair in 1936, was of a very haughty nature. He began to pin-prick the prisoners every now and then. A written representation was submitted to the Superintendent, Port Blair about his conduct in which it was pointed out that practically all facilities provided to them since 1933 had been withdrawn. A protest fast was also kept for three days.[2] After pretence of an adamant attitude for some time, the Superintendent, Port Blair assured them that such things would not happen in future. In addition to such incidents, the terrorist prisoners were always harassed by the authorities in one way or the other. Gradually by 1937, all the so-called amenities became shadowy things.[3] The quality of food gradually deteriorated. Worthless books were purchased by the Government. Proper attention was not paid to them in the hospital. One football supplied to them was never repaired. Daily newspapers from India were not allowed to them. Their letters from the relatives were not delivered to them. During their four year stay at Port Blair no interview with any of the relatives was granted to them. Many political prisoners were flogged for slight

[1] Ibid, p. 153.

[2] Bejoy Kumar Sinha: 'In Andamans, The Indian Bastille', p. 155.

[3] Ibid, p. 144.

violation of the rules of the prison. The continuous stay of terrorist prisoners in the dingy cells in the harmful climate of the tropical islands, shattered the health of nearly all of them. Tuberculosis took a heavy toll. Eight prisoners were repatriated to India on account of this disease while six were still lingering on with it in the Andamans. During these four years fifteen prisoners were returned to the Indian Jails as they were suffering from severe diseases. Malaria had affected the constitution of all of them adversly. Every one of them had lost weight and vitality to resist diseases. The number of convalescent gangs among the terrorist prisoners was constantly increasing. Signs of mental aberration or nervous break down were visible in the case of many prisoners.[1] The prospect of slow and painful death loomed large before many of them.

The demand of the Indian National Congress for the repatriation of Political prisoners

Meanwhile momentous changes had taken place in their motherland. The Government of India Act 1935 had given autonomy to the provinces. It was expected that in the forthcoming election to the provincial assemblies, Congress would gain a majority and form ministries in many provinces. The Congress had already taken up the cause of political prisoners. From 1932 onwards when the first batch of terrorist prisoners was sent to the Andamans, the Congress leaders were demanding their repatriation to India. They were whole-heartedly supported by other parties and the public in this demand. In the Legislative Assembly of India numerous questions were being asked about the treatment of political prisoners in the Andamans and their repatriation to India. Approximately 172 questions were put to the Home Secretary on this subject from 1932 to 1938.[2] The terrorists prisoners in the Andamans

[1] Bejoy Kumar Sinha : 'In Andamans, The India Bastille', p. 134-139.

[2] The number of questions asked in the Legislative Assembly about the treatment of political prisoners each year from 1932 to 1938 is as follows :

(a) 1932...18 (b) 1933...61
(c) 1934...10 (d) 1935...11
(e) 1936...33 (f) 1937...25
(g) 1938...4,

although they were not kept fully acquainted with the developments in India, had some inkling about them. They were thinking of a better future as some hopes of release had been raised in their minds.

Visit of Henry Craik and his statement

In this state of affairs, matters were precipitated by Sir Henry Craik, the Home Secretary to the Government of India. He visited the Andamans in 1936 to inspect the conditions of these islands personally specially those of political prisoners. The terrorist prisoners submitted a representation containing their grievances. Their main demands were :

Firstly, uniform treatment should be given to all prisoners.

Secondly, a daily allowance of not less than Rupee one was to be given.

Thirdly, educational facilities for sitting in examinations, purchasing books and periodicals, handsome grants for recreation and dress should be sanctioned.

Fourthly, such of them as were due to be released if the rules regarding remission in sentences allowed to prisoners of other types were to be applied to their cases also, were to be set free.

And lastly, that people's will regarding the repatriation of political prisoners from the Andamans should be respected in order to prove the sincere intentions of the British Government.[1]

Sir Henry Craik on his return to Simla in a press conference informed the journalists that Andamans were a prisoners' paradise. He declared that conditions of living in the Andamans were better than those prevailing in other jails of India and that prisoners were passing their days happily on those islands. He also mentioned that they had no major grievances but only wanted their release. The grievances mentioned in the petition submitted by the prisoners to him were not at all touched by him. He also said on the floor of the Assembly on

[1] Bejoy Kumar Sinha ; 'In Andamans, The Indian Bastille', p. 126 and Legislative Assembly Progs. dated 23 August, 1937, p. 49—Communique dated 30 July, 1937.

13 October, 1936 that among the political prisoners in the Andamans nobody suffered from tuberculosis.[1] Apparently he ignored the fact, perhaps deliberately, that many prisoners had been repatriated to India on account of this disease and many were suspected to suffer from it. Further, according to Craik the health of the political prisoners transported to the Andamans had deteriorated before their deportation and general decline had not been noticed in the health of these prisoners. There is no doubt that the above statements of Craik were entirely false. At that time even the constitution of a person from India, who passed a free life in these islands, was affected adversely due to malaria. His statement was a cruel joke to political prisoners incarcerated in the Cellular Jail. They were passing their lives in suffering at a place of confinement which with some exaggeration could be described as 'Prisoner's Hell' but an entirely different picture was being painted before the public by the authorities. A memorandum signed by 239 political prisoners deported to the Andamans was submitted on 13 October, 1936 challenging the statement of Craik made in the Press Conference.[2] In this memorandum after giving brief details of their lives they again voiced their demands.

Deputation of Raizada Hansraj and Sir Mohammed Yamin Khan to the Andamans

The statements of Craik also evoked a number of protests from leaders of different political parties in India. The more the Government was stressing the beauties of life in the Andamans, the greater was the suspicion roused in the public mind.[3] The whole nation was indignant over this misrepresentation of facts. Members of the Legislative Assembly demanded that they should be allowed to visit the Andamans. A member ironically suggested that the Government should move its seat from Delhi to Port Blair. The Government of India had to yield to the pressure of public opinion. A deputation consisting of Raizada Hansraj, a Congress member from the Panjab and

[1] Legislative Assembly Progs. 13 October, 1936.
[2] Bejoy Kumar Sinha : 'In Andamans, The Indian Bastille', p. 127.
[3] Ibid.

Sir Mohammed Yamin Khan, a Muslim League member from the United Provinces visited Port Blair in October, 1936. The occasion of their visit was utilised by the terrorist prisoners to explain the correct position. Misrepresentations in Craik's statements were brought to light in a memorandum submitted to the Government of India through these two visitors.[1] There was no improvement in the condition of these prisoners as a result of this delegation as the Government considered their treatment of prisoners a satisfactory and had no intention to make conditions better for them.

Demands of terrorist prisoners in the Andamans

In 1937 Congress ministries were installed in seven provinces of India. The terrorist prisoners after great discussions among themselves resolved to base their demands on the issue of civil liberties. A representation was submitted to the Viceroy on 9 July, 1937 by them asking for the satisfaction of the following demands[2] :

Firstly, declaration of general amnesty to all detenues, state prisoners, and to all convicted political prisoners.

Secondly, withdrawal of orders of internment, of ban on exiles, of restrictions on workers, and the repeal of all repressive laws.

Thirdly, permanent abolition of the system of deportation of political prisoners to the Adamans and immediate repatriation of those already there.

And lastly, framing of permanent rules and a code for treatment of all types of political prisoners in jails.

Copies of the representation were also given to the Superintendent, Port Blair for forwarding them to the Prime Ministers of different provinces of India. It was pointed out to them that they had included the above demands in their election manifestos and hence it was incumbent on them to prove their sincerity by immediately acceding to the above demands.[3] The resolve of a hunger-strike, in case their demands were not met, was also mentioned. It seems that the

[1] Bejoy Kumar Sinha : 'In Andamans, The Indian Bastille', p. 129-146.

[2] Ibid, p. 175-177.

[3] Bejoy Kumar Sinha : 'In Andamans, The Indian Bastille', p. 179.

above appeals were not forwarded to the Congress ministries. No reply was sent to the terrorist prisoners by the Viceroy or the Congress ministries. A reminder was sent by the prisoners on 18 July, 1937 with a warning that if no reply was received by 23 July, 1937, they would commence hunger strike. On receiving no response from any quarter, a notice was given on 23 July, 1937 that the strike would begin from 25 July, 1937. The Superintendent, Port Blair communicated to the political prisoners on the evening of 23 July, 1937 that the government had no desire to effect a wholesale release or repatriation of political prisoners confined in Cellular Jail.[1]

Another hunger-strike by terrorist prisoners

The hunger-strike was commenced by 183 prisoners on 25 July, 1937. Other prisoners, who were prevented by their comrades to join the strike on account of ill health, refused to work. Unlike the previous hunger-strike of 1933 the authorities were more vigilant in the process of forced feeding. The number of hunger-strikers gradually swelled.[2] Out of 290 political prisoners, 230 had joined the hunger-strike.[3]

The news of the hunger-strike created a storm of indignation in India. Hundreds of political prisoners interned in Deoli, Behrampore, and Alipore jails in India also joined the strike in their respective jails, in support of their demands. The leaders of the Congress were pressing the Government for an immediate settlement of the demands. They were also requesting the terrorist prisoners to suspend their strike. In their opinion, the Government was ready to meet most of their demands but was not prepared to talk about them in face of the hunger-strike.[4] Fazlul Haq, the Prime Minister of Bengal, sent a telegram requesting them to give up the hunger-strike. Bhula Bhai Desai and Satya Murti, eminent leaders of the Congress, appealed them to abandon it. A telegram from Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru sent on behalf of the Congress Work-

[1] Bejoy Kumar Sinha : 'In Andamans, The Indian Bastille', p. 184.
[2] Ibid, p. 189.
[3] Ibid. p. 190,
[4] Ibid, p. 192.

ing Committee was received by them.[1] Numerous telegrams and messages from their friends and relatives and the public also reached them. The Government of India, while expressing concern over the hunger-strike stated that the main demand of the prisoners was their release from prisons and that they would not consider such demands as long as the strike continued.[2]

Strike abandoned on appeals from Gandhiji and other leaders

The appeals from their friends, well-wishers and Congress leaders whom the prisoners respected greatly moved the hunger-strikers. But they felt that their case was being misrepresented to the public of India. They were not fighting for their release only but for the granting of civil liberties to all. Their demand was an all India demand. After four weeks of hunger-strike the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution. In this resolution it asked the Government to repatriate to India the political prisoners in the Andamans. They also requested the strikers to terminate their hunger-strike.[3] On 28 August, 1937, the terrorist prisoners on hunger-strike received a telegram from Mahatma Gandhi.[4] Gandhiji on behalf of Rabindra Nath Tagore and the Congress Working Committee advised them to abandon the hunger strike assuring them help in the redress of their demands. He also requested them to assure him personally that those persons, who previously believed in terrorist methods no longer did so and had faith in non-violence. This assurance from the side of the prisoners would help him in getting their demands fulfilled. A general meeting of the strikers was held in the Cellular Jail at 11 P.M. in the night to discuss the appeal of Gandhiji. It was decided by them to bow before the national mandate and suspend the strike.[5] A telegram was sent to Gandhiji in which it was stated that touched by nation-wide appeal and his message they had

[1] Bejoy Kumar Sinha : 'In Andamans, The Indian Bastille', p. 194.
[2] Ibid, p. 193.
[3] Ibid, p. 196.
[4] Ibid. p. 196.
[5] Ibid, p. 198.

suspended the strike on the assurance that the whole country had taken up their cause. The terrorist prisoners also declared, "We those who believed in terrorism do not do so any more and are convinced of its futility as a political weapon or creed. It definitely retards rather than advances the cause of our country.[1] The whole country rejoiced at the termination of the hunger-strike. In fact in the fight for civil liberties the prisoners had won a victory. Shortly afterwards the political prisoners confined in the Cellular Jail heard the welcome news of their repatriation to India. The first batch of prisoners left the Andamans on 22 September,. 1937. Most of the terrorist prisoners were released subsequently from the Indian Jails and afterwards.

Review of the British treatment of political prisoners deported to the Andamans

The motives of the British imperialistic policy can easily be discerned in the treatment of political prisoners deported to the Andamans. The British Government deported a number of valiant fighters of freedom to a distant island in order to curb their spirit. Many patriots were thrown in the dungeons of the Cellular Jail without any hope of return to their country. They were treated in a most inhuman way. No contact with their people was allowed to them for a number of years. They were never given the rights usually granted to an ordinary criminal. Efforts were made to humiliate them in many ways. Sometimes they were subjected to the most barbaric punishment i.e. flogging. Even after the hunger-strike of 1937, three political prisoners were flogged. Due to the absence of any public opinion in the Andamans the authorities of Port Blair treated them harshly. But these pioneers of national freedom struggle did not submit to the tyranny of British Imperialism. In order to maintain their self-respect they fought heroically against heavy odds. Many of them—Indu Bhusan Roy, Ram Rakha, Mahavir, Mohit, Mohan Man krishna Das and others—sacrificed their lives willingly for a cause which they considered

[1] Bejoy Kumar Sinha : 'In Andamans, The Indian Bastille', p. 161.

to be noble. Others like the Savarkar brothers, Permanand, Aushutosh Lahiri, Prithvi Singh, members of the Gadar party, participants in the Midnapore raids, convicts of the Chittagong armoury raid, of Lahore Conspiracy case, of Kakori case, the editors of 'Yugantar' and 'Swaraj', nationalist weeklies of India and hundreds of others struggled with a grim determination without yielding an inch of ground. In this struggle a large majority of them became physically invalid, some of them like Ulaskar Dutt turned insane but their dogged and iron-will was not curbed by the inhuman methods of British Imperialism.

The story of the struggle by the political prisoners confined in the Cellular Jail, the 'Bastille' of India, against the increasing repression of the British Imperialism forms one of the glorious chapters in the history of the freedom movement in India. Their sufferings have earned for the Andamans the status of a land of martyrs—a land of great reverence for the Indians. The Cellular Jail, a building which reminds one of the castles of the medieval ages, has become a place for pilgrimage. As soon as one Indian reaches Port Blair, he bows respectfully to the memory of many a patriot who languished in these islands often longingly and wistfully looking across the deep blue sea towards his main land. We also cannot forget that the Andamans proved a blessing in disguise for the national movement of our country. By concentrating a large number of picked terrorists from all provinces, whose level of political knowledge, traditions and forms of struggle were somewhat similar, an organic contact between different youth movements of an extreme type was made possible by the British Government. For a few years (1933-37) they were given the opportunity to discuss their past in view of the present requirements and developments. They could have a dispassionate view of things in the secluded atmosphere of the Cellular Jail. They realised their goal was vague and not clearly defined. It is true that they stood for national revolution and the liberation of the motherland but they never tried to contact the masses—the driving force in all revolutions.[1] They realised that their activi-

[1] Bejoy Kumar Sinha : 'In Andamans, The Indian Bastille', p. 20

ties were predominantly of a secret character and their achievements disproportionate to their sacrifices. It is also true that by their tradition of iron-will, self-sacrifice and dogged persistence they had been able to inspire self-confidence and unbending resistence among a section of the people but majority of the people did not like their conspiratorial activities. By such discussions the terrorist prisoners in the Andamans realised that they had to change their methods. They, therefore, readily responded to the appeal of Gandhiji and issued with unanimity the momentous declaration from the Andamans accepting the path of non-violence. The above declaration from the Andamans was followed by messages of similar nature from other terrorist prisoners interned in Indian jails. These declarations by the terrorists brought an end to the extremist movement in India. Along with it, this ended the system of transporting political prisoners to these distant islands, thus ending a chapter of the British rule in India, which can be called as inglorious if not shameful.

EIGHT

LIFE AND MANNERS OF THE ABORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF THE NICOBARS :

THE Nicobarese belong to a completely different race group from the aborigines of the Andamans, although like the Andamanese, they also belong to an ancient race. In all the accounts of the travellers from second century onwards the same story has been repeated by them about the Nicobarese. They have been invariably described as—unclothed men with a narrow loin cloth having a long tail. Women with short petticoats, their eagerness to get iron from trading vessels in exchange of coconuts, betel, and ambergris ; and living in isolation from the world except for their contact with passing ships. These narrations prove that the aboriginal inhabitants of the Nicobars have been living on their present site for a long time and at least for two thousand years having the same civilisation and habits which they possessed in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Ethnological origin of the Nicobarese race

The origin of the Nicobarese race is a question which has not yet been definitely settled. On account of the absence of a collective memory among the Nicobarese, their folk lore has not provided any solid basis to the ethnologists for tracing clues of their past history. It has, therefore, become very difficult to affiliate them with other extinct or extant groups of human beings.[1] The only basis on which an attempt can be made to determine their race is the study of their physical characteristics, language, habits and customs. The greatest difficulty in adopting this procedure is the division of the

[1] Census Report, 1951, Appendix A, p. Li.

Nicobarese into groups according to their habits, customs, physical features and language. Each group occupies a separate island or group of islands. These groups are as follows[1] :

		Name of the island	*Group*
1.		Car Nicobar	Northern group
2.	(a)	Chowra	Central group
3.	(b)	Teressa	
	(c)	Bompoka	
4.	(d)	Nancowry	
	(e)	Camrota	
	(f)	Trinkutee	
	(g)	Katchall	
5.	(a)	Little Nicobar	Southern group
	(b)	Pulo Milo	
	(c)	Great Nicobar (Coastal tribes)	
	(d)	Kandol	
6.		Great Nicobar (Interior)	Shompen tribe

(a) Theory of Sir Richard Temple

Sir Richard Temple[2] after studying in detail the habits and customs of the different groups of the Nicobarese, considered the differences between these groups to be nominal. According to him such differences were expected among people living an almost isolated life in different islands.[3] He, therefore, was of the opinion that they belong to one race. According to him the Nicobarese seem to be descended from the Indo-Chinese race as distinguished from the Tibeto-Burmese and Malay tribes.[4] He points out certain affinities between the Nicobarese and the people of Indo-China race.[5] Among these affinities,

[1] Census Report, 1931, p. 66.

[2] Richard Temple—Supra, p. 4, Chapter I.

[3] Census Report, 1901, p. 200.

[4] Ibid, p. 199.

[5] Ibid, p. 199. Sir Richard Temple has given a long list of the customs which are similar among the Nicobarese and the Indo-Chinese. The main affinities are : building of houses on piles, straining teeth with betel, enlarging the lobe of the ear, artificially deforming the heads of infants, aversion to milk, weak marriage ties, free choice of partners by women, sniffing for a kiss, indisciplined by nature, mixing freely without restraint, scaring the spirit, hospitality, special ceremonies for dead, fondness for festivals, and carrying of loads by women on their backs.

the strongest link of the chain which binds the Nicobarese to the Indo-Chinese group is the philology of the Nicobarese language. Two eminent philologists, Grierson and Peter Schmidt, have identified the language of Central Nicobar group, as reproduced in the Dictionary of Man,[1] as having "affinities with the Indo-Chinese language as represented now a days by the Mon or Telaing languages of Tenessarim and Malay peninsula and Khmer language of Cambodia."[2] This classification of the Nicobarese language with Mon-Khmer group convinces many a ethnologists about the descent of the aborogines of the Nicobars from Telaing emigrants from the coast of Tenessarim. These emigrants are supposed to have landed on the shores of these islands in remote times.

The above theory also finds support in the conclusion drawn by S.H. Roberts in his book 'Population Problems of the Pacific.' According to Roberts there were waves of migration from Indo-China in the fifth and thirteenth centuries towards the Pacific. On the basis of the above conclusion of Roberts, earlier migrations from the mainland to the island of the Nicobars can be safely assumed. We can presume that such migrations took place from the Malayan peninsula in the fine weather of the north-east monsoon for which the Nicobars and the East Indies are a natural destination.

The theory of Sir Richard Temple is also supported by ancient traditions of Car Nicobars. The people of that island believe themselves to be descendants of the Burmese. Owing to a rebellion these Burmese ancestors of the Nicobarese were forced to flee from Tenessarim and seek asylum in the Nicobars.[3] By another tradition the Car Nicobarese hold themselves to be descended from a bitch who got afloat on a raft during a cataclysmic flood. Another legend of the Nicobars points out the canine origin of their race. It depicts a Burmese princess exiled by her father, for her unnatural connection with a dog, landing upon the shores of the Nicobars. Before the birth of her son on one of the islands she killed the dog to eliminate the

[1] Man E.H. : Supra, Chapter IV.

[2] Census Report, 1931, p. 67.

[3] Notice of Nicobar islands—P. Barbe, Selection of Records, Vol, 77.

evidence of her shame. A desire to propagate her species led her to marry her son and the result of this union was the birth of Nicobarese race. Doctor Hutton[1], has recorded a similar belief among the aboriginals of the Naga hills in India. According to this belief the Peguanas, among the Nagas, ascribe their origin to a dog and a Chinese woman who escaped shipwreck.[2] These two stories of the canine origin of these two different tribes seem to have sprung up from the same source *viz*. Mon-Khmer among whom the story might have been current in remote times. The tradition was probably taken to the Nicobars and the Naga hills by persons of the above group who might have migrated to these places.

