

## Urbanisation and Socio-Economic Structure in Lakshadweep

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**Abstract:** Lakshadweep is located in the western part off mainland India in Arabian Sea. It is believed that initially the islands were inhabited by the Malayalis in ninth century. However, the territory remained less fascinating to the outsiders. The people of the region were isolated from the world mainstream and witnessed many upheavals. Hence, the developmental activities were very little before 1956 when the control of the islands comes to Indian Government. Thereafter, the islanders got the status of tribe and the impetus of developmental activities took place on the inhabited islands.

The region is composed of calcareous soil due to the formation of the islands by coral reefs which unfertile for agricultural activities except plantation activities. Coconut and papaya cultivation are the main mainstay of the islanders. The industrial development is also low. Hence, the social and economic condition of families in the region is poor. Consequently, the survival and livelihood of the tribal people depends upon the extraction of copra, collect cowry, fishing and so on as their economic pursuits on the islands. Various social, economic, infrastructure and agriculture development plans have been initiated by the government of India in the region.

The present paper tries to study the demographic, social and economic structure of the population in the urban areas on the Lakshadweep islands. The status of social condition along with occupational structure in urban areas has been studied. The study concludes that some of social indicators depict the development of the society. The economic and occupation parameters pointed out that the people are mainly engaged in primary activity such as coconut plantation, copra extraction, cowry collection, fishing etc. But the overall socio-economic development is lagging behind as compare to the mainland of India. The government should make efforts in generating the economic opportunities on the beautiful islands.

**Keywords:** coral reef; demography; tribe; calcareous soil; urban

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Lakshadweep is the smallest Union Territory (UT) of India consisting of 12 atolls (Table:1), 3 reefs and 6 newly formed submerged sand banks spreading from 220 km to 440 km from the off cost of Kerala state. The total geographical area of 22 islands and 5 attached islets and cays is 32 km<sup>2</sup>. Andrott is the largest island covering 4.9 km<sup>2</sup> and Bitra is the smallest inhabited island with the geographical area of 0.1 km<sup>2</sup>. Out of the total, twelve are inhabited by human population. The human population on Bangaram and Suheli Cheriya kara islands has been enumerated in 1991 and 2011 respectively.

**Table1.** Geographical Area of inhabited Islands in Lakshadweep

Sr. No.	Island	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Sr. No.	Island	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
1	Amini	2.59	8	Andrott	4.90
2	Bitra	0.10	9	Kalpeni	2.60
3	Chetlat	1.14	10	Minicoy	4.80
4	Kiltan	2.20	11	Bangaram	0.80
5	Kadmat (Cardamum)	3.21	12	Suheli Par	0.80
6	Kavaratti	3.70		Other islands, islets & cays	2.0
7	Agatti	2.60		Total	32

**Source:** Saigal: 1990

The demographic structure in Lakshadweep islands indicates that the population in this union territory has increased continuously since the 1901 except 1911-1921 decade as indicated in Table 2 and a significant increase in growth has been observed during 1961-1971. But, a declining trend has been observed after 1971 with a slight increase in 1991. The sex wise exposition indicates the same trend of male population on the islands whereas the growth among the females is low.

**Table2.** Population Growth in Lakshadweep

Sr. No.	Decade	Total Population	Male Population	Female Population
1	1901-1911	+4.85	+8.87	+1.06
2	1911-1921	-6.31	-8.16	-4.43
3	1921-1931	+17.62	+19.59	+15.70
4	1931-1941	+14.43	+13.06	+15.81
5	1941-1951	+14.6	+13.18	+16.00
6	1951-1961	+14.61	+15.93	+13.34
7	1961-1971	+31.95	+34.71	+29.24
8	1971-1981	+26.53	+26.74	+26.32
9	1981-1991	+28.47	+30.63	+26.25
10	1991-2001	+17.19	+16.91	+17.49
11	2001-2011	+6.40	+6.44	+6.35

Source: Census of Lakshadweep

The island-wise population growth of Lakshadweep is exhibited in Table 3. The table explains a declining growth rate of population after 1981 on all the islands except Kadmat and Bangaram, while an increasing trend is found in Kadmat during 1991-2001 but declined drastically in the next decade. Suheli Cheriyakara island (part of Kavaratti sub-division) inhabited by 11 people only and all are male.

