

Horticulture and Herding Practices in an Island Tribe: A Case of the Nicobarese of Car Nicobar Island

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Abstract

Scheduled Tribes who constitute 8.6% of the total population of our country are classified in different categories on the bases of their physical features and racial affinity, mode of livelihood or subsistence pattern or economy, linguistic and geographical location. Keeping this in mind, the present study endeavours to analyse the horticultural and herding practices prevalent among the Nicobarese of the Car Nicobar Island. The study is an outcome of rigorous fieldwork conducted among the Nicobarese on fifteen villages of the island, applying Anthropological methods of fieldwork and it also attempts to bring forward the role of tribal cooperative societies functioning on the tribal reserve island of Car Nicobar.

Key terms: Nicobarese, Car Nicobar, horticulture, P.H.L., E.H.L., coconut plantation

Introduction

Scheduled Tribes who constitute 8.6% of the total population of our country are classified in different categories on the bases of their physical features and racial affinity, mode of livelihood or subsistence pattern or economy, linguistic and geographical location. Economy is one of major sub-system of any social system. Comprehension of structure and dynamics of the economic system is prerequisite for study practice in the tribal Indian as most of the challenges to tribal welfare are embedded in them. (Rath, 2006) Economy simply means economics system of institution. Economy can be understood as an institutional arrangement that facilitates acquisition, production, and distribution of material means of survival for individual and community life. (Pfeffer, 1994) Several studies are conducted reflecting on the mode of livelihood or subsistence pattern or economy among tribes of India in direct or indirect manner. Few of them which are pioneering and pertinent to mention here are Malinowski (1922), Elwin (1939), Pritchard (1940), Radcliffe-Brown (1948), Saxena (1955), Majumdar (1963), Vidyarthi (1951), Vidyarthi and Rai (1976), Vidyarthi (1981), Justin (1994), Sahay (1979,1981,2007,2014). However, there is paucity of literature reflecting exclusively on the economic organizations of the Nicobarese of the Car Nicobar Island. Hence, the present study was undertaken.

An Overview on Andaman & Nicobar Islands

Andaman & Nicobar Islands, situated in the Bay of Bengal, is a Union Territory consisting of 293 islands (of which 39 are inhabited). Administrative headquarters is in Port Blair. This Union Territory consists of two districts, Andaman and Nicobar. Andaman group of Islands consist of North Andaman, Middle Andaman, South Andaman and Little Andaman besides many smaller islands. Nicobar group of islands comprises of Great Nicobar, Car Nicobar, Nancowry, Katchal and Chowra. The Nicobar district consists of two Tehsils, viz. Car Nicobar and Nancowry. The head quarters of Nicobar district is Car Nicobar.

The Nicobar Islands are situated in the south east of Bay of Bengal between 6° - 10° N latitude and between 92° - 94° E longitude. There are all together 22 large and small islands,

of which, only 12 are inhabited. The most northerly island of the group is Car Nicobar, which is 143 miles i.e. 228.8 km from Port Blair and about 75 miles i.e. 120 km from 10° (Ten Degree) channel, which separates it from Little Andaman. Broadly speaking, the Nicobar Islands can be divided into three groups, the northern-most group consists of Car Nicobar; the central group includes Chowra, Teresa, Bompuka, Katchal, Kamorta, Nancowry, Trinket and in the southern group comes Pulo Milo, Little Nicobar, Kondul and Great Nicobar. The extreme southern point of the Great Nicobar, previously known as Pygmalian point and now as Indira point (inundated during tsunami of 2004) is about 91 geographical miles from Pulo Brass office Achin head of Sumatra. It is the southernmost point of India. The Nicobar stretch over 36 miles with an aggregate of 635 sq. miles. There are only 22 islands in Nicobar district in which only 12 are inhabited. List of inhabited islands include Car Nicobar, Chowra, Teresa, Bompoka, Katchal, Kamorta, Nancowry, Pula milo, Kondul and Great Nicobar. Uninhabited islands are Battimalv, Tillangchang, Meroe, Teris, Menchul, Fark, Cuba, Isle of Man, Megapod, and Pigeon. The area of the whole Nicobar archipelago is 1841 sq. km.