There is also a great similarity between the physical features of the Nicobarese of the northern group and the Burmese. The women of Car Nicobar when dressed in Burmese costumes can hardly be distinguished from the Burmese and Tailangs.

The theory of Sir Richard Temple regarding the origin of the Nicobarese from the Indo-Chinese race does not explain the strong Malay influence which is prominent among the Shompen of Great Nicobar and which decreases gradually as one proceeds to the north. His statement that the differences between the customs and habits of the different group of the Nicobarese are slight, is also challenged by many anthropologists and sociologists. These anthropologists point out many diverse differences among these different groups of the Nicobarese and advance a number of theories about their origin. According to some of them, the Nicobarese belong to two different races while others maintain that they are one people who have changed owing to the continuous influx of foreign blood about which there is no doubt.

(b) Theory of Kloss

The theory of Kloss[1] about the origin of the Nicobarese

[1] Doctor Hutton: He was the Census Commissioner of India in 1931. He toured the Andamans and the Nicobars in 1931 and wrote short notes on the original inhabitants of these islands which are appended to the Census Report of 1931.

[2] Census Report, 1931, p. 67.

[3] C. Boden Kloss: Supra footnote Chapter I.

is entirely different from that of Richard Temple. According to him, these islands were originally inhabited by a race of Malays, who were gradually driven towards the south by the immigration of the Indo-Chinese settlers from the coast of Burma but that in this process there was a certain fusion of races which would account for the Malay element in the Nicobarese today.[1] Kloss believed that the Shompens were the last remanent of the Malay race because they have been able to maintain a separate existence in the dense forests situated in the interior of Great Nicobar. To account for the dark skin and curly hair met with among the Shompen, Kloss admits a possible mixture of South Indians who might have migrated to Great Nicobar in ancient times. He tries to substantiate his theory by pointing similarity of skull of the Nicobarese to the Malay type. The skull of the Nicobarese is brachy-cephalic with marked prognathism. This type of profile approaches very nearly to the figure of Japanese of the lower Malay type *i.e.* Pithecoid.[2] The anthropometic measurements taken by the Census parties of 1911 and 1931 also confirmed that the Shompens as a physical type are different from the other Nicobarese of the North.[3]

A study of the customs of the Nicobarese also lead us to believe that some of them are of Malay origin. The practice of male couvade[4] (lying in of the man at the time of his wife's confinement) together with other practices in the nature of suggestive magic such as severing the lashings of canoe fastening in order to make delivery easier are Malay customs.[5] The practice of ancestor worship and of preserving the bones of the members of the family in little coffins in dwelling houses, which prevails in Teressa and Bompaka have Melanesian Association.[6] Anthropological researches in the Pacific and Melanesia by

[1] In the Andaman & Nicobar—the narrative of a cruise in the Schonner, Kloss, B.C., p. 229-30.

[2] In the Andaman & Nicobar—the narrative of a cruise in the Schooner, Kloss, B.C., p. 229-30.

[3] Census Report, 1911. p. 102 and Census Report, 1931. p. 68.

[4] Couvade : Supra, p. .

[5] Census Report, 1921, p. 16.

[6] Ibid, 1931, p. 69.

Malinowski and others embodied in the publication 'Argonauts of the Western Pacific' reveal environments and cultures with many similarities to those found in the Nicobars, thus indicating a possible former connection between them. The language of the Nicobarese people also contains a marked Malay element. The people of Teressa believe that the inhabitants of Nancowry are the descendants of Malays who visited these islands on a fishing excursion and settled there after losing their boats.

Views of Man

Man supports the theory advanced by Kloss. He agrees with him in stating that the Shompens are original inhabitants of the Great Nicobar, being descended from Malays. According to Man, these people were driven into the interior by aliens, more powerful than themselves, who were wrecked on the coasts of these islands from time to time.[1] The mixture of Burmese, Chinese, Dravidians and even Indo-European blood among the Nicobarese of the Central and Southern groups can be cited in support of this theory of forced migrations to the Nicobars by people of many races at different times. But it must be admitted that this foreign influence of some of the races is very slight and recent. Hence the theory of Man requires greater anthropological investigation before it can be fully accepted.

After critically examining the views of Temple, Kloss, and Man, the theory of Kloss that, "The original Malay population of the Nicobars, the characteristics of which are still found in the Shompens was gradually driven into the interior by the immigration of Indo-Chinese and Burmese settlers from the North" fits in better with the existing conditions than that of a common stock for Shompens and other groups as suggested by Temple.

(c) Nicobarese descendants of Indians—Theory of S.K. Gupta

S.K. Gupta, Deputy Commissioner and ex-officio Superintendent of Census operations in the Andamans and the

[1] Census Report, 1931. p. 69.

Nicobars in 1951, has tried to identify the Nicobarese as children of Indian soil.[1] He claims to have traced a reference to this race in the Ramayana. According to him, Sugriva, the King of the great race of 'Banars' (वानर) while ordering for a mass rally of all his troops mentioned a race which had characteristics similar to those of the Nicobarese. Sugriva said as,

"Khisirodabelanilayah
Tamalabanabasinah
Narikelacanah Chiaba
Tesam Shankhya na vidyate."

which means, "Summon also my countless vassals who build their homes on the beach, or live in tamala forests, and live on coconuts." This description aptly applies to the Nicobarese. Numerous other similarities between the habits of the Nicobarese and the 'Banars' of the Ramayana have been quoted by Gupta in support of his theory. According to him the special qualities of the 'Banars' found in the Nicobar are:—

Firstly, Banars were golden hued.

Secondly, their main food was 'fala and mula', *i.e.* fruits and roots.

Thirdly, they were famous for their muscular powers.

Fourthly, they did not possess any murderous weapons.

Fifthly, their main sport was wrestling.

Sixthly, their houses were always described as 'guphas' *i.e.* caves.

Seventhly, the decorative frame work which the Nicobarese affixes to the prow of his caves reminds one of the excellent wood carving of the bier in which the corpse of Bali, the brother of Sugriva was laid for some time, for cremation.

Eighthly, the 'Banars' wore loin-cloth with a tail at the end like the Nicobarese.

Ninthly, like the Nicobarese the 'Banara' did not stick to anything for a reasonable length of time.

Tenthly, Angad, in his rage against his father Sugriva's sin of omission, preferred a fast unto death for himself to a fight with him. Today an aggrieved Nicobarese would also

[1] Ibid, 1951, Appendix A, p. Li.

prefer destroying his own canoe rather than punish the offender.

Lastly, the Nicobarese, specially the people of Chowra island, are addicted to drinking. Sugriva also forgot his duties on account of heavy drinking.

After describing the above similarities of the Nicobarese and the race of the 'Banars', Gupta explains the real meaning of the word 'Banar' (Ba-nar) as 'near cultivator' *i.e.* the people who do not grow 'Oshadi' (annual crops) but live on crops like fruits and roots.[1] He also challenges the verdict of Grierson regarding the affinity of the Nicobarese language with Mon Khmer group. According to Gupta, only a few words of the Nicobarese language belong to the above group of language. Gupta also discounts the tradition of the canine origin of the people and cites the testimony of Rani Islon of Nancowry[2] in his support. According to Rani Islon, "this tradition is a figment of the intellectual brain and we illiterate people neither know nor believe it."[3] The Nicobarese habit of wearing tails and using a head-gear looking like dog's ear seem to be responsible for this foist by the foreigners, which these people in their simplicity have accepted as correct. From the above evidences Gupta concludes, "The twentieth century Nicobarese belong to that great and most populous race of 'Banars' who inhabited the sub-mountainous regions of Eastern India, the uplands of Central India and the coastal regions of Burma and Malaya."[4] They were a yellow coloured people but quite distinct from the people of China and Manchuria. The absence of any tradition among the Nicobarese regarding their joining the expeditionary forces of Sugriva, is explained by Gupta with a surmise. According to him perhaps the expeditionary force of the Nicobarese did not return to tell this tale of the great epic and in the absence of written language those who remained

[1] Census Report, 1951, Appendix A, p. Lii.

[2] Rani Islon : She possesses considerable influence among the original inhabitants of the Nicobars and is friendly and helpful to the present administration.

[3] Census Report, 1951, Appendix A, Page Lii.

[4] Ibid.

in the islands could not preserve it.

Gupta's theory has not yet been tested by ethnologists and is weak in many respects. It does not explain the predominant Malay and Burmese influence among the Nicobarese. Even the physical features of the Nicobarese in the interior of Great Nicobar and the inhabitants of Chowra, who have been able to preserve their ancient culture to a great extent, have few similarities with the South Indians or any other people of India. Only a minor Dravidian influence which can account for their dark skin and curly hair is noticeable among the Shompens. Further anthropological researches and ethnological investigations are evidently necessary before any reliance can be placed on Gupta's theory which is evidently based on similarities between 'Banars' and the Nicobarese. Such chance similarities are generally found among two different tribes.

Physical and mental characteristics

The Nicobarese are a well developed race so far as their physique is concerned. Doctor Guha, after analysing the measurement of 121 males taken by the Census party of 1931, places them among shortstature people, though not quite so short as the Andamanese.[1] Man's enquiries of about 150 Nicobarese produced the following average[2] :

	Men	Women
Height	63¾ inches	60 inches
Weight	136 lbs.	118 lbs.

The prominent physical features of the Nicobarese are : forehead well formed, lips normal, ear of medium size, eyes are obliquely set, nose wide and flat, cheek bones prominent, face somewhat flat and mouth large. The complexion is yellowish brown or reddish brown in colour. Their figure is not graceful due to waist being square and back bending inwards sharply. Their skin is intensely smooth throughout their life. By perpetual betel-chewing their healthy teeth are disfigured. The hair of the Nicobarese are dark rusty brown. There are, however,

[1] Census Report, 1931, p. 69.
[2] Ibid, 1901, p. 200.

differences in the general physiognomy of people living in different islands. Strong Burmese influence is evident in the Northern islands of the Nicobar group. In Great Nicobar the Malay influence becomes pronounced, and the Shompens can be called distinctly as an isolated group of primitive Malays. They are about an inch shorter and are less robust in appearance than the coastal tribes. They are a shade darker and their hairs are curly, which suggests Dravidian influence. In Teressa also, South Indian influence is visible in the colour of the skin of some of the people and in the top tuft of their hair. The nordic shape of head noticed in Nancowri may be accounted for by the former presence of a Danish garrison in the Nicobars.[2] At the present day, Chinese influence is most apparent in the South and in some parts of the Central group, where the most of the trade is carried on by the Chinese.

The Nicobarese, are by nature dull, lazy, cowardly and apathetic. This racial laziness is due to the climate and the productivity of nature.[3] Without any special effort on their part coconuts, pigs and fowls are found abundantly in these islands. Pandanus and cycas provide sufficient farinaceous food. Soil produces a magnificient return in vegetables, fruits and roots as a result of the simplest cultivation. The ocean is an inexhaustible source of the supply of the fish. Although the Nicobarese are dull by nature, they show considerable ability in climbing up the coconut tree. They do very well what they are obliged to do, and are very methodical in the cultivation of their gardens, the care of their coconut trees and live stock, and construction of their huts, canoes and implements [5] They are expert in paddling and sailing boats but are not good swimmers. Living in such a land of plenty, the Nicobarese cannot endure thirst and hunger for a long time. They will smoke, chew betel, eat or drink at short intervals all the day long, whenever practi-

[1] Census Report, 1901, p. 203.

[2] Ibid, 1931, p. 68. For details of the Danish garrison infra of Chapter IX.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Census Report, 1901, p. 202.

[5] Ibid, 1911, p. 103.

cable. The Nicobarese, are temperamentally very good and have a kind disposition towards strangers. They are truthful, honest and polite in business transactions, though sometimes suspicious towards foreign traders.[1]

Internal Government and Social organisation

The Nicobarese are divided in their various islands into a series of communities or clans. A clan or a community resides in a village. Each group or group of villages has its chief who inherits this position either by heredity or is appointed by the government. The headman or the chief is usually an individual, who owing to his superior wealth, symbolised by the number of his pigs and the size of his plantations, has reached a position of influence within the community.[2] The authority of the chief varies with the individual. He has no power to enforce his views or wishes against those of the community and he is tolerated as long as he can use this influence for the good of the community. Throughout the islands except at Chowra, the government of the village lies essentially in the hands of the elders of the village rather than the headman.[3] Each head of a family has a recognised position within the community as an elder, and it is in the council of these elders that all questions of importance are decided, concerning the general welfare of the community. The elders are also empowered to hear disputes and punish the offender according to their customs and traditions.[4] The above system of internal government has been aptly described by Richard Temple as a "simple democracy bound by customs."[5]

The above system of communal government varies slightly in Car Nicobar from that found on the other islands. In this island there is a fairly dense population and a comparative smaller number of villages. In each of these villages there is a chief with his deputy and a committee of elders, who decide all disputes. Each village is further sub-divided under sub-chiefs

[1] Ibid, 1901, p. 204.
[2] Census Report, 1931, p. 69.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid, 1911, p. 104.
[5] Ibid, 1901, p. 204.

into groups. Each group occupies houses owned by the sub-chief and all the members of the group under the direction of the sub-chief are responsible for the material welfare of the individuals composing the group.[1] In Chowra the authority of the chief stands out prominently.[2] All points and disputes are referred to him by the community for decision. He is empowered to award punishment to his people for any offence.[3] Due to the contact with the civilisation tribal administration in Car Nicobar and to a lesser extent in other islands except Chowra, is losing its former power whereby the interests of the clan were safeguarded.[4] Chowra, owing to its position and size, which show no commercial possibilities, has never come into the direct influence of the administration and consequently the authority of the chief of the village is still respected in this island.[5]

Tribal Justice

The chief or the elders of the village administer justice according to their old tribal laws. Offences against tribal morality, custom and traditions are punished with fines of pigs or physical torture in the shape of beating. In Chowra, the offender is brought to the chief, who in association with the elders, inflicts a fine of at least ten pigs on him. The community then participates in a feast of pigs at the expense of the culprit. Sometimes, in the presence of the chief, members of both the parties in a dispute select a man each to assist them in a fight. These two men with quarter-staves in their hands fight with each other. The party which is adjudged to have been worsted without real serious injury is supposed to have lost the dispute. It has to pay a fee in shape of a pig which is consumed by both parties.[6] The settlement of quarrels by parties is sometimes done by attacking each other at night, armed with quarter-staves, wearing coconut husk helmets and smearing their own

[1] Ibid, 1911, p. 104.
[2] Census Report, 1931, p. 70.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Census Report, 1931, p. 70.

faces with blood. Without causing much injury to other party the dispute is thus settled. This custom is gradually dying out in the Northern group of islands.

'Devil Murders'

In the Nicobars certain anti-social activities are punishable with death according to local customs. Any person who is found guilty of any offence considered dangerous to the community is ceremoniously executed after open consultation by the elders of the village. The offences which are considered obnoxious to the society are :

Firstly, possession of an evil spirit,
Secondly, use of witch-craft to cause harm to the public,
Thirdly, proving dangerous to the community,
Fourthly, homicidal proclivity,
Fifthly, threat on the part of the offender to kill another man,
Sixthly, failure to get cured (by a 'doctor' called Menluana),
Seventhly, theft and lastly, incurable disease.

Such ceremonious judicial executions were termed as 'Devil Murders' by the British authorities. These executions were carried out by the Nicobarese only when there was a great necessity for it in the interests of the community. It was generally believed that any individual, who was guilty of such offences as mentioned above, was possessed of an evil spirit and hence was dangerous to the society. The real idea was to get rid of such an individual in the interest of the village or community. A detailed explanation of the sentences of death carried out under the orders of the elders of the village, which came into light during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, shows that this punishment was given in Car Nicobar, Chowra, Teressa and the islands of the Central group.[1]

The orthodox method of the execution of such sentences was very cruel. The legs and the arms of the victim were broken or dislocated to prevent resistance by that individual. He was then strangled and thrown into the sea with a heavy

[1] Census Report, 1901, Appendix D.

stone around his legs. Now-a-days there is a great variation in the procedure. The victims are usually taken unawares and strangled to death. Some of the victims put up resistance to save their lives.

It has been claimed by the British administration that the cases of executions by the Nicobarese for anti-social activities in the above manner have since ceased, because the inhabitants of the Nicobars know very well that if they are found to be involved in the process of execution, they would be severely punished by the authorities. However, recently two such cases of execution have occurred in Chowra. The present administration is constantly warning the Nicobarese not to take the law into their hands. Constant surveillance is also kept to prevent such executions. With the appointment of Tehsildars in all parts of the Nicobars and regular communications between the islands and the mainlands it is hoped that the so-called 'Devil Murders' will stop.

Social Life

The complete absence of any struggle for existence has resulted in the social equality of all classes in all the islands of Nicobars. It has also vitally affected the social life of the Nicobarese. After a Nicobarese family has collected enough food for themselves by plucking coconuts and forest produces, uprooting yams and fishing they just give themselves away to swimming, wrestling and racing with canoes or feasting with friends. These feasts which frequently take up many days in a month occupy a very prominent place in the life of the Nicobarese. In reality, festivals are the pivot of the social life of the inhabitants of these islands. Throughout the year, a Nicobarese is busy in celebrating social and religious festivals. The social festivals are celebrated purely in a spirit of enjoyment while the religious festivals are held mainly to discover, propitiate and drive away the evil spirits. The festivals are always community festivals and not confined to a particular group of families or a village. Inhabitants of other villages of the same island are also invited to these festivals which are held on a very large scale.

The festival of Ka-Na-Ha-Un celebrated in Car Nicobar is purely a social affair. It is held in rotation in each village of the above island. Invitations are also sent to other villages a week before the feast with requests to the guests to bring provisions with them. Only such persons who are able to bring food consisting of pork, yam, plaintains, papayas, Ku-wen (bread fruit pudding), sufficient for ten persons accept the invitation. On the day of the feast the host also slaughters some pigs and prepares other edibles according to his capacities. When all the guests have assembled, toddy is first served. Food is then distributed in basket plates made of cane. Various preparations are also fastened to strings in such a manner that each string may be given to one guest. Betel nuts and cheroots are also served at intervals. After the dinner, communal dancing and singing goes on till late hours.

Another important social festival is the canoe feast at Car Nicobar when specially selected pigs are collected beforehand in a small enclosure and fattened. On the day of the feast they are encouraged to give a good fight before slaughter. After slaughter, a few important people smear their bodies with pig's blood. Communal singing and dancing goes on till a late hour followed by actual canoe-feast in which canoes consecrated at Chowra are brought to Car Nicobar with offerings.

Customs of 'Couvade'

The study of the social customs of the Nicobarese from birth to death is very interesting. A peculiar custom known as Couvade or 'paternal lying in' has been observed, from remote times, by all islanders including the Shompen.[1] According to this custom, special lying-in-huts are provided in all the villages. At the Central islands, these are styled as 'Ni-kamayua' and at Car Nicobar these are called as 'Chuk-ta-fata-pati' or 'Pati-ta-kuvia' (the two former signifying 'Birth-hut' and latter 'Tabooed hut).[2] A few weeks before the confinement of woman, both

[1] Custom of Couvade in the Nicobar Islands—E.H. Man, Census Report, 1911, Appendix C, p. 116.
Man during the years 1883 to 1888 recorded particulars about this custom from personal observation.

[2] Ibid.

husband and wife are prohibited from doing hard work. The husband has also to abstain from his favourite dishes, social gatherings and entertainments during this period. The couple moves in the 'Birth-huts' some days or even weeks before the confinement. During the first month, after the birth of his first child, the father is treated like an invalid in the 'Lying in-hut'. He has to lie down like a patient. Other people wait upon him in a similar fashion as they attend his wife. On subsequent occasions of the birth of a child, the above compulsory period of confinement is limited to one or two days. The practice of couvade was observed very rigidly by many couples in the past because it was believed that its non-observance would result in misfortune to the wife during her period of confinement as well as to the infant. They were so particular in its observance that in many cases anxious husbands commenced to observe 'couvade' about three months before the birth of a child and maintained it for a total period of six months.[1] With the contact of civilisation, the Nicobarese are gradually becoming hospital-minded and deliveries in the hospitals are not uncommon now.

