

To.
The Director (TW)
A & N Administration
Port Blair

The Andaman aborigines – the real patriots

Sir,

I humbly draw your kind attention on the following that: -

It is difficult to construct a complete and accurate account of these islands before establishment of second penal settlement. Whatever has been documented so far is either noted in scattered government reports or in a few books and travelogues published at widely separated intervals.

The Andaman Islands for centuries were the homeland for the Island aborigines viz. Great Andamanese, Jarawas and Onge. Obscurely they were mentioned in different travelogues in past.

The Great Andamanese: The Great Andamanese had their major encounter with the Britishers in 1789 A.D. when lieutenant Archibald Blair arrived at Chatham Island along with his party on basis of the report submitted to East India Company by colonel Colebrook and Captain Blair. The first penal settlement was established in 1789 in what was then called Port Cornwallis – now Port Blair.

Colonel Syme, who was sent on a mission to Ava in 1795, visited the establishment on his voyage out, and found there a population of 700, including a company of sepoy. He estimated the aborigines at 2000 to 2500, and gives a very unflattering description of them. They then used rafts of bamboo in addition to canoes. Some estimated the aborigines were above 5000.

The new settlement was so unhealthy and fearful that it was finally decided to be abandoned in 1796. In 1855 measures were proposed at Calcutta – for the Andamans were then an appanage of the East India Company – for the repression of the outrages practised by the Andamanese on those crews shipwrecked on their shores and two year later - on the conclusion of the Mutiny – it was determined that a penal settlement should once more be established in the Andaman group thus combining a headquarters from whence the pacification of the aborigines might be undertaken with an abode of punishment for such mutineers and others whose offences had not merited the death penalty.

Dr. Federic J. Mouat was sent as head of a commission to examine the islands and select a suitable locality for the establishment of second penal settlement. The commission spent few weeks steaming about the coasts of the Archipelago, and finally decided on Old Harbour to which they gave the name of Port Blair, in honour of its former resident. This expedition had several serious conflicts with the aborigines, in which a few of the latter were killed.

1796

← Here is the amendment