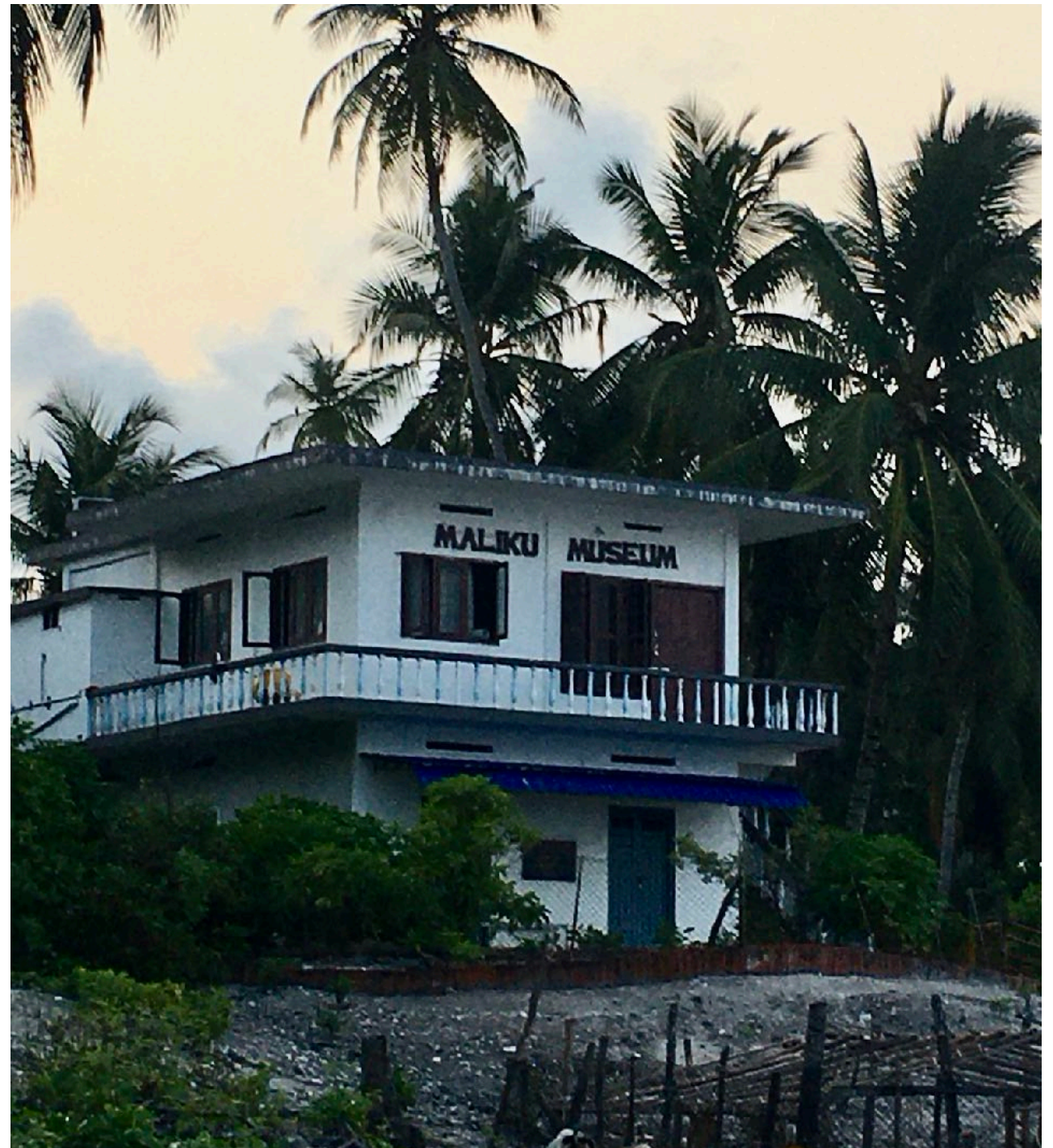


# Maliku Museum

Dedicated to the People of Minicoy

The building was made possible by a grant from SEACOLOGY in 2009 in return for conserving 2451 acres of marine habitats for 20 years.