Intiatory Ceremonies

At the ceremony of naming a child, which is immediately held after his birth, there is a feast. As soon as the father gives a name, the women start crying and collect round a trough into which they throw specimen of all types of food used in the feast, each with a good wish for the babe's good luck. The trough is then thrown in the sea to drive away all spirits of ill-luck.[2] In addition to this name given by the father, the Nicobarese adopt a name of his elder or a friend. This name is frequently changed in after life as the use of names of deceased relatives and friends is tabooed for a generation. This name, if adopted, before the death of grandfather or grandmother is also changed after their demise as it is obligatory to adopt the name of the deceased grandfather by men and grandmother by women.[3]

[1] Custom of Couvade in Nicobar islands—Census Report, 1911, Appendix C, p. 116.

[2] Census Report, 1901, p. 272.

[3] Ibid.

Marriage Customs

Among the Nicobarese the relations between the sexes are singularly unfettered by convention. At an early age they are initiated into sexual life, no doubt as a result of the practice of a man's living with all his dependents in a single communal hut. This feature of 'free love' in no way offends their sense of morality.[1] Among the young couple games of hide and seek are played in the evening which are little more than opportunities for sexual intercourse.

The usual age for marriage is sixteen in the case of a girl and twenty two in the case of a boy. Marriage is largely a matter of mutual selection and is usually the outcome of some long standing affection of a girl for a particular youth. The girl is at liberty to accept or reject a suitor. In some cases, pressure is brought to bear on her to prevent an undesirable match, or to bring about a desirable one.[2] The consent of the parents or the head of the family is necessary in all cases. In Chowra before the couples are able to marry, either the boy or the girl must possess three pigs to be given to the opposite party. To obtain a bride, the suitor must always give a present, which differs with the clan status of the bride's father. In the case of a wealthy parent, this present would be ten pigs, twenty fathoms of cloth, twenty rupees, two large silver spoons and one bundle of silver wire.[3] In case this indemnity is too much for the suitor or he is a poor man, he can enter the house of his father-in-law and work as his dependant ; or in case if he possesses a small coconut plantation this becomes the property of his father-in-law and stays for ever with the latter's family.[4] In many cases the future abode of the couple depends on the man power of the either family. If the bride's father is in need of a helping hand, the bride-groom goes and lives with him.[5]

In all islands except Chowra, there is no ceremony or rite associated with marriage but a large feast is invariably held to

[1] Census Report, 1931, p. 71.
[2] Ibid, 1911, p. 100.
[3] Ibid, 1931, p. 71.
[4] Census Report, 1931, p. 71.
[5] Ibid, 1951, Appendix A, p. LIV.

which the whole community is invited. The guests are expected to bring presents for the newly married couple to enable them to set up a new home. In Chowra, some religious rites are performed.[1] The couple get their heads shaved off. The hairs are kept in an enclosed space for seven days. They are also made to wear saffron clothes during this period. This type of custom is stilll prevalent in many parts of India. The husband has to give gifts to the relatives of the wife and guests make presents to the couple.

Marriage is not considered to be binding on both the parties. If a husband and wife fail to get on well, they just leave one another to look elsewhere for a mate. In Katchall, Nancowry, Camrota and other islands of the Southern group, there is a sort of 'companion marriage'.[2] The couple live together as long as they desire and find it convenient. No malaise is felt over desertions or divorce. On the contrary, a woman who has divorced or deserted more husbands is considered a proud lady.[3] Instances are also not lacking when duels have been fought with quarter staves, by the divorced husband and the lover.

Infidelity after marriage is rare. In former times death was the only punishment for adultery as it was considered a great sin against the community.[4] As this punishment resulted in a decrease in the population, fine and severe beating of the offenders was substituted for the extreme penalty of death. In Car Nicobar and several other neighbouring islands, usually the man and the woman indulging in adultery are severely beaten.[5] In some cases the deserted husband and the injured family is paid pecuniary compensation for the alienations of his wife's affections.[6] In one such instance a man had to indemnify the brother of a woman with whom he had committed adultery. The brother, who received this compensation, des-

[1] Ibid.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Census Report, 1911, p. 100.
[5] Ibid, 1931, p. 72.
[6] Ibid.

troyed his racing canoe in disgust over his sister's conduct. The co-respondent who was unable to pay the compensation in full, handed over a part of his coconut plantation in lieu of it.[1] Usually both the delinquents are fined three pigs each by the elders of the community. Divorce is usually permitted. Where there is no child, this is effected by mutual consent. When there are children, they are divided between the couple through arbitration.

There are no endogamous or exogamous groups for marriages among the Nicobarese. The prohibited degree of relationship is confined to the actual members of a family and not even extends to cousins.[2] Consequently there is a great deal of inter-marrying in groups. An instance was noted in 1890, in which a Nicobarese nick-named Davy Jones was living with his two sisters. Although other inhabitants of these islands did not approve of this practice they did not seem to interfere in the matter.[3] One distinguished feature of the marriage customs of Nicobars is the absence of polyandry. Polygamy is rare among the Nicobarese.

The status of women in Nicobarese society is at par with that of men. They exercise considerable influence in the councils of men and are at complete liberty.[4] Due to the custom of a son-in-law becoming a member of his father-in-law's household in many cases thereby helping the bride's father in old age, daughters are as welcome as sons. Though the large part of work, domestic or otherwise devolves on women they are not called upon to perform hard manual labour.

Beliefs and Practices

The religion of the Nicobarese can be described as 'undisguised animism'.[5] Their ceremonies and observances which are

[1] Diaries kept in Car Nicoabar—V. Solomon (1895-1901). Journal of Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 32. 1902, p. 202-238.

[2] Census Report, 1911, p. 100.

[3] Six weeks in Car Nicobar—A.L. Butler. Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 32, 1902, p. 202-38.

[4] Census Report, 1931, p. 71-72.

[5] Ibid, 1901, p. 206.

numerous and occupy a large portion of their time are centred round the propitiation or compulsion of evil spirits. These spirits are credited with possessing power to cause sickness, damage property and harm individuals. According to Hutton, "these spirits are not only vague malicious Earth Spirits but ancestral spirits in a bad temper."[1] The recognition of the continued existence of the spirit after the death of an individual is a very marked feature of the beliefs of the Nicobarese. All personal property of a man is destroyed or buried with him on his death in order to satisfy his ancestral spirits. The canoes of the deceased are destroyed and the posts of his house are hacked up in pretence of dismantling his hut. His coconut and pandanus groves and clumps of bamboo are placed under a taboo for a period of three years. This period can be reduced to one year according to the will of his relatives.

'Scare-Devils'

To scare the evil spirits called 'Iwi' the Nicobarese erect scare-devils, which differ considerably in the different groups of the islands.[2] In the north they are marked by simplicity or by adherence to two patterns while in the Southern and Central group of the islands, they are noticeable by their numbers, elaborateness and by the general talent shown in their execution. In every village of Chowra, two types of scare-devils are found. The first consists of a man-headed post with a slightly forked top hung round with grass and young banana leaves. The second type of scare-devil is an elaborately carved model canoe. It is usually hung up inside the huts. On building a new hut or clearing a new plantation area, young coconuts are hung up on sticks to propitiate the good spirits called 'Iwi-Ka'.[3]

The scare-devils of the other islands of the Central and Southern groups are marked by their variety. At Nancowry,

[1] Ibid, 1931, Footnote on p. 76.
[2] Census Report, 1931, p. 76,
[3] Ibid.

three types of scare-devils are found[1] :—

(1) Henta

(2) Henta-Koi

(3) Automatic bull roarers and bamboos with bushes of grass with a plank.

Henta are paintings worked on areca spathe screens or carved on boards with considerable skill and fineness amounting almost to an art. These hentas are ambitious in design. Some screens contain even seven or eight pictures but ordinarily four are painted on one screen. A representation of the Sun surmounts the whole design or the Sun and the Moon are represented at the top right and the left corners. A man probably representing an anthropomorphic conception of God known as Deuse, dressed in some quaint garbs, is depicted in a standing posture. This conception of God has perhaps been acquired from the missionaries. On the other side of the screen various weapons, implements and articles of daily use are depicted. Below the figure of the Deuse, huts, coconut trees, birds and sometime men and women are shown on hentas. Below these paintings, animals, ships and canoes in full sail are painted. Various fishes with mermaids and crocodiles are depicted in the bottom of the picture.[2]

Henta-Koi :—On wooden figures or wooden screens real or mythical animals, birds, fishes, crocodiles, ladders and human beings are carved or painted as the case may be. These figures are made with considerable skill. They are always aggressive and monstrous in character in order to scare the evil spirit easily. These figures are generally used at the time of sickness. If the patient recovers, then, these are kept, otherwise they are thrown into the sea. Figure of ladder is intended for discovering the evil spirit in air while the ship or the canoe is supposed to enable them to search the spirit among coast villages. Figures of fish, birds and other animals are meant to invoke their assistance and goodwill in discovering these offending spirits. These Henta-Koi are principally used in the

[1] Ibid, p. 77.

[2] Census Report, 1901, p. 207. The above description of henta is given by Temple as derived from Man.

Central group. They are less common in the Southern group, rare at Teressa and are not found at Car Nicobar.[1]

Several varieties of Henta-Koi are made with slight variations in carvings. Henta-koi-kalang is a carved fish eagle. Henta-to-oinya is a single representation of Deuse on board or an areca spathe. Henyan-gashi-heng is a henta representing the Sun with a human face with eight arms between which his children are shown. Henyan-gashi-kahe represents the Moon. On one side of the henta-koi Deuse is depicted with a wine glass in his hand. On his left, coconuts, water vessels, lanterns, baskets, weapons and other such things are shown.[2] In Great Nicobar, henta-koi placed on wheelers are trollied in the gardens. These various types of henta-koi are used at the time of sickness. In case these prove to be of no avail, they are thrown into the sea and new ones are made.

Automatic bull-roarers are found in the Central group of the Nicobar islands. These roarers are constructed on the beach in front of the village. They are attached to trees and poles often 40 to 60 feet in height. They are formed of a narrow plank to which a small screw effect is given by twisting and cuttings so that they revolve in wind about a central pin. At each end of the plank there is a node of bamboo, the open end of which is partially blocked with rubber or wax. The revolving wood produces a very deep and booming noise identical with that produced by a bull-roarer, when it touches the rubber or wax.[3] In Great Nicobar stalks similarly adorned are used as scare-devils.

'Menluanas' or 'Witch-Doctors'

The medium through which the Nicobarese communicate with the spirits is the menluana or the witch-doctor, who is credited with the powers of smelling out evil spirits and driving them away. The menluanas are supposed to possess considerable powers, even to the extent of causing a person to become ill or die. In Car Nicobar there is a noviciate stage through

[1] Census Report, 1901, p. 207.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid, 1931, p. 77.

which a man has to pass before becoming a menluana. Any one who feels himself inspired can become a 'Mafai', which means that he is a novice and is undergoing sacred instructions.[1] The ceremony of making a man Mafai consists in placing spirit-scaring articles and toddy round his bed. After adoring him with such articles and many rings he is carried from village to village, in an ornamental chair. Much feasting and dancing is done at public expense on this occasion. If at the end of a certain period he decides to become a doctor, he is duly initiated as such. He may however, refuse initiation or even after initiation he is pronounced to be a failure he can once more lapse into the condition of an ordinary human being.[2] There have been numerous instances when the persons, who claimed themselves to be inspired after an illness or an extraordinary dream, were found to be impostors. Sometimes a man who does not feel himself inspired to become a menluana is forced to become a mafai when others feel that he is possessed of special powers. In 1899, Offandi, chief of a village in Car Nicobar was persuaded by several menluanas to become a Mafai. He was relieved from that position after several days by a resignation ceremony.[3]

On all occasions of sickness a menluana is called for at once. He smells out the offending evil spirit and drives it away. He also makes a new scare-devil for the benefit of the patient. If a menluana is suspected of using his art to the disadvantage of others, it is believed that he would meet an unfortunate and untimely death. Evil influences of a dishonest menluana are counter-acted by using the services of other witch-doctors. At present the authority of the witch-doctors is not so great as it used to be in the past.

Funeral Ceremonies

Ceremonies after death seem to be the most important event of the life of a Nicobarese. There are elaborate funeral ceremonies to scare the spirit of the deceased. These customs vary greatly throughout the islands and have, therefore, been

[1] Census Report, 1901, p. 210.

[2] Religion of Car Nicobar—Rev. George Stevenson, Census Report, 1931, Appendix B, p. 93.

[3] Ibid, p. 211.

described separately.

Car Nicobar :—When a man is about to die he is usually brought to a 'Death-House' on the beach at a fixed place called elpanam[1] and there he is left to die. As soon as the man dies, each group of houses in the village provides two yards of cotton of red colour and two yards of white cotton for wrapping the corpse. After the corpse is washed with coconut water it is wrapped in the clothes. It is, then bound to the pieces of an old canoe in an upright position to make it more rigid, and more easier to carry.[2] The relatives who express much grief, pretend not to like the burial of the corpse and drag it to the village. The other mourners, who are larger in number, try to take it to the grave. In this struggle over the corpse, several carriers are injured and sometimes the corpse is also damaged.[3] The corpse is never carried to the village because it is believed that in case it is taken into the village, the whole village becomes unclean. After reaching the burial ground situated on el-panam, the corpse is buried in the grave with all the portable belongings of the deceased.[4] In case a man dies in his hut instead of el-panam his hut is burnt.

There is a special ceremony for the burial of highly revered personalities.[5] After the body of the important person is wrapped in clothes and adorned with silver wire and necklaces, it is placed in an open coffin and fastened with large canes. The funeral is attended by about a thousand Nicobarese coming from all other villages in the island. Amidst this large gathering in the el-panam, the coffin containing the corpse is thrown and about one hundred people drag the canes fastened to the coffin up and down in competition until the canes are broken. At about six o'clock in the evening the corpse is buried in the

[1] El-panam ; An open space in the middle of the village is kept spotlessly clean and covered with sand for holding sports, meetings and feastivals. This public place is called el-panam.

[2] Religion of Car Nicobar—Rev. John Stevenson, Census Report, 1931, Appendix B, p. 91.

[3] Diaries kept in Car Nicobar (1895-1901)—V. Solomon. Journal of Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 32, p. 202-38.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

grave.

Chowra :—The dead body is washed and put into a canoe for burial. These canoes are kept in a cemetry in a thick grove about fifty yards from el-panam of the village. In the case of a man, he is buried with the top of his head pointing to the west and his legs towards the east. This signifies that the man has been on a long journey throughout his life and like the Sun, constantly crossing the sky, reaches the west after much travel. A woman is always buried in opposite direction. As a sign of respect to the deceased, it is customary for the whole village to shave their heads. This shaving is operated with a sharp instrument called 'dah' by the women. In Chowra, the property of the dead man is not destroyed but preserved in his memory in treasure-houses for a considerable long period.[1]

Teressa and Bompaka :—The method of burial in these two islands is similar to that of Chowra. The inhabitants of these two islands place a figure in the form of a post at a fixed place. The post is covered with clothes, general belongings, head dress of the deceased's wife, and skull of pigs which were retained by the dead man as trophies.[2] The canoes containing the dead body are kept on the sea shore. After some years these canoes decay on account of their constant exposure in the rainy season and sometimes the skull and the bones are scattered on the ground.

Nancowry, Camrota, Trinkutee, Katchall and islands of the Southern group :—In these islands, the presence of all the relatives is compulsory at the funeral. The dead body is washed five times near a fire place before silver wire and cloth is wrapped around it. The movable property of the deceased is destroyed and its fragments are placed on the grave along with the food as a propititation to the spirit of the dead. The pig tusk trophies of the dead person and the henta-koi are thrown in the forest. Burial takes place at dusk, dawn or before mid night in order to prevent the shadows of the attendants from falling into the grave and getting buried with the corpse. In the grave the body is pinned down by special contrivances, to prevent the

[1] Censut Report, 1931, p. 78-79.

[2] Ibid.

'Mongwanga' or body-snatching spirits from abstracting it. Manluanas also exhort the spirits to remain in the grave.[1]

Shompen :—The dead are buried in a sitting posture with hands lashed together near the mouth in which pulp of pandanus is placed.[2]

The funeral ceremonies in all the Islands of Nicobar do not end with the burial. In all other islands except Chowra, dead bedies are exhumed after seven days while in Chowra if the deceased is an ordinary person, it is done after three days. In other cases, it is done after seven days.[3] Until the ceremony of disinterment of bones is performed, the community does not resume the domestic routine and duties of the normal life. In Car Nicobar, the bones are thrown into the jungle near the beach. In Teressa and Bompaka the skull of an important person is preserved and placed in a life size hollow wooden body in a sitting posture. The remaining bones of the deceased are placed inside the hollow figure through a door meant for this purpose. The bones of all the departed members of the family are kept in little hollowed logs about one feet in diameter and three feet long.[4] In Chowra, the skeleton is placed in one of the canoes belonging to the deceased. Such canoes are laid down in jungle near the sea shore in pairs of forked wooden Y-shaped posts from four to six feet from the ground. The body is then left to rot. In due course of time the canoes fall to the ground. The skulls and bones of many generations are thus collected at one place[5]. In all other islands the skull of the deceased is preserved for family worship. The Nicobarese, perhaps, get a psychological satisfaction by keeping a portion of the material body of their beloved deceased. Only among the Shompens, the body is not disinterred as among the other Nicobarese.

There are certain other important ceremonies connected

[1] Census Report, 1901, p. 207-209.
[2] Shompen of Great Nicobar—Census Report, 1931, Appendix A. p. 87-88.
[3] Census Report, 1951, Appendix A, p. LVIII.
[4] Ibid, 1931, p. 78-79.
[5] Ibid.

with the funeral customs of the Nicobarese. After the disinterment process a purification ceremony is celebrated. A memorial post of the deceased is set up round a log on which spoons and forks are hung. A feast is generally held in the village hall after sunset and a basket of pork is provided for the deceased. Next morning the contents of these baskets are thrown away into the sea.[1] Another feast on the next day is held and the communities restart the routine work of daily life. During such feasts in Chowra, one of the trees of the coconut plantation of the deceased is ceremoniously cut and burnt. A cut is also made either in the floor or in one of the posts of his hut.

Ossuary Feast

A feast of the dead called the Ossuary feast is held in every village of Car Nicobar every second or third year by rotation. It is a very laborious and costly festival, associated with much ceremony. As the festival calls for cooperation on the part of the whole village, a council of elders of the village is held to decide the time of the feast. The date settled is generally ten months after the meeting and may fall at any time of the year except the months of incessant rains. Preliminary invitations are sent out to other villages soon after the meeting. These invitations are of two kinds *viz.* general and special. The general invitation is given to friends and relatives requesting them to join and help the villagers in every respect. Special invitations are given to such parties who can give a performance during the feast.

After these invitations are sent out, a 'Na-kapoh' (food for the burial ground) is built. A tree of about sixty feet high is cut down for placing food on it. After all the branches of the tree are removed, holes are bored at intervals all along the stem to fix pegs on them. Such trees are fixed in ground at el-panam and outside many houses in the village. Varieties of yams, dabs, betel leaf, bunches of coconuts, pandanus, bananas and other edible of about fifty varieties are hung on the pegs fixed on the tree. Below these poles, teakwood boxes containing clothes,

1 Census Report, 1931, p. 91-93.

jewels, bottle of toddy and earthern pots made at Chowra are placed. The poles are also decorated with flags and toys. Decorated canoes are set up in front of many houses. Bamboo cages able to hold about a dozen pigs are made. The graveyard on el-panam, roads of village, hut and a portion of the beach is cleaned. In these labours the people of nearest village also give help. All these preparations take about three months. During this time the killing of pigs in the village is restricted. The date of the feast is then definitely fixed and special invitations are sent out to the people of other villages. Two days before the feast all the houses in the village are decorated. Pigs are brought into the village from outside. Their legs are tied to a pole and they are carried round the village before being put up in the cages.

The visitors also bring pigs and quantities of food with them when they join the feast. A dance is held near the group of houses where the posts with food have been erected. The dances begin with short pieces and after each piece a song is sung. The dance continues throughout the night. Next morning the lofty post of the food is cut down and thrown away in the jungle with the food tied on it. A pig is killed as a special offering and a part of its flesh is placed on coconut leaves over the place of the uprooted post.

In the evening pigs collected for the feast are slaughtered near the village. The flesh of the pigs is singed or roasted over the flames of palm leaf torches. Pieces of pork are distributed to all the visitors, beginning with those who have come from distant villages. When all have got their share they depart to their homes. The lower jaw and the lungs, which are not given to any one, remain as the property of the owner of the pig. A specially large jaw bone with big tusks is treasured for many years as a trophy of the feast. Some of the visitors who have received their share of pork stay for witnessing the fight of the pigs. Some savage pigs are let out of the cages by men who are skilled in this kind of sport. They sieze the pigs by the ear and hold them. If, as some times happens, a man is accidently bitten or ripped by the tusk of the boar in arm or leg, the pig is at once speared by persons who are standing by. The flesh of

such pigs is only eaten by elder people.