The Car Nicobar Island

The Car Nicobar Island which is situated in Bay of Bengal in Andaman and Nicobar group of islands spreads in an area of 126.9 sq km. It was inhabited by 20,292 Nicobarese (census 2001) and currently 17,841 as per census 2011. Although the area of Car Nicobar is less than 7% of the total area of Nicobar group of islands, its population as per census of India, 2011 is 48% of the total population of the Nicobar. Area-wise, the village named Arong is the biggest one. In the order of increasing population 15 villages in Car Nicobar include Mus, Tamaloo, Perka, Malacca, Sawai, Kenyuka, Big Lapathi, Small Lapathi, Tapoiming, Chukchuka, Kinmai, Arong, Kimus, Tee top, HQ, and IAF Camp.

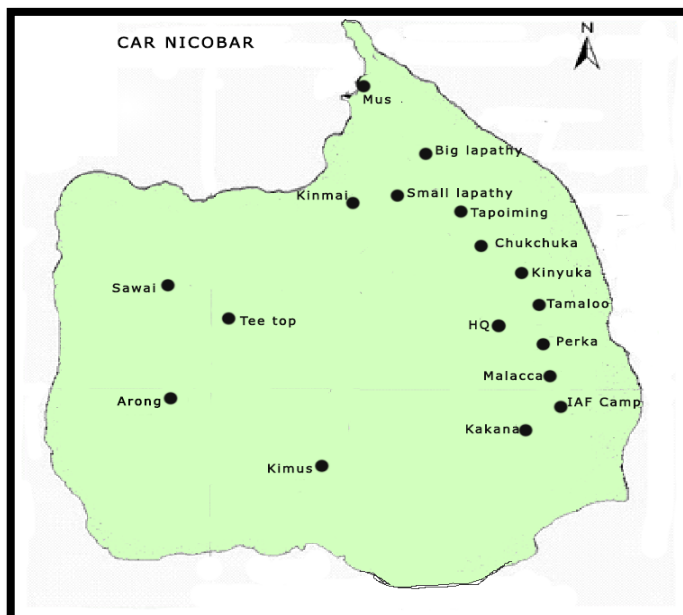


Plate 1: Map of Car Nicobar Island (source: www.google.com)

Car Nicobar is remarkably flat except for some cliffs in the north and small hilly areas in the interior. It is roughly oval in shape with a tapering projection on the north east. It is bordered by a silvery beach and the areas of flat ground consisting of coralline

diluvium. The coral extends in places to the higher ground and appears to have been raised considerably above sea level. There are small streams in the northern and southern tips. The Nicobar including Car Nicobar fall under earthquake prone belt and tsunami alerts are very common around it.

The composition of soil is sandy at the coastal plain and loamy or marshy in the interior. The loamy soil is rich with decaying matter and disintegrated coral debris which is suitable for horticultural activities and coconut plantations. The north eastern and the south western parts of the Car Nicobar are formed of raised permeable coral laterite, sand and marine alluvium. On the southern side there are stretches of brackish swamps, mostly containing mangrove or marine alluvium.

The Nicobar Islands experience tropical climate, hot and wet throughout the year. It is the breeze and frequent rainfall which keeps the temperature pleasant. The hottest period is from March to April. The coolest months are December, January and February. The south-west monsoon brings rain to the Islands from May to October. In the same manner, the N. East monsoon also brings rain which is not as heavy. The temperature varies from 85 - 90° F in the shade. The rainfall is generally above average annually and level of average humidity is 85%. There is no sweet water stream flowing outward to the sea; but, there are a few seasonal wet courses radiating from the interior high land towards the northern and south western coast. Because of very low discharge, these streams cannot cut deep in the soil and flow down to the coast over the sand cast up by waves.