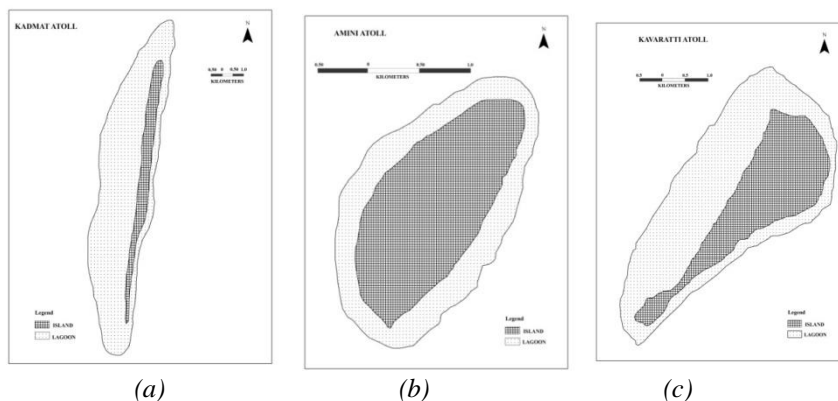
**Table3.** Island-wise Population Growth of Lakshadweep

Sr. No.	Inhabited islands	Census Year		
		1981-91	1991-2001	2001-11
1	Amini	20.12	13.85	4.37
2	Bitra	24.31	17.33	2.65
3	Chetlat	38.21	11.60	2.53
4	Kiltan	29.05	19.54	7.70
5	Kadmat	27.97	33.48	1.60
6	Kavaratti	31.39	16.55	10.85
7	Suheli Cheriyakara	uninhabited	uninhabited	100.00
8	Agatti	37.92	23.58	7.34
9	Bangaram	100.00	6.56	-30.77
10	Andrott	33.91	17.52	4.39
11	Kalpeni	15.27	5.75	2.32
12	Minicoy	24.96	14.12	10.03
	All islands	28.47	17.19	6.40

Source: Census of Lakshadweep

**2. THE STUDY AREA**

The union territory of Lakshadweep has the smallest share of population in India. It has no statutory towns or standard urban agglomeration till 2011 census. Hence, the union territory has non-municipal census towns only. However, these urban centers do not possess the urban characteristics on the islands. But some settlements have been classified as census towns since 1981. As per 2011 census, all the twelve inhabited islands in Lakshadweep (Table 2) are grouped into one district and ten sub-divisions.