On the following day, some fat pigs are killed and reduced to lard, which is stored in coconut shells. All through the night, the dancing goes on in which a number of people from the neighbouring villages also join.

On the next day the 'Anul-la-kopah' (digging the grave) ceremony is held. A fence of palm leaves is made round the burial ground. One opening on the side of forest is kept in the fence for throwing away the bones. The women and children stand far away from the grave yard. The bones of those who have been dead for two years or more are dug by the people. While this process goes on a witch doctor standing by each grave, tries to keep away the evil spirits by waiving a bunch of leaves. If by chance, the bones are found to have flesh on them they are put back and covered over again to await the next festival. The skull and bones of each dead body is cleaned and placed separately on a spathe on which white and red cloth is wrapped. Bones placed on the top of big yams are carried to the 'Dead House' on the el-panam. Sometimes the digging of graves continues on the second and third day in case there have been many deaths in the village.

Next morning the palm spathe and the cloth is torn up. The bones of ordinary people are thrown away in the forest but the bones of important persons are reinterred in the graves from which they were taken. In Nancowry the skull is put on a plate and food is served in it to the people. This practice is not observed in Car Nicobar and other islands. After the disinterment of bones the graves are again filled up.

The ossuary feast ends up with gay ceremonies and enjoyments. Special dances for several nights are held. Wrestling matches and boat races are witnessed with much enthusiasm. A big boat race in which many youths take part attracts almost the whole of the village. With a gay dance of the Mafais the

Ossuary feast comes to a close.[1]

Seasonal Religious Ceremonies

Besides, the great Ossuary feast, there are several religious ceremonies observed through out the year.[2] In a ceremony during December leaves of rattan are struck across the el-panam to keep off the evil spirits away. In January these leaves are pulled up and gathered in a heap on the beach, where they are burnt. In the month of February, the spirits of the dwelling houses are honoured. Fishes are caught from the sweet water ponds in the interior, and small fishes are struck on sticks. These sticks are placed over the entrance of the houses. In March, the spirits of the sea fishes are honoured. In the night several people go out in canoes to catch the curved fishes, which are speared by attracting them with torches. In the morning every one brings his catch to the el-panam with several coconut palms. Fishes cut into small bits are stuck on the palms. In each hut three of these tender coconuts with palms are hung. In April, the fire festival is celebrated. At the time of the waning of the Moon, dances are held in the light of coconut shells for the whole night. It is followed by wrestling in the morning. After this performance the burning of coconut shells for light is prohibited till the waning of the Moon in May, when the harvest festival is held. In this festival 'making of pudding' is the main item. Coconuts, yams, and bananas are scraped and placed in the oil of coconut in pots manufactured at Chowra.[2] The cooking of the pudding is done at night on the el-panam. Next morning each family kills a pig. The houses in the village are decorated

[1] The above account of the Ossuary feast is based on the following sources :—
(i) Diaries kept at Car Nicobar (1895-1901)—V. Solomon, Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1902 Vol. 32, p. 202-38.
(ii) Census Report, 1901, Appendix B, p. 226-229.
(iii) Ossuary feast—Rev. G. Whitehead, Census Report, 1921, Appendix M, p. 45-47,
(iv) Religion of Car Nicobar—Rev. George Stevenson, Census Report, 1931, Appendix B, p. 92-93.

[2] The manufacture of clay pots is tabooed in all other islands of Nicobar except Chowra. Infra Chapter VIII.

with coconut leaves, pudding and the indigenous products of the land. A member of the family while hanging these decorations shouts loudly. He desires a prosperous season, plenty of pigs, coconuts, yams and a pretty girl willing to wed him and so on. After taking rest during the day, all boys go to the el-panam in the evening and spear the young coconuts struck on the decorated places. The coconuts are collected in one place, where the boys stand in one line. A man throws every tender coconut in front of the boys and as the nut rolls down on the ground, the boys try to hit it. After this game of hitting the party goes to the village to play the same game. The next day is spent in hunting wild pigs. In June there is no ceremony. In the month of July, bad spirits are driven away and put on a raft. Spirits of the dead are also honoured. Each relation of the dead offers a chicken and pigs to the Mafais. During August the first festival of fishing with line and hook is celebrated. Usual offerings are put in every house and three raw coconuts with bits of fish and ferns are hung on the wall of the house. The second festival of fishing with similar ceremonies is held in September. During October, banyan leaves are put on the el-panam with a wish to have the direction of the wind changed from south-west to north-east. In November a ceremony to drive bad spirits is held. The process is similar to that of the July festival except that in case the wind is to the contrary direction, the spirits are not sent away on the rafts. In such circumstances the fish are killed by the Mafais and thrown into the sea.

A festival in Car Nicobar is celebrated to drive away a great evil fish supposed to emerge from the sea to the sandy beach for doing harm to the people.[1] A portion of the beach about five hundred yards in length is marked off. It is considered a sin to walk between these marks and the sea. Branches of coconut palms are tied to stakes in the ground for building a rough fence around the marked spot. Pieces of cloth are held up against the fence. Throughout the length of the marked

[1] A festival in Car Nicobar—Rev. W.R. Park, Census Report, 1931, Appendix K, p. 43-44.

ground, fringe of beads are unrolled from sticks. The enclosed space is entered by about twenty men wearing a head dress resembling a hat, a fringe of green paper round their necks, and a red tape round the waist. Three plated fish shaped mats made of leaves and representing an octopus, lobster and some ordinary fish are dragged over the sand in the enclosure by these men. An old woman distributes fruits from some overhanging trees. These fruits are used for poisoning the water for the purpose of killing the fish. After this process two men enter the enclosure and strike the sand with considerable vigour as if they are slaying some unseen monstrous fish. The same performance is carried out by another pair of men at the other end of the enclosure. The poison fruits are buried in the holes thus made. There is no dancing after the festival. It is also customary for all the residents of the village to confine themselves in the home for seven days after this ceremony lest misfortune by treading on poisonous fish bones, may fall on the people. This ceremony is held in this island once in fifteen or twenty years. It is generally held after the capture of a big fish supposed to be a monster.[1]

Taboos

The Nicobarese also have some forms of taboos based on superstitions.[2] On the death of an individual it is customary to taboo his name to the whole community. This taboo lasts for a generation. As a mark of respect for the deceased certain forms of food and drink are tabooed for a period extending from two days to three years. Singing, fishing, dancing or any type of community work is forbidden for a few days after the death of a person in Chowra till the purification ceremony, is held. Taboo also effects the form of huts in certain villages of the Nicobars. Among the Shompens, the hut in which a death has occurred is tabooed for an uncertain period. The making of clay pots is prohibited on all islands except Chowra. Certain old people do not use large pots in the feasts. Making

1 A festival in Car Nicobar—Rev. W.R. Park, Census Report, 1931, Appendix K, p. 43-44.

2 Census Report, 1901, p. 77-78.

shell lime for betel-chewing is tabooed except on Car Nicobar, Katchall, Nancowry and the islands of the Southern group. One kind of fish trap is tabooed for every place except Nancowry harbour in the rainy season.

There is a common kind of private taboo of much interest. Persons undergoing this form of taboo are termed as 'Saokkua' which means fastidious. These people do not eat domesticated fowls or pigs. They drink only rain water from a reservoir or flowing water of a stream situated at a distance from their hut. Out of all the spirits, they drink rum only in coconut shells. Bread, biscuits and rum are the only food and drink which they can accept from others during the period of taboo.

Folk Lore

The Nicobarese have a rich variety of folk lore.[1] According to one of the folk lores, Chowra is the holy land, and the people of this island are wizards. The stories of the canine ancestory of the people of Car Nicobar have already been described.[2] According to another folk story of Car Nicobar, coconuts originally grew out of the head of a man who was beheaded for procuring water out of his elbow by magic. A folk lore tells us the story of a man who became an owl on account of his grief, when he knew that he had eaten the flesh of his children who were killed in his absence by his wicked wife. The origin of bats is ascribed to evil spirits in a folk lore. These spirits turned some sailors into spirits for they offended them. According to one folk lore some wild people, who killed honest villagers, were changed into sharks when they were driven to sea by the people for their misdeeds.

There are other tales full of magic, mythical animals and supernatural occurrences. In one of these stories, a tiger, a lion, a snake eating a snake and other such animals which are not indigenous, figure. The tale of the creation in which Deuse appears and stories similar to that of Eve and her birth, for-

[1] Nicobarese folk lore—Rev. G. Whitehead, Census Report, 1931, Appendix N, p. 47-49, & Census Report, 1901, p. 77.

[2] Supra Chapter IX.

bidden fruit and the temptation are prevalent in these islands. All these tales are instances of the receptivity of the Nicobarese to foreign stories.[1]

Different views about Nicobarese religious beliefs

S.K. Gupta does not agree with the views expresssd above about the beliefs and practices of the Nicobarese. In his opinion the Nicobarese are not animists in the sense that they attribute life to inanimate things or worship stocks and stones.[2] According to him the Nicobarese believe in a spirit called 'Ma-ala-ha' literally meaning 'Lord of the flesh'. This spirit lives in the human body and leaves at the time of the death for going to the spirit world. The aboriginal inhabitants of the Nicobars invoke Ma-ala-ha only when something unnatural like disease or accident takes place so that it may drive away the evil spirits called 'Sia'. In Gupta's opinion several customs and ceremonies, which have been considered as religious by previous observers, are not actually guided by religious considerations.[3] According to him the 'hentas' are not scare-devils but only large wooden representation of men and animals for decoration purposes. An excellent model of an aeroplane as a henta-koi noticed by him in a village is quoted by him as an example in support of his contention. He also considers the hentas as an artistic expression of the people's conception of the Universe painted on an areca spathe. These are kept near the bed of the sick for creating a favourable psychological effect on the affected person. He explains the significance of the automatic bull-roarers as indicating the change of monsoon from south-west to north-east and a sort of warning to fishermen. These bull-roarers are of course, put up with certain ceremonial rites because the weather plays a most important part in catching fish. In Gupta's opinion the large number of wooden statues found inside the dwelling houses are kept in respectful memory of their dead ancestors. The hanging of pig's skull in front of a hut signifies the prosperity

[1] Census Report, 1901, p. 211.
[2] Ibid, 1951, Appendix A, p. LVII-LVIII.
[3] Census Report. 1951, Appendix A, p. LVII-LVIII.

of the owner—the larger the number of skulls, the better is his economic condition.

On an enquiry from several menluanas it was learnt by Gupta that sick men are treated by them with herbs and oils first. Along with it a psycho-analysis treatment was also given. No doubt some superstitions about the powers of the witch-doctors are firmly believed by the Nicobarese but this seems to be a question mostly dependant on faith.

According to Gupta, the Nicobarese possess an amazing psychological trait based on a profound religious basis.[1] This trait seems to be an embryonic invocation of supernatural punishment—an idea so much developed in the 'Tyaga' and 'Dharma' of India. The Nicobarese sometimes set fire to their own huts and property to express shame or disgust at the miconduct of his relatives and friends. For a heinous offence of a servant, his master smashed his best canoes, killed his pigs and destroyed other property belonging to him for giving vent to his injured feelings. These actions are almost like righting a wrong by self-mortification and non-attachment.

The conclusion drawn by Gupta is, "Although the faith of theirs cannot be called theistic, it is certainly transcendental, and non-materialistic. It also reveals their conception of life beyond, though not in a very developed form."[2] Any thing which is against Nature both internal and external, is considered to be evil by them. In their simple and unsophisticated way they try to keep the evil off. Like other societies, primitive or civilised, the Nicobarese have their own superstitions and as they have got plenty of time at their disposal, the ceremonies to ward off evil are elaborate and lengthy.[3]

The complete divergent views about the religious beliefs of the Nicobarese expressed by Gupta raise an interesting

[1] Census Report, 1951, Appendix A, p. LVII.

[2] Ibid.

[3] The writer of this book does not agree with the views expressed by Gupta. The idea behind self-mortification and non-attachment in the Hindu religion is entirely different. No such self-punishment, at least of this type is heard any where in India. Such an attitude can be compared to the behaviour of children, who when they do not get anything they desire, throw away in disgust and anger what they possess.

controversy. The ideas about religion of the Nicobarese held by the anthropologists has been considered by him as entirely misleading. It is for the anthropologists and the sociologists to make a thorough field study of the religious practices of the inhabitants of the Nicobars, which Gupta has, perhaps, not been able to do thoroughly during his tenure of office in the Andamans and the Nicobars.

Amusements

The numerous elaborate feasts and festivals show that the life of a Nicobarese is not one mad rush for the conquest of Nature but a slow and easy movement assimilating all the good things of Nature in the current of their life. Besides these feasts, the leisure time of the inhabitants of the Nicobars is spent in swimming, wrestling, dancing and racing with canoes. All these enjoyments are their favourite pastimes. Pinning down fish with a spear, attracting it by the light of torches is both a sport and an economic activity.

The Nicobarese hold regular and ceremonial dances in addition to the dances enjoyed by them in festivals. In Car Nicobar such regular dances are confined to the females. They arrange themselves according to their size and form a ring with a gap in the end. A bonfire of dried coconut husks and leaves is lighted in the middle and the whole party rhythmically dances from one end to another. There is hardly any accompaniment to this dance except soft and intermittant music. In the islands of Great and Little Nicobar, males and females join hand in hand forming a complete ring during the dance. They hum a moaning tune which is suggestive of the sound of surf breaking on the beach. The dancers slip right and left under the direction of one leader and jump in unison coming down on both the sides.[1]

The Nicobarese are very fond of music and sing clearly well in unison. They compose songs for special occasions. They have a stringed musical instrument made of bamboo. The song is accompanied by a play on this instrument. The Nico-

1 Census Report, 1901, p. 213.

barese are so fond of these amusements and festivals that their islands can be called the land of festivals. Decked in multi-coloured but spare garments, this happy species of Homo Sapiens, singing, dancing, racing, wrestling, and then lazing on the beach, perhaps intoxicated by the juice of their native trees give one the impression of Tennyson's Lotus Eaters.[1]

Dwellings

The dwellings of the Nicobarese are of considerable size and can accommodate an entire family. The house is raised on piles, some five to seven feet from the ground and consists of one large boarded floor with mats. The houses are usually circular with a high thatched roof of grass and palm leaves. Cooking is done in a separate hut. The huts are practically devoid of any material possessions, but are full of wooden statues and other works of art.[2] The surroundings of the villages in the Nicobars are generally clean except in Teressa and few villages of Nancowry island, which give a dirty look. Every village in the Nicobars has an el-panam in the middle of it near the beach. In villages of Car Nicobar, there is a communal kitchen where women of every household cook in turn and the whole community messes together.[3] The huts of the Shompens are of a far more coarser and primitive type than those found in the west of the Nicobars.[4] These huts are of two species. The first is raised on a level of three to four feet from the ground and is thatched with long leaves of areca palm and has a thin roof. The second, of a permanent nature, consists of an erection of posts about eight or nine feet from the ground. The access to these huts is obtained by means of a ladder. The sites of these permanent habitations are always well chosen for defensive purposes and are surrounded by a slight stockade.[5] A third type of hut built in the trees is noticed by some observers on the bank of the Galathea river in the Great Nicobar.

[1] Ibid, 1951, Appendix A, p. LV.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Census Report. 1951, Appendix A, p. LV.

[4] Shompen of Great Nicobar, Census Report, 1931, p. 87.

[5] Exploration of Great Nicobar, C.W.B. Anderson, Appendix A, Census Report, 1931, p. 87.

It appears that each village on the coast of Nicobars has a corresponding village in the interior of the island.[1] These villages consist of two or three huts, similar to those built on the coast. The wealthy owners of these huts in the interior villages, live in them for certain seasons of the year with their family for the purpose of cultivating vegetable gardens and rearing pig stocks. These huts have a few permanent occupants also for tending the gardens and looking after the pigs in the absence of the owners. These Nicobarese are of the same stock but are wild, timid and uncivilised. Utmost secrecy is maintained by the coastal Nicobarese about these villages.

Dress

Nature has been kind to the Nicobarese in giving them a mild equitable climate which renders clothing almost superfluous for them. The Nicobarese man, while at home, wears only an infinitesimal loin cloth, or rather string fastened behind with a wagging tail.[2] This must have been his garment for centuries together as is evident from the persistent reports of travellers from second century onwards till the seventeenth century. The women wear only a petticoat from waist to knee made of barks and coconut leaves. As a result of their contact with the foreigners they have started wearing cloth in Car Nicobar but still the girdled men and bare-bodied women are a common site there. In Chowra and beyond, the population still keep to their old traditions in dress.[3] The Nicobarese are very fond of colour in their scanty dress. A Nicobarese male will feel proud of his red or black girdle with a flying tail and the female of her 'lungy' of the same colour with flowered designs. The Shompens formerly wore a species of bark around their loins but now they have begun wearing loin cloth which they obtain from traders.[4]

[1] Note on the villages in the interior of Car Nicobar—Census Report, Appendix F, 1911, p. 120.

[2] Census Report, 1901, p. 216.

[3] Ibid, 1951, Appendix A, p. LV.

[4] Shompen of Great Nicobar, Census Report, 1931, p. 87.

Ear-sticks with silver ends (usually defaced four anna pieces) are worn by the Nicobarese as ornaments. In Car Nicobar, a young man returning from Chowra wears a sort of crown. A number of German silver bracelets, armlets, anklets and necklaces of large silver beeds are worn by Menluanas and Mafais as semi religious ornaments. In Chowra, ornaments made of iron are used. Similar ornaments are worn by the Shompens.

Food

The staple diet of Nicobarese consists of a cheese-like pulp made by boiling coconut-kernal, pandanus, banana and yam all together and then making it into a dough.[1] This pulp can be preserved for a long time. The main basis of this pulp is coconut. Besides, they would often have yam, pig, chicken and fish curry. Cultivated oriental fruit of many kinds are also taken. The flesh of dogs is eaten in Chowra.[2] Nowadays the Nicobarese have become accustomed to take rice which is imported from outside.

The inhabitants of the Nicobar islands are very fond of stimulants. They smoke a great deal of tobacco. Betel with nut and lime is in perpetual use among all the Nicobarese. Toddy prepared from coconuts is drunk on several occasions. Any kind of foreign spirit is most welcome to them.

Property and Land Tenure system

In the under developed state of civilisation found in the Nicobars combined with the highly developed idea of communism prevalent among the people, the absence of the idea of the ownership of land, as vested in a private individual seems natural. Strangely enough, a vague and ill defined idea of the ownership of the land exists in these islands. The system of land tenure in the Nicobars, varies from a quasi-feudalism in Car Nicobar to communal ownership in Great Nicobar with private ownership in Chowra and the islands of the Central group.[3]

[1] Census Report, 1951, Appendix A, p. LV.

[2] Ibid, 1901, p. 61.

[3] Ibid, 1951. Appendix A, p. LVI.

Tradition and usage has vested the ownership of the land in Car Nicobar in the person of the village chief or headman. The ownership is not strictly a personal one. He holds the land on behalf of the members of the community.[1] He has, however, real claim of ownership on such lands of the village, which have not been distributed to individual families for cultivation. Similarly, forest trees and bamboo clamps are considered as private property of the headman. Grants of cultivable land to all families of the village are made by the headman. Such grants are not usually changed and continue for generations together. The grant of land is held by the family as a unit and no person in his individual capacity has any right on it. No particular member of the family has even the right to alienate any of the trees. Trees can only be sold with the consent of the whole family and the chief of the village. In such a case the payment is not taken in cash but in commodities for which the family may be in immediate need. Every year demarcation of the plantations is made by a peculiar system of ascertaining the position of the trees. After the distribution of the land, fence is made round these plantations. This system has worked satisfactorily for ages without causing any dispute. The trouble arises only in case of exchange of an area of plantation in one village with the garden land of an other village.[2]

Land is held on an individual basis in Katchall, Nancowry, Chowra and other islands of the Central group. All surviving children inherit the property of their parents in equal shares. In case there is a widow, she lives with the eldest child.[3] In Great Nicobar and Kondal all plantations are owned communally.[4] In the forest lands of Great Nicobar if any tree is out for canoe-building, presents are invariably given to a Shompen. The land in Great Nicobar seems to be divided up by boundaries into the hunting grounds of the various groups who naturally reta-

[1] Note on the ownership of land in the Nicobar islands, R.F. Lowis, Census Report, 1911, p. 121.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid, 1951, Appendix A, p, LVI.

[4] Census Report, 1951, Appendix A, p, LVI.

liate at any attempt of encroachment on their land.

