

Lakshadweep

Overview:

Lakshadweep is the smallest Union Territory of India. The group is located 200 to 300 km. off the coast of Kerala in the Arabian Sea. It is a group of two dozen islands, eleven of which are inhabited. Lakshadweep is the northern part of the former Lakshadweepa. Lakshadweepa means "one hundred thousand islands" in Sanskrit. It refers to the three archipelagoes in the Indian Ocean stretching southwards into the Indian Ocean from the sea off the southeastern coasts of India. These are the Laccadives, Maldives and the Chagos Archipelago.

Territory:

Land area 32 sq. km (20 sq. mi).

An archipelago with a land area of 32 sq. km (20 sq. mi). Comprised of 10 inhabited islands and 17 uninhabited islands, attached islets and 5 submerged reefs. The islands are spread over a 48,000 sq. km (30,000 sq mi) radius in the Arabian Sea. The inhabited islands are Kavaratti, Minicoy, Androth, Agatti, Amini, Kalpeni, Kadmath, Kiltan, Chetlath and Bitra.

Location:

Located about 220 to 440 km (137.5 sq. mi to 275 sq. mi) from Kerala coast and at a distance of varying from 6 to 350 km (3.8 mi to 218.8 mi) from one another.

Latitude and Longitude:

8 12 North Latitude and 71 74 East Longitude

Time Zone:

GMT +5

Total Land Area:

32

EEZ:

200

Climate:

Tropical. High humidity of 70-76%. Annual mean temperature 30_ C. /82_ F., rainfall <250 inches. Rainy season is from May to September and November to January and southwest monsoons are a regular occurrence during this time. March, April and May are the hottest months of the year.

Violent storms and cyclones regularly occur in Lakshadweep. A disaster management committee monitors the weather. Weather ships, ferries and helicopters are available for search and rescue missions.

Natural Resources:

fish, coconut, coir. They are the country's only coral islands. Lakshadweep officially consists of 12 atolls, 3 reefs and 5 submerged banks, with a total of about 36 islands and islets. The reefs are in fact also atolls, although mostly submerged, with only small unvegetated sand cays above the high water mark. The submerged banks are sunken atolls. Almost all the atolls have a northeast-southwest orientation with the islands lying on the eastern rim, and a mostly submerged reef on the western rim, enclosing a lagoon.

ECONOMY:

Total GDP:	
1998	15,000,000.00 USD

Per Capita GDP:	
1995	250.00 USD

% of GDP per Sector:		
Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

% of Population Employed by Sector			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
1998	70%	%	%

External Aid/Remittances:

Growth:

Real Growth Rate: 5.2% (2000)

Lakshadweep is considered a no-industry area. However, an Industrial Potential survey conducted by the industrial Development Bank of India has revealed that the area has the capacity for industrial development. On the request of the Administration Agencies like Small Industries Service Institute, Trichur; Regional Research Laboratory, Thiruvananthapuram; Industrial and Technical Consultancy Organisation, Kochi, etc, have prepared detailed industrial potentiality reports for Lakshadweep and suggested various kinds of ventures with developmental potential based on resources available and demand for implementation. The sea around the island is highly productive. The islands stand first in the country in per capita availability of fish. Coconut fibre extraction and conversion of its fibre products is the main industry in the islands. Under government sector there are seven coir fibre factories, seven coir production-cum-demonstration centres and four fibre curling units, functioning under the coir sector. These units produced coir fibre and coir yarn in addition to other coir products like curled fibre, corridor mat, mat and matting. Small coir units are also functioning under private sector

in different islands.

An initiative geared toward addressing high unemployment rates is "The District Employment Exchange." The service registers applicants and submits their resumes to potential employers, and arranges work placements. In addition, the Employment Exchange is in the process of helping recruit people to the Indian Army, Air Force and Coast Guard. Upgrade skills, such as typing, training are offered to those interested.

Labour Force:

Unemployment

Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)
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Industry:

Tourism, fishing, boat building, coconut and coir cultivation.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Lakshadweep economy, the major products being coconut and coir, with coconut producing approximately 26.5 million nuts in 1994-95.

