

**National Seminar on -
Conservation of PVTGs of A & N
islands – *the way forward*
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ANDAMANESE TRIBE

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(I) Introduction

1. It is one of six STs - (A) Nigrito stock – (i) Andamanese (ii) Onges (iii) Jarawas (iv) Sentinelese (B) Mongoloid stock – (v) Shompen (vi) Nicobarese in A & N islands. All except Nicobarese are PVTGs.
2. They are the aboriginal inhabitants of A & N islands
3. Negritos are first human beings to populate Andaman islands about 50, 000 years ago.
4. They were the sole indigenous people of the islands till mid 19th century.
5. British founded a Penal Colony at Port Blair in 1858 despite resistance by tribals.

6. It was the Golden Age for the self reliant hunting-gathering aborigines before the arrival of outsiders.
7. British Armed Forces were sent on punitive expeditions to shoot the aborigines and burn their huts.
8. A large group of Andamanese hunters camped in forest near village Aberdeen, Port Blair to ambush British Colony in wee hours one day in May 1859.
9. But Andamanese met their massacre dealt by British Security Forces because of treachery of Doodnath Tiwari in this Battle of Aberdeen.
10. Later, Peace Missions were sent by British to befriend Andamanese and encourage them to visit Port Blair.
11. Subsequently, the “Andaman Home” was started at Port Blair by British wherein frequenting tribals were treated with food, gifts, medicine etc

- 12 In no time, this institution of interface with outsiders turned notorious for introducing the wine, opium, tobacco etc among Andamanese and sexual abuse of their women.
- 13 Consequently, many alien diseases made inroad into Andamanese through this Home leading to their heavy casualties.
- 14 The estimated Andamanese population of more than 5000 was reduced to only 23 by 1951 due to foreign ailments including four epidemics, - pneumonia (1868), syphilis (1876), measles (1877) and influenza (1892).
- 15 After Indian independence, the Administration made an attempt in 1949 to settle the few surviving Andamanese at one place. But nomadic tribals did not change to the sedendary lifestyle.
- 16 By then Administration was given the huge task of rehabilitating thousands of Bengali refugees in Andaman islands.

17. Later, in 1969 the Administration succeeded in persuading the wandering Andamanese to settle at the Strait island and provided them the free ration, clothes, houses and basic facilities of water supply, power supply, health care, jetty, Police Radio, School etc and raised a coconut plantation.
18. In 1976 an autonomous and fully funded welfare agency the Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti (AAJVS) with the Administrator of the Union Territory as its President was set up by the Administration to look after the PVTGs.
19. Andamanese led for next three decades a modicum of community life on Strait Island and their population gradually increased to the present 56.
20. Their interface with outsiders was largely confined to the welfare officials and there were few limited unethical interactions too.

21. However, there were a couple of instances of non-tribals of Port Blair marrying the Andamanese and these outsiders opened a new chapter in the socio-economic history of Andamanese.
22. Tsunami disaster of 2004 destroyed the infrastructure of Andamanese settlement at Strait Island also and Andamanese however, with traditional wisdom did not suffer any causality.
23. Andamanese had to stay in the relief camp at Port Blair for years before they came back to the rebuilt settlement at Strait island.
24. Andamanese children admitted in schools in Port Blair were not shifted to the Government school at Strait island under the influence of few non-tribal spouses and others.
25. 24 school educated Andamanese youths got into Government jobs (6 are awaiting) and thus Andamanese started gravitating towards Port Blair.

(II) Ills, Evils and Issues

26. Genetic disorders, T.B. obesity, hypertension, diabetes, upper respiratory track infection, intestinal infestation, anemia are the maladies among Andamanese.
27. Addiction to intoxicating liquor and tobacco is major evil that the Andamanese suffer from.
28. They are susceptible to the evil of socio-economic exploitation by non-tribals especially when they enter into marriage alliances or when they are in places like Port Blair i.e. out of tribal reserve.
29. Attempt to imitate the customs, and practices of the non-tribal people even if unsuitable to their tribal traditions.

30. Marriage alliances with the non-tribals is on increase due to exposure of school going children and jobbers in Port Blair.
31. Andamanese parents frequent Port Blair under the pretext of looking after their children as they are studying in non residential schools in Port Blair.
32. Andamanese jobbers posted in Strait Island also often go to Port Blair under the pretext of meeting the Departmental offices and to draw salary as there is no banking facility at Strait Island.
33. Andamanese get access to the wine shops when they are at Port Blair and they indulge in drinking spree. They squander salary in unnecessary purchases in the town.

34. Andamanese visit Port Blair for medical treatment since only ANM/Pharmacist are available at Strait Island and not the doctor.
35. Educated youths and children using internet are keen to stay in Port Blair as there is no internet and Mobile phone connectivity at Strait Island.
36. Present trend of Andamanese gravitating towards Port Blair would end up in disintegration of their community unless the Strait Island becomes the place of fondness and home for Andamanese.
37. The legal protection under A & N island (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956 is available only in notified tribal reserve area inhabited by the aborigines and not outside it.

(III)Resources, Remedies & Responsibilities

- 38.The settlement at Strait Island needs to be transformed in to a cultural and economic hub for the Andamanese.
- 39.Andamanese continue to observe some of their customs and traditional practices at Strait Island as they find the ecstasy in them and so Administration needs to facilitate and support them.
- 40.Andamanese relish the traditional food obtained by hunting the wild boar, turtle etc. Administration needs to repopulate the Strait island with wild pig through scientific method and prevent poaching of such wildlife by non-tribals.
- 41.Backyard poultry of indigenous and disease resistant Nicobari fowl needs to be encouraged at Strait Island and similarly bee-keeping can be taken up in big way by Andamanese with help of Administration.

42. Encouraging such economic activities is not only paying for them but keep Andamanese engaged in positive works which will be one of the effective means for their de-addiction.
43. Modern facilities like Mobile phone, internet, banking etc need to be provided at Strait island so that youths need not go to Port Blair to access them.
44. Medical Sub-Center needs to be upgraded and doctor to visit settlement so that primary health care is available at Strait island itself.
45. Children studying in Port Blair need to be admitted in good residential school so that parent's anxiety about children's stay is relieved.
46. Children and jobbers need to be encouraged and facilitated by the Administration to stay at Strait island and go for traditional activities like hunting, fishing , canoeing and perform tribal rituals, dance, sports etc during their holiday.
47. A & N islands (PAT) Regulation, 1956 needs amendments to cope up with present tribal situation.

Table 1:

Sl. No	Name of the Tribe	Location	Population		Tribal Reserve (in Sq Km)
			2011	2018	
1.	Andamanese	Strait Island	044	56	6.01
2.	Onges	Little Andaman	101	120	403.37
3.	Jarawas	Middle & South Andaman	380	505	1040.84
4.	Sentinelese	North Sentinel	050	50	59.67
5.	Shompens	Great Nicobar	27168	27168	853.19
6.	Nicobarese	Nicobar District	229	238	899.76
	Total	UT of A&N Islands	27972	28137	3279.285

Table 2:

Population of Andamanese (2018)

Sl. No	Age group (years)	Male	Female	Total
1	0-10	04	07	11
2	11-20	12	04	16
3	21-30	07	03	10
4	31-40	04	06	10
5	41-50	03	02	05
6	51-60	01	01	02
7	61-70	-	01	01
8	71 & above	01	-	01
Total		32	24	56

THANK YOU