Material and Methods

This research paper is an outcome of rigorous Anthropological field work conducted in 15 villages of Car Nicobar named as Mus, Tamaloo, Perka, Malacca, Sawai, Kenyuka, Big Lapathi, Chukchucha, Small Lapathi, Kakana, Tee-Top, Kinmai, Tapoiming, Arong and Kimios. Popular methods of field research like observation, interview schedule, genealogical method, case study, photography, content analysis etc were applied in this study. 200 Subjects from 45 Nicobarese Tuhets (extended joint families) hailing from 15 villages was included in the sample of the study. These subjects and tuhets were chosen on the basis of random sampling. Data on economic organisations was collected by applying semi structured schedule. The collected information was further cross-checked from elderly members of the tuhet (ma-kuo-tuhet) and sometimes from the village captains also.

The Nicobarese of the Car Nicobar

On the basis of physical features, the Nicobarese of Car Nicobar is closer to Mongoloid stock. But, the elderly people of Car Nicobar say that their ancestors were a group of exiles from the Tenasserim coast of Burma, hence they are descendants of the Burmese. Car Nicobarese are characterised as people of short stature where men range from 146.1 cm to 173.7 cm in stature with a mean of 158.7 cm while women are of an average 148.7 cm. They are fairly muscular with mean weight as 55.03 kg and having more or less normal nutritional status. About 2/3rd of the population is dolichocephalic and less than 1/3rd are mesocephalic. Mesens predominate with Leptens, ranking second in the strength of number. Platyrrhines are commoner in Car Nicobar than in other Islands of the group. Thus, general appearance of Car Nicobarese is Mongoloid and hence they belong to Mongoloid race.

Following table 1 enumerates indigenous names and their meaning of 15 villages on Car Nicobar Island.

S. No.	Name of the village	Indigenous Names	Meaning of the Indigenous Names
1.	Mus	Hanyoich	To dry in sunlight.
2.	Kinmai	Totchak	Sound of liquid inside coconut fruit.
3.	Small Lapathi	Poncho	You will do this.
4.	Big Lapathi	Seti	Knife that has been kept.
5.	Tapoiming	Hongchu	Keep moving.
6.	Chukchucha	Pompai	Absurd term of Mumbai.
7.	Tamaloo	Timlo	To complete.
8.	Perka	Ke-e-ro	Word for granted.
9.	Malacca	Urekka	First cook food than do other work.
10.	Kakana	Sapeha	Walking with the puffy chest.
11.	Kimios	Ohrahoon	Did not get anything.
12.	Arong	Haran	Put ladder.
13.	Sawai	Otkasip	Loose.
14.	Kenyuka	Saraki	Slipped.
15.	Teetop	Rittop	Delta.

Island is divided into these 15 villages in such a way that the tail of all the villages touches each other in centre of the Island and the villages thus become almost triangular in shape whose base is the sea coast. Villages are structured into five parts which includes (1) Rinval - central region of woods, (2) Tavat - woods, piggeries, gardens, (3) Tu-long - garden, coconut plantations and dwellings, (4) Tuhet - homestead and coconut (5) El-panam - village beach and coastline.

The people use 6 different dialects along with Car Nicobarese language. Nicobarese resembles to English in grammatical structure. The people of Car Nicobar have adopted a form of Roman script which falls in Austro-Asiatic sub family language. However the lingua franca is Hindi. The families are joint family type termed as Tuhet. Every Tuhet consists of several households (families). The Tuhet holds property jointly and the single family is known as hengmikuono (heng = 1, mikuono = family).

The Nicobarese families are patrilineal in nature. Lineage is usually traced through the male members of the Tuhet. The residence pattern may be either Patrilocal or Matrilocal. There is no specific rule of residence. Tuhet is exogamous in nature. Property descends to all lineage members in a tuhet and family in equal ratio and both the sexes have equal rights over property. Jural inheritance of property is through male and female. Male *primogeniture* is the rule pertaining to the social position in the tuhet and family. The Nicobarese form an endogamous group for the matter of marriage. Matrimonial alliances can be established between persons belonging to any family and tuhet provided they are not related consanguineously for at least two generations. Monogamy is the social norm among the people. About 99% marriages are love marriages and only 1% is arranged. But love marriages are also usually arranged. Among Car Nicobarese, system of bride price is absent. The Hindus, Muslims and the Christians practice their traditional rituals of marriage as per their religion. The Car Nicobarese follows Protestant ways in the marriages with slight local