Besides agriculture, the other major activity is fishing. The Lakshadweep Development Corporation Limited, a government corporation, runs the ferry system between islands and is responsible for ports, shipping and tourism sectors.

Niche Industry:

Considering the scope for coir and coir based industries, coir demonstration cum training centres were established during 1974-75 to train the local women in production of thinner variety coir yarn which has good market value, not only in the Islands, but also on the mainland. Under the coir sector there are seven coir Fiber factories, six coir production-cum-demonstration centres and three fiber curling units functioning in different islands with 316 workers. The above coir units under the department has produced 380 MT coir fiber, 67 MT curled rope and 42 MT coir yarn during 1997-98. In addition to the above unit the department has also established one coir spinners industrial cooperative society at Amini during May 1997 under coir sector. Out of the two Handicraft Training Centres established at Kavaratti and Kalpeni in 1973 and 1979 respectively, one is continuing to impart training to local candidates in making seashell-toys, coconut shells-craft, wood carving etc. After training they are provided with tools and equipments on 50% subsidy to establish their own production units. The hosiery factory established in 1967 at Kalpeni produces vests, tee shirts, etc. Presently the factory provides regular employment to 17 persons and job work employment to 13 persons. During 1997-98 the factory produced 11,817 different size banyans in addition to allied products.

Tourism:

Due to its isolation and scenic appeal, Lakshadweep is emerging as a major tourist attraction for Indians. This brings in significant revenue, which is likely to increase. Since such a small region cannot support industries, the government is actively promoting tourism as a means of income. Adventure tourism and scuba diving are being highlighted. In 2006, tourism infrastructure was started with the construction of a 200 bed hotel in Kavaratti.

Imports and Exports:	
External Budget: revenues: 209,240.00; expenditures: 4.36 million; Exports: n/a; Partners: mainland India; Imports: n/a; Partners: mainland India;	
Tot. Value of Imports	0.00 ()
From Eu:	
Import Partners (EU:)	
Partners Outside EU:	
Import Partners:	
Tot. Value of Exports	()
To Eu:	
Export Partners:	
Partners Outside EU::	
Export Partners:	
Main Imports:	
Main Exports:	



TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS

External:

Number of Airports:

Indian Airlines services the inhabited islands of Kavaratti, Minicoy, Androth, Agatti, Amini, Kalpeni, Kadmath, Kiltan, Chetlath and Bitra. Helicopters also travel from the mainland to Kavaratti, Kalpeni, Minicoy and Kadmath.

Agatti has an airport where there are direct flights from Kochi, Kerala or Ernakulam (Cochin). Tourists need a permit to visit the islands; foreign nationals are not permitted to visit certain islands. Consumption of alcoholic liquor is not permitted in the islands except at Bangaram Island.

Number of Main Ports:

The Inter-Island Service Sector regulates cargo ships that make regular trips from the mainland to the islands. Ferries travel between the islands and luxury cruise ships travel around the islands with foreign visitors who are allowed to visit only the island of Bangaram.

Internal:

Air

Road:

cars and bicycles are available on most islands. There are 253 km of paved roads.

Sea:**Other Forms of Transportation:****Economic Zones:**

With a lagoon area of about 4 lakh Sq Km (2 million sq km) of economic zone, Lakshadweep is one of the largest territories of India. [A lakh, also spelled lac, lacs, lacks or laksha, is a unit in the Indian numbering system, widely used both in official and other contexts in Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. One lakh is equal to a hundred thousand. A hundred lakhs make a crore or ten million. This system of measurement also introduces separators into numbers in a place that is different from what is common outside India. For example, 3 million (30 lakh) would be written as 30,00,000 instead of 3,000,000.]