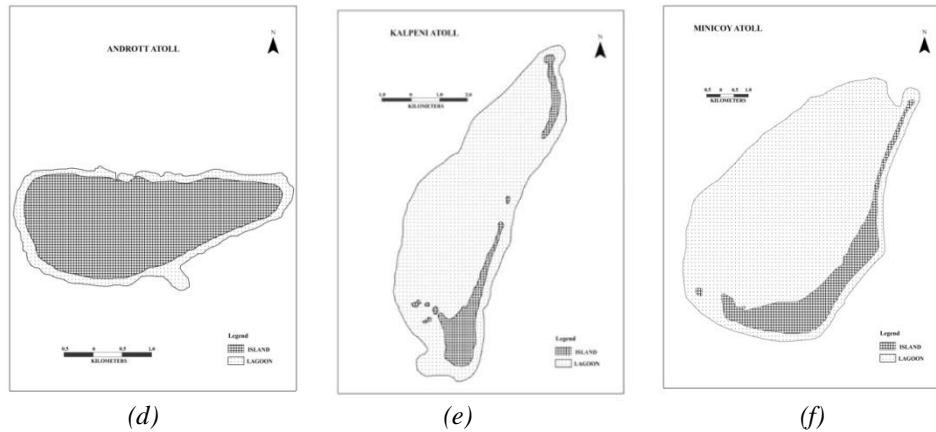


Fig1. Urban Islands in Lakshadweep

In 1981, the census has classified three settlements as non-municipal ‘census town’ by the census department of India. In the next census, one more town is added in this category but declassified in next two census years. According to 2011 census, by addition of three more towns viz. Kadmat, Andrott and Kalpeni are classified as census towns. Thus, the percentage share of the urban population has increased from 46 in 1981 to 78 in 2011 (Table 4). However, this share has declined to 44 percent in 2001 due to the declassification of Agatti Island as rural.

Table4. Urban Population in the Islands of Lakshadweep

Sr. No.	Islands	Census Years			
		1981	1991	2001	2011
1	Amini	5367	6447	7353	7661
2	Kadmat	-	-	-	5404
3	Kavaratti	6604	8677	10119	11210
4	Agatti	-	5670	declassified	-
5	Andrott	-	-	-	11191
6	Kalpeni	-	-	-	4419
7	Minicoy	6658	8320	9495	10447
	Urban Population	<b>46.28</b>	<b>56.31</b>	<b>44.50</b>	<b>78.07</b>

Source: District Census Handbook; Village and Town Directory, Census of Lakshadweep, 1981 through 2011.

### 3. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Lakshadweep is consists of small islands with low level of agricultural and industrial development. The calcareous soil in most of the islands is unsuitable for agriculture except plantation of coconut. The industrial development is also low because of less economic growth and scarcity of natural resources. Hence, the people on islands struggle hard for their survival and livelihood even in urban areas. Therefore, a modest attempt is being made to find out the social and occupational characteristics of the population in the urban areas on the islands.

#### Objectives

The following objectives are taken for the present piece of analysis:

1. To find out the status of social characteristics among the population in census towns in Lakshadweep.
2. To study the composition of occupational structure of the population in census towns in Lakshadweep.

### 4. DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

The study is an exploratory work and mainly based on secondary data. The information from other sources has also been incorporated. The social and demographic composition such as sex ratio, family size and literacy level have been taken into considered. The sex ratio is computed by the number of females per thousand males. The male and female literacy computed separately to find out the disparity by excluding the population below six years of age. The social composition of population is carried out on the basis of percentage share of scheduled caste population. Education Index is prepared by giving the weights on the basis of the number of years of study in educational institutions from

nursery to senior secondary schools. The weights are assigned as zero to nursery, five to junior basic, seven to senior basic, ten to high school and twelve to senior secondary schools.

The occupation workforce is standardized in percentage. The percentage rate of main and marginal workers is grouped into four classes such as cultivators, agricultural labourers, household workers and other workers. The frequencies have been tabulated into uniform groups for analysis. There is no local urban government on the islands since no statutory town on the islands. But census department classified three settlements as non municipal ‘census towns’ in 1981, four in 1991, three in 2001 and six in 2011. So, to find out the urban characteristics in the census towns, the data regarding the urban settlements in the respective years have been incorporated.

**5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**5.1.Social and Demographic Structure**

The social and demographic characteristics have been assessed by taking into consideration the family size, sex ratio, education and literacy in the urban centers on the islands.

**5.2.Family Size**

The size of the family is affected by the socio-economic conditions of the area. The number of persons in a family has been calculated and depicted in Table 5 It is more than 5 persons which is higher than India. It is interesting to note that it is higher in urban areas rather than rural areas which are opposite to the mainland India. The highest family size is observed in Minicoy whereas lowest found on Kalpeni island.