The building is built and managed by Maliku Development Society & supported by the Centre for Action Research on Environment Science and Society. The museum showcases the items collected by Shri K.G.Mohammed, Retd. SPO. The items in the Museum collection belong to K.G Mohammed.



# History of the Museum

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Minicoy or Maluku, as the locals call it, is completely different from the rest of the Islands in the U.T of Lakshadweep. With their long Maritime tradition, people of Maluku have earned global reputation as seafarers, Dhivehi is their mother tongue. From time immemorial the malikuns displayed their inborn talents and skills for various activities. Their aesthetic sense is displayed in almost everything from household items to country craft and boats. As in other parts of the world, modernisation has influenced the inhabitants so much that the natives seldom wear their traditional dress. Most household items made of wood, lovingly crafted by indigenous craftsmen are replaced by plastic or other synthetic materials.

K.G Mohammed, retired Senior Publicity Officer has been a collector of artifacts. He valued their historical importance and feared that they would be lost and forgotten if they were not taken care of. I have known him for more than two decades and noted that he had housed his precious collections here and there beside his office as he had no proper place to keep them.. At that time, I was a frequent visitor to Minicoy to carry out research and also for implementing the “conservation, enterprise and livelihood league project”. I noted that Maluku had their own customs, traditions and laws to manage their lagoon and reef resources. Being mainly Tuna fishermen they were not targeting reef fish other than small fish used as bait for tuna fishing. The Fishermen Association also agreed to keep aside some areas as no take areas so that species could propagate.

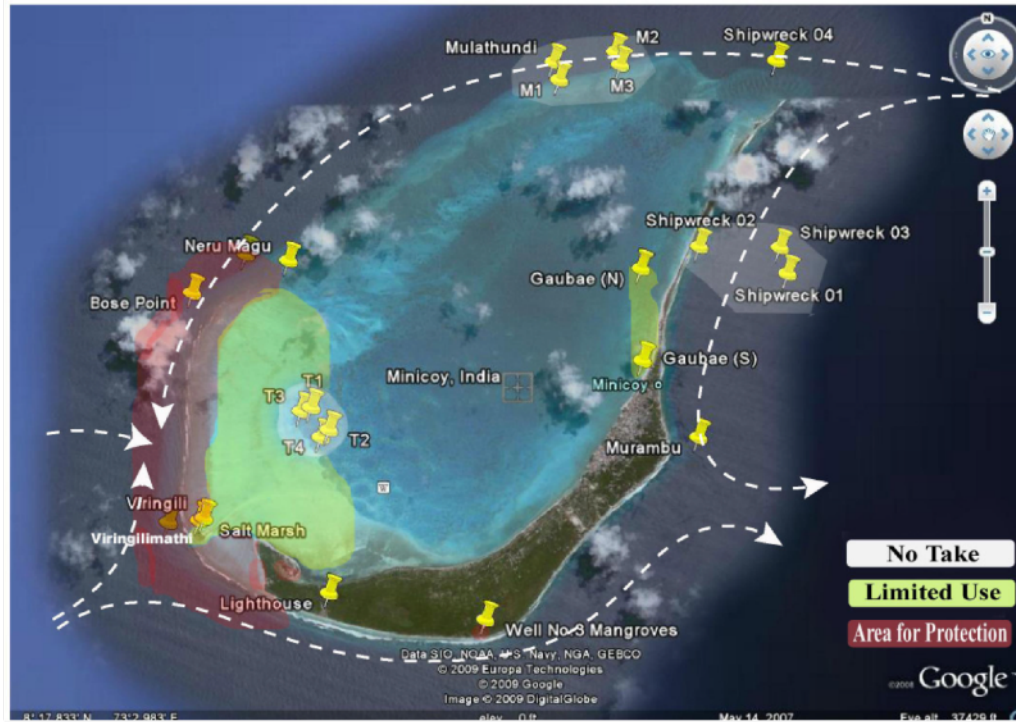
I heard of SEACOLOGY and noted that they rewarded Island communities that carried out conservation activities with infrastructure in exchange for setting up an MPA. To my mind Minicoy fitted the bill. We decided to apply for this grant. To build consensus for a common infrastructure to apply for we held a meeting with the Dweep Panchayat members. The Village headmen organised public meetings at each village to find out what common infrastructure was needed. They all agreed that a community museum was needed since lifestyles were changing and the old Minicoy customs and artefacts would soon be lost. Seacology approved the grant in 2009 and the Village heads signed a covenant to protect 2471 acres of Marine and Mangrove protected area for 20 years. It is now 2020 and they have kept their promise till date. The ground floor was completed in 2012 and Inaugurated by Mr. Amarnath Hon'ble Administrator of the U.T of Lakshadweep. The first floor is used as an environment awareness resource centre, an office for the Maluku Development Society and a guest room for visiting researchers.

