



## ***Chapter VI***

# **ISLANDS TODAY**

The Andaman & Nicobar Islands lying between  $92^{\circ}$  to  $94^{\circ}$  East and  $6^{\circ}$  to  $14^{\circ}$  North latitude cover an area of 8249 Sq. Kms. These 572 Islands, Islets and rocks can be divided into the Andaman (Northern) & the Nicobar (Southern) groups. The highest peak in the Andaman Group is Saddle Peak at 732 mtrs. and Mount Thullier at 642 mtrs. is the highest point in the Nicobar Group.

With 92% of its area under forest cover the Islands have a population of 3.56 lakhs concentrated in 8% of the area i.e 660 Sq. Kms. The Islands have a density of 43 persons per Sq. Km. There is only one urban area, of 16.6 per Sqm Kms (Port Blair town and its environs), which caters to a population of 1,16,407 persons. The Islands are administratively divided into two districts-the Andamans District & the Nicobars District with a population of 3,14,239 and 42,026 respectively.

The policy of the government after independence was to inhabit these islands and to this purpose refugees from the erstwhile East Pakistan were settled here. This policy continued till the mid-seventies and led to a very high population increase over the decades. In the decades ending 1971 the decadal

growth rate of the islands was over 80%, which has subsequently been brought down to 26.94%. As compared to the All India decadal growth rate the Islands' growth is slightly on the higher side but concerted efforts are on to control it.

The status of the major **social, physical and economic indicators** of the Islands are as under:

- The total birth rate in the islands is 17.81 while the death rate is 3.46 per 1000 population. The infant death rate is only 17.33 per 1000 live births. Amazingly, the birth rates and the death rates in the rural areas are much lower than those in the urban areas.
- The sex ratio in the islands has always been lop-sided, due to selective immigration of males and the islands have recorded a low sex ratio of 846 females per 1000 males.
- The A&N Islands have 147 health institutions comprising 3 hospitals, 4 Community Health Centre, 19 Primary Health Centres, 5 Urban Health Centres, 107 Primary Health Sub-Centres and 9 dispensaries. 132 Doctors and other supporting staff man these. There is total bed strength of 1005. 75% of the facilities cater to the rural areas. Of the total 34 Sub-centres, 4 PHC's, 1 CHC, 3 Homeo Dispensaries and 1 District Hospital cater to the tribal population which comprises 9.53% of the population.
- 81.18% of the population in the islands is literate. The literacy percentage among males is 86.07% while 75.29 % females are literate.
- There are 21 Pre-Primary schools and 2 Ashram Schools in the Islands. 208 Primary Schools, 55 Middle Schools and 44 Secondary Schools with 48-Sr. Sec. Schools comprise the formal education system. Of these 321 institutions 60 cater to the needs of the tribal students. The Islands are the only place in the country where education is imparted in 5 languages—Hindi, English, Tamil, Telegu and Bengali. There are a total of 84,073 students and 4472 teachers, the student teacher ratio being 19:1, which is an exceptionally good figure. In order to impart vocational training an

Industrial Training Institute, Teachers Training Institute and a B.Ed. College are functioning in the islands. There are 2 Govt. colleges, one in Port Blair and another in Mayabunder.

- The per capita income based on a gross State Domestic Product of Rs 957.26 crores was Rs. 26965 by the end of 2000-2001.
- The Islands have 504 inhabited villages. Of these 394 villages are fully provided with treated water supplies and 110 villages are partially covered. 52 partially covered villages were augmented to fully covered villages in the last 2 yrs. The Indira Nallah and Panchawati Nallah projects have been taken up and 3 water treatment units have been constructed in rural areas at Bakultala, Garacharma & Diglipur.
- There are a total of 1163 Kms of blacktopped road in the islands. 114 Kms of urban road falls in the Municipal limit and the ATR stretches for 333 Kms. Of the 504 inhabited villages 256 are connected by road.
- The per capita energy consumption in these islands is about 250 KWH per person per annum whereas the national average is 350 KWH per person per annum. There are 34 diesel-generating powerhouses scattered in various islands with an aggregate generating capacity of 38.8 MW. The installed capacity of the stations ranges between 6 KW to 12500 KW. Of the 504 villages, 477 villages have been electrified and the total numbers of electricity consumers are 66196.
- Of the total revenue area of 75,000 hectares, 25,000 hectares is under "deemed forest" and only 50,000 hectares of land can be brought under cultivation. Of this 9,800 hectares of land is under paddy and production during 2002-2003 was to the tune of 32111 MT, which is much below our needs.
- The area under forest equals 7171 sq. km of which 2929 sq km is reserved forest and 4242 sq km is protected forest. No timber was extracted as per the orders of the Hon'ble Supreme court. However the Forest Department earned a revenue of Rs 7.85 crores during the year

2002-03. There is one zoological garden, one biosphere reserve, one biological park and nine National Parks, 98 wildlife sanctuaries and one forest training school and two Govt. saw mills in the islands.

- There is one Employment Exchange and 5 Employment Information and Assistance Bureaus in the island with 41,381 applications on the live register. The total placements made during the year 2002-2003 were 902.
- There were 6 medium scale industries in these islands and of these only 2 are now actually functioning. Of the 1479 small scale Industrial Unit 48% are now closed.
- 969 Co-operative societies with the membership of 73,185 and a share capital of Rs.3.46 crores reflect the vibrant Cooperative Movement in the islands.
- 5 ships ply in the mainland island sectors, while 21 ships in the Inter-island sector, 6 vessels in the foreshore sector and 26 vessels in the harbour ferry sector are the lifeline of these islands.
- The recently introduced Pawan Hans Helicopter Services are a vital link in day-to-day life and emergencies in the islands. At present it connects six islands with Port Blair. Of these 3 islands are in the Southern group. Three more islands in the Northern group are planned to be started in the near future. The Islands have helipads in 30 islands, which can be used during emergencies.
- During 2001, 27243 tons of fish, valuing Rs.11.464 crores was landed. 2964 Fishermen are engaged in fishing of which 1821 are using country craft while 222 are using mechanized boat.
- Due to the concerted efforts in the Animal Husbandry field, the efforts of the Veterinary services are visible. The livestock as per the livestock census shows a total livestock of 1,88,310 and total poultry of 8,00,950.

- The Law and Order position is quite good in these islands. There are 16 Police Stations and 17 Police Out Posts and 1 District Jail with the A&N Police. Conviction Rate is as high as 49.30% in case of offences committed under IPC of which 99.96% in case of Local Special Laws.
- There are 67 motor transport buses that operate on 76 routes covering a route length of 15,99,000 Kms.

