

Infrastructural Development for Tourism in Great Nicobar: Special Reference to Campbell Bay, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India.

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Abstract

The main objective of the present study has been making comparison of changes in the island settlement particularly over the space and time and its real time development from issue based. The discussion reveals that there has been a tendency of growth among local people after Tsunami 2004 in the few pockets of Campbell Bay oriented. This has happened probably because of two important factors. Firstly, the wave of central government scheme towards mega project and attraction of future tourism prospects. Secondly, the island itself plays an important role for its strategic location. The island has certain individual features which would to some extent, determine a considerably different line of growth, but in the main, condition in the Indian subcontinent will obviously be the principal determining factor in the future course of tourism development in the island. The article is an endeavour to analyse the aspect of tourism prospective.

Keywords: Infrastructure Development, Tourism, Great Nicobar, Aboriginal Tribes, Strategic Location.

Introduction

The entire system of space organisation of these Islands hinges upon Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair). It would be evidence from some examples. Colonization may be taken first. The history of occupancies of new lands, such as the North America, reveal that first settlers were occupied those areas which are easily accessible from the port to landing and more economic to settle. Thereafter they move to interior areas and to less economic lands. But these movements are associated with the developments of means of transport. In the case of Andaman and Nicobar Islands first settlers settled down in Sri Vijaya Puram and its outskirt. Sri Vijaya Puram which has been the only point of landing. In later phases, port and jetties has been developed in other Northern and Southern Islands. These places played dual role, one as linking point with the core i.e. Sri Vijaya Puram and the other as the regional central places for providing services and facilities. Consequently, they also became administrative headquarters.

The present study area is one of the best example for Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which as came to its existent only after settlements during 1970's. The different settlements have established under the scheme of Government of India.

Selection of the Study Area

Great Nicobar is located 180 km to the North of the island of Sumatra. The island covers 921 km² but is

sparsely populated with a population of 8067 in 2011. It is largely covered by rainforest, known for its diverse wildlife and primitive group i.e. Shompen tribe. The Great Nicobar island is located between 6° 45' N and 93° 49' E. The southernmost point of India, Indira Point, is located in Great Nicobar Island; which is accessible by road from Campbell Bay, the headquarter of the sub-division nearly 65 km, away from Campbell Bay harbour. The island is close to Strait of Malacca, the main waterway linking the Indian Ocean with the Pacific Ocean. It lies close to Aceh Province of Indonesia, an area which is an important global trade route.

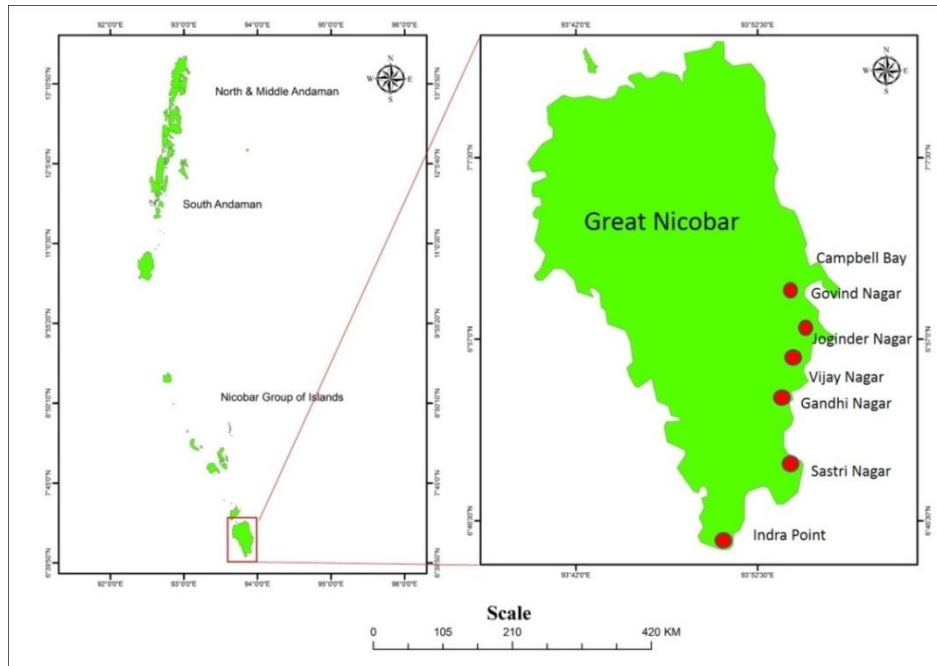


Fig: 1. Study Area

Campbell Bay port is situated in eastern part of the island, which is approximately 1200 kms. south east of the Indian mainland. Distance between the Sri Vijaya Puram to Campbell Bay by sea route is 529 kms. Campbell Bay can be reached from Sri Vijaya Puram by means of a helicopter which is provided by Pawan Hans and Dornier aircraft service, which is controlled by Andaman Nicobar command. The inter-island shipping services are also available from Sri Vijaya Puram in regular interval.