With the exception of Chowra the property which goes by inheritance in the Nicobarese, are coconut trees, canoes and sometimes huts. This inherited property remains with them as a family rather than with the individual. All persons, both male and female have equal rights to the property. In case a son goes to live with his father-in-law, he loses his inheritance rights to his ancestoral property. The same is the case with a daughter who leaves her family. In case a family completely dies out, the plantation goes back to the chief. He can either keep it for himself or allot the same to some other member of community. In Great Nicobar and in the islands of the Central Group, where communities are smaller, the possession of coconut palms is vested in the headman and the eldest son succeeds to inheritance. In case there is no son, the daughter inherits the property.[1]

Production and Trade

The economic activities of the Nicobarese community consists in the simple vocation of attending to coconut groves, growing yams, plucking the fruits and drying coconuts in a very crude fashion. Both males and females take active part in these processes. Not only the family but the clan, village community and ultimately the whole islands form the groups which co-ordinate in the accomplishment of their various tasks.[2]

Their main economic wealth is in coconuts. It is the source of wealth and the currency of the country. A very large proportion of this article is exported through a number of sailing vessels coming from Burma, Penang and coasts of India. They are never sold for their full market value as the Nicobarese entirely fail to recognise the purchasing value of their coconuts. Besides coconuts, the exports from Nicobars include betel nuts, ambergris, trepang, shell, rattan, cane and occasionally tortoise-shell and edible birds' nests.[3] The import

[1] Ibid, 1931, p. 73-74.

[2] Census Report. 1931, p. 74.

[3] Ibid. 1901, p. 217.

consists of great varieties of articles including rice, cotton-clothes, iron, cutlasses, knives, tobacco, crockery, pottery, glassware, sugar, camphor, biscuits, fishing nets, matches, looking glass, needles and spirits.[1] Most of these articles are really luxuries for the Nicobarese and in many cases the possession of such articles is desired by people only for satisfying their vanity. All the trade is carried by the barter system *i.e.* things are given by the traders in the exchange of coconuts or any other articles supplied by the Nicobarese. The foreign trade is mostly in the hands of the Chinese and the Burmese, who mercilessly exploited the aboriginal inhabitants of these islands.[2]

The internal trade of Nicobars has very interesting features. The manufacture of clay cooking pots is tabooed in every islands except Chowra. According to their customary taboos pig and certain forms of food can only be cooked in these earthen pots made in Chowra. The clay of these pots is obtained by the people of Chowra from Teressa. The inhabitants of Teressa allow the people of Chowra to take a limited quantity of clay from their island. When the pots are ready, the people of Chowra set out in canoes to Car Nicobar, Teressa, Bompaka, Nancowry and Katchall for sale. In case other islands require these pots later on, they come to Chowra for purchasing them.

All canoes in the Nicobars are made in the islands of Central and Southern group. These canoes are passed on to Chowra for sale because all canoes must be purchased through the inhabitants of this island. If any Nicobarese does not purchase a canoe from an islander of Chowra, he pays an equivalent amount of price to any persons of Chowra. The price usually paid for a canoe is cloth, pig, spoon, silver wire and 'dah'.[3] The coastal villages of Great Nicobar trade with the Shompens. They purchase bundles of rattan, wood for canoes, wooden spear, honey and bark on exchange for iron, 'dah' and cotton clothes.

The Nicobarese are good carpenters and can make good models of most of their articles. All kinds of harpoons and

[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid, 1951, Appendix A, p. LIV.

[3] Census Report, 1931, p. 74-75.

spears with detatchable heads are made with fineness.[1] The Shompen use a wooden pointed spear with notched head. The people of Chowra make clay pots with great dexterity. The canoes of the Nicobarese are skilfully outrigged structures, light and easily hauled. They are made of one piece of wood, hallowed out and burnt. The Nicobarese are very expert and neat in making articles from leaves, spathes of palm and shell of coconuts. They use coconut shells for storing every kind of liquid. They are also expert in making many kinds of baskets, mats, and screens from the nipa palm. Scoopes for serving rice, boards, rakes, scrapers, pillows, poles and a large number of other domestic articles are made of wood. Although they cannot produce iron, they make scoopes from the iron obtained from the traders for cutting coconut kernels, hoes, and tools. Shells of fish are used by them as scrapers. Threads, bow string fastenings for spears, harpoons and fishing lines are made from fibres of several kinds. Canes and bamboos are used for several purposes. Blow pipe, betel crushers, earsticks and other such things are made of cane. Baskets of different sizes, fish traps, cages for birds, fowls and pigs are made from bamboo.

Language

The Nicobarese speak one language whose affinities are with the Indo-Chinese languages, as represented now-a-days by the Mon language of Pegu and Annam and Khmer language of Cambodia, amongst civilised peoples and by a number of uncivilised tribes in the Malay Peninsula and Indo-China.[2] Philologically, the language is very valuable. It can form the true basis for studying the philology of the languages of the Indo-Chinese family as it has remained isolated due to the absence of miscegenation for a pretty long time.

The language is spoken in six different dialects. These

[1] On Andamanese and Nicobarese objects—E.H. Man, Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1882, Vol. II, p. 268-94.
An elaborate list of articles prepared by the Andamanese and Nicobarese has been given by the author in the above article.

[2] Census Report, 1901, p. 252.

dialects have now become so differentiated in details from the fundamental language as to be mutually unintelligible. As far as colloquial speech is concerned, these dialects can be considered as six different languages.[1] The areas over which these dialects are spoken are as below :—

(i) Car Nicobar,
(ii) Chowra,
(iii) Teressa and Bompoka,
(iv) Nancowry, Camrota, Trinkuttee, Katchall,
(v) Islands of the Southern group, and
(vi) Interior of Great Nicobar—The area of Shompens.

There is a strong Malay element in the language of the people. Quite a few words of the language of the foreigners—Portugese, Danish, English, Chinese, Burmese and Hindustani with whom they have came into contact, have been adopted by the Nicobarese in their language. Besides, speaking his own language, a Nicobarese can easily pick up and talk in the language of foreign traders.

State of civilisation in the Nicobars

Except the Shompens who are living in a primitive state of civilisation in the interiors of Great Nicobars, the Nicobarese are members of a semi-civilised society. Separated from the world, separated except for occasional visits with their own kith and kin ; their interests are limited to their own families and to their neighbours on a small island.[2] The general contact with the outside world for the last two thousand years has never been such as to intervene seriously between the people and their customs. Their old culture has grown up without outside interference or by contact of material consequences until quite recently with any other race of human beings. Therefore, in studying their life one actually studies the rudiments of the manners and customs of the great races that now occupy China, Indo-China, Malay peninsula and Archipelago—in fact

[1] Ibid.
[2] In the Nicobar islands, G. Whitehead, foreword by Sir Richard Temple, p. 7.

the whole of the Far East.[1] The Nicobarese, indeed, belong to a child race with the animal instincts of the adult.[2] He tries to find amusement in everything in life, in work, in religious festivals and even in funerals. One can not expect such a carefree life except in the land of Hesperides.[3] But the days of passing their lives in an easy going manner are now over. The developmental activities started under the Five Year Plans,[4] for the general welfare of the inhabitants of the Nicobars have resulted in a great change. There is a rapid transformation of the Nicobarese society. They are taking part in these activities. The outside contacts have made them more active and they are now conscious about their future. They are shedding their odd beliefs as most of them specially in Car Nicobars have adopted christianity.[5] In this island fear is now being expressed that if this pace of change is kept unabated, the traditional culture of the Nicobarese would be lost. Therefore some progressive Nicobarese are trying to preserve good points in their ancient culture. It is hoped that by such efforts they would be able to evolve a happy state of life in which high standard of living and material benefits would be tempered with old age values contained within the frame work of their own distinctive culture.

[1] In the Nicobar islands, G. Whitehead, foreword by Sir Richard Temple, p. 8.

[2] Ibid, p. 225.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Infra, Chapter X.

[5] Census Report, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, part IV & V, page 106.

NINE

HISTORY OF NICOBARS FROM 1701 TO 1947

Activities of French Missionaries (1701-42)

The history of the Nicobars since the eighteenth century till the occupation of the island by the British in 1869 is a long record of unsuccessful attempts of Christian missionaries to colonise and convert the islanders. In 1688 two friars, probably Jesuits were present in the Nicobars for preaching the gospel of Christ.[1] They lived in Camrota island and were hopeful about their success. Unfortunately no account of these missionaries is available anywhere to enable us to know the results of their efforts. In the beginning of the eighteenth century the French missionaries of Pondicherry[2] were seriously thinking of sending some bishops to the Nicobars for the conversion of the islanders but as they were short of personnel they waited fresh arrivals.[3] Father Petre Faure who belonged to the Society of Jesus in France offered himself for Nicobars to the Superiors of this mission when he landed in Pondicherry in 1710. He along with another missionary named Father Bonnet landed in the Nicobars in January 1711. After preaching the gospel for two and a half years in the islands of Great Nicobar in Chambalon[4]

[1] Census Report, 1901, Appendix A, p. 221—Dampier's account of Nicobars. Dampier met one of these missionaries during his stay in Nicobars in 1688. For Dampier's stay in Nicobars, Supra, Chapter I.

[2] Pondicherry—A famous port on the Coromondel coast of South India. It was under the possession of France at that time.

[3] Letter Edifiantes on Bengal, Translated by Rev. H. Hosten S. J., published in Bengal Past & Present, Vol. VII, January 1811, p. 150 (Father Petre Faure wrote a letter to Father de la Boesse of the same society giving details of his stay in the Nicobars).

[4] Chambalon—The southern group of islands of Nicobars are known to Malays as 'Sambilong'. This Malayan name has been mentioned in the above account of Faure as Chambalon.

the two missionaries went to the other islands. They stayed in the island of Car Nicobar for about ten months and then proceeded to another island. The only contact which the missionaries maintained with the mission at Pondicherry, was through ships touching at the coast of the Nicobars. A Frenchman, who was a member of a ship which had anchored at the Nicobars brought the first news of their death to India in 1715.[1] The manner and the date of their death is still a mystery. From enquiries at the Nicobars it was learnt that they were perhaps murdered by the inhabitants of the island which they visited last of all. According to another version they met their ends on account of serious disorders in their bowels while at Nicobars. A search among the records of the French mission at Pondicherry, however, revealed that these two missionaries returned from these islands on acoount of ill health. Father Faure died in the French mission at Madura on 2 November, 1714, and Father Bonnet died between 1714 and 1717.[2] The latter version was not accepted by the French missionaries themselves as it was based on a remark of a French Bishop Sommervogel. Father Sommervogel has not quoted any authority for his information. He has also not supplied full details of the death of Father Bonnet except that he died between 1714 and 1717. As the memory of the two Fathers was held in great esteem in the island of Car Nicobar by majority of its inhabitants it is not likely that some of them had murdered them. Hence it can be assumed that the two Fathers died in the Nicobars on account of ill health. The result of their preaching in these islands could not be ascertained correctly but it is believed that they were able to convert one or two of their servants.

In 1726, Father Charles de Montalembart in a letter to the French Governor of Pondicherry offered himself for proceeding to the Nicobars to explore the possibilities of establish-

[1] Letter Edifiantes on Bengal, Translated by the Rev. Hostens J., published in Bengal Past & Present, Vol, VII, January, June, 1811, p. 152.

[2] Ibid, p. 155. Madura : A city in South India which is famous for its temples.

ing a small factory and to preach Christianity in those islands.[1] Arrangements for sending Montalembart to the Nicobars could only be made in 1741. He was authorised to establish a mission in these islands and to determine the most favourable spot for the erection of a factory for the French East India Company. After a stay of about one year in the Nicobar islands he returned to Pondicherry in 1742. His stay in these islands proved fatal to him and shortly after his return to India he succumbed to a disease which he had contacted in the Nicobars.[2]

Activities of the Danish missionaries (1753-83)

At this time the attention of the Danish East India Company was attracted towards the Nicobars. A plan for the colonisation of the islands was made in 1753.[3] An expedition started from Tranquebar[4] in 1755 to the Nicobars. The members of this expedition opened a commercial establishment in 1756 in one of the islands. The Nicobar islands were named as Fredrick islands. All the members of this colony died very soon in these islands due to fever. After two years the Danish Government intimated to the Directory of the United Brethren mission of Denmark generally known as 'Moravian Mission', "that it would give great pleasure to the King if some of their missionaries would proceed to the Nicobar islands to convert

[1] Letter Edifiantes on Bengal, Translated by Rev. Hostens J., published in Bengal Past & Present. Vol. VII, January-June, 1811, p. 157.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Letter dated 24 January, 1955 from Axel Linvald, Director Rigsarkivet, Copenhagan, Denmark to the author of the present thesis.

[4] Tranquebar : A harbour on the south east coast of India. A settlement was established by the Danes at that time. It served as the headquarter of the Danes in South India.

the people to Christianity."[1] After some negotiations with the Danish East India Company the Moravian brethren decided to send George John Stahlman, Adam, Gottliele, Voclekr and Christopher Butler to proceed to the Nicobars.[2] These missionaries arrived at Tranquebar on July, 2, 1707. In absence of any arrangements they had to stay in the Danish mission at Tranquebar.

In 1769, the Danish East India Company again decided to establish a colony in the Nicobars. A few officers of the Danish East India Company with a party of soldiers and servants arrived in Nancowry island accompanied by six missionaries.[3] By 1771 the majority of them had lost their lives due to the adverse effects of the climate of the Nicobars. Only two European soldiers, four servants and four missionaries survived. This second failure deterred the Danish East India Company from sending fresh provisions and men to the colony and the project for the establishment of a factory in the Nicobar islands was abandoned. The four missionaries who remained there were entrusted with the disposal of the remaining goods. With the withdrawal of the colony by the Danish East India Company, the means of supplying the missionaries with necessaries of life

[1] Letters on Nicobar islands, their natural productions, and the manners, customs and superstitions of the Natives & C, addressed by Rev. John Gottfried Haensal to Rev. C.I. Latrobe, 1812. Selections from Records, Vol. 77, p. 31.

Rev. Latrobe, an English Bishop, personally heard the accounts of the activities of the Danish missionaries in the Nicobars from Haensal. Haensal was a Danish missionary who remained in these islands, except for short intervals, from 1779 to 1786 and was the only person among the Danish missionaries to survive from the ill effects of his sojourn in the Nicobars. Latrobe wrote a letter to William Wilberforce, the celebrated English reformist, on 12 May, 1812 on the above subject. Latrobe also enclosed the copies of the original letters sent by Haensal to him giving a description of the stay of the Danish missionaries in these islands.

[2] Ibid, p. 32.

[3] Ibid, p. 32. The five missionaries who could not proceed to the Nicobar islands in 1760 were not included in this party. Out of the six missionaries who went to these islands in 1769 the name of three have been mentioned by Haensal. These three missionaries—Liebisch, Heyne and Blascke—met Haensel in these islands in 1779 while the other three had expired.

became uncertain. The missionaries employed an Englishman named Holford, a resident of Tranquebar, to render this essential service. He delivered supplies to them in a small ship in 1775. In the next two years he made two attempts to land on the Nicobars but was unsuccessful.

The Directors of the Moravian mission were not discouraged by the failure of the mission sent to the Nicobars in 1769. In 1779, they deputed Father Haensal and Wangeman to these islands. On their arrival in the island of Nancowry, they found that out of the four surviving missionaries one had expired on account of ill health. The remaining three missionaries—Liebisch, Heyne and Blascke—were in a very bad state of health. Blascke was sent to India in the vessel in which Haensal came to the Nicobars as he was seriously ill. Soon after his reaching Tranquebar Blascke breathed his last. Shortly afterwards Liebisch and Wangeman expired due to illness in the islands. Haensal himself was seriously ill with Malaria. Although he survived the attack but he never recovered from the after effects of it. Haensal remained in Nancowry for two years more with Heyne. In 1781, they were joined by Brother Steinman. The new missionary soon fell ill and expired within a month of his arrival. In 1783 three Danish missionaries named Henirich, Fleckner, and Raols arrived at the Nancowry harbour. Raols, however, returned in the same vessel with Heyne and consequently Haensal was left with Henirich and Fleckner, the two new arrivals. These missionaries passed their life in misery. They were always short of necessary provisions and suffered from continued illness. The Moravian mission deputed Father Sixtus to examine the state of the mission at Nicobars and to bring home such missionaries as were still alive. Haensal, who was ill, proceeded to Prince of Wales island. After his departure Father Sixtus breathed his last. Haensal on his return to Nancowry found that Henirich was not keeping fit. Leaving Father Fleckner on the islands Haensal and Henirich returned to Tranquebar. Haensal made arrangements for the return of Fleckner to Tranquebar, when in May 1785, Henirich was again sent to the Nicobars with two other missionaries named Rudholphi and Sorensen. Sorensen died soon after his arrival

in the Nicobars. Fleckner who was at Tranquebar breathed his last in 1785. In September 1785, Haensal again went to the Nicobars. He returned to Tranquebar next year, on account of ill health. Father Rudholphi also returned to India in 1787. Meanwhile Henirich, who was in Nancowry since 1785, expired in these islands. In 1787, only one missionary named Kargh was present in the Nicobars for preaching the gospel. Haensal was deputed to fetch all the effects belonging to the mission as it was decided to withdraw the mission from these islands.

Failure of Moravian Mission

The loss of eleven missionaries within a short period had a depressing effect on the Moravian Mission. Inspite of their sufferings they had not been able to convert any inhabitants of the Nicobars to Christianity. The causes of the failure of the Moravian Mission are not far to seek. The greatest difficulty which confronted the Danish Missionaries was to learn the language of the aborigines. Some of them were able to communicate with the Nicobarese in bastard Portugese, but it did not serve their purpose. They tried to learn the language of the people but before they could acquaint themselves with it or had gone so far as to be able to speak to the Nicobaese most of them were carried away to another world on account of the unhealthiness of the climate of these islands. Even the effects of malignant fever and obstruction in the liver contacted by the surviving missionaries had depressing effects on them and they lost faith and courage in their mission.[1] The principal cause of prevalence of diseases among the missionaries was their mode of living. In absence of regular communications with their headquarters in India they were always short of the bare necessities of life. The ships from Tranquebar reached them after a considerable long period. They had also to exert much in clearing land, building shelters and planting vegetation for themselves. Spade in hand, often while fever stricken,

[1] Letters on Nicobar islands, their natural productions and the manners, customs and superstitions of the Natives & C, addressed by the Rev. John Gottfried Haensal to Rev. C. I. Latrobe, 1812. Selections from Records, Vol. 77, p. 35.

they were compelled to till the ground in order to secure the means of support. The only other works which they did was to gather shells on the shores, to hunt for birds and reptiles in the swampy forests so that they may procure the means of further subsistence by the sale of their collections in Europe. In these circumstances the failure of the Moravian Mission was obvious.

Attempt of the Austrians to occupy the Nicobars (1778)

The occupation of these islands by the Danes since their abandonment of the colony at Nancowry in 1771, had been a nominal one. After 1771 the Danish East India Company always appointed one of the Danish missionaries living at the Nicobars as their representative in order to prevent foreign powers to occupy these islands. The missionaries had no power with them to exercise the rights of sovereignty over the Nicobars. The guns left by the Danish East India Company in Nancowry were gradully stolen by the Malays. Even during the stay of the missionaries in the Nicobars, a Dutch adventurer named William Bolts hoisted the Austrian flag on the Nicobars. Bolts after leaving the service of the East India Company persuaded the Austrian Government to allow him to trade with the East Indies and authorise him to take possession in the name of Austrian Empress, Maria Theresa, and her successors, all territories and settlement which he might acquire from Indian princes.[1] He formed a partnership with Baron Von Prote of the Netherlands and two merchants of Antwerp named Ritter Von Borrekens and Herr Dominik Nagels. The partners according to the contract bound themselves to furnish a capital of nine lacs of guldens[2] for fitting out two vessels to trade with the East Indies

[1] Extract from the 'Voyage of the Austrian Frigate Novarra', Selections from records, Vol. 77, p. 197-206.
The account of the expedition of Bolts is based on an article by Nicolas Fontana who accompanied Bolts as a Surgeon. It was first published in Leipzig in 1782. The above mentioned narration has been included in the Selections from Records, Vol. 77. It has been supplemented by connected documents from the Archives at Brussels, in Belgium. (Belgium was a part of the Austrian Empire at that time.)