**Table5.** Family Size in Urban Areas

Sr. No.	Name of Islands	2011	2001	1991	1981
1	Amini	5.57	6.24	6.36	6.55
2	Kadmat	5.09	-	-	-
3	Kavaratti	4.99	5.63	5.81	6.21
	Agatti	-	-	6.44	-
4	Andrott	6.20	-	-	-
5	Kalpeni	4.73	-	-	-
6	Minicoy	7.24	7.01	7.14	6.66
	All towns	5.68	6.23		6.47
	India	4.66	5.10	5.30	5.40

Source: Census of Lakshadweep

**5.3.Sex Ratio**

Sex ratio describes the number of females per 1000 male population. It is an indicator of social and gender based development in a region. Table 6 indicates that the sex ratio (2011 census) among the islands is higher as compare to India. The highest sex ratio in favour of female is observed in Andrott (1035 females). On the other hand, the lowest is found in Kavaratti because this island has been inhabited recently by the administrators particularly males who have been transferred from the mainland country. The female child sex ratio is also high in the urban areas on Lakshadweep islands than urban India. It is highest observed in Kadmat and lowest in Kavaratti.

**Table6.** Sex Ratio in Urban Areas

Sr. No.	Islands	Total Population			
		2011	2001	1991	1981
1	Amini	1001	968	969	933
2	Kadmat	1009	-	-	-
3	Kavaratti	815	811	829	823
	agatti	-	-	883	-
4	Andrott	1035	-	-	-
5	Kalpeni	901	-	-	-
6	Minicoy	947	1057	1049	1154
	All towns	945	935	930	
	India	926	900	894	880

Source: Census of Lakshadweep

**5.4. Education and Literacy**

The education in the pre-British period on the islands was confined to the teaching of Quran. After 1871, the British administration made some efforts to improve the education condition on the islands. However, a little progress was observed because the people were suspicious about the modern education. In 1888, the Inspecting Officer suggested a system of combined the secular education with religious education in the Amindivi Islands. However, a low progress in education system was observed till 1904 when the first government elementary school was started on one of the islands. Later, these schools had been started on some other Islands between 1905 and 1925. In 1947, all the islands had primary schools except Bitra. The present condition of educational institutes have been depicted in table7. The table indicates that the education establishments are higher in rural areas than urban.

**Table7.** Educational Index per 1000 population on Lakshadweep Islands

Sr. No.	Name of Islands	Nursery	Junior Basic (JB)	Senior Basic (SB)	High School (HS)	Senior Secondary (SS)	Total	Index of School Educational Facility
1	Urban	6	13	6	4	5	34	4.61
2	Rural	3	6	1	2	1	13	5.60
3	Total	9	19	7	6	6	47	4.98

Source: Lakshadweep website

Table 8 exhibits the number of schools in the urban areas. The high education index is observed in Kadmat (7.0), Andrott (4.8) and Kalpeni (6.0) whereas Minicoy, Kavaratti and Amini show the lower school education index. The government has started Jawahar Navodya Vidyalaya on Minicoy Island and Kendriya Vidyalaya on Kavaratti Island. The University of Calicut has established one centre each on Kadmat and Andrott. A provision of reservation in higher education has also been ensured at the mainland to the islanders.

**Table8.** Number of Schools in Lakshadweep Islands

Sr. No.	Name of Islands	Nursery	Junior Basic (JB)	Senior Basic (SB)	High School (HS)	Senior Secondary (SS)	Total	Index of School Educational Facility
1	Amini (U)	1	3		1		5	3.39
2	Kadmat (U)	1	3		1	1	6	7.03
3	Kavaratti (U)		1	2		1	4	2.77
4	Andrott (U)	1	4	2	2	1	10	5.99
5	Kalpeni (U)	2	1	1		1	5	5.88
6	Minicoy (U)	1	1	1		1	4	2.39
	All towns	6	13	6	4	5	34	4.61

Source: Lakshadweep website

After independence, many efforts have been made to improve the education with the launch of various schemes such as providing books, mid-day meal, scholarships and hostel accommodation free of cost to the children. There was only one graduate till 1956 when the Government of India created these islands as Union Territory and renamed as Lakshadweep in 1973. The literacy rate in 1951 on the islands was mere 15.23 percent which has been increased up to 86.66 percent in 2001 and 91.85 percent in 2011 (Table 9). The table exhibits that the male literacy level is high in urban areas. On the other hand, literacy among females is high in rural areas on the islands. More than 90 percent literacy is found in both regions i.e. urban as well as rural.

