

# STATUS OF FEMALE CONVICTS UNDER BRITISH COLONIAL RULE (PENAL SETTLEMENT) IN ANDAMAN –INDIA: AN ANALYSIS.

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## **Abstract:**

British colonial expansion policy had brought the Andaman and Nicobar Islands under its control. As it was a gateway of Indian subcontinent, protection and control of these islands from foreign powers was the utmost priority of British Authority. By setting up the Andaman Penal Settlement, a permanent colony of convicts, the Britishers tried to welcome the families of the convicts from mainland India. To invite wives of the convicts and later on transporting the female convicts to Andaman was a well planned imperial policy. British colonial aggrandizement policy compelled the ordinary Indians to migrate as workforce in the newly built colonies .Accordingly, the British authorities instrumented the policy to transport prisoners from Indian jails to Penang, Burma, Malacca , Ceylon, Burma, Mauritius, Surya Nam, South Africa, Fiji to support workforce to develop industrial activities and thus the economy.

Colonial policy was very regressive, especially, the Penal colonies had mercilessly devalued the status of Indian women. The position of convicted females was very pathetic and were used in many ways in these colonies .The females were brought forcefully to these colonial society to develop intimacy with civilians as entertainers , entertain petty officers and soldiers as prostitutes or to have marital relations with convicted prisoners in Penal Settlement in Andaman .

Due to disproportion in sex ratio, a number of immoral and bad habits developed in the convicted society in Andaman. Most of these heinous crimes took place due to illegal connection or extra-marital relations of wives with other males or vice-versa. The interest of the empire was to use these females for different purposes. In penal colony, the condition of females was very pathetic. The main objective behind their presence in the colony was to have sexual pleasure. Even the attitude of their male partners was not reliable. On many occasions the convicts used their wives for prostitution because even if they were caught they were not sent to jail. High rate of abandonment of convict-wives by male convicts was found when the latter were released from the Andaman. Hence, the abandonment had become a regular feature. The regretful plights were very common with convict wives, when the male ex-convicts abandoned their wives and children on disembarking the Port Towns. As a result many such unfortunate females either ended up in the brothels of Rangoon or Calcutta.

### **Introduction**

Women are victims in almost all the societies at all times. However, British colonial rules in India subjugated all Indians under all kinds of situation and circumstances. British colonial aggrandizement policy had compelled the ordinary Indians to migrate to those places where they set up overseas colonies. To meet the demands of the workforce in the newly built colonies, the British authorities instrumented the policy to transport prisoners from Indian jails to Penang, Burma, Malacca etc. Even large quantities of labor class people were migrated to Ceylon, Burma, Mauritius, Surya Nam, South Africa, Fiji, to support workforce to develop economy and industrial activities. According to Kiran Dhingra, *Most of the East Indians colonies of the nineteenth century – whether Penang, Malacca, Singapore – had, in implementation there of, been started by using convict labour – the cheapest sources, cheap also in terms of accountability to the public for the government actions, by virtue of there being none at hand to observe its treatment of the prisoners. (Page- 36).*

The documental evidence states that many of the convicted prisoners committed suicides or were killed due to torture by authorities. Even many of them became mentally sick. To avoid untold tortures or capital punishment, few of them escaped from settlement and met death at the hands of aboriginal tribes. The Britishers treated these convicts as commodities.

### **Concept of Penal Settlement:**

British colonial expansion policy had brought the Andaman and Nicobar Islands under its control. As it was a sea route and gateway of Indian subcontinent, the protection and control over these islands from foreign power was the priority of British Empire. Therefore, the first settlement at the Andaman was established in 1789 by Archibold Blair in order to reduce piracy and the murder of ship wrecked crews. Like other colonies developed in Bencoolen Penang, Malacca, Singapore and Moulmein and the Tanasserim provinces with the help of convicts, the Andaman colony was set up with the help of hundreds of convicts and free Bengal settlers. (Local Gazetteers, 1908, p. 85). In 1796, the colonial policy was withdrawn and islands abandoned due to unfavorable

weather conditions as the location was not suitable to settle down permanently. After closing down the settlement, 270 convicts and 550 Bengalis were transferred to Penang and Bengal respectively.