Island at a Glance

1	Location	Southernmost Island of U.T	
2	Distance by Sea from Sri Vijaya Puram	552 Km	
4	Head Quarter	Campbell Bay	
5	Gram Panchyat	03 Nos.	
6	Panchyat Samiti	1	
7	Population in 2011	8367	
8	Sex ratio	665 in 2011 and 741 in 2001	
9	Population Density	7	
10	ST Popualtion	898	

11	Major Language	Hindi, Punjabi, Nicobari, Telugu	
12	Shompen (Aboriginal tribe)	244	
13	Suitable month for tourism	Oct to April	
14	major Crops	Coconut, Arecanut	
15	Special Species	Rudraksha Plant (Elaecocarpus Ganitrus).	
16	LPG Connection	2421(2022-23)	
17	health and Wellness centre	12	
18	Electrified Villages (Including Other Islands)	21	

Source: Basic Statistic, 2022-23, Directorate of Economic and Statistics, A&N Administration,

Port Blair

The history of Campbell Bay is deeply intertwined with the indigenous tribes that have inhabited the Island for millennia. The Nicobarese and Shompen tribes have thrived in the island relying on traditional livelihoods such as fishing, hunting and gathering. During British colonial period, small administrative setups established in Campbell Bay area and extract the natural resources as for their own commercial interest for trading.

Selection of the area of its significance in future prospects like tourism development and other mega projects of international importance and in regional prospects.

Aims and Objectives:

The present research paper has attempted to study the significance of the island location in broader prospect of national interest. Find out the positive role in national security and parallel to its multiple developments for human settlement and its future self-sufficient economy. Since the present study covers of its infrastructure facilities in the growth of tourism and allied services, it will help to understand the growth and development extent to the services in southern islands of the union territory. Improve transportation infrastructure to enhance the accessibility for tourists visiting in Campbell Bay.

Data Base and Methodology

In order to have a better understanding of spatio-temporal changes of the island different data sets were used to understanding the situation. Topographical maps and Google imagery were used to analyse the forest cover land use and different beaches creeks, post tsunami changes in sea shore and habitations of people. Based on field observation and image interpretation the assessment has finalized. The present study is also based on secondary source of data collected from local government office in Campbell Bay and other district level office in Sri Vijaya Puram apart from these, conducted local interviews with old settler's, fisher colonies, Nicobari tribal and other NGO's are also being collected and finalised in the study. The data, thus came together were performed a series of actions to change and examined accordingly.

About the Island

Great Nicobar Island is the southernmost island situated in Andaman and Nicobar groups of Islands which is one of the largest islands in this archipelago. Geographically it lies 529 km sea distance from Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair) to Campbell Bay, which is the entry point of Great Nicobar Island. The

bay is nestled amidst lush green tropical forest and fringed by pristine beaches, offering breath-taking views of the sea. Campbell Bay enjoys a strategic location that makes it gateway to the Indo Pacific region. It's proximately to international shipping routes and its harbour has historically made it a significant maritime hub. The region experiences a tropical climate characterised by high temperatures, humidity and rainfall throughout the year. The dense vegetation, consisting of evergreen and deciduous forest, supports a diverse array of flora and fauna including endemic species found in the territory. In addition to its natural beauty, Campbell Bay is renowned for its multi-cultural heritage, with indigenous tribes such as Nicobarese and Shompen inhabiting the island for centuries. Their unique traditions language and craftsmanship add to the cultural tapestry of the region.

People Accessibility of the Island

Originally, Great Nicobar is the home of two indigenous communities, the Shompen and Nicobarese. In later phase colonial power first setup their establishment in Campbell Bay for their maritime purpose and developed the harbour and few infrastructures to exploit the natural resource from the island.