variations here and there. Among the Nicobarese Christians, the marriage ceremony is performed in the church; but, among the Muslims it is not performed in the mosque; it is conducted in the dwelling house itself. Tuhet, which is the name for their large extended joint families, consists of the maximal lineage. Among the Car Nicobarese, the tuhet is the unit of all social life. 'Kinem or mirooto' is the outcome of a tuhet, where a group separates itself from the original or parental tuhet into several tuhets carrying separate identities. The head of tuhet is known as 'Makuotuhet' or 'Marooto'. Indigenous term for kinship is 'hanong ki sano'. Familiarity and joking is prevalent among individuals. Great respects are given to higher lineage or to higher generations. (Justin, 1994)

Earlier they were animists but today these tribals practice all the religions. 92% of the people are Christians, 7% are Muslims and only 1 % is Hindu and other. The Nicobarese residing on this island follow Protestant sect of Christianity. Car Nicobarese strongly believe in superstitions and the existence of spirits. Witch doctor known as 'tomiluono' (totarong) help them in indigenous healing and to combat diseases. A ceremony called 'haka ap' (offering sacrifice to the canoes) is celebrated to ensure safety during deep sea fishing and canoe race. A number of 'kiolos' (semi-religious festivals) are also celebrated to protect the Island from malevolent spirits, to combat disease etc. The common female costume is now lungi or 'sarong' or 'hilla' with a typical blouse (inyute). Earlier, males used to wear loin clothes known as 'kisat' and 'ning' but as a result of culture contact with outer world, modern clothes like jeans, t-shirt, bermudas are being used.

The traditional food of the Nicobarese includes pandanus (kevari), yam, banana, tapioca, coconut and other wild fruits, roots and tubers (termed as tavingo) collected from forests. They eat non-vegetarian items also like fish, mutton, pork, beef and chicken, except for the Muslims who don't eat pork. Mice, birds (kaloh, maku-ko, kavov), crabs, iguana flesh (*kave*), chicken, imported rice, vegetables like brinjal, potato, lady's finger, etc. constitute to their cuisine. Now a day, they are also eating tinned and packaged food purchased from market. The entire tribal community share a common traditional practice of drinking toddy, rice-beer or handia. They smoke a great deal of loose tobacco rolled or wrapped in pandanus leaf. Cigarettes and bidis, nyoop (betal-quit) are common among both males and females. The traditional Nicobarese house is built on a raised platform about 7 ft. on stilts (logs/beams) with a curved roof made from heavy thatch of *afo* (*lallang* grass). Traditional Nicobari Beehive houses now are getting extinct and can be counted on finger tips. Every village has a large communal house near the sea beach known as 'el-panam', where feasts and general meetings are held. In the houses' tahaklo' (raised platforms) of springy wood, cane and split bamboos serve the people as a lounge.

Findings

Economic Activities among the Nicobarese

The traditional economy of the Nicobarese is originated spontaneously, developed and flourished in the islands' ecological settings; their economy concerned itself by drawing upon the resources of nature. They are largely dependent upon their traditional economic pursuits. Their economy is largely based on horticultural activities. Agriculture in Car Nicobar is not practiced in the similar manners as it is practiced on Indian main land. The cultivation practices of the Car-Nicobarese cannot be called agriculture in the strict sense. Agriculture is an economic organization but not the primary mode of subsistence.

Horticulture

Horticulture is the main subsistence activity of the Nicobarese. They produce different varieties of Yam, Pandanus (kevari), Plantain, papaya and sugar cane (lamun) in their gardens. Different kinds of vegetables like brinjal, beans, radish, lady’s finger, bitter gourd and varieties of leafy vegetables are grown in horticultural practices. Two varieties of potato viz. Malaya potato called ‘Sabudan’ and Nicobari Potato called ‘Dokonio’), Cucumber (Timun), Bitter gourd (Lal kumhara), Beans (Lobia), Banda (Dhangan), Radish, Brinjal, Lady’s finger, Sweet potato, Arum and Kundru are grown by them. Varieties of fruits like Banana (five varieties known as Samakied - Red banana, Tachong - common variety, Sampu-small sized and sweet like sugar, Kinlaha, and Famusi), Custard apple (Sharifa; with two varieties – Ambili and Alltao), Pine apple (called Ferung), Papaya, Guava, Lemon, Mango, Jackfruit (called Takavoko), Wild oranges, Bread fruit, Shaddock, Monkey jack are grown in large quantities applying modern horticultural techniques learned by the tribals under various government schemes.