As these islands were geo-politically very important, again in 1857, the British authorities started thinking to re-occupy these islands. After the outbreak of Sepoy mutiny in 1857 against British, the government was under compulsion to transport hundreds of war prisoners in Andaman. As a result in March 1858, 200 convicts arrived in Andamans for establishment of second penal settlement. The government had planned to develop the penal colony by receiving 10,000 convicts within five years.

The British re-occupied the Islands in 1858 with convicted ex-mutineers followed by hundreds of ordinary criminals. Most of them had been sentenced to life primarily for murder and armed gang robbery. The difficulties to develop penal colony was manifold. Transport system was quite difficult and unfair due to long distances of sea route. Hence, development of convicted colony was a costly affair in all respects. Alien atmosphere and unhealthy conditions placed these convicts at high risk. Moreover, to keep vigil over both savages and convicts was a challenging task for Colonial authority. Therefore to protect them from tribal attacks, they needed a good number of soldiers and petty officers.

In 1870, the per capita expense on convicts in the islands was five times the cost of maintaining a prisoner in Calcutta Alipur jail. A significant part of this extra expense came from the necessity of supplying the basic requirements for the settlement from the mainland. The obvious solution was to make the Andamans more productive, so that the penal colony could meet a larger proportion of its own demands. (Sen – p. 102).

The immediate plan was framed by the local officials to make the islands colony more self-dependent in respect of food production, so that the high expense of burdens of the convicts colony could be reduced from the shoulders of the British Indian Government. They had planned to develop a penal colony with the help of convicts in the name of self-supporting convicted colony. The objective behind development of colony was manifold, to use the labour force for cultivation, so that certain amount of food grains could be supplied locally to meet the demands of the settlers. Secondly, by expanding settlement areas further into tribal territory, the self-supporting convicts could be used by confronting the tribes, pushing them back and eventually transforming the tribal world in deeper forest territory. The development of colonial settlements was pre-planned by Mr. J.P. Walker.

The colonial management aimed to convert the islands space into a flourishing agricultural colony. For better use of these convicts of life and transportation to penal colony as labourers, the self-supporter status / reorganization was permitted to prisoners as early as possible. According to Aparna Vaidik:

*“The inauguration of the self-supporter system aimed at reforming the convicts and also at relieving the government of its maintenance cost and making the settlement self-sustaining. Self-supporters were first class prisoners who had been granted a ticket – of – leave and allowed to take up any profession of their choice for a living. In the initial years of the settlements inception, the convicts were given tickets after a short probation and those who brought money with them were made self-supporters almost on arrival”. (pp. 223-224).*

One division of convicts (421) was sent as settlers for sixteen villages at Port Mout in Andamans. It was felt necessary to develop such type of villages to strengthen themselves against attacks from the savages by making it as populous as possible. (Sen. Pp. 101-102).

In the early 1870s, more than one thousand convicts population in the Andamans were classified as Self-supporters, (GOI, Home (Indic 4 Nos. 1871, Nos. 48-49 A) of which about 350 were women. To make a perfect family oriented settlement, the authorities desired to send women through the punitive stages in order to make them eligible to marry male self-supporters. From 1862 onwards, the government had imported female convicts into Andaman under the Penal settlement and actively encouraged marriages between those women and male self – supporters.

The final colony was developed by self-supporters convicted in Port Blair from penal colonies already developed in many South East Asian countries. Stamford Raffles’s administration of convicts rules were successfully applied in Bencoolen (Sumatra) and the Strait was directly brought to exercise under the Andaman penal system. His management of convicts notion applied to both these colonies which emphasized the employment of prisoners in the form of labours enabled to develop a sustaining colony and encouraged long term convicts to marry and settle permanently in this settlement. These guidelines formed the basis for the Penarage Rules of 1827 and fully satisfied the government of the Andaman settlement in 1858 (Richard Temple, Census Report 2 the A & N Islands, 1901, Appendix – A, p. 365).