After independence, the first batch of ex- serviceman settlers in 23rd April 1969, hailing from the various district of Punjab reached to Campbell Bay under the Government of India scheme and settled in the islands in different coastal villages. They were allotted sufficient land for agriculture and as well as for plantation crops. All total 67 families of ex- serviceman were bought from the Punjab. The challenges faced by the settlers were paramount, as they established their houses and agriculture practices in one of the remotest part of the union territory. Over the years, more ex-servicemen settlers joined there from the different states of India up to 1980, along with few families of fisherman. These ex-serviceman families living their lives in isolation but steadfast their commitment to their nation's security. The ex-serviceman settler's villages were located near the south eastern coastal part of the islands. Villages are Campbell Bay, Joginder Nagar, Lakshmi Nagar, Govind Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, Shastri Nagar. In Campbell Bay Zero Point is famous for its locational point of view. All the developmental activities and infrastructures are developed in around of Zero Point, also it is known as the headquarter of Great Nicobar. As the island geographical location is very strategic and significance for Indian union water boundary.

Connectivity from the Focal Point (Sri Vijaya Puram)

The development of transport system is closely associated with the socio- economic development of the region. The transport system is created tie with various point which has desire to interact with each other. Once a region is occupied, it necessitates the development of the transport and communication system to sustain the established relationship.

The union territory, situated in the Bay of Bengal constitute one of the most isolated part of the Indian union, separated from the mainland of India by vast stretches of sea. Since the location of islands amid the sea, water transport is of special importance to maintain the contact with the rest of the India. Regular ship services for passengers and heavy goods are transported from Sri Vijaya Puram to Campbell Bay harbours. Therefore, waterways are the lifelines for Great Nicobar Island. Presently helicopter services are there and defence services established an airport and weekly air services are facilitates for the local people. Coast Guard established their new extension centre in Campbell Bay. Routine petroleum services through their ships are maintained proper Indian maritime security. Regular ship services are maintained from Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair) to Campbell Bay and vice versa. At

present boats and ships services are in a good condition and maintained its regularity. M.V. Sindhu and M.V. Nalanda, two modern ships are giving their services in regular mode. The ships are having all modern facilities for passenger and also capacity of goods container.

Next to waterways, the road transport in Campbell Bay comprises and maintained by the State Transport Services (STS) through buses from Campbell Bay bus terminus to Gandhi Nagar village, the last settlement of the island and other key destinations in the island. Additionally, private vehicles provide flexibility and convenience for those seeking independent travel expenses. The lifeline of the island connectivity i.e, north-south road, with a length of 65 kms, from Campbell Bay harbour to last point of India i.e, Indira Point, a border road constructed and maintained by the Border Road Organisation (BRO) ensuring connectivity and accessibility across the region. Known for their robustness and durability, BRO built road provide vital transportation links, facilitating movements between key destinations in the island. With the expertise of BRO, Campbell Bay's road network contributes to the development of tourism and infrastructure playing a crucial role in supporting the regions socio economic growth and the connectivity with the rest of the union territory. Recently, Indira Point southernmost helipad of India was developed and it is also maintained by the defence and BRO. Our honourable President of India Smti. Draupadi Murmu, visited this place during February 2024 and boosting the morals of defence personals. One of the best slogan/message, BRO placed near road side milestone written as "Kashmir to Indira Point, India is one".

Tourism infrastructure in the Islands

Limited infrastructure has developed by government sector for tourism. Campbell Bay offers Government sector accommodation such as APWD guest house, Information Publicity& Tourism (I.P&T) Tourist guest house, Panchayat guest house for public and as well as for tourists. In private sector, still the development of hotel and other home stay or private guest houses are very limited. In Campbell Bay, transportation infrastructure comprises limited government services like State transport buses, offering connectivity to key destinations within island. Tourists can also hire rental vehicles to explore the regional their own pace.

Good quality foods are available in government guest houses and other private hotels, they are providing meals in reasonable rates.

Communication Infrastructures includes services like BSNL, FTTH and Airtel Broadband, yet its internet connectivity remains limited in many areas.

Ongoing initiatives, such as the development of helipad at Indira Point, effort to enhance the connectivity and promote tourism development in Campbell Bay.

Major Project of Government of India Great Nicobar

The Great Nicobar transshipment port project is a significant infrastructure development initiative planned by the Indian government to transform the island of Great Nicobar into a major transshipment hub. This project is part of a large strategic vision to enhance India's maritime trade capabilities, improve connectivity and established Great Nicobar as a key location for shipping in the Indian Ocean region.

It will increase India's connectivity with Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and the other important trade zones. The project is expected to create numerous jobs, spur regional development. Along with the port, development of roads airports and other infrastructure in Great Nicobar will enhanced to support econo-

mic activities.