**Table9.** Literacy Rate by Sex in Lakshadweep Islands

	2011			2001			1991		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
Urban	91.92	95.84	87.79	88.62	93.77	83.13	83.99	91.31	76.11
Rural	91.58	94.53	88.50	85.04	91.49	78.27	78.89	88.66	68.72
Total	91.85	95.56	87.95	86.66	92.53	80.47	81.78	90.18	72.89

Source: Census of Lakshadweep

Table 10 shows the town wise data on literacy. The islands indicate a better condition in literacy. Among the urban areas, it is observed highest in Kadmat and lowest in Amini. The sex wise analysis

shows that Kalpeni have highest male literacy whereas Minicoy have lowest. Among the female literacy, Kadmat is observed with highest and Amini with lowest literacy level.

**Table10.** Literacy Rate in Urban Areas in Lakshadweep by Sex

		Amini	Kadmat	Kavaratti	Andrott	Kalpeni	Minicoy	All towns
2011	T	89.12	95.04	91.59	90.61	94.78	92.85	91.92
	M	95.96	97.15	95.37	95.45	97.53	95.28	95.84
	F	82.34	92.95	86.93	86.04	91.70	90.30	87.79
2001	T	82.74	-	88.56	-	-	93.05	88.62
	M	91.19	-	94.10	-	-	95.39	93.77
	F	74.19	-	81.66	-	-	90.86	83.13
1991	T		-		-	-		83.99
	M		-		-	-		91.31
	F		-		-	-		76.11
1981	T	48.48	-	60.22	-	-	65.29	58.65
	M	62.90	-	70.74	-	-	71.40	68.66
	F	33.04	-	47.43	-	-	59.99	48.25

**Source:** Portrait of Population: Lakshadweep; Census of India: 1981

District Census handbook; Parts XIII-A&B Village and Town Directory: Lakshadweep District; Census of India 2011.

### 5.5. Occupational Structure

Occupational characteristic determine quality of life and economic potential of an area. The livelihood of the tribal people of Lakshadweep depends upon the geographical and environmental condition. They use to live in and depend on an integrated and self sufficient economy for livelihood primarily on the gathering and related activities. The occupational structure of the islanders has been carried out. Table 11 shows the percentage share of working population in 1991 and 2011 on the islands. It is pertinent to note that the percentage of working population (including main workers and marginal workers) is less than half of the non-working population excluding the population of children. The working population is more in rural areas than urban.

**Table11.** Percentage of Working Population in Lakshadweep Islands

	2011			1991		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Urban	28.01	44.56	10.51	27.31	45.17	8.10
Rural	32.90	52.28	12.55	25.28	42.86	6.96
Total	29.09	46.25	10.96	26.43	44.17	7.60

**Source:** Census of Lakshadweep

Table 12 indicates that the highest working population is found on Kalpeni whereas the lowest on Andrott. To find out the reasons of low level of working population, it is necessary to delve into further analysis. The sex-wise analysis of working population explains that the share of percentage of the male is four times higher than female. On the other hand in the non-working population, the same trend is observed in male non-working population while among the females, Minicoy Island exhibits highest non-working females. It is because the male members do services on big ships and the females are mostly engaged in household chores.