Energy Policy:

All the inhabited Islands including Bangaram had received electricity by the end of Sixth Five Year Plan. The Electrification of the Islands began in 1962. Minicoy was the first Island to receive electricity in 1962. Diesel generating sets are the main power supply. A 50 KWp solar power plant is under construction at Kadmat. One 100KW grid interactive solar photovoltaic (SPV) power plant will be installed at Kiltan. An 80 KW wind electric generator will be installed at Kavaratti and Agatti. One 200 KW capacity Biomas gasifier plant for generating electricity has been proposed to be installed at Kavaratti Island. Solar copra driers have also been proposed for installation at Kavaratti, Amini and Andrott Island.

Year	Total Energy Production (Mwh)	Type			Total Energy Consumption (Mwh)	Sector				
		Thermic (Mwh)	Geothermic (Mwh)	Other (Mwh)		Domestic (Mwh)	Commercial (Mwh)	Public Service (Mwh)	Industry (Mwh)	Public Lighting (Mwh)

Official Currency:

Rupee

Banking and Insurance:

Number of Banks and Credit Unions:

Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:

Number of Insurance Companies:

All money in India must be changed through an official bank or moneychanger. Authorization is given by the Reserve Bank of India. Major banks, such as SBI, Indian Overseas Bank and the Central Bank of India have branches in Lakshadweep. In addition to banks, private dealers and travel agents will exchange money. Often even in the remotest parts of the island there will be small moneychangers available. Institutes available in Lakshadweep include the State Bank of India, Syndicate Bank, Allahabad Bank, United Bank of India, Canara Bank, Punjab National Bank, UCO Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Indian Bank and the UTI Bank.

Financial Services:

Banks and financial institutions that offer insurance are regulated by the Reserve Bank of India. Their guidelines insist that a company have a net worth of not less than 500 Rs crores and a capital adequacy of not less than 10%. Their non-performing assets level must be lower by 1% than the industry average. In addition, their participation in the insurance joint venture should not exceed 30% of the new company paid capital and their total equity investment by the bank in all its subsidiaries and joint ventures does not exceed 20% of its network.

Communications/E-Commerce:

State of the art in Kavaratti, but limited in the rest of the region. A monitoring "Cell" functions in the Collectorate at Disaster Head Quarters in Kavaratti, which immediately transmits information about pending storms or cyclones to all islands via radio transmission. Communication networks of BSNL, Naval detachment, Interstate Police Wireless, Lakshadweep Police Wireless, IR Battalion Wireless, NIC, etc. are fully utilized for warning and for communication. The TV network is also used for communication.

Public Ownership:

Outsiders are forbidden to own land, settle or even visit Lakshadweep without a permit. Women, however, enjoy a unique position. The Marumakkathayam system of inheritance, under which Tharwad property descends through the female line, saves the women from economic dependence. Ancestral or Tarwad property is equally shared among the members of the joint family in Kavaratti and Agatti, whereas in Andrott the division is between the Thavazhi only. The Tharwad property is managed by the eldest male member of the family known as Karanavan. He has no right to alienate or sell any portion of the Tharwad property. The wife and children of the Karanavan are not entitled to any share from Tarwad. Thus the Tharwad property system has given economic freedom and independence to women in the social system of Lakshadweep. The husband is obliged to make an annual payment towards the maintenance of the wife which forms part of the marriage contract. The wife has full freedom to demand a divorce on grounds of non-payment of these customary dues and divorce does not disqualify a woman from seeking a new mate. There is also no ban on the remarriage of a widow. The predominance of women in all walks of life is a peculiar feature of Minicoy. The husband takes the wife's family name after marriage and all family affairs are managed by the female of the house.

Land Use:

arable land: n/a; permanent crops: n/a; other: n/a;

Agriculture/Forestry:

The underlying coral is sometimes excised and the tracts fertilized with organic matter; these support the cultivation of bananas, vegetables, edible root crops, and millet. Coir (coconut husk fibre) is traded for rice from the mainland. Coconut fibre extraction and conversion of its fibre products is the main industry in the islands. Coconut is the only major crop with a production of 27.7 million nuts per year. Area under cultivation is about 27.50 sq. km. Modern Agricultural activities began in 1955 when an Agricultural Demonstrator was posted on Agatti island. Agricultural Fieldmen and Agricultural Maistries were also appointed and trained. At Andrott and Kalpeni, paddy was cultivated first. In 1952, sugar cane was cultivated at Agatti and sugar candy was produced. In 1958, Agricultural Demonstration units were established in all inhabited islands. A separate department for Agriculture now exists under U T Administration. Now, the main activities of the Agricultural Department are the production of good quality coconut seedlings, demonstration of the improved cultural and manurial aspects of coconut cultivation, control of pests and diseases, establishment of vegetable gardens. In these "Thottam" areas, about 10 varieties of paddy were grown in 1970s, but they were unsuccessful. Thottam areas were fully utilized by farmers until the end of 1980s by rotating sweet potato, cowpea and cereals, but they are now used primarily for coconut and banana cultivation.

Marine Activity:**Fishing:**

maritime claims: territorial sea: 4 km;
exclusive fishing zone: 1912 km

The region is regulated by India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

The potential for development in fisheries has resulted in boat-building yards, canning and processing factories being built and the adoption of mechanized fishing boats. The islands have the highest population of fish per capita in the country. The present harvest of fish is only at approximately 10-12%. Tuna and shark are the largest fish resource.

Marine Life:

In the waters of Lakshadweep over 1100 species of fish are identified of which about 30 species are commercially exploited at present. Tuna and shark are the largest fish resource.

Critical Issues:

Over population is a threat to the agriculture industry. An increase in population has resulted in a large number of residential flats being built in farming areas.

JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES

Capital:

Kavaratti

Political System:

Government type: parliamentary form of government containing an independent judiciary, the Kerala High Courts, which guarantees the fundamental rights and directive principles of State Policy. Internal Government: Under the District Magistrate there is one District Magistrate and nine Executive Magistrates. In January 1971, four special types of C.D. Blocks started functioning with their headquarters at Kavaratti, Andrott, Amini and Minicoy.

The Amini Block was later split into two on October 2nd 1976:

- (1) C.D. Block Amini, consisting of Amini and Kadmat Islands with Headquarters at Amini
- (2) C.D. Block Kiltan, consisting of Kitan, Chetlat and Bitra Islands with Headquarters at Kiltan.

All the inhabited Islands along with their attached Islands and islets, were divided into nine additional subdivisions in 1983. Each subdivision is under the charge of a subdivisional Officer. They are also Executive Magistrates for respective Islands. They also function as Block Development Officers or Block Development Officers for these Islands. Co-ordination of all Development activities and Implementation of all programs coming under the community Development Block and the area developmental programs under the Five Year Plan Schemes in these divisions and subdivisions are the responsibility of these officers.

Apart from liaising between the various departmental Administrative powers for local Administration, these Officers also head Block level Committees in their areas. According to the new Panchayati Regulation there will be a two-tier system of Panchayats in Lakshadweep. There will be Dweep Panchayat and a District Panchayat. There will be no intermediary panchayat in this territory.

Ten inhabited Islands have the 10 Dweep Panchayats. The District Panchayat will have its Headquarter at Kavaratti. There are 79 seats in the Dweep Panchayat out of which 75 seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes candidates; and 30 seats are reserved for women, including women belonging to Scheduled Tribes. There will be a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson in the Dweep Panchayat.

There will be 22 seats in the District Panchayats. Out of these, 20 seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes, including 7 seats reserved for women belonging to STs. There will be one President cum-Chief Counsellor and Two Vice Presidents-cum-Counsellors in the District Panchayats. The members of the Dweep Panchayat and District Panchayats will be directly elected. The Chairperson of the Dweep Panchayats will be members of the District Panchayats by virtue of their position as Chairperson.