The NITI Aayog plan envisages 6,50,000 people inhabiting in the island by 2050. Its current population is only around 8,500 (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>). However, the project must balance developmental goals with ecological preservation to sustainably benefit the region.

Important tourism sites

Campbell Bay boasts pristine beaches, lush green rainforest and diverse maritime life, offering unparalleled opportunities for eco-tourism and adventure. With rich biodiversity, cultural heritage, adventure activities like snorkelling and trekking. Important tourist attraction sites are as follows:

1. Galathea River

The Galathea River present promising tourism potential with its scenic beauty and its deltaic coast and beaches which has attracts seasonal immigration of turtles from far Australian Sea in their age long route for nestling. They are famous for calling leather back turtles. The river offering activities such as rivers cruises, kayaking and bird watching. It's an ideal destination for eco-tourism experiences.

2. Indira Point

As the southernmost point of India, Campbell Bay offers tourists a unique opportunity to explore the experience the pristine beauty of the islands. It's remote beauty and as a symbolic landmark, Indira Point offers stunning view of Indian Ocean. The location is especially significant for its lighthouse, which has served as a guide post for ships navigating the region. Though the 2004 Tsunami submerged parts of Indira Point, the lighthouse still stands in its original position, the basement of the lighthouse embarked in seawater.

3. Beaches and other tourist attraction Points

Pristine beaches such as B.Quary, in Campbell Bay, Alexander Beach in Joginder Nagar, Laxmanpur Beach in Rajiv Nagar, Gandhi Nagar beach in Gandhi Nagar, Indra point beach and Galathea river coast beach. All the beaches and coastline are the attraction point of domestic and international tourists. These unspoiled sites are offer visitors the opportunities to explore untouched and experience the raw beauty of nature.

4. Biodiversity Site

With numerous endemic species of flora and fauna found nowhere else in the world. Rare endangered bird's species such as Nicobar Megapode, Nicobar Pigeon, Nicobar Scrub fowl inhabit the forests, making Campbell Bay a paradise for wildlife lovers and bird watchers.

Post-Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster

The catastrophic history of mega Sumatra Andaman earthquake on 26 December 2004 triggered Tsunami waves killed over 2.85 lakhs of peoples in South East Asian countries. These islands (Nicobar group of islands) were one of the worst affected regions. The coastal belt of the Great Nicobar, which was inhabited with an ex-serviceman settler, suffered a lot in terms of life and property. The coastal belt of the Great Nicobar Island was damage severely. The coastal sea beaches, agriculture lands, coastal roads, houses, government buildings totally washed out by devastating tsunami killer waves.

After the disaster, Government of India has started a major developmental project of the island and after a period of 20 years, the island witnesses new phase of development in the area. Major project has been launched and normalised the situation. Today, while scars of the tsunami remain visible, Campbell Bay stands as a testament to the indomitable spirits of its people and enduring power of hope and renewal.

Suggestions

Beside the development of the individual resources, there are possibilities of the use of combinational resources also. Among them, scenic beauty can be one. The landscape of the island is the complex of heterogeneous elements of both physical and human realms. The island is one of the very few places in the world today, where man has so far survived in his original forms and manners. The natural scenic beauty, serpentine creeks, palm fringed sandy beaches, coral reefs, evergreen forests undulating green hills and fabulous underwater life makes the island a paradise for tourists. All the places of interest are opened for Indian national and certain restrictions on foreign tourists are there. It is suggested that permission process is being simplified to attract foreign tourists. Tourist home also been established in different location for easily accessible and stay with all comfortable facilities. Further, link with the island and mainland has to be strengthened by providing frequent air services from Sri Vijaya Puram and Vice Versa. Inter-Island helicopter services and regular ship services have also added to attraction. It is also suggested that Sea Plane services also been introduced in the island.

Conclusion

In a nutshell the island is rich in natural resources, which are capable of transforming the extractions-based economy into a dynamic and tourism once if utilised with the island. Due to absence of vast coastal plains and flatlands, land must be used very judiciously. Land resource and its utilisation is not enough scope for expansion of grain farming because of the limited level land. In this perspective it is proposed to enhance the scope of tourism as the best source of economy in the island. The Government of India mega project has also been support to develop the island economy in near future. In this process of future planning for regional development emphasis should be diversification of island economy in accordance with the natural resources. At the same time good health of the island should be maintained. Concentration of all facilities and infrastructure not to be developed in Campbell Bay concentric, it should be planned in such a manner that equity and development is more simultaneously.

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