**Table12.** Town wise Percentage of Working Population on Lakshadweep Islands

		Amini	Kadmat	Kavaratti	Andrott	Kalpeni	Minicoy	All towns
2011	T	24.84	31.90	31.47	19.61	36.66	30.04	29.09
	M	41.13	50.19	46.80	31.84	56.28	49.66	46.25
	F	8.56	13.78	12.66	7.80	14.89	9.31	10.96
2001	T	23.61	-	33.69	-	-	23.19	
	M	39.28	-	52.85	-	-	38.99	
	F	7.41	-	10.08	-	-	8.24	
1991	T	21.03	-	30.97	-	-	24.66	27.31
	M	37.57	-	50.39	-	-	41.60	45.17
	F	3.97	-	7.55	-	-	8.52	8.10

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1981	T	24.11	-	28.95	-	-	17.29	
	M	34.94	-	48.69	-	-	32.84	
	F	12.50	-	4.96	-	-	3.81	

**Source:** *Census of Lakshadweep*

The occupation of main working population has been classified into four categories viz. cultivators, agricultural labourers, household worker and other workers. Table 13 exhibits that no one is engaged in cultivation or agricultural labour. A small amount of population involves in the household activities and 99 percent of male as well as female population is engaged in other economic activities. They do primary activities such as coconut plantation, extraction of copra, cowry collection, fishing etc. A small amount of families rear cattle. Their economic pursuits are controlled by physical, environmental and climatic factors. The male population is more engaged in small household industry as compare to females.

**Table13.** *Percentage of Various Types of Main Working Population (2011)*

Sr. No.	Name of Islands	Cultivators	Agricultural Labourers	Household Workers			Other workers		
		Total	Total	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1	Urban	0.00	0.00	0.90	0.79	1.52	99.10	99.21	98.48
2	Rural	0.00	0.00	0.90	0.48	3.17	99.10	99.52	96.83
3	Total	0.00	0.00	0.90	0.72	1.86	99.10	99.28	98.14

**Source:** *Census of Lakshadweep*

Table 14 explains that the male working population in Amini and Andrott are engaged in household industry. It is observed that the females on Andrott Island are also engaged in household industry. The analysis of data indicated that the same trend as main occupation has been observed for marginal occupation. The females are more involved in household economic activities as their marginal occupation and do marginal occupation for small period of time.

**Table14.** *Percentage of Various Types of Main Working Population (2011)*

Sr. No.	Name of Islands	Cultivators	Agricultural Labourers	Household Workers			Other workers		
		Total	Total	T	M	F	T	M	F
1	Amini	0.00	0.00	1.96	2.06	1.41	98.04	97.94	98.59
2	Kadmat	0.00	0.00	0.62	0.50	1.30	99.38	99.50	98.70
3	Kavaratti	0.00	0.00	0.58	0.60	0.51	99.42	99.40	99.49
4	Andrott	0.00	0.00	2.68	2.00	5.98	97.32	98.00	94.02
5	Kalpeni	0.00	0.00	0.64	0.57	1.02	99.36	99.43	98.98
6	Minicoy	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.11	0.40	99.86	99.89	99.60
Total	All towns	0.00	0.00	0.90	0.72	1.86	99.10	99.28	98.14

**Source:** *Census of Lakshadweep*

## 6. CONCLUSION

Lakshadweep is a group of small islands in Arabian Sea. About 95 percent of the total population is tribal live in dilapidated conditions. The average family size is more as compare to average of India. But, the family size is low in rural areas while child proportion is more than urban areas. So, it may be inferred that the longevity of life is low in rural areas as compare to urban areas in the islands. The sex ratio is more in the rural areas of islands as compare the urban and the country. However, the child sex ratio is equal in urban and rural areas but in the later case, it is low than the country. On the other hand, the level of education is very high on the islands. The government made a long stride in this direction by implementing various schemes and initiatives.

The islands in Lakshadweep are formed by the calcareous sand which is not suitable for crop cultivation except coconut plantation. Therefore, there are no cultivators and agricultural labourers on the islands of Lakshadweep. The share of workers engaged in household industry is also very low. The percentage of other workers is significant who engage in plucking of coconut; copra extraction; cowry collection; toddy toppling, coir making and so on. In nutshell, we can say the government has done many things but still there are a lot scope for the betterment of the islander tribal people involving the civic society and the government.

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