Every tuhet has its own identified, large sized horticultural grounds under its ownership in the forest. Horticultural activities most of the times, are done applying simple indigenous/traditional methods of farming, with least or no use of chemical fertilizers. However, the yield is low. Shifting cultivation/swidden cultivation is practiced with fallowing practices for growing coconut and pandanus on major part of land. Then they make necessary repairs to old fencing to keep the young plants intact. Every tuhet erect a stone wall or wooden fencing around their plot followed by hoeing, sowing and planting yam, banana as well as other crops, weeding so as to allow the horticulture to flourish and to protect the young plants from snails and lastly harvesting. Most of the time circular plots with wooden or stone fencing are prepared after cleaning the forest land by the end of March or early April. Traditionally, Sung (May, June, July), Chuhat (August, Sept, Oct.) and I - luoi (Nov, Dec, Jan.) constitute to monsoon season whereas, Sikehngo (Feb., March, April) is summer season. Primarily, on these two seasons most of the horticultural activities depend, but Nicobarese consider the monsoon season as more suitable for horticulture. Calendar of crops grown is enumerated in the following table.

Table 2: Calendar of Crops

Type of Crop	Months of availability
Yam, Tapioca, Sweet potato	Available from Jan. to March
Plantains of different varieties	First week of May
Lady's finger, Bitter gourd	First week of May after it rains depending on Monsoon
Pineapple	Throughout the year in all seasons
Sugar cane	Throughout the year in all seasons
Banana	Throughout the year in all seasons
Nicobari Potato	Sown in June- July, harvested in the months of Nov- Dec.
Arum	Throughout the year

All the tuhet members cooperate in the horticultural activities. Mixed crops are preferred

during sowing season. Cooperation of members of other tuhets is also sought as and when required.

The vegetables grown are only for self consumption. Horticulture as an economic organization though is not much beneficial in earning cash amount but is very much helpful in balancing their subsistence economy and fulfilling their food needs.

Coconut plantation

Nicobari tuhets spend much time and energy on their plantations of coconut, areca nut, pandanus, and jackfruit. Coconut and areca nut plantations are major source of wealth for the tribals of the island of the Car Nicobar. They aid to their material and social requirements. However, their mode of subsistence revolves round the coconut plantations.

‘Tot kin long’ (means without fencing) is a new system of coconut plantation adopted by the islanders in order to replenish old coconut grooves with new ones. In order to protect their coconut plantations they erect ‘Takoyo’ which is a symbol displayed by erecting two vertical parallel wooden poles joined at the top by a horizontal stick. Pigs' jaws are hung on the horizontal stick along with a few tender coconut leaves, and red and white cotton cloth. It acts as a warning to the members of a large extended joint family residing within a tuhet not to pluck any nuts from the ‘akoyi’ (forbidden) plantation area. During the period of takoyo none of the members of tuhet can pluck nuts from the plantation. There is no doubt that all members of a tuhet have usufructuary rights and access to the available resources of the tuhet, which is generally open to all on an equal footing but it lies under the control of the tuhet head. Everyone has to abide by the laws of the ‘takoyo’ for a specific period. This shows that large groups of families residing in a tuhet respect each other.(Justin, 2004, and fieldwork)

Various schemes are introduced for the tribal people by central government to encourage coconut plantations in the region. Some of the tribals are taking hybrid seedlings of coconut and planting them in their lands in order to enrich sources of their cash economy.