Legal System: A federal system and the existence of the Central Acts and State Acts in their respective spheres has generally provided for a single integrated system of Courts to administer both Union and State laws. The highest court in India is the Supreme Court of India followed by the High Courts in each State or group of States. Ultimately, the decisions of the Supreme Court are binding on ALL courts. The Supreme Court of India comprises the Chief Justice and not more than 25 other Judges appointed by the President of India. Supreme Court Judges retire upon attaining the age of 65 years. In order to be appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court, a person must be a citizen of India and must have been, for at least five years, a Judge of a High Court or of two or more such Courts in succession, or an Advocate of a High Court or of two or more such Courts in succession for at least 10 years or he must be, in the opinion of the President, a distinguished jurist. Provisions exist for the appointment of a Judge of a High Court as an Ad-hoc Judge of the Supreme Court and for retired Judges of the Supreme Court or High Courts to sit and act as Judges of that Court.

Below the High Courts lies a hierarchy of Subordinate Courts. Panchayat Courts also function in some States under various names like Nyaya Panchayat, Panchayat Adalat, Gram Kachheri, etc. to decide civil and criminal disputes of petty and local nature. Different State laws provide for different kinds of jurisdiction of courts. Each State is divided into judicial districts and presided over by a District and Sessions Judge. This is the principal civil court of original jurisdiction and it can try all offences including those punishable by death. The Sessions Judge is the highest judicial authority in a district. Below him, there are Courts of civil jurisdiction, known in different States as Munsifs, Sub-Judges, Civil Judges etc. Similarly, the criminal judiciary comprises the Chief Judicial Magistrates and Judicial Magistrates of First and Second Class.

Associated Power: Union Territory of India, a Sovereign Democratic Republic. The President is the head of state who in turn appoints the Attorney General and Parliamentary representatives. The Indian Parliament establish laws on matters enumerated in the Union List. State Legislatures establish laws on matters enumerated in the State List. While both the Union and the States have power to legislate on matters enumerated in the Concurrent List, only Parliament has power to make laws on matters not included in the State List or the Concurrent List. In the event of repugnancy, laws made by Parliament shall prevail over law made by State Legislatures. The State law shall be void unless it has received the assent of the President, and in such case, shall prevail in that State. Judicial Branch: Supreme Court of India, High Court and State Court. The Kerala High Court presides over the islands of Lakshadweep.

Political Parties:

Communist Party (CPI), Indian National Congress (INC), United Progressive Alliance (UPA)

Important Legislation:

Constitution: 1950, amended 1956, 1960, 1976, 1986;

The Constitution recognizes statutes, case law and customary law consistent with its dispensations. Statutes are enacted by Parliament, State Legislatures and Union Territory Legislatures. There is also a vast body of laws known as subordinate legislation in the form of rules and regulations, as well as by-laws made by Central and State Governments and local authorities like Municipal Corporations, Municipalities, Gram Panchayats and other local bodies. This subordinate legislation is made under the authority conferred or delegated either by Parliament or the State or Union Territory Legislature concerned.

Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands (Entry and Residence restriction) Rules: enacted 1967.

These rules protect the interests of the general public of Lakshadweep, about 95% of whom are Scheduled Tribes. As per these rules, every person, who is not a native of these islands, must obtain a permit in order to enter or reside in these islands. Government Officials and Armed Force members

and their family members are exempted from this requirement and foreign tourists who have a valid passport and visa for visiting India, can visit as a tourist the islands of Agatti, Kadmat and International Tourist Resort of Bangaram, with permission of Administrator.

The Consumer Protection Act: enacted 1986, amended 2002;

This act allows a trader or the service provider, as the case may be, to file a complaint about a price in excess of the price

(a) fixed by or under any law for the time being in force;

(b) displayed on the goods or any package containing such goods;

(c) displayed on the price list exhibited by him by or under any law for the time being in force;

(d) agreed between the parties; (v) goods which will be hazardous to life and safety when used are being offered for sale to the public. Lakshadweep