As we sit isolated in the Island with the outbreak of Covid 19 in the outside world I was reminded how important it is to keep our traditions and be self reliant with the local resources.



# Map showing area suggested for Protection under the covenant with SEACOLOGY

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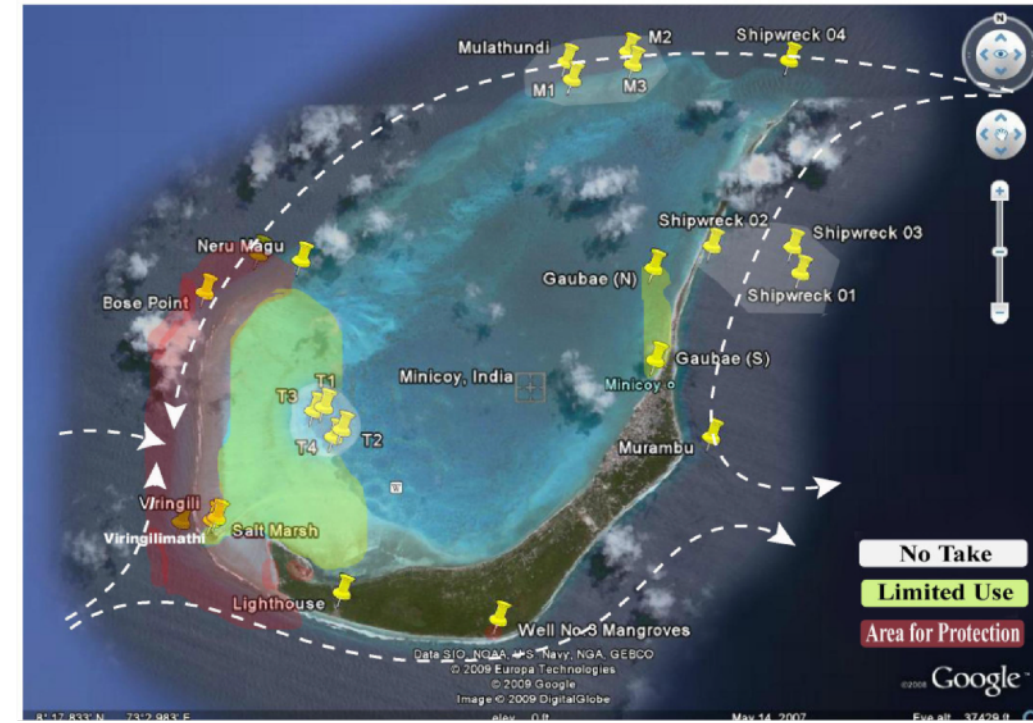
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Map showing sensitive ecosystems and areas and degree of protection needed  
The Joint Coastal Resource Management Council, Minicoy



Note: The prevailing currents are shown on the basis of fishermen's knowledge. A GPS was used to mark ecologically sensitive areas in Minicoy requiring different degrees of protection. The areas have been marked after extensive discussion with fishermen and public in all the villages of Minicoy in 2006-2009

- White Colour:** needs total protection; no extractive activities (i.e.all types of fishing or gleaning) will be permitted here. These are:
  - Shipwreck area on the North East
  - Mulathandi on the North West where new coral growth has been seen
  - Coral patches in Tharaathere marked T1, T2, T3, and T4