Copra Making

Coconut plays a very important role in the subsistence of the Car Nicobarese. However, it is not the staple food but it is a cash crop. In the absence of meat, pork or fish curry it is taken along with pandanus, banana, yam and papaya. Two methods of making copra viz. Sun drying and Kiln drying are considered as indigenous methods by the islanders.

Supari (areca nut) and Copra are sold to the village / primary cooperative society called Panam Hinengo Limited (PHL) at the rate of Rs.45 per kg & Rs.70 per kg respectively. P.H.L. in turn sells the local products to the central cooperative society called E.H.L. or Ellon Hinengo Limited which ship them either to Calcutta or Chennai to the branches of NAFED (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation) based at New Delhi for sale in the markets. According to Mr. Lamuel Daniel, 2nd captain of Big Lapathi Village, “NAFED gives Rs.35 per kg for copra and Rs.50 per kg for supari but tribals are given only Rs 25 per kg and Rs.40 per kg as E.H.L. takes Rs 3 per kg as transportation and labour charge for working as an agent between tribals and NAFED”. As tribals do not have their own cargo vessels so they have to depend totally on E.H.L. Tapping toddy is regular activity and it is also sold at the rate of Rs 30-35 for 750ml. (Fieldwork, Upadhyay and Patel, 2005)

Extraction of Coconut oil

Coconut oil is extracted applying two indigenous methods by the islanders. First method includes use of a traditional oil press made up of heavy wooden bar known as 'Kinran Tavi-I' under which grated coconut is placed to extract oil.

In the second method, the grated coconut is put in a big utensil almost half filled with water. It is then placed on a raised platform to keep it safe from pigs and dogs and is left there exposed to the intense heat of the sun. After some days, the oil separates and starts floating on the surface. It is poured out and strained with the help of coconut ocrea or cloth. This method takes at least a week, while the first method takes just a day. (Justin, 2004)

The people generally prepare oil for domestic use but now most of the tuhets are extracting oil for commercial purposes to sell it in the market at the rate of Rs. 30-40 per litre.

Areca nut/ Supari (Tisaha)

Areca nut (Tisaha) is another important subsistence crop, but the yield is low on the island. Its current market value is Rs 40-45 per kg. The ripened nuts are exposed to sunlight for a week. The husk and shell are removed. Again it is exposed to the sun. In this way the areca nut is baked and hardened in the dry heat of the sun. Thereafter it is sold to P.H.L. and the cash they get is utilized to meet out daily chorus requirements.

Animal Husbandry

Excluding pigs (haun), no other animal is given much importance in the villages of Car Nicobar. They rear varieties of live stock but do not give much importance to these animals as is done by mainlanders. Every tuhet rear its own pig herds as pigs have both social and religious importance on the island. In marriage payments, pigs, goats and fowl are presented as gifts and they are also used as a mode of settling disputes as compensations in the society.

Pig Herding

Pig herding is part of daily routine of the Nicobarese. It symbolizes a high social status among the Nicobarese. Pigs are treated as an asset, a source of happiness and merry making on festive occasions and imposed as fines in settling disputes and petty crimes. Pigs bring prestige to the tuhet. Feeding the pigs is considered as an auspicious activity. Every day in the morning they go to 'noko' (a place for feeding pigs) and feed their pigs with grated coconuts. Every Nicobari follow it religiously. However, the commercial value of pigs among the tribals is a recent development.

According to Mr. Thomas Phillip, Secretary Tribal Council C/N, and Late Mr. J. B. Daniel, second captain of small Lapathy village, "The scheme of providing foreign breeds of pigs to tribals is not successful on the island because the breeds which are provided are brought from mainland and they are adapted to different types of feed and here on the island they have to be dependent on coconuts. They cannot adopt this change in feed and hence couldn't survive for long. Though animal husbandry dept. also provides feed at nominal costs but it is not

sufficient for feeding the pigs". So the scheme is not much beneficial for the tribals in improving their economy. (Upadhyay and Patel, 2005)

Formation of Cooperative Societies, Cooperative Movement on the Island and the Nicobarese