[2] Gulden : An old unit of account in Austria worth about two shillings.

and China. This amount included a sum of three lacs and sixty thousand guldens which the Empress promised to deliver in goods from the state of Austria. The Empress also invested Bolts with the rank of a Lieutenant Colonel in the Austrian Army. The Austrian Chancery gave him several letters of recommendations signed by the Empress. These letters were addressed to the Emperor of China, King of Persia and Indian Princes whose states Bolts was supposed to visit. Other letters bearing the signature of the Austrian Chancellor, Prince Kaunitj, were also given to him to be delivered to the Princes of lesser eminence. Bolts started from Europe in September 1776 with a crew of 155 men. His ship 'Joseph and Therese' was destined for the east coast of Africa, coasts of Malabar Coromondel and Bengal. Contrary winds on the west coast of Africa compelled him to touch the coast of Brazil, and take fresh provisions at Rio-de-Janaro. He reached the Bay of Delgoa opposite the island of Madagascar on 20 March, 1777. In this bay his ship was wrecked and some of his crew lost their lives. Bolts established a factory on the coast of Madagascar and erected two forts. He reached Surat on 4 September, 1777. From Surat he proceeded to Bombay and afterwards to Goa. In Goa he secured concessions for trade from the Portugese. Bolts purchased certain territories of land near Manglore and Karwar[1] from Haider Ali.[2] He agreed not to use guns in his factories or raise fortifications. In the meanwhile, Bennet, the Captain of the ship 'Joseph and Therese' occupied the islands of Nancowry, Car Nicobar, Trincuttee, and Katchall in the Nicobars. On 1 April, 1778 the possession of these islands was announced in the name of Emperor Joseph II of Austria who had succeeded Maria Theresa after her death. The expenses incurred by Bolts in Madagascar, Goa, Nicobars and the Malabar coast counterbalanced his receipts and the Company formed by him found itself unable to meet its engagements. Bolts returned to Austria in 1781 for reorganising the financial resources of the Company.

[1] Manglore and Karwar are harbours on Malabar coast of India.

[2] Haider Ali was the ruler of Mysore, a state in South India. He ruled from 1766 to 1782.

He was successful in his efforts in inducing other partners to finance it. He, however, could not proceed to the East owing to differences among the partners. The Company was declared insolvent in 1785. Bolts died in Paris in great poverty in April, 1808. The occupation of the islands of the Nicobars by Bolts in the name of Austria ceased with his failure to trade with the East Indies. The action of Bolts is an adventure, similar to those undertaken by many Europeans in those days. They considered the hoisting of the national flag of their country or establishing a small factory in any territory of the East as giving them the right of mastery over that land.

Reoccupation of the Nicobars by Danes (1783-1836)

The action of Bolts seems to have offended the Danes. In order to maintain Danish rights on these islands it was resolved to establish a new settlement.[1] The Crown took over the rights and administration of the Nicobars from the East India Company in 1783. However, no such settlement could be established by the Danes in the Nicobars in accordance with the decision of the Danish Government. An expedition from Tranquebar was sent to those islands in 1784, but it proved a failure on account of fever contacted by the members of the expedition party.[2] From 1793 to 1807 the Danes kept a small guard in the Nicobars. In 1807 the English on account of the Napoleanic wars announced the possession of these islands in the name of Great Britain. Their nominal possession ended in 1814 when at the conclusion of the war these islands were returned to the Danes. During the time of English occupation of the Nicobars an Italian Jesuit missionary stayed in these islands for some time to propogate Christian faith.[3] He returned to Rangoon after a short time due to ill health. In 1827, Rosen, a Danish missionary submitted proposal to the Danish Government for the establishment of a colony in the Nicobars. His proposals were approved by the Danish Government in 1831. Rosen reached

[1] Letter dated 24 January, 1955 from Axel Linvald, Director, Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen, Denmark to the author of the present thesis.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

the islands in the same year. He was forced to leave the Nicobars on account of serious illness in 1834. By 1836 the small colony established by him in these islands had also disappeared.[1]

Another effort by the French Missionaries (1836-45)

The French Jesuits made a fresh attempt to propogate the Christian faith in these islands. This time their efforts were directed from the French Mission at Paris. In 1836, two missionaries named Supries and Galabert were sent to the Nicobars from Malacca. After a year of suffering and bad health they abandoned the islands without the consolation of having made a single convert. The French Mission at Siam then deputed another two missionaries to proceed to the Nicobars. Chopard and Beaury landed on the island of Teressa on 5 February, 1842. While landing they lost most of their belongings and were put to much discomforts on account of it.[2] Less than a month after their arrival in the Nicobars both of them fell ill. Beaury breathed his last on the night of 1 April, 1842. Chopard was so ill that he could scarcely perform the last rites over the tomb of his companion. His illness lasted for about four months. During this period some Englishmen were massacred on the island of Nancowry by its inhabitants. However, the inhabitants of the Teressa island behaved in a friendly manner towards him. Encouraged by their good behaviour Chopard started visiting other islands of the Nicobars in December, 1842. He claims to have registered his first baptism when in January, 1843 he was called to attend a sick woman.

[1] Letter dated 24 January, 1955 from Axel Linvald, Director, Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen, Denmark to the author of the present thesis.
Rosen had left an interesting account of his stay in the Nicobars in an article published in Danish language at that time under the caption, 'Memoirs from my stay in the Nicobar islands.'

[2] Letter Edifiantes on Bengal, Translated by Rev. H. Hosten S.J., published in 'Bengal Past & Present', Vol. VII, January 1811, p. 159-62.
Chopard wrote an interesting account of his stay in the Nicobars in an article in 1896 entitled 'Vie de M Abbe Chopard-Missionaire Apostolique Apotredes Isles Nicobar, Par un Pretre du Dioce se de Besancon'. His account was translated by Rev. H. Hosten & published as quoted above.

In March, 1843, Chopard was joined by Father Renier. Chopard's health had not yet recovered from the illness but it was with much persuasion that he agreed to leave the Nicobars for a short time along with Renier. He returned to Teressa in November, 1843 accompanied by a young man.[1] On December 21, 1843 he again fell ill but continued to work. During his illness, he several times succeeded in dissuading the Nicobarese from committing violence on the crew of wrecked ships. Inspite of his preachings and efforts, in an island near Teressa, a ship was set on fire and 25 passengers were killed by the Nicobarese. In April, 1844, Chopard who was continuously ailing left the Nicobars with his health completely shattered. An English Doctor at Moulemein succeeded in giving him a new lease of life by his treatment. In August, 1844, Chopard with two French missionaries named Plaisant and Lacrampe again left for the islands. As soon as he reached Teressa, he again fell ill. The two companions of Chopard also suffered from ill health. They were present in these islands in April, 1845 when Busch in a Danish ship landed at Teressa. The two Bishops—Plaisant and Lacrampe seem to have left these islands soon after. Chopard, however, stayed in the island and breathed his last in his hut in Teressa on 25 June, 1845 without effecting any bonafide and sincere convert.

Last attempt of the Danes to occupy the islands (1845-69)

In 1845, the Danes made their last attempt to occupy these islands. Busch was sent by the Government of Denmark in an English ship 'L Espiegle' to resume the possession of these islands.[2] He cast an anchorage off Teressa on 9 April, 1845. His party met Chopard and his two companions who were glad to know about the establishment of a settlement in the Nicobars by the Danes. Busch then proceeded to Nancowry and visited the ruins of the old Danish colony. He hoisted the Danish

[1] The name of the person who was an Asiatic has not been mentioned by Chopard. This young man completely identified himself with the Nicobarese by adopting their mode of living.

[2] Busch Journal kept on board Schooner 'L Espiegle' on a cruise amongst the Nicobar islands in 1845. Selections from Records, Vol. 77, p. 9-27.

flags at two places *viz.* Great Nicobar and Little Nicobar. He invested Tomarra, a chief of the island of Pulo Condul, with a honorary dress. Tomarra was also granted a certificate in which the possession of these islands in the name of Christian VIII, King of Denmark, was declared. He was entrusted with the duty of guarding the Danish flags. On 25 January, 1846, Captain Steen Bille, commanding the Danish ship 'Galathea' arrived in the Nicobars to assist the attempted colonisation of these islands. Two natives of Malacca named Luba and Angra were installed as petty chiefs in the island of Nancowry. Their duty was to hoist the Danish flag on the arrival or departure of foreign ships in Nancowry harbour. The result of these two expeditions were as usual fruitless. Nobody was willing to stay in these islands on account of its climate. The Danish Government was also unable to pay any attention to this colony on account of its pre-occupations in the politics of Europe.[1] The Danish Government, after considering the enormous cost and the failure of various attempts to establish colonies in these islands, were now not inclined to take the de facto possession of the islands and continue a settlement there. In 1848, the Danish Government formally renounced the claims of sovereignty and removed all the remains of their settlement in the Nicobars. From 1848 to 1869, the islands were left to themselves. The only event worth mentioning during this period is the unsuccessfull attempt of Franz Mauer, an officer in the Prussian Government to create interest in the Prussian Ministers to take possession of these islands in 1867.

Repeated cases of attacks on ships touching the coast of Nicobars

Inspite of the formal occupation of these islands by the Europeans, the Nicobarese were developing a name throughout the Indian Ocean of being little better than pirates. Several incidents of attacks on the crew of ships anchoring off Nicobars

[1] Letter from Axel Linvald, Director, Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen, Denmark, dated 24 January, 1955 to the author of the present work.

occurred during this period.[1] In 1839, a vessel was attacked at the port of Nancowry in which some of the officers were dragged to the shore and killed on the spot. Out of forty men only five could escape from the hands of the Nicobarese. In 1843, on the same spot a small craft coming from Bengal was cut off. In this attack the whole of the crew, consisting of twenty five men were murdered. In May 1844, a European Captain was killed in the Nancowry harbour. A Schooner was attacked at Teressa in August 1844. The Captain of the schooner was killed and the passengers who leapt over-board were either drowned or murdered. After some time the passengers of another vessel were put to death at Camrota by the inhabitants of that island. The blame of these repeated attacks on ships touching the coast of the Nicobars have been attributed by the Europeans to the treacherous nature of the Nicobarese. However, subsequent investigations have proved that the whole blame for such attacks does not lie on their shoulders. Provocation was given to the Nicobarese by the sailors of these ships in many instances. In the case of an attack on a ship in 1839 the sailors had attempted to molest the women of the islands.[2] Such incidents naturally prejudiced the Nicobarese towards all the strangers. Moreover, most of the attacks on the vessels were conducted by the Malays, who resided in the islands during the dry season. They might have been joined by a few inhabitants of these islands, whose adverse sentiments were exploited by the Malays. The above opinion is confirmed by the fact that after the occupation of the islands by the British in 1869, these acts of violence on the part of the Nicobarese ceased as they were afforded protection from the misdeeds of sailors and foreign traders by the British authorities.

The repeated attacks at the Nicobars on vessels hoisting British flag brought these islands under the direct notice of the

[1] Busch Journal kept on board Schooner 'L Espiegle' on a cruise amongst the Nicobar islands in 1845. Selections from Records, Vol. 77, p. 9-27. Busch has narrated all these incidents in his journal. He gathered this information from Chopard.

[2] Busch Journal kept on board Schooner 'L Espiegle' on a cruise amongst the Nicobar Islands in 1845. Selections from Records, Vol. 77, p. 9-27.

British Government in India. In 1852, two British vessels were the victims of piracy on the coast of the Nicobar islands in which whole of the crew was murdered.[1] Hopkinson[2] while offering suggestions to the Government of India regarding measures to be taken to prevent attacks on ships touching the coasts of the Andaman and Nicobar islands observed, "Any project for the re-occupation of the Andamans and the other islands of that group should also comprehend arrangements for exercising over them a surveillance over the neighbouring group of the Nicobars." He further wrote that, "It would be well if these islands could be reduced to our authority, and if the establishment of a Penal Settlement were the only consideration, they would probably answer as well for that purpose as the Andamans."[3] Grant,[4] in his minute dated 19 March, 1856 agreed with Hopkinson and remarked "the contemplated object would be still very imperfectly obtained without the occupation of the Nicobar islands also."[5] He was, however not sure whether the Nicobar islands could be occupied without any dispute with any European nation because like the Andamans the British had never taken possession of these islands even nominally. The Court of Directors after considering the above opinions expressed the view that, "these inhospitable islands hold out to us, as at present advised, little inducement to plant the British flag."[6] They, however, considered it possible the apprehensions which deterred the Danish Government from continuing to occupy these islands as unfounded and exaggerated. The Government of India was, therefore, requested by them to gather such information about the insalubrity of the Nicobars which may enable them to form an opinion respecting the expediency or inexpediency of taking formal possession of the islands. The Governor General in Council while appointing the Andaman Committee[7]

1 Selections from Records, Vol. 77, p. 264.
2 Hopkinson : Infra Chapter III.
3 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No., 82, 6 August, 1858.
4 Grant, J.P. : Infra Chapter III.
5 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, O.C. No. 79, 6 August, 1858.
6 Court of Directors Political Deparment Despatch No. 37 of 1 October, 1856 to the Governor General in Council.
7 Andaman Committee : Infra Chapter III.

to examine the shores of the Andamans for the selection of a site for a penal settlement in the Andamans do not seem to have issued any instructions about the Nicobars to the Andaman Committee and nothing was done for a number of yeas to carry out their instructions of the Court of Directors.

Decision of the British to occupy the Nicobars

The matter was re-opened in 1867 when an outrage was committed on a brig named 'Futteh Islam' at the island of Trinkutee in the Nicobars. In this attack twenty one persons were murdered by the Nicobarese. This time the Government of India did not take matters lightly. It was decided to punish the culprits and take measures for the prevention of such incidents in future. An expedition was sent to the Nicobars for punishing those who were responsible for this act. Houses of several men known to have been implicated in the unpleasant happenings were burnt. The Government of India after protracted correspondence with the Governor of the Straits settlements on the problem of taking effective measures to solve this problem wrote to the Secretary of State for India that, "The only plan that suggests itself to us for preventing the recurrence of the outrages which have long attracted attention, is to occupy, with a proper degree of permanency, one of the islands and from that vantage ground endeavour to reform and civilize the inhabitants. This is a measure which we should not desire to undertake except for the pressing necessity and with the prospect of some measure of success." The placing of a war ship to cruise in the waters of the islands was not considered sufficient for this purpose as it would not deter any foreign power from establishing a naval station in these islands, although there was no such possibility. It was further decided to place the Nicobars under the supervision of the Superintendent at Port Blair. A European officer under the Superintendent, Port Blair was to reside in the settlement to be established at a selected site in the Nicobars. The Secretary of State moved the Foreign Office, London to

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Political Branch, O.C. No. 10 to 12, April, 1868. (Political Despatch No. 46 of 3 April, 1868 from the Governor General in Council to the Secretary of State for India).

ascertain whether any objection would be raised by the Danish Government in the event of an occupation of these islands by the British. The Danish Government formally intimated to the Government of Great Britain through Her Majesty's Minister at Copenhagen that, "Their Government had abandoned voluntarily, their rights in the Nicobars and had no objection in ceding them to Britain with the understanding that no other power had already taken possession of them."[1] It was not considered advisable by the Danish Government to make a formal cession of these islands as some difficulties might be experienced in passing such a measure through the Rigs-dag, the Danish parliament. The Secretary of State authorised the Government of India to take such steps as may be deemed fit to bring the islands under the British flag and to provide for their administration under the supervision of the Superintendent, Port Blair.[2] In March, 1869 the Government of India issued directions to the Superintendent, Port Blair for the occupation and the administration of these islands.[3] The three northern islands of the main group *viz.* Nancowry, Camrota and Trinkutee on which the acts of piracy had chiefly occurred, were to be occupied and the protectorate of the British to be extended to the other islands. A penal settlement was to be established at Nancowry under the control of the Superintendent, Port Blair. A steam launch was to be used to keep up communications between the two groups of islands. Periodical visits to other islands of the Nicobar group were to be paid by the British officers stationed at Nancowry. On 16 April, 1869, a formal proclamation was made announcing the occupation of the Nicobar islands by the British.[4] With the occupation of the islands by the British there was an end to a long story of unsuccessful attempts by the Europeans to colonise and Christianise the Nicobars. It was a record of extreme but useless sufferings that merely well intentioned enthusiasm and heroism can inflict, if they are not combined with practical knowledge and proper equipment.

[1] Selections from Records, Vol. 77, p. 315.

[2] Ibid, p. 316. Resolution No. 1571-75 of 24 March, 1869 of the Home Deptt.

[3] Ibid, p. 318.

[4] Selection of Records, Vol. 77, p. 318,

Penal settlement at Nancowry

After the occupation of the Nicobars by the British, a penal settlement was established in June, 1869 on a place opposite to that of the site of the settlement of the Moravian missionaries.[1] It was named as Nancowry harbour settlement.[2] It was placed under the charge of the Superintendent of Port Blair as he was the nearest authority who could effectively supervise it. The Government of India, however, had no intention to make the Nicobars an adjunct to the penal settlement of the Andamans.[3] In accordance with the directions of the Government of India, the Superintendent, Port Blair always deputed an Assistant Superintendent of his establishment as officer in charge of the Nancowry settlement. A European Military officer was posted in the settlement with an infantry regiment for the protection of the settlers and the passengers of the trading vessels. A hospital was maintained under the charge of a medical assistant. The Superintendent, Port Blair occasionally visited the Nicobars.

Construction work for the settlement was started in June, 1869. For five years the pioneers of the settlement lived in a small ship named 'Blenheim' which was anchored in the harbour. They had to undergo severe hardships in establishing the colony. Inspite of all precautions there was a high sick rate in the settlement.[4] The penal settlement was maintained at Nancowry till 1888. The total number of residents in the settlement was at one time four hundred out of which the average number of convicts was 235—the number of convicts varied from 172 to 308 during these nineteen years.[5] In the beginning only convicts, sentenced to a term were sent to Nancowry and consequently escapes of the prisoners were rare, but when the original element was replaced by life convicts, escapes became proportionately

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Public Branch, A Progs. No. 13, 12 June, 1869.

[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 19-20, 29 April, 1871.

[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 18, July, 1875.

[4] Report on the Penal Settlement in Nancowry harbour, E.H. Man ; Appendix A to Census Report, 1901, p. 188-96.

[5] Ibid.

numerous.[1] In 1875, term convicts were again sent to Nancowry harbour. Every convict was required to pass three years in the Nicobars before being returned to Port Blair. He was qualified for a relief after a minimum of three months or a maximum of six months' stay at that place. The system of management of convicts in the Andamans was applicable to them. These conditions were not so hard to the convicts coming from Port Blair as within a course of a year they became accustomed to the climate of the Nicobars. Many convicts voluntarily prolonged their stay in Nancowry for more than three years.[2] The convicts were employed in constructing buildings, tanks and wells, metalled roads, drains and a jetty. They also reclaimed swamps near the site and were engaged in cultivation of vegetable and fruits. Experiments in planting cotton, tobacco and coffee were made by the settlers. A cattle farm was maintained at the settlement for making it independent of supplies from India. The settlement authorities also exported coconuts, betelnuts, trepang, edible brid's nest, tortoise shell, ambergries and split cane.

British attempts to colonise the Nicobars

Before the penal settlement at Nancowry was closed in 1888, attempts were made by the British authorities to colonise the islands with foreign settlers. In 1873, the proposals of Stewart, Superintendent of Port Blair, for leasing out lands in the Nicobars to the settlers, were approved by the Government of India. Small plots near to the site of the settlement were selected and placed under the close observation of the Assistant Superintendent. These plots were leased free to the Burmese and Chinese labourers who were engaged in Nancowry by the Public Works Department of the settlement at the time of its inception.[3] They were to hold these lands for ten years. One tenth of the land given to them on lease was to be cleared annually by them. In case they misbehaved or infringed the

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 17, July, 1875.
[2] Ibid, No. 23-25, September, 1873.
[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 48, January, 1874.

prescribed conditions, the land was to be forfeited with the trees or crops that may be standing upon the lands at that time. The grants were subject to a moderate assessment after ten years of occupation by the settlers. In granting lands to these settlers, care was taken to avoid any encroachment on the rights of the inhabitants of the Nicobars. This attempt at colonisation made by the British in 1774 was abandoned after a few years. The settlers did not take sufficient interest in clearing the lands. They were not provided with resources sufficient for this purpose by the Government. They were not the right type of people which were required for starting a settlement on a foreign land. These settlers did not like to stay in the adverse climate of the Nicobars for a very long time. Under these circmstances, the failure of the attempt of colonisation was not surprising.

In 1882, the Superintendent, Port Blair, submitted another scheme for the colonisation of the Nicobars by the Chinese.[1] In his opinion the essentials for a scheme which may have a fair prospects of success were :—

(a) the removal, as far as possible, of all restrictions on free persons settled in the Nicobars,

(b) periodical communication, with cheap rates of passage between Nancowry and Penang, a harbour in the Prince of Wales island,

(c) assistance to the newly arrived emigrants ; and

(d) the issue of license to occupy land on liberal terms.

As regards the difficulty of the unhealthiness of the climate, it was hoped that with improved sanitary measures, the sick rate would be normal.[2] This hope was based on the statistics of the health of the convicts residing in Nancowry since 1869, which showed a marked improvement in the health of the prisoners. The above scheme was sanctioned by the Government of India in 1884.

