



Andaman & Nicobar Islands

The Bay of Bengal smiles to itself as it kisses the sandy beaches along these islands. The dense green forests and colourful birds make the Andamans and Nicobar an abode for the peaceloving, happy and cheerful locals.

The tribes have their own traditions and culture, social customs and religious practices. Though people from other parts of the country, with different faiths, languages, customs and religions have settled down here, the original inhabitants have fiercely guarded their own social and cultural identity. Though the dances of the people of the islands do not have a wide variety, they are entertaining and unique in their own way.

Nicobarese Dance

The creative expression of the Nicobarese people is closely associated with the environment- Nature has always been their strongest inspiration, and the Nicobarese tribes living in the Car Nicobar Island of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are the only tribes that have accepted modernization.

The most important festival celebrated by the Nicobarese tribe is the Ossuary Feast. At this feast, the members of the family pay homage to the soul of the departed head of the family. On this occasion, the Nicobarese Folk Dance is organized and all invitees take part in the dance. The festival is celebrated on a full moon night so that





there is sufficient light for the nightlong performance. All the people who are invited join in the dance. The dance is performed in a circular formation. Both men and women join in the dance but in separate groups. The dancers wear the traditional costume consisting of coconut and plantain leaves around their heads and waist. There are no musical instruments accompanying this performance. This folk dance is also performed during canoe racing and other seasonal festivals, followed by a pig fight in the morning.

Dances of the Great Andamanese

The Great Andamanese people appreciate rhythm and time but not pitch or tune. They sing in unison, but not in parts. The key in which a solo or a chorus starts is quite accidental. They can be readily taught any dance steps and can also learn it by themselves from observation. The composer of the song always sings without action or gesticulation and always to the same rhythm. The songs relate to travel, sport and personal adventures, never to love and very rarely to beliefs and superstitions.