Earlier, Nicobarese of Car Nicobar was involved only in barter trade but with changes in economy, the barter system is dying slowly and gradually. In 1948 Government formed Primary Cooperative Marketing Societies (P.H.L./Panam Hinengo Limited). P.H.L. was initiated by Bishop John Richardson. and they now exist in all the villages of Car Nicobar in order to cease exploitation and boost the trading activities of the people. After 1947, the entire island was managed by MS Jadwet Trading Company in which the islanders were also made partners. Half of the shares belonged to Jadwet while the balance accrued to the Nicobarese. Later the firm was renamed as Nicobar Trading Company and then Nicobarese - Commercial Company. In the early part of 1977 it was converted to Ellon Hinengo Limited (E.H.L.) or Central Cooperative Society. Since, 1947, barter system of trade has been given up totally and now P.H.L. & E.H.L. are working as whole sole agents of NAFED and tribals in all their trading activities. E.H.L., with the help of its Fair Price shops system (FPS) which is in every village of Car Nicobar, supplies articles of daily use to the tribals on reasonable prices.

In this way cooperative movement has affected the lives of the people and moulded new attitudes. With the opening of Nationalized Banks like State Bank of India and Andaman & Nicobar Cooperative Bank, people have learnt the significance of saving money. PHL & EHL buy tribal products like copra and supari and sell it to NAFED and give reasonable prices to the tribals. But it has been pointed out that EHL possesses an undoubted political influence, which is causing negative reaction in overall process of development.

According to Mr. Derrek Israel, 1st captain of Small Lapathi village, "people are not happy with functioning of EHL in spite of their valuable services rendered to islanders. An undercurrent of resentment is discernible among several young educated people. They believe that Jadwet receives the major share of profits and they are given fewer amounts in comparison to their hard work done in producing copra and supari. EHL also takes much time in paying to the tribal for their produce. Due to this, tribals face a lot of hardships when they are in urgent need of money or during emergencies. EHL has cargo vessels like M V Safeena, M V Nicotrade, M V Richardson & M V Solomen in order to carryout trading activities. By trading collectively they are able to pool together the resources of all the villages and distribute benefits to share holders which are less benefiting to tribals." (Fieldwork)

The Car Nicobarese are working hard to produce their requirements for subsistence alone. There is no surplus or commercial gain from their various activities, even though they have a productive economy.

They are moving towards modernization and can be called most developed tribal of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In spite of tremendous changes in social beliefs and practices and material culture, they have neither accomplished any innovations, nor adopted new techniques and modern agricultural know how in the horticultural activities. No mechanized implements are reported to have been used; chemical fertilizers, seeds and manure can give impetus to the horticultural activities of the people. In the early 1970's Nicobarese began a new trend towards incipient agricultural economy by initiating paddy cultivation at Mus

village but lack of irrigation facilities and composition of soil hindered this start.(Justin, 2004)

The Cooperative activity of PHL & EHL needs to be made more transparent and favourable to tribals. These days, the PHL & EHL are working and functioning in very slow pace. Though they are formed for tribal welfare but these are adding to their problems and exploiting them in one way or other. So, more transparency is needed in the working of PHL, EHL, Tribal Council and village Captains. All institutions on the island need to perform their best for tribal welfare because they are the representatives of tribal and are one among them.

Under the influence of Christianity and various schemes of tribal development initiated by Govt. of India, these tribals were smoothly sailing towards prosperity. But the tsunami of BLACK SUNDAY on 26 December, 2004 devastated the whole island and shattered the dreams of peace loving Nicobarese. This tsunami not only shattered the dreams but also disrupted the growth of various economic organizations flourishing among Nicobarese viz. agriculture, horticulture, coconut plantation, animal husbandry, herding, fishing hunting, copra making and cooperative movement under the auspices of NAFED, Panam Hinengo Limited (Primary Cooperative Society), Ellon Hinengo Limited (Central Cooperative Society) and Nicobari Tribal Council. After the continuous endeavour of almost more than one and half decades, both at the part of the Nicobarese and the Government, the island of Car Nicobar has overcome the material losses incurred on them due to catastrophic tsunami. However, the grief of losing their beloved ones still haunts industrious and kind hearted Nicobarese.

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