Fifteen Chinese cultivators were engaged at Penang for a term of two years for the employment at Nancowry in cultivation. Their cost of passage from China to Penang was defrayed by the Government. They were sanctioned a daily ration each

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 20, October, 1882.

[2] Ibid, No. 55, May, 1883.

of 24 ounces of rice and half pound of salt fish in lieu of money. They were allowed to occupy and cultivate land with an authority to sell the produce thereof, on their own terms. In case they elected to return to their place after the expiry of two years, a free passage was to be provided to them and in case they decided to remain in the colony they were to be given licences on extremely liberal terms.

The fifteen Chinese, who settled on Camrota in December, 1884, did not show any enthusiasm in their work. During a period of eight months only seven and a half acres of land was cleared by them without raising any crops [1] Inspite of lack of enthusiasm among the Chinese settlers, the authorities of Port Blair deprecated the abandonment of the scheme unless it proved to be wholly impracticable.[2] They wished to make another effort to induce active and intelligent Chinese by giving them liberal offers to come to the Nicobars and select the best site which may seem to them offering the best prospects of a successful cultivation. They could, however, persuade no body to come and settle in the Nicobars. The opinion among the Chinese at Penang was not all favourable to the proposals of colonisation of the Nicobars. The only sure way of inducing voluntary settlers in those circumstances was to make the existing settlements a success, to enable the pioneers to have an opportunity of spreading the good news among their countrymen.[3] As the existing settlement had no prospects of success it was abandoned in 1885.[5]

This fresh attempt to colonise the Nicobars also failed due to lack of perseverance. The Government of India was not willing to carry out the scheme entirely at their own expense.[4] The Chinese, who settled in the Nicobars, were dependent on the payment made by the Government. The abandonment of the scheme after a year's operation without giving it a fair trial made it impossible to launch any scheme of colonisation of the

[1] Ibid, A Progs No. 54, October, 1885.

[2] Ibid.

[3] N.A.I. Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch. A Progs No. 54, October, 1885.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid, A Progs No. 54-57, October, 1885.

Nicobars in future by Chinese or Burmese settlers. The Government should have shown patience and taken measures to remedy the defects which did not allow the scheme to have a fair start. They should have selected a proper site for the settlement. A wealthy and enterprising Chinese should have been induced to employ Chinese labourers with arrangements for maintaining intercourse at reasonable intervals with Penang so as to enable these labourers to communicate with their friends and obtain supplies. Proper medical arrangements should have been made by the Government for the settlers. All these arrangements needed much perseverance and sinking of a large amount of capital which the Government of India was not prepared to sink at that time. After the failure of the scheme, no fresh attempts were made by the British to settle foreigners in the Nicobars.

Friendly attitude of the Nicobarese towards the British

The attitude of the Nicobarese after the establishment of a settlement at Nancowry harbour was not at all hostile. While they were uniformly hospitable and civil, they invariably sent away their women and children on the approach of any war vessel. The reason for their want of confidence was a result of the act of revenge carried out by the Government of India in 1867 when two ships were sent by them to investigate the murder of sailors committed by the Nicobarese. The violent acts of this punitive expedition struck terror in the hearts of the Nicobarese. But gradually they became friendly towards the British authorities. They felt that the British control of the islands was nominal. The people of some islands which were situated at a distance from the British settlement were, for all practical purposes, ignorant of the sovereignty of the British over them.[1] Even the inhabitants of Car Nicobars who carry on considerable trade with India and Burma did not feel the foreign control of their country. The people round Nancowry, who witnessed the gradual extension of the settlement and the system of regulated communications with India, were probably the

1 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 23, September, 1873.

only people to realise the permanent nature of the hold of the British on their country. They, however, genuinely hoped that the unhealthiness of the climate would ultimately lead the new comers to follow the example of the previous settlers and abandon the place altogether.[1]

Extension of British authority to other islands

In order to make the British sovereignty over the islands of the Nicobars better known and appreciated by the inhabitants, the Government of India authorised the Assistant Superintendent of the Nicobars to enter into relations with the most accesible 'Menluanas' (Witch-Doctors) and induce them by trifling gifts or payments to carry out any orders of the British officers.[2] In case the authority of the witch-doctors was not respected by the people, small penalties were to be levied by the British officers on those who disobeyed them. The authority given to 'Menluanas' was to be gradually expanded and converted into something hereditary and official. The Government of India, however, warned the officers that, "No impatience should be shown for extending British authority, or for making it felt, except in the case of atrocious crime, but protection should be given as far as possible against pirates and others."[3] After some time the Government modified its orders as they found that the 'Menluanas' did not possess much authority among the Nicobarese to enable them to effect any supervision. Such authority was now vested in 'Captains'—a set of influential men, believed to be somewhat superior in intelligence than the 'Menluanas' and considered to be capable of exercising influence over their fellow islanders.[4]

The British authorities also took measures to increase the trade of the Nicobarese. Owing to the confidence inspired by the annexation of these islands to British India and the protection there after afforded to those desirous of trading with them

[1] Ibid.

[2] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 24-25, September, 1873.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

resulted in the expansion of the Nicobarese trade. The authorities also enforced respect for life and property of the Nicobarese and afforded protection to them from the ill treatment of the traders. No encroachment on the property of the Nicobarese even by the settlement authorities was allowed by the Government. Coconut plantations belonging to the Nicobarese were never to be appropriated without due compensation.[1] The Government of India also did not agree to levy any tax on the Nicobarese although the Superintendent, Port Blair, made a proposal to that effect.[2] In 1881, by a regulation all imports and sale of foreign spirits, arms and ammunitions were prohibited without a license. This measure had beneficial effect on the Nicobarese, who were very fond of such things and indulged, too often, in drunken orgies.

Closing of penal settlement at Nancowry

After nineteen years of British occupation of the Nicobars it was felt that the object for which the penal settlement was established at Nancowry harbour, had been achieved. Since the date of occupation of the islands by the British till the abandonment of the settlement by them in 1888, seven wrecks had occurred on the coast of the Nicobars, while two boats from the Malayan peninsula were cast ashore on them. In all these cases the passengers of these vessels and boats were treated kindly by the inhabitants.[3] During these nineteen years, there was not a single attempt at piracy by the Nicobarese.[4] In 1888, there seemed to be no possibility of acts of piracy or ill treatment of the crew of wrecked ships by the Nicobarese. It seems that by this time the Nicobarese fully appreciated the advantages of friendly inter-course with the outside world and were more anxious to encourage the visit of traders from whom they hoped to procure the supplies of necessary articles, which they obtained

1 N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 49, January, 1874.
2 Ibid, A Progs. No. 24. September, 1873.
3 Ibid, A Progs No. 80, June 1888.
4 Report on the Penal Settlement of Nicobars, E.H. Man, Appendix A to Census Report, 1901, p. 188-196.

from them since ages. In view of the above circumstances, the need for a penal settlement had ceased. The penal settlement at Nancowry was never successful from the financial point of view and was never likely to be so. It was, therefore, recommended by Man, the officer in charge of the settlement that, "Owing to the exceptional circumstances and conditions of the colony in incurring continued expenditure and no adequate return, even prospective, there remained neither inducement nor justification for maintaining an establishment in such a remote and malarious locality."[1] The Government of India, after a careful consideration of the above proposal decided to close the settlement in 1888.[2]

Administrative arrangements after 1888

In abandoning the settlement at Nancowry harbour, the Government of India had no intention to withdraw their authority from Nicobars. After this period, the Nicobarese were kept in contact with the administration by means of two local government agents, one of which was paid. In the beginning, the paid agent appointed in the Nicobars did not prove to be suitable and trustworthy.[3] In 1895, a south Indian clergy named Solomon, who was the incharge of the orphanage at Port Blair, was appointed as paid agent. His duties were to report on the affairs of the Nicobars, give and take port clearances and maintain meteorologic registers.[4] The duty of the unpaid agent, generally a local trader, was to give information about the events in the Nicobars which he could gather during the course of his visits to different places in the island for business. The islands were placed under the charge of a Deputy Superintendent with his headquarters at Port Blair. He or some other officer of the settlement of Port Blair was to visit these islands three or four times during a year in the steamer. During his stay for one or two days at Car Nicobar

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 61-80, June, 1888.
[2] Ibid, A Progs. No. 40, September, 1895.
[3] Ibid, A Progs. No. 80, June, 1888.
[4] Ibid, A Progs. No. 40, September, 1895.

and Nancowry, he was to settle disputes and dispose off cases of offence.[1]

The above policy of an indirect form of Government through Chiefs and elders, interfering only in cases of violence and maintaining government agents, without magisterial powers, was changed after the first world war. An officer, with the designation of an Assistant Commissioner and having magisterial powers to hear all complaints of a petty nature in his local court, was sent to the Nicobars.[2] A ten percent export tax was also levied by the Government on Coconuts. Car Nicobar, which due to a remarkable increase in the population and flourishing trade, had become the most important island of the group, was chosen as the seat of the Assistant Commissioner. A local hospital for the treatment of the inhabitants of the Nicobars was also opened in the above island. The control on other islands was also made strict through a Tehsildar, who continuously toured these places. Inspite of these measures, many islands have still not fully come under the constant surveillance of the administration and their contact with the civilisation and the trader is nominal. With the implementation of the five year plans the people of the Nicobars are now coming closer to the people of the mainland and the present administration.[3]

[1] N.A.I., Home Deptt., Port Blair Branch, A Progs. No. 40-41, February, 1906.

[2] Census Report, 1931, p. 79.

[3] Please see Chapter X.

TEN

PRESENT POSITION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

Japanese occupation of the islands

The last two decades have been of tremendous importance to the Andaman and the Nicobar islands. During the second world war, it was visited by Subhash Chandra Bose. In a meeting in the Gymkhana grounds of Port Blair, he said, "You give me blood, I will give you independence" (तुम मुझे खून दो, मैं तुम्हें आजादी दूँगा). The Japanese occupied these islands in March 1942. Two weeks after the landing of the Japanese forces in South Andaman in March, 1942, they established a peace committee.[1] This committee lasted for nearly eight months until the arrangements for a military administration was completed on 2 December, 1942. In this arrangement, the real power was in the hands of the Commandant of Japanese naval forces in these islands.[2] From the very beginning the Japanese faced acute shortage of food. Rice stocks for the local population were completely exhausted by the end of August, 1942.[3] Due to the activities of the allied submarines the Japanese Commander took drastic steps to meet the situation. He ruthlessly tried to eliminate old and infirm people and leave only those who could work for them. As a result of this policy, hundreds of people were shot dead, and many drowned in seas. In 1943 the allies succeeded in landing a commando party by a submarine in the Andamans. The Japanese came to know about the presence of the party in

[1] File No. 601/7652/H—Ministry of Defence, Japanese occupation of the Andamans, p. 1.

[2] Ibid, p. 10.

[3] Census Report, 1951, p. X.

the islands but were never able to capture them. In order to extort information about these spies of the British, the Japanese inflicted severe torture on many people, particularly those who knew English. As a result of these tortures, a great though unknown number of men, women and children died.[1] About 1,300 persons were forced to evacuate the areas of Port Blair.[2] The sufferings of the people were lessened to some extent with the arrival of Lieutenant Colonel Lokanathan, Colonel Bhonsle and four officers of the 'Indian National Army' on these islands in February, 1944.[3] These officers evacuated the islands in July 1945. In October, 1945, these islands were again occupied by the British who brought with them supplies of food, medicine and cloth.

The occupation of Andamans and Nicobar islands by the Japanese forces from March, 1942 to October, 1945 had a very marked effect on them. During this period the islands were subjected to severe economic, social and psychological disturbances. Its disastrous effects are still being felt. The Japanese even did not spare the isolated tribe of the Jarawas. They bombed the areas of this tribe and thus made the task of reconciling them more difficult. The only good which they did to these islands was to promote agriculture.

Abolition of the penal settlement in 1945

With the reoccupation of the islands by the British, the penal settlement at Port Blair was abolished. The abolition of the penal settlement reduced the population of the Andamans from 21,000 to 14,000. But after the partition of India, new comers have replaced the settlers to an increased extent. The Andamans offered a home and a new start in life to a number of displaced persons from East Bengal. People from other parts of India have also settled in both the island groups.

[1] Census Report, 1951, p. X.

[2] File No. 601/7652/H—Ministry of Defence, Japanese occupation of the Andamans, p. 10.

[3] Ibid, p. 4.

Administrative arrangements of the islands after independence

Since the independence of India from the British rule, these strategically placed islands in the Bay of Bengal, which had earned the sinister reputation of 'Kala Pani' and were considered as distant lands are now treated as a part of our beloved motherland in every sense of the term. With the lifting of the shroud of ignorance, indifference and dread about the Andamans and the Nicobars, these tropical oceanic regions have also started to wake up to a new future. They found themselves like Rip Van Winkle, as a part of almost a strange world, with a lot of headway to make in case they were to take their proper place in the political, social and economic currents sweeping over modern India.[1] Fortunately for them the Government of India realised their responsibility in this respect. During the British rule, these islands were left much to themselves but now careful attention is being paid by the administration to develop the vast resources of these two groups of islands. The islands are administered directly by the Central government since 1947. In the constitution of India the islands were given the status of a Part 'D' state. In 1952 the administration of the islands was placed directly under the President. On the reorganisation of the states these parts of the country were constituted into a union territory from 1 November 1956. From this date these islands are administered by the Central government through a Chief Commissioner. Till March 1960 the Chief Commissioner was advised in legislative and policy matters by an advisory committee which was nominated by the Central government. From the above date the advisory committee was reconstituted with a view to get it intimately associated with the Ministry of Home Affairs on policy matters. The reconstituted committee consists of the Chief Commissioner, the elected member of the parliament representing these territories, the Senior Vice Chairman of the Port Blair Municipal Committee and five other non-official members nominated by the Central government.

Planned development of the islands

Although nothing substantial could be done in these islands

[1] Andaman and Nicobar Information, 26 January, 1957, p. 1.

during the first five year plan except a tentative and cautious colonisation scheme necessitated by the pressure of the refugees on the mainland, an ambitious programme for the development of these islands was formulated in the second five-year plan. A state planning committee was formed in 1956 with the Chief Commissioner as Chairman ; the member of parliament and heads of departments as members along with few non-official nominated persons of these islands. This committee is functioning uptil now and with the help of their expert local knowledge the islands are undergoing a programme of phased development.

Second Five-Year Plan

The second five year plan of these islands was drawn up in view of the peculiar situation of these territories.[1] The primary necessities of these islands are to settle people on the land and to open the country by providing lines of communications and essential services.[2] Out of a grand total of Rs. 603·135 lacs, substantial allotment was made for the development of agriculture, irrigation, land resettlement, animal husbandry and milk supply.[3] Besides the development of the produce of timber and other forest products, extension of fisheries has also been provided for in the plan. For improving the inland communications and to start a steamer service from the mainland to the Andamans 39·79% of the total outlay of the plan was to be spent. 86·620 lacs were provided for increase in education, health and medical services, water supply, housing and welfare of the backward classes. The supply of electric power for large industries at few places was also provided in the plan. The plan aimed at stimulating developmental activities in these islands. No efforts were made to improve the standard of living of the people. This question was considered as less pressing at that juncture.[4] In case the implementation of the plan was successful,

[1] Second Five-Year Plan, Andaman & Nicobar Administration, 1956-61. See the outlay and allocation of the second five-year plan in Appendix III.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

as it was hoped to be, it was expected that it would naturally result in the rise of standard of living.

Progress of the Second Five-Year Plan

With the cooperation of the people, the Government was to achieve considerable success in the execution of the second five year plan in the Andamans and the Nicobars. Model coconut plantations were established in the Nicobars for demonstrative purposes. Free plant protection services have been offerred to farmers for checking diseases. In the Andamans one hundred and forty acres of waste land were placed under cultivation till 1960.[1] The cultivators were helped with implements, and improved seed. Arrangements for large scale cultivation of sugarcane, ginger, pepper, cardamom, pine apple and other fruit bearing plants were made. Several cottage and small scale industries such as carpentry, black-smithy, tailoring, embroidery, coir industry, bamboo and cane work and soap making were started. A training school for the learning of such crafts was opened at Port Blair. A model grass farm of 25 acres was established for the improved quality of food for the animals. Poultry on a large scale was encouraged by setting four model farms and supplying the cultivators with chickens. For the transport of timber, three marine diesel engines were purchased. The output of timber was 64,177 tons in 1961 as compared to 54,637 tons in 1956. 485 acres of match-wood plantations and 600 acres of teak plantations raised during 1958 to 1960 are giving good yield. The fishing industry is also giving encouraging results on account of special care being given to it. Two motor boats, and four ordinary fishing boats were purchased and given on loan to fishermen alongwith better type of fishing nets and implements. For irrigation in the South Andaman where most of the displaced persons are settled, the Mithakari dam has been completed. As a result of these efforts the area under paddy cultivation has increased from 9255 acres to 16827 acres.[3]

[1] Second Five-Year Plan, Andaman & Nicobar Administration, Proposals for development, 1959-60.
This is an annual report of the progress of the Plan.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Administration Report of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, 1960-61

The colonisation of the Andamans by displaced persons from East Bengal was approved by the Cabinet of India in January, 1952. It was decided to clear forest lands to the extent of 20,000 acres for settling 4,000 agriculturist families from the mainland and alloting five acres of cleared land to each family. 8010 acres were cleared during the second plan and 1569 families were settled.[1] They have been supplied with implements necessary for cultivation and have been provided with necessary finance.

A great difficulty in the development of these islands was the lack of inter-communications and regular communications with the mainland. Roads at many places connecting two settlements in the Andamans have been built. About 81 lacs was spent on this item in the second five-year plan. Regular weekly air service from Calcutta to Port Blair for mail and goods was started from April, 1957. A vessel for inter-island communication is in service since 1957. A ship from Madras to Port Blair is also providing swift communication to these far-flung islands.[2] But still much has to be achieved in this direction.

During the last decade great attention has also been paid to the welfare schemes for the people. Seventy six primary and one middle school have been opened at different places. There are separate girls and boys higher secondary school in Port Blair. Scholarships to more than sixty students have been given for higher studies in India. Trade schools were opened at many places in addition to those already functioning in several settlements. Houses for industrial workers, persons of low income and sweepers have been built. New buildings for the hospitals at Car Nicobar, Port Blair and Maya Bander in North Andaman are completed. A clinic for the patients of Tuberculosis was ready in 1961. Arrangements for veterinary service has been made in both the island groups. Improvements in the water supply of Port Blair are expected soon. In fourteen villages of the displaced persons, tube wells have been sunk to supply fresh water to them. The people are being encouraged to form coperative societies.

[1] Ibid.

[2] Andaman & Nicobar Information, Fourth Issue, October, 1957.

Although the second five year plan is considered to be a success yet the targets could not be achieved in full. Out of an outlay of Rs. 603.135 lakhs in the second five-year plan only Rs. 364.942 lakhs was spent.[1] The causes for the shortfalls in various developmental activities is attributed to the paucity of administrative and technical personnel. Due to lack of experience, on account of the absence of first five-year plan, even normal services were strained to a great extent. The difficulties of foreign exchange in procuring machinaries and other articles aggravated the situation resulting in shortage of equipment and key materials. The transport difficulties from mainland along with inter-island difficulties of communications have also hampered the progress. The building activities of the islands have suffered on account of lack of suitable contractors. But there is no cause to be pessimistic, as remarked by the Chief Commissioner, "On the whole the situation on the eve of the Third Plan is distinctly better than it was at the commencement of the Second Plan and one thing can be safely said here is that a favourable climate has been created which encourages the hope that the development programmes ahead will be accelerated."[2]

The Third Five-Year Plan

The experience gained in the second five-year plan has set the general pattern of investment in the third five-year plan. Although the pattern of the second five year plan was followed yet certain priorities were fixed according to the past experience. Top most priority was given to the development of transport and communications aiming at the removal of the bottlenecks in inter-island communications. The next highest priority was given to the development of agriculture and its allied subjects for achieving self-sufficiency in foodgrains and for fully exploiting the timber wealth. Emphasis on development of power and small scale industry was there. Education, public health and other programmes of social development which are of

[1] Administration Report of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, 1960-61

[2] Ibid.

highest importance for building of human resources were provided a higher priority in the pattern of investment. Thus the plan was drawn up in response to the particular needs of these territories with a view to enable them to come up to the level of the rest of the country.[1]

In order to make the third plan a success, Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Union Home Minister, paid a visit to the islands in 1962. Several team of experts also visited these islands to survey the potentialities of these territories.[2] The increased interest shown by the Central government and the cooperation of the people enabled the local administration to work enthusiastically resulting in alround development of the islands. However, inspite of all these serious efforts only 61.90 per cent of the total outlay *viz.* Rs. 6,32,628 lakhs were utilised.[1] The main reasons for the shortfall is again the non-availability of technical personnel, foreign exchange difficulties, lack of key materials, transport bottlenecks. On account of the national emergency many schemes were either slowed or deferred. The entire amount of 190 lakhs for procurement of one passenger cum cargo ship, one cargo ship and touring vessels remained unspent for want of suitable vessels in India. The suspension of colonisation programme during the emergency saved 67·39 per cent of the outlay under the head. The housing programme could not be pushed up on account of little response from the public in the lower income group. The pilot project scheme of rubber cultivation could not be implemented on account of difficulties of key materials and technical personnel. Delay in procurement

[1] For the outlay of the Third Five-Year Plan—See Appendix IV.