Land Revenue and Tenancy Regulation, 1965. The right of ownership is related to the number of coconut trees only, but, until 1959, residents were ignorant of the extent of the land they owned. A survey was carried out under the Lakshadweep Survey and Boundaries Regulation, 1959, and rules protecting the islanders were established. The landlord-tenant relationship was abolished with the enforcement of Lakshadweep Land Revenue and Tenancy Regulation, 1965. On abolition, three fourths of the land was granted to the Nadapu tenant who owned the trees, and the remaining one fourth of the land was reverted to the Jenmi or cowledar. Lakshadweep Development Corporation, Companies Act, 1956. Set up under the Island Development Authority for developing the economic and commercial activities of the islands, this has encouraged the development of the Tuna Canning Factory at Minicoy and increased its capacity to 3 lakh cans per annum. A Desiccated Coconut Powder unit has also begun at Kadmat. The average annual production of Desiccated Coconut is 60 tonnes. The Corporation is also diversifying this unit to produce Coconut Oil. Marketing of Coir products produced by the Department of Industries has been taken over by the Corporation, which is now able to fetch better prices than earlier. Jaggery, vinegar and a coconut nursery unit had been set up at Kalpeni and Andrott respectively. A Masmin and fish meal unit was established at Agatti to produce masmin and utilize the by-product as fish meal for poultry consumption. The annual installed capacity is 100 tonnes of masmin and 30 tonnes of fish meal.

Principal Taxes:

Associated Power:

Union Territory of India

Citizenship:

Indian

Paradiplomacy:

n/a

HUMAN RESOURCES

60,595 (2001)

2001			
Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population

males: 51.4% (31 118); females: 48.7% (29 477) (2001)

Population:	
Year	Resident Population

Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up
2001	8860	0	0	0	0

Migration:

Crude Birth Rate:	
2001	18.05%

Life Expedctancy:

61.3 years (2001)

Crude Death Rate:	
2001	3.87%

Ethnicity:

More than 93% of the population who are indigenous, are Muslims, converted by Arab traders, and the majority of them belong to the Shafi School of the Sunni Sect. The islanders are ethnically similar to coastal Kerala's Malayali people. Inhabitants of Minicoy, the southernmost and largest island, closely resemble Maldivians. The locals call themselves the Div-i or the Aminidivi ("from the mother island").

Class Division:

The entire indigenous population has been classified as Scheduled Tribes because of their economic and social backwardness. According to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes list (modification orders), 1956, the inhabitants of Lakshadweep who and both of whose parents were born in these islands are treated as Scheduled Tribes. There are no Scheduled Castes in this Union Territory.

Languages:

Malayalam is spoken in all the islands except Minicoy where people speak Mahl which is written in Divehi script and is spoken in Maldives also. The people of all the northern islands speak a dialect of Malayalam. According to local folk beliefs, they descended from traders who were washed up on the islands during a particularly heavy storm. However, the people of Minicoy, the southernmost atoll, speak Mahl, a variant of Divehi, the language of the Maldives.

Religion:



Muslim 90%, other 10%

Literacy:

87.52% (def: over 15 can read and write; 2001)

Education System:

Historically, education in Lakshadweep was limited to the teaching of the Koran. Now these "Madrasas" function alongside modern schools. Modern elementary education is available on Agatti, Kavaratti and Androth and Minicoy. Scholarships are offered by the Indian government to encourage students to pursue higher education. There are nineteen JB schools, four SB schools, Nine high schools, and two secondary schools. The Jawaharlal Nehru College is located in Kavaratti and is affiliated with Calicut University. A new Trade "Information Technology System & Electronic Maintenance (IT & ESM)" program is in the process of being approved at the Industrial Training Institute, also located in Kavaratti. Upon completion, candidates will be able to repair and maintain all electronic equipment, including computers. There is also an Adult Education Programme being implemented in order to improve the literacy rates in adults in the region.

Total Pre-schools:(2007)	
Total Primary Schools	
First Level:	
Second Level:	
Third Level:	
Total Secondary Schools:	
Total Professional Schools	2
Universities:	

Number of Schools per Island:										
	Pre-school		Elementary			High-school		Prof.	University	
	Pub	Priv	1	2	3	Pub	Priv		Pub	Priv
			19	4		9		1	1	

Students Enrolled:					
Year:	Pre-School	Elementary	High-school	Prof.	University

Teachers							
Year	Pre-School	Elementary			High-School	Prof.	University
		1	2	3			

Lakshadweep Kala Academy, a multi-art and multi-disciplinary art/cultural institution. Universal secondary education proposed by 2010. In 2006, two school uniforms were given to each primary school child. In 2006, a new Tourism training course was added at the Dr. Ambedkar I.T.I. which also has: Hospitality Management, Marine Tourism, IT and Electronic System Maintenance, Electrician, Fitter, Mason, Welder, Plumber, Seaman Training for CDC, Fishing and Marine Engineering.