#### **Administration Areas under settlement:**

British penal colony in Andaman extended to southern part of Andaman and Ross Island was the administrative Head quarter. The colony consisted of three districts and four sub-divisions.

Eastern District, (Head quarter-Aberdeen), Ross, Haddo.

Western District, (Head quarter – Viper Island), Viper, Wimberlygunj;

Jail District, (Head quarter – Cellular Jail), Cellular and Female Jail.

Each sub-division was classified into stations, the place where convict labors were kept. And villages where free or self- supporters were living. The Eastern District had two sub-divisions,

Haddo and Ross Island. Under Haddo sub-division, five convicts stations and thirteen villages were developed. In Ross sub-division, seven stations and two villages were developed. The largest district was Western district which had two sub-divisions, Viper and Wimberlygunj. Under Viper sub-division, five stations and ten villages were developed. However under Wimberlygunj sub-division, there were seven stations and thirteen villages . The smallest district under penal settlement was Jail district; only two jails were kept under its jurisdiction i.e. Cellular jail and Female jail. (Local Gazetter – 1908, pp. 84-85).

#### **Population movement:**

The journey of penal settlement started in 1858 with 733 convicts at Chatham and Ross Islands in Andaman, the figures of convicted population increased to 3294 in 1867. In 1864-65, the penal colony was further extended by covering few new areas in Port Blair. By that time, 6963 convicts were received by penal authorities. A systematic population figure was recorded by the British administration after every ten years of gap. The records available from 1874 have a detailed profile of various categories of convicts separately.

#### **Year –wise statistics of convicts’ population.**

Particulars		1874	1881	1891	1901	1904-05	1905-06
No. of convicts received	M	603	1102	869	1232	1158	1507
	F	97	100	852	80	43	54
No. of life convicts	M	6727	7668	8033	9204	9576	9642
	F	836	1122	861	714	676	673
No. of life term convicts	M	6	2657	840	2037	3816	4339
	F	-	5	4	19	44	42
No. of convicts released	M	355	64	685	215	161	300
	F	4	3	73	32	27	31
No. of convicts died	M	107	534	435	433	532	529
	F	9	15	17	17	-	30

Source: Local Gazetteer,1908.

The population was distributed over an occupied area of 327 sq. miles in 29 stations or place where labor convicts were kept and 34 villages where free residents or ticket-of-leave (Self-supporter) convicts resided.

### **Penal colony and female convicts:**

For making the Andaman penal settlement a permanent colony by convicts' population, the Government of India felt that the best thing to do would be to welcome the families of the convicts from mainland. However, it became a compulsion for the government to make a liberal policy and have a friendly relation with convicts, in order to make a permanent settlement of convicts as early as possible. As the convicts were males, without re union of family members, the idea of establishing a penal colony was not practically possible as the human settlement, without females was simply impractical. Therefore invitation of wives of the convicts and later on transportation of female convicts into Andaman was a well planned and Empirical policy. Therefore, on the very inception day of penal colony, the convicts of first batch were asked to invite their families. Hundreds of letters were dispatched on behalf of the convicts to their families / wives, but in only 5% cases, females desired to join the convicts. The religious conservatism resulted in the failure of the policy. "The Hindu females hesitated to embark on a British vessel fearing loss of caste. Therefore, in 1860, the officials accepted that all efforts to bring families of the convicts to join them at Andaman have entirely failed.

