

Andaman Island. It has recently been declared as a National Highway, ^(N.H.-223) except the stretches that pass through the Jarawa Reserve. There is currently a bridge connecting Middle Andaman to North Andaman. However, for the other islands (i.e South Andaman – Baratang, and Baratang – Middle Andaman), connectivity is by vehicle ferries. South Andaman is the main populated island in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. 60% of the population of A&N Islands resides in the southern part of the South Andaman Islands. In the Nicobar Group, which is separated from the Andaman Group by a broad ten degree channel, the main islands are Car Nicobar, Great Nicobar and Nancowry group of Islands. The Nicobar Group of Islands is almost exclusively a tribal reserve, and outsiders are not permitted entry. A map to depict the cluster of islands that constitute the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is annexed hereto as **Annexure – 1**.

11. During the British period, the settlements were confined mostly to South Andaman, around Port Blair. These settlements were “penal settlements”, because those persons who had completed their conviction were allowed to settle in South Andaman, around Port Blair. There were forestry establishments in Middle and North Andaman. Post-independence, under the colonization scheme which was part of the settlement policy of Ministry of Rehabilitation, settlements were created in Middle and North Andaman between 1949 and 1961. During this period, 3280 families (majority of whom were from Bengal) were settled in these islands. Under the scheme, each of the families was given 4