

TOPONYMY OF ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI) are a group of remote, isolated island archipelago and external territory of India at the juncture of the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea extending between 92° to 94° East and 6° to 14° North latitude. The capital city of ANI, Port Blair, is located 1,190 km from Chennai of mainland India. Since pre-historic times, these islands were the home of aboriginal tribes. The vulnerable tribal groups identified in the Andaman group of islands are the Great Andamanese, Onges, Jarawas, and Sentinalese, all of Negrito origin, while the tribes in the Nicobar group are the Nicobarese and Shompens, both of Mongloid origin. This article looks at the toponyms of various islands of ANI and shows how these names reflect the social and political attitudes and motivations of the name-givers. This article also analyses how the toponyms distinct and different on islands based on island life, e.g. biodiversity, food, customs, space, time, memory and their relationship to mainland and continental toponymies in order to draw valid conclusions about the specificity of island toponymies.

KEYWORDS: *Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India, Toponymy*

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