

**Directorate of Art & Culture**  
**A & N Administration**  
**G-20 Summit at Port Blair**

**Write Up on Cultural Programme to be held at Swaraj Dweep on**  
**26<sup>th</sup> November, 2022**

**Introduction:** People from diverse religious and linguistic backgrounds, brought here at different times have become an integral part of the total population of Andamans today who have contributed immensely in weaving the harmonious social fabric of the Isles. Today, the composite culture of the Islands have several fairs & festivals, sundry cuisines & cultures; illustrating as many regions of India. Aboriginal tribes including Nicobarese besides Moplas, Karens, Chota nagpur Tribals from Jharkhand & Bihar, Bengalis, Tamils, Telugu, Malayalis, Local Borns, and Burmese constitute the majority of the population of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The simplicity and affection of all our people will win your hearts forever.

**1. Nicobari Folk Dance-***The term Nicobarese refers to the dominant tribes of the Nicobar Islands. On each island, the people have specific names, but together they are the Nicobarese.*

The Nicobarese show great pride in their culture and traditions. The Nicobarese dance of Andaman and Nicobar Islands is a mesmerizing tribal dance. It is mainly performed during the Ossuary Feast or the Pig Festival in or near the houses in the island of Car Nicobar. This dance is devoted to the deceased head of the family. It is observed with night long dancing in the full moonlight under the swaying palms. The dancers dressed in coconut fronds step charmingly in time to traditional songs.

**2. Karen Folk Dance-***The Karen of the Andamans are Burmese immigrants who were first brought by the British Government with the help of Christian missionaries in March 1925. The Karens have acquired an excellent knowledge of the rain forest and the seas, becoming expert hunters and fishermen.*

The Karen bamboo dance involves high level of alertness & coordination among dancers. It emphasises on working in harmony, teamwork, along with other community values. This dance is a very quick group dance that requires all dancers to be in sync with the beat. Karen youth & young adults usually perform this dance at major community celebrations and Karen New Year. The participants attired in hand woven Karen traditional costumes and headgears perform to the beat of the bamboo in sync with the song.

**3. Bengali Folk Dance** –*The Bengali community is the major population of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Major chunk of Bangla speaking population came to these Islands in 1954.*

As a traditional art form, folk dances of Bengal have gained immense popularity and recognition over the years. This Bengali folk dance is basically performed on special occasions. During the spring festival, it is performed to the glory of nature. This folk dance is accompanied with folk music instruments like flutes, pipes, drums and cymbals.

**4. Malayalam Folk Dance** –*The first Malayali group to reach here were from Mappila community who were deported to Andaman Islands following the Moplah Rebellion in August 1921. Later, more Malayalis were settled by Govt. of India in batches.*

Harvest Festival is a celebration of the food grown on the land. Thanksgiving ceremonies and celebrations for a successful harvest are worldwide and very ancient. This Malayalam folk dance is performed during the harvest season where male and female farmers of Kerala sing and dance to show their happiness. The traditional costume is lungi and gamcha.

**5. Tamil Folk Dance**–*Tamil speaking population is widely spread, and a sizeable population is found in almost every Island. The Tamilians have not only come from Tamil Nadu in India, but some of them were also brought from Burma and Sri Lanka.*

Kavadi Dance is a religious folk dance which is celebrated by the Hindus of Tamil Nadu. The name Kavadi Attam, literally means 'Burden dance'. In this dance, Lord Murugan, the God of War is worshipped by making ceremonial sacrifices and offerings (rice, milk) to pray to him to help them ward off their debts and to be saved from any kind of calamity. The Kavadi may vary in shape and size and it has rice, milk or anything that the devotee would like to offer to Lord Murugan.

**6. Punjabi Folk Dance-***A large number of Punjabis live in A&N Islands and have contributed their might in the development of the Isles. The first batch was brought to Andamans in 1969 and rehabilitated in the Great Nicobar Islands.*

Bhangra is the traditional folk dance of Punjab performed during 'Baisakhi' to mark the harvest festival. Bhangra is traditionally performed on the beats of 'dhol'- a large drum, and boliyan- short sets of lyrics that describe scenes or stories from Punjab. The dancers wear extremely colourful outfits to emphasize the visual effect of Bhangra moves. Nowadays Bhangra is performed on the Punjabi dance songs as well by men and women together during various Punjabi festivals and functions to express their happiness on the occasion.