[2] The following team of experts and dignitories have visited these islands from 1962 to 64.

(a) Two experts of Rubber Board (b) the adviser of colonisation to the Govt. of India (c) Chief Architect and Town Planner C.P.W.D for master plan of Port Blair (d) Director, Social Welfare Delhi (e) Inspector General Forests (f) A team of National Council of Applied Economics and Research for techno-economic survey (g) Soil Co-relator, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (h) Live-Stock Development Officer, Ministry of Food & Agriculture (i) Director, Anthropological Survey of India (j) Dr. Zakir Husain (k) Two geological field parties of Oil and Natural Gas Commission.

[3] Administration Report of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 1965-66.

of stores through Director General Supply and Disposals resulted in the slow progress of construction of jetties and several other schemes. In all other spheres appreciable progress was achieved in the third five-year plan.

PRESENT PROBLEMS BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATION

Exploitation of the Nicobarese by traders

The most difficult problem facing the present administration regarding these two islands concerns the aborigines of the Andamans and Nicobars. In the past, Nicobarese have been exploited by the foreigners. In most of the islands of the Nicobar group, the trade was in the hands of Chinese from Malaya, who mercilessly exploited the people and gave them drinks and petty articles in place of copra. The Nicobarese have never got the full value of their coconuts, which is their main product. It is gratifying to note that since 1949 efforts are being made to counteract the clandestine activities of the Chinese.[1] The government agent stationed at Nancowry has opened up branches in all the islands of the Central group and in Kandol in Great Nicobar for purchasing coconuts at a reasonable price from the Nicobarese. Two out-posts, one at Camrota and other at Kandol, were established to prevent the foreign traders from exploiting the simple Nicobarese. As a result of these measures the activities of foreign poachers have considerably declined.

Not only the foreign traders but Indians in the past, both in trade and government employment, have given a very poor account of themselves. They treated the Nicobarese with no consideration at all. It was natural for the inhabitants of the Nicobars to have a strong suspicion about the bonafides of the Indian people with whom they are now associated. Fortunately the Government of India have been pursuing a right policy in this direction also. The Nicobarese are being treated as free citizens of the Indian Republic. No attempts are being made to interfere in their normal social and daily life. Nobody is allowed to repeat the sad incidents of the past. As a result of

1 Census Report, 1951, Appendix A, p. LV.

this policy they are getting closer to the Indians day by day. A strict control of the export trade, periodical increase of the exchange rate of copra according to the fluctuation of prices on the mainland, control of prices of consumer's goods and the establishment of cooperative societies in the rural areas have been greatly appreciated by them. The efforts made by the administration in the second and third five-year plans to provide necessary educational and medical facilities have practically won their confidence.

Continued hostility of the Shompens

The only Nicobarese tribe which have not reconciled itself to the present conditions is known as the Shompens. They still maintain their hostile attitude towards the coastal Nicobarese and to any one who enters their territory in the interior of Great Nicobar. Their number has been considerably reduced during these last five decades due to the epidemics of Influenza and Poliomyelitis, which raged among them in 1918 and 1947 respectively. As a result of this decline in their population they have not been able to attack the coastal Nicobarese so frequently in the recent past. In an expedition recently conducted by the authorities in which the authorities behaved with utmost caution, the Shompens behaved in a friendly manner.[1] It appears that they will not attack any more. But they are just on the border line of friendship and hostility and their future behaviour depends on the conduct of the administration and the Nicobarese who live on the coasts of Great Nicobar. One false step will drive them back again to hostility and they like the Jarawas will be driven to become implacable and ruthless enemies to all strangers. It is suggested that anthropological expeditions at regular intervals should be carried out in the regions of the Shompens before the effects of the above friendly visit wear off.

Gradual extinction of the Andamanese race and the hostility of the Jarawas—suggestions to deal with these problems

Although the Nicobarese are being gradually reconciled to

[1] Shompen of Great Nicobar, Census Report, 1951, Appendix F, p. 9-11.

the present administration, the problem of the gradual extinction of the Andamanese race, except the Jarawas, Sentinelese and the Onges, along with the continued hostility of the Jarawas is still baffling the present Government. It is even feared that the friendly Onges of Little Andaman, who occasionally visit Port Blair even now may also decline in numbers in case they continue to maintain contacts with the civilisation. As a result of the raids of the Japanese, the population of the Jarawas has also decreased. Not many of them are visible in the forest area near Port Blair. Out of 223, aborigines estimated to be living in all the islands of the Andaman group in 1951, the number of the Jarawas is supposed to be only 50.[1] The Government of India has not yet been able to adopt a decisive policy for making efforts to save the race of these free nomads who represent the relic of one of the oldest races which existed in the world in stone age. In 1949, all the surviving aborigines of North and Middle Andaman were concentrated in Bluff island,[2] without considerin g the fact that they dislike a restrained life. After a short time only two males were found on that island, the rest having paddled away in their canoes to other islands.[3] The Onges, who should have been entirely prohibited to visit Port Blair, are still doing so for receiving annual gifts of cloth, tea, sugar and tobacco leaves. At present it is even being considered that they should be trained in carpentry and that some social workers should visit Little Andaman to instruct them in cleaning their drinking water and to teach them cleanliness.[4] A medical-cum-anthropological unit to render medical aid to the Onges was established. The Government is anxious to bring them to such a level of civilisation in which they can enjoy the minimum comforts of civilised life. No doubt it is the first duty

[1] Census Report, 1951, Appendix A, p, XLIX. In the Census Report of 1961 their number has been estimated at 500. Evidently the number given in the Census of 1951 was very low.

[2] Census Report, 1951, Appendix A, p. XLV II. Bluff Island—See below.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Andaman & Nicobar Information, 4th issue, October, 1957.
Bluff Island :—An island between South Andaman and Middle Andaman on the west side near Baratang.

of the State to bring them to human level, but sufficient care should be taken to see that these efforts may not lead to further deterioration in their numbers. In some cases the Government of India is repeating the mistakes of the past e.g. the Onges are allowed to visit Port Blair and take tobacco with them. The establishment of a medical unit which may result in frequent contacts with the civilisation may also prove harmful to them in case the officers of the unit are not well acquainted with their cultural background and daily habits. The following humble suggestions are offered to the present administration as a result of the study of the present writer about the aborigines of the Andamans :

Firstly, although the aboriginal tribes of the Andaman islands are declared as a scheduled tribe under Section 243 (2) of the Constitution of India in May 1959 by the President, yet active steps are needed to prevent them from being exploited by others.

Secondly, no efforts should be made to disturb the normal conditions of these people. They should have practically no contact with civilisation and in no case they should be allowed to procure things like tobacco from the people.

Thirdly, some experienced social anthropologists should be deputed to study the conditions of these people at regular intervals. Only such persons who are fully acquainted with the past history and the cultural background of the Andamanese should be co-opted in such expeditions. These anthropologists should suggest suitable remedies for improvements in their living conditions with great caution. These suggestions should only be implemented in case there are some signs of increase in their numbers.

Fourthly, cooperation from societies established for the welfare of tribal people may also be sought. The Bhartiya Adim Jati Seva Sangh, New Delhi, may be approached in this respect. Such societies may be asked to depute social workers to live among the Andamanese for some time without making any effort to interfere in their daily routine. They should try to teach them to remain clean and induce them to report themselves for medical examination and treatment.

Fifthly, the present policy of throwing foods from air to the Jarawas and the Sentinelese may be pursued cautiously.[1] The shooting of the Jarawas, even as an act of revenge should be avoided as far as possible. Precautions should, however, be taken that no settler should lose his life as a result of the attacks of the Jarawas. Efforts should be made to capture a few young Jarawas and these captives should be placed in normal surroundings under proper vigilance. They shouid be released with gifts after a short stay. Portman's policy of sending friendly expeditions in these areas may also be pursued. Such acts may help in winning their confidence. They will gradually realise that the intentions of the persons who have encroached on their lands are friendly and harmless towards them.

It is only by following a policy of 'Isolation' that we can entertain any hope of saving the steady decrease in the Andamanese race. Already the extinction of the tribes of Bojigngiji group—Juwai, Kol, Bojigyab, Balawa and Bea—is more or less complete and the chances of regeneration of the members of the Yerewa group *viz.* Chariar, Kora, Toba, Yere and Kede is very slight.[2] Only ten males, twelve females and one child were estimated to be alive during the 1951 census among both these groups and almost all of them were reported to be unproductive.[3] It is only in the case of the Jarawas and the Onges that efforts can bear fruit in case they are made in right direction. The Government should immediately take up this problem with all the seriousness it deserves and save these last representatives of Negrito culture from utter extinction.

[1] Second Five-Year Plan, Andaman & Nicobar Administration, Proposals for development, 1959-60.

[2] Supra. p. 139, Chapter IV for figures of the Andamanese population.

[3] Census Report, 1951, Appendix A, p. XLVII.

APPENDIX I

List of the Heads of Administration in the Andamans and the Nicobars

(1858—1947)

Name	*Date of joining*	*Remarks*
Dr. James Pettison Walker	10 March, 1858	
Captain Haughton	3 October, 1859	
R.C. Tytler	May, 1862	
Lt. Col. Ford	May, 1864	
Colonel H. Man	March, 1868	
Major F.L. Playfair	16 March, 1871	officiating
Major General D.M. Stewart	15 July, 1872	confirmed 18 Feb. 1873
Captain M. Prothroe	7 May, 1875	officiating
Major General C.A. Barwell	26 May, 1875	confirmed on 24 March, 1876
Captain M. Prothroe	27 November, 1876	officiating
Major T. Cadell	27 February, 1878	
Captain R.J. Wimberley	13 December, 1878	officiating
Colonel T. Cadell	12 December, 1879	confirmed on 21 December, 1880
Major M. Prothroe	17 October, 1881	officiating
Colonel T. Cadell	27 November, 1883	
Lt. Col. R.J. Wimberley	12 February, 1887	officiating
L.H.E. Tucker	5 October, 1888	officiating
Colonel T. Cadell	28 April, 1889	

Name	*Date of joining*	*Remarks*
Colonel N.M. Horsford	16 April, 1892	
E.H. Man	25 July, 1894	officiating
Major R.C. Temple	3 August, 1894	confirmed on 3 September, 1895
Colonel F.W. Chatterton	3 September, 1896	officiating
Lt. Col. R.C. Temple	24 November, 1896	
Lt. Col. G.W. Anson	21 January, 1898	officiating
Lt. Col. R.C. Temple	31 January, 1900	
Colonel S.H.P. Graves	9 May, 1901	officiating
F.E. Tuson	10 November, 1901	officiating
Lt. Col. R.C. Temple	14 November, 1901	
F.E. Tuson	9 May, 1903	officiating
W.R.H. Merk	9 April, 1904	
H.G. Taylor	24 September, 1904	officiating
W.R.H. Merk	24 November, 1904	
Major H.A. Browning	14 April, 1906	
H.G. Taylor	24 September, 1907	officiating
Colonel L. Herbert	10 October, 1907	officiating
Lt. Col. H.A. Browning	16 October, 1908	
Lt. Col. M.W. Douglas	16 February, 1913	
J.H. Simpson	14 April, 1914	officiating
Lt. Col. M.W. Douglas	16 October, 1914	
J.H. Simpson	13 May, 1916	officiating
Lt. Col. M.W. Douglas	19 May, 1916	
R.F. Lowis	29 June, 1919	officiating

Name	*Date of joining*	*Remarks*
Lt. Col. M.W. Douglas	11 October, 1919	
Lt. Col. H.C. Beadon	23 May, 1920	
J.M. Wright	17 September, 1922	officiating
Lt. Col. M.L. Ferrar	23 April, 1923	confirmed 23 May, 1923
J.M. Wright	18 June, 1924	officiating
Lt. Col. M.L. Ferrar	27 October, 1924	
J.M. Wright	1 November, 1927	officiating
Lt. Col. M.L. Ferrar	1 August, 1928	
C. Worsley	12 April, 1931	officiating
Lt. Col. D.E.C. Kenny	25 August, 1931	officiating
J.W. Smyth	7 December, 1931	
W.A. Cosgrave	6 February, 1935	
C.E. Waterfall	7 February, 1938	
	October, 1942 to March, 1945	These islands were under Japanese.
N.K. Patterson I.C.S.	October, 1945	From March, 1945 to October, 1945 these islands were under the Allies.
I. Majid I.C.S.	February, 1947	

The names of the Heads of the Administration in the Andamans and the Nicobars with their date of joining upto 1938 have been taken from p. 68-69 of the List of the Heads of Administration in India published by the Imperial Record Deptt. in 1939. Prior to 15 July, 1872 the designation was the Supdt. Port Blair. From that date the Head of Administration in these islands was designated as Chief Commissioner of the Andamans & the Nicobars. From 1945 this designation can be used in official correspondence and otherwise. This practice was not followed from 15 July, 1872.

APPENDIX II

List of political prisoners who went on hunger strike during 1914 in the Cellular Jail

Sl. No.	*Name*	*Details of conspiracy case*	*Duration of sentence*	*Date on which struck work*
1.	Waman alias 'Daji'	Jackson murder	Life	9 April; 1914
2.	Aswani Kumar Bose	Khulna gang	7 years	23 April, 1914
3.	Abinash Chandra Bhattachargee	Alipore bomb	7 years	16 April, 1914
4.	Suresh Chandra Sen Gupta	Arms Act	Life	9 April, 1914
5.	Nagendra Chandra	Khulna gang	7 years	9 April, 1914
6.	Barindra Kumar Ghose	Alipore bomb	Life	7 April, 1914
7.	Sudhir Kumar Sarkar	Alipore bomb	7 years	7 April, 1914
8.	Ramcharan Lal	Editor of Yugantar	7 years	13 April, 1914
9.	Avani Bhusan Chakrobarty	Khulna gang	7 years	1 April, 1914
10.	Ganesh Ghose	Alipore bomb	Life	23 April, 1914
11.	Laddha Ram	Editor of Swaraj	Life	10 April, 1914
12.	Upendra Nath Banerjee	Alipore bomb	Life	25 April, 1914
13.	Hrishikesh Kanjilal	Alipore bomb	10 years	1 April, 1914
14.	Jyotirmoy Roy	Dacca case	6 years	1 April, 1914
15.	Bhibhuti Bhusan Sarkar	Alipore bomb	10 years	1 April, 1914
16.	Sachindra Lal Mitra	Khulna gang	7 years	1 April, 1914

Note :—The Editors of *Yugantar* and *Swaraj* nationalist weeklies, were transported to the Andamans on the charge of seditious propaganda against the British rule in India.

APPENDIX III

Second Five-Year Plan of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands (1956-61)
Outlay, Allocations and Expenditure

Head of Development	*Outlay Rs. in lacs*	*Actual Expenditure*	*Percentage of Total Outlay in Expenditure*
I *Agricultural and Community Development*			
(a) Agricultural Production	20·000	11·162	56
(b) Land Development	5·600	0·422	8
(c) Minor Irrigation	6·500	0·007	·1
(d) Land Resettlement and Colonisation	130·000	91·172	70
(e) Animal Husbandry	3·800	2·007	53
(f) Dairying and Milk Supply	5·000	0·165	3
(g) Forests	80·000	12·374	15
(h) Co-operation	0·750	0·767	102
(i) Fisheries	1·750	2·362	135
(j) Community Development and N.E.S. Programmes	10·210	11·673	114
II. *Power*			
(a) Electric Supply	2·500	0·921	37
III. *Industry*			
(a) Cottage & Small Industries	7·000	3·193	46

IV. *Transport & Communications*			
(a) Road	85·000	80·895	95
(b) Road Transport	1·000	1·258	126
(c) Inland Water Transport	49·000	—	—
(d) Shipping	105·000	99·007	94
V. *Special Service*			
(a) Education	27·400	11·016	40
(b) Public Health & Medical	18·300	11·319	45
(c) Water Supply	7·000		
(d) Housing	32·920	23·863	72
(e) Welfare of Backward classes	1·000	0·464	46
VI. (a) *Development of National Language*	0·805	0·460	57
(b) Town Planning	2·000	—	—
(c) Publicity	0·600	0·435	73
Grand Total	**603·135**	**364 942**	**60·5**

APPENDIX IV

Third Five-Year Plan of the Andaman and Nicobar islands

	Total Outlay (Rs. in lakhs)	Percentage of total outlay
1. *Agricultural Programmes*		
(a) Agricultural Production	53·947	5·51
(b) Minor Irrigation	—	—
(c) Soil Conservation	9·983	1·02
(d) Animal Husbandry	4·420	0·45
(e) Dairying & Milk Supply	3·500	0·35
(f) Forests	56·818	5·80
(g) Fisheries	14·770	1·51
(h) Warehousing and Marketing	—	—
(i) Land Resettlement & Colonisation	110·350	11·27
Total	**253 788**	**25·91**
2. *Cooperative & Community Development*		
(a) Cooperation	3·960	0·41
(b) Community Development	25·020	2·55
(c) Panchayats	3·000	0·31
Total	**31·980**	**3·27**

3. *Irrigation & Power*		
(a) Irrigation	—	—
(b) Power	14·350	1·47
Total	**14·350**	**1·47**
4. *Industry & Mining*		
(a) Village & Small Industries	13·320	1·36
(b) Industry	1·440	0·15
Total	**14·760**	**1·51**
5. *Transport & Communications*		
(a) Roads	238·000	24·30
(b) Road Transport	10 000	1·02
(c) Ports & Harbours	—	—
(d) Inland Water Transport	—	—
(e) Shipping	263·000	26·86
(f) Tourism	3·000	0·31
Total	**514·000**	**52·49**

	Tota Outlay (Rs. in lakhs)	Percentage of total outlay
6. *Social Services*		
(a) Education	56·760	5·80
(b) Health	50·750	5·18
(c) Housing	16·000	1·63
(d) Welfare of Backward Classes	6·500	0·66
(e) Social Welfare	0·100	0·01
(f) Labour and Labour Welfare	2·780	0·28
Total	**132·890**	**13·56**
7. *Miscellaneous*		
(a) Statistics	0·410	0·04
(b) Publicity	3·000	0·31
(c) Local bodies	10·358	1·06
(d) Others	3·784	0·38
Total	**17·552**	**1·79**
Grand Total	**979·320**	**10·000**
Development of minor ports in Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Provision in the Central Plan)	42,580	—
GRAND TOTAL	**10,21,900**	

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

S. No.	*Particulars*	*Abbreviations*
1.	Report on the Administration of the Andamans and the Nicobars and the Penal settlement of Port Blair.	Administration Report.
2.	Census Report on the Andamans and the Nicobars and the Penal settlement of Port Blair.	Census Report
3.	Selection of Records in the Home Department of the Government of India.	Selection of Records.
4.	C. E. Buckland, Dictionary of National Biography.	Buckland.
5.	M.V. Portman, A History of our relations with the Andamanese.	Portman.
6.	Sykes, History of Exploration.	Sykes.
7.	National Archives of India.	N.A.I.
8.	Original Consultation.	O.C.
9.	Original Proceedings.	Progs.
10.	Department.	Deptt.
11.	Volume.	Vol.
12.	Number.	No.
13.	Page.	p.

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(*v*) Indices and proceedings of the Public, Judicial, Jails and Police Branch of the Home Department of the Government of India from 1858 to 1916.

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(*vii*) Indices and proceedings of the Political Branch of the Home Department of the Government of India from July, 1907 to 1916.

Note . The above series of records preserved in the National Archives of India are the only source of information of this subject in India. The records maintained by the Chief Commissioner of Andamans and Nicobars were destroyed during the Japanese attack on these islands in 1943. (Indian Historical Record Commission Proceedings, December, 1951, Volume XXVIII, Part I, Page 113).

Before the Government of India opened a separate branch in 1873, styled as 'Port Blair' in the Home Department to deal with the affairs of the Andamans and Nicobars, the matters regarding these islands were dealt with in the proceedings of the Secret, Public, Judicial, and Marine Departments. Even after the opening of a seperate branch, the proceedings of the Public, Jails, Judicial and Police branches of the Home Department contain references to

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(*xvi*) There are several articles as appendix to Census Reports of 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931 and 1951 which throw light on these two islands :

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