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ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ADMINISTRATION
Directorate of Health Services

A survey report on the Nutritional deficiency disorders and high mortality among the children of the Great Andamanese tribe was published in the National Medical Journal of India 1998 which was subsequently published in the national newspapers at Delhi and also in The Daily Telegrams under the caption "High Mortality among Andaman tribe due to malnutrition: ICMR Study" wherein the ICMR based at Port Blair has pointed out that malnutrition may be responsible for high infant mortality among the vanishing Great Andamanese tribe the population of which has declined from 3500 in 1858 to 36 in 1995.

The high mortality among the Andamanese tribe due to malnutrition seems to be controversial. However, the statement/table mentioned below indicates that there was steep fall in the population of Andamanese in the early period which has been stabilised gradually over the years:-

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Years</u>	<u>Population</u>
1867	5,000	1989	30
1901	625	1991	31
1906	500	1992	32
1911	455	1993	36
1921	209	1994	36
1931	90	1995	36
1941	32	1997	37
1951	23	1998	38
1961	19		
1971	24		
1974	23		
1976	24		
1981	26		

It is evident from table mentioned above that the steep fall of population took place immediately after the penal settlement in 1857 i.e. it fell from the 5000 to 500 in the first 49 years. The declining trend continued till 1961. Thereafter the population has more or less stabilised. During 1970, the entire tribal population were rehabilitated in the Strait Island with available health facilities. A Dispensary with full time Pharmacist has been established. Standing instruction has already been issued to the Medical Officer, Long Island asking him to visit Strait Island once in every week to conduct clinics. Patients requiring indoor treatment are shifted to the Primary Health Centre, Long Island. Patients requiring specialised treatment and investigation are shifted to Port Blair.

During 1997 a team of doctors including all the Programme Officers in the field of public health speciality, nutrition, health education, Medical Specialist, Nutrition Specialist with para medical staff like Lab Technician, Radiographer was sent to Strait