Medical Services:

There are several medical services available in Lakshadweep including 2 hospitals, 3 community health centres, and 4 primary health centres. There are dental services available at the Indira Ghandi Hospital in Kavaratti. The first modern dispensary was started in 1874 at Amini without any infrastructure or facility. In 2006, additional dispensaries for the Indian system of medicine were created. The 'Ever Alert' web enabled stock entry system for all medical institutions was set up. Continual improvements in facilities and services have decreased the incidence of epidemics like cholera and smallpox, leprosy and filariasis. Improvements in transportation and communication have also helped improve the incidence of these diseases, as well as the implementation of the various national programs for control/eradication of diseases. Family welfare programs, including the universal immunization program and maternal and child health activities have helped reduce mortality rates and improve the health status of the people. There is a Lakshadweep AIDS Control Society which is credited by government for the decreasing amount of aids cases in the Union.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

History:

The name Lakshadweep means "Hundred Thousand Islands" in the Malayalam language and also in Sanskrit. Evidence suggests that the first known human settlement in Lakshadweep began in 6th century. Although the earliest settlers, who came from Malabar coast, were nomadic, they brought with them coconuts to cultivation. The Islands were covered with various types of perennial shrubs, trees and grass species. Andrott, Kalpeni, Amini, Kavaratti and Agatti show evidence of the earliest settlements. Early settlers excavated the interior part of the island first to create suitable conditions for the cultivation of rice, and other crops like jower, sorghum, ragi, sweet potato and bananas. Wild colacasia and cowpea were also cultivated. Initially the primary means of transportation between islands and the mainland was by boats called odams. The main items transported were plated coconut leaves, vinegar, jaggery, cowries, coconut planks (Ada), dondhi, dried fenari & thaluthama (medicinal plants). Eventually, these commodities were sold in Kozhikode and Cannanore at Kerala and Mangalore at Karnataka, ports belonging to the Indian Union. Although these items were the islands main economic resource, during the 6 month monsoon season, transportation and communication were cut off between islands and mainland. As a result, islanders often suffered from malnutrition and were forced to survive on coconuts, fish, rhizome of wild colacasia, and the pseudostem of plantain.

Before November 1956 and during the reign of Kolathiri Rajahs and to some extent the Ali Rajahs, the administration in the islands was only nominal and the emphasis was more on trade. Each island was almost a separate unit though they were under a common ruler. The islands came to be divided in 1787 when Tippu Sultan accepted the allegiance of the people of Amindivi Islands and took over those islands in return for a jaghir from his territory in Chirakkal. Thus the five islands Amini, Kadmat, Kiltan, Chetlat and Bitra, fell under Tippu Sultan's regime while the rest, Kavaratti, Agatti Andrott, Kavaratti and Minicoy and other uninhabited islands continued to be controlled by Arakkal rule. In 1799, with the fall of Tippu Sultan in Shrirangapattana, the Amindivi islands were annexed by the East India Company and formed a part of the South Kanara District. In 1871, the Southern islands lost the island of Cannanore to the East India Company along with other possessions of the Beebi of Cannanore. The British control was, however, nominal and the Beebi retained the administration for an annual tribute. When the British sequestered the islands for arrears of revenue and took over the Administration in 1875, they were attached to the Malabar District. The northern islands continued to be a part of the South Kanara District and the Southern Islands a part of the Malabar District until November 1956, when the States of the Indian Union were reorganized and these two groups of islands were separated from the South Kanara and Malabar Districts of the Madras State to form a Union Territory.

Referenda:

Recent Significant Events:

Independence Day August 15, 1947. In 2006, government local cable tv channel was available on all islands.

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

Sources:

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