Perhaps, the most genuine problem of the family members including wives and children for accepting the invitation was to leave homeland for an unknown destination. People did not know about the place. The main question was how the family members would rely on British authority and live a secured life in Andaman. Therefore, they preferred waiting for their husband to return than leaving mainland to join their husbands. Virtually, the British authorities wanted to confirm the possibilities of establishing penal colony by inviting female convict members. A lengthy correspondence was made among officials in Port Blair and higher officials in mainland. The immediate need was to welcome wives of the convicts, or transport female prisoners from mainland jails and make every possibility to arrange marriage of male prisoners. The Lyall and Lethbridge commission stated that : "*Provision of more women as wives for self-supporters is one of the Chief needs of the settlement..... not only does the excessive disproportion of the sexes which exists at present lead, directly or indirectly (by encouraging unnatural vice), to nearly all the murders and attempts at murder which occur annually, and to a large part of the other crime, ..... if they could get wives, contentedly stay there and add to the productive powers of the colony.*" (Majumder)

Due to disproportion in the sex ratio, a number of immoral and bad habits developed among the convicted society, who was being recommended to form penal colony in Andaman. Such a dearth of women led to serious moral deterioration among the convicts. So many murdered cases were registered in 1894, 1895 and attempt to murder cases was registered in 1896. Most of these heinous crimes took place due to illegal connection or extra-marital relations

of wives with other males or vice-versa. According to Mark, Supt. of Port Blair ( April 1906) immorality in the settlement had increased manifold(Ibid ).Homosexual cases were also prevalent due to absence of women and the result was incidents of murder in the settlement was hypothesized as being related to this crime. (Vaidik,p.229)

To overcome the state of unnatural crimes and immorality among male and females behaviours, the colonial authorities tried to find out the best option as soon as possible. Accordingly, many steps were taken to reduce the crimes as far as possible like (1) Family members of mutineer including (wives) and children to be sent to Andaman. *“For obvious reasons, it is necessary that there should be women in the settlement. I would therefore strongly urge the advisability of government offering every facility especially at present, for the emigration of all families who may be applied form and taking measures for their arrival at Port Blair”*(.ibid-123).

A list of local address in mainland of the willing convicts, who wanted to invite their families in Port Blair were collected by settlement authorities from Port Blair. To find out the families and reach to them for the purpose of convincing them, two reliable agents were appointed *“Convicts Family Emigration Agents, one for Bengal and second one for North – Western provinces and Oudh. They were given a salary of Rs. 50 p. mensem with a bonus of two rupees for each female and infant members of a family dispatched from Calcutta in addition to Rs. 2/- as a bonus was announced for sending each female and infants of a family from Calcutta”*.(Majumder,p..123)

An administration assistance was sought from Magistrate of Agra, above and all a coolly Emigration Agent in Calcutta was appointed to assist convicts family and make communication to important departments of that areas. Altogether 25 letters from convicts to their wives were dispatched to collectors of the districts along with a duplicate enclosed with Agents. Each convict was offered an attractive proposal who agreed to bring there families in Penal Colony, a piece of cultivate land free of rent. To provide financial assistances during the first three years (until there a good harvesting / yield of full crops) to the extent of four Rupees per mensem to the convicts for the first year, three Rupees for second and two Rupees for third year and two Rupees per mensem for each adult female and one Rupee per mensem for each infant of the families.

But whatever effort was under taken to bring the families of the convicts to Andaman met with dissatisfactory results. Altogether 25 families of Bengali convicts were pursued but none of the females agreed to cross the sea. Therefore, as an alternative, the arrangement was made to transport females' convicts to Andaman from mainland jails for marriage purposes. In 1860, 35 willing female convicts were sent from Bengal to Port Blair. And many marriages took place. To encourage the marriage among convicts, the status of the convicts had been changed and married couples were allowed the status of *“Self-supporters.”*(Ibid,p.124)

*“Hence, marriage also meant a release ahead of time from the exacting routing a prison life, and the rest of the sentence spent in comparative security. The penal administration ensured a legal marriage, if not one in full accord with religious rites and matching a religious and broad category of caste that was the practice in the mainland. As long as their husband had not obtained*

*their tickets-of-leave, and were in port Blair, the women were assured security and a degree of comfort.”(Dhingra,p.157).*

The married female convicts had got freedom of keeping their houses, giving birth and looking after their children and to build homes. They could hope for an early release. Even a woman who had committed hard core crimes heinous in nature were usually granted remission as their husbands applied for their release.

The female convicts were deported to the Andamans for committing heinous crimes. They were convicted for murdering husbands or females (i.e extra-marital or vice-versa relations of husbands with other females). Hence, their nature of crimes was considered dangerous and never received any respect, honor, morality from others. They deserved penalty of capital punishment and a fit case for transportation. As a result these female convicts had no desire to return home after completion of their incarceration period.

*“The British officials noted that most of the female convicts, on their release, preferred to remain in the settlement instead of returning to their home country or accompanying their spouse. They desire for social security and acceptance was the main driving force behind such a choice. Lack of social acceptance was obviously the major reason behind their unwillingness to return. The transportation of convict women, thus, made the circle of their social outcasting and misogynic characterization complete. The return of there natal society was rendered near impossible after having traversed the sea.”(Vaidik, p. 241).*

#### **Status of female convicts:**

To overcome the problem of disproportion in sex-ratio between male convicts and females , number of legal and social sanctions had been forced by British authorities. The problem was a Hindu male convict was not permitted to marry a local Muslim woman. Secondly, a Muslim woman who has not divorced and whose husband was living in India, was not allowed to marry at all. Whenever such complications arose, local officials tried to sort out these problems and asked for legal opinions from society and magistrate. The local magistrates were of the opinion that a Hindu could under no circumstances be divorced. They opined that unlike Islam, Hinduism had no provision for divorce. However in the case of Island, no such problem arose.

Nevertheless, in such cases, the government in India had delegated the power to local superintendent for settlement by using his discretion in such matters. And the Superintendent before sanctioning or refusing permission was asked to ascertain the customary practices of the community to which the female convicts belonged. Subsequently, the British authority had succeeded to modify marriage rule. The Government of India had tried to send as many young female convicts to Port Blair on priority basis. The modified marriage rule had given opportunity to Hindu widows for re-marriage.



The authority took maximum efforts to encourage female convicts to transport to Port Blair from nearest jails. In January, 1860, the Superintendent of the Alipur jail, F.C. Mouat was directed to send the detailed rolls of all the female prisoners, who were willing to come to Andaman. However, the sincere efforts of the administration could not reap a good result. In 1897, the statistics of male-female ratio showed that out of 2447 self-supporters only 363 were women. The proportion of women to male population led to serious moral deterioration in the lives of convicts.

The post-marital lives of the convicts were full of serious complication. Especially difficulty arose when a male term-convict married a female life-convict. For when the term convict was released he went back home leaving his convict wife and children behind. Therefore, the government was compelled to apply some compulsion to male convicts before entering into the wedlock. The new rule stated that male convict should agree to remain in the settlement, after marriage.

In the penal settlement society, the paucity of women had led to many advantages on their part. Mr. Sen has illustrated that scarcity of female had given them a capacity to bargain mainly in the form of choosing their husbands from amongst the male prisoners. Paradoxically, the situation was not always in favor of them. From the available facts, it was difficult to say that female convicts were in a position to use the imbalance in the sex ratio to their advantage. Male convicts also had the right to refuse or accept. The unmarried female remained in the female jail. However, married women were permitted to live with their husbands. Moreover, every female was eligible for marriage after five years in the settlement and if married they might leave the settlement after 15 years with their husbands. (Sen, p.242).

Some social disorder was found in penal colony, where the female children of the first generation convicts were victimized. The parents of ex-convicts wanted their daughters to be married to free persons. However, convicts self-supporters preferred to marry convict's daughters rather than female convicts. But this type of marriage did not prove good for their daughters. Once their husbands were found guilty convicted and imprisoned, the wives became a serious victim of the situation. On the other side, it was also found that the self-support convict husbands were often subjected to exploitation by the free girls at the behest of her convict parents. The exploitation primarily occurred over the property that the self-supporter convict possessed.

In the penal settlement, the state of female position in the society has been decried in many meaningful ways. The transportation of wives of the male convicts and females convicts in Andaman had served many purposes for British power. The re-union of family members was supposed to fulfill several functions simultaneously such as mode of regulating sexual union, controlling and ordering for convict pleasure and desire and imparting stability to the convict workforce. Female as sex was used by colonial powers under different stages and conditions. On regular basis, the British authority sanctioned to supply Indian girls for large number of soldiers. Contagious diseases Act of 1864 were drafted by British crown in order to control sex related

venereal diseases to be spread among soldiers from native prostitutes." *Under this Act and the cantonment Rules, the British and other European soldiers in India were not only permitted but promoted to hold native young and good-looking girls as prostitute for their carnal pleasure*"(Bhandari, p.28). The colonial power was asked to send more females in Penal settlement to have control over the immoral state of mind of convicts committing different class of crimes.

The presence of females in penal settlement was multifarious as it is said that life in Andaman cast them (convicts) in an essentially sexual mould. The transportation of female convicts in these islands was the perceived need for legitimate sexual partners to serve the male convicts. They were not transported to the Islands to fulfill the labour force of a developing frontier colony but to render sexual services for the cause of the empire. There it was the intention of the authority to have young and unattached female convicts in the colony. The first batch of convict women to arrive in the Andamans consisted of a large number of young widows from Bengal, Bihar and United Provinces. Out of 159 females, 10 were below 20 years of ages, 72 were in between 20-30 years age group and 43 were in between 30-40 years of age group. The marital status stated that 133 were widowed, 25 were married and only one was unmarried. (Vaidik, p.239).

Hence, at every place the interest of the empire was to use the females for different purposes. The females served as prostitutes in British regiment and satisfied the sexual desires of the soldiers and even male convicts in Andaman. The Britishers ordered to send more females in Penal settlement to control the immoral state of mind of convicts who had committed different classes of crimes. Various circumstances had forced them to serve the interest of many class of people. In the penal colony, the status of female was very low and did not lead a dignified life. The main objective behind their presence in the colony was only to give sexual pleasure, not to have greater emphasis on the reproduction and productive capacities. Even the attitude of their male partners was not reliable on many occasions the convicts used their wives for prostitution because even if they were caught they were not sent to jail (p. 237). Forced and illegal sexual relationship was found in many British prisoner colonies.

Sen has illustrated *"Mid-eighteenth century bride wells were the centres of unrestricted and boisterous sexual contact between male and female in mates. Female convicts routinely paid "garnish" by submitting to rape. They were also used as prostitutes by male convicts, prostituted by jailors to outsiders in special wards known as bawdy-houses, and used by jailors as private sex-slaves."*(Sen, pp.27-28).

Mr.Sen further stated that prostitution by female convicts was a major concern in the Andaman. Yet even as administrators in Port Blair echoed English commentators of the past in denouncing the sexual instability that women criminals brought into the prison, they remained eager to import female convicts. Even in Mauritius, another overseas colony of British Raj, where Indian convicts served, a total of six female prisoners were sent to the islands to meet the sexual needs of the male prisoners.(Ibid,p.28).

In Andaman penal settlement, prostitution by female convicts was a serious concern. There were so many irregularities committed in side female jails or barracks. The women were the victims as sex workers were needed to meet the physical demands of many sections of people. In Andaman, the female barracks were known as *Randi Barrik*. They were forced to do or circumstances forced them to recognize themselves as sex workers. Even Thaneswari recollected his memories that when women visited the office of the higher authority (Chief Commissioner) many women attempted to prey him and approach him with bad intention.

The situation was miserable for wives of the convicts. After completion of convict period in jail and settlement, male convicts were left with many options. Many of them decided to settle down in the Andaman with their wives and children. But most of the convicts decided to return to mainland, without their convict wives. High rate of abandonment of convict-wives by male convicts was found when the latter were released from the Andamans. Hence, the abandonment had become a regular feature. The plights of the convict wives were really regretful, when the male ex-convicts abandoned their wives and children on disembarking the Port Towns. As a result many unfortunate females either ended up in the brothels of Rangoon or Calcutta or they joined the mainstream of prostitution. Under the proclamation in 1877 by Her Majesty, about 60 of such women with their children were allowed to enter wedlock once again.

Major Davies wrote in his report that the life term male convicts married female convicts simply in order to reduce their imprisonment period as self- supporters. They did not hesitate to force their wives to lead the life of prostitute for their personal gain. In the Local Born society, women had no respect. According to Raizada Honsraj (1936) such state of affairs continued to exist in the penal settlement in the Andaman till its abolition in 1945. Paucity of females inevitably had many bad effects. Home department (1915) of Government of India narrated the grime situation of families' position in the following words." In 1914, there was hardly a reputable single woman in the western district of the settlement. In the eastern and western districts solomy was prevalent to an alarming extent.

During Japanese occupation in these islands, the situation of women had further deteriorated, as they were forced to live with Japanese soldiers. Dr. M S Dhillon narrated in his own words "The Japanese would enter any house at any time and ask for food and other luxuries. They would even forcibly sleep with women in the presence of their males. It was all shameful and demoralizing." The Japanese also used the local unscrupulous men like Pushkar Bagchi, who with the help of local police let loose a hell on the innocent people to please the Japanese and to satisfy their sexual lust. Late Kesar Das, who recollected his memory of those black days said Pushkar Bagchi's allegedly nefarious activities in forcing local women to act as "comfort girls" for Japanese soldiers. However, according to Jayanta Das Gupta, the author of – Japanese in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, (2002), ".....in Korea, China, Philippines and Malaya, an estimated 2 lakh women

were forced into sexual slavery by the conquering Japanese army..... Compared to this, the numbers involved in Andaman was very small indeed.”

### **Observations**

Since time immemorial, the condition of women has not improved. In all situation and circumstances they have been the victim. Nothing was exceptional in Island’s penal society built by British colonial policy. More number of males as compared to females in convict settlement led to many disorders among local people. For serving the interest of British penal settlement at Andaman, willing wives of the convicted prisoners were asked to come and settle with their husbands. As the response was poor, the authority went for an alternative. The authority had shown the interest to transport female convicts from mainland jails without *raison d’etre* their personal safety and future. Further, the same policy was extended to other overseas colonies expanded by them. They were used as commodities. As a daughter she was exploited by father, as wife she was used by husband for his personal gain. To stop immoral activities among male convicts, females were imported to Andaman and were supposed to entertain males .The life term male convicts married female convicts simply in order to reduce their imprisonment period as self-supporters. They did not hesitate to force their wives to lead the life of prostitution for their personal gain. The marriage between Muslims and Hindus convicts was common but in spite of that a Sharp Hindu orthodox mentality developed among fellow Hindus. As a result whenever, a Hindu bridegroom married Muslim bride out of love affairs or compulsion , the parents of Hindu bride groom often did not welcome their sons and daughters-in –law . Therefore, in the latter stage among Local families, it was found that many boys were disowned by the community of Hindu parents on their marriage with Muslims girls or vice-versa.

During their convict lives, the Hindus would try to maintain their purity and avoid relationship with Muslims or other faiths. Thanasari’s wife , a Hindu Brahmin had tried to maintain her Hindu purity by avoiding standing close to her co-female prisoners in female jail as well as her post married life. Nonetheless, the females in Local society had a dominant role and position, whereas in many cases, the bridegroom not only changed their religion but also stayed at their fathers –in –law houses after rejecting their parents due to marriage with Muslim bride. But under such circumstances the children felt discomfort due to non- Islamic background of one of the parents. Perhaps, in most of the cases the parents of such category had successfully developed a congenial and liberal atmosphere during their long married lives. Therefore, at the time of festivals, parents and children were allowed to celebrate festivals of both religions. Hindu mother would celebrate Laxmi Puja at home. Similarly Muslim mother was allowed to celebrate Id or Muharram with whole family and friends. This is the secrecy of Local Born (Families of Ex-convicted) families, who have successfully developed unity in diversity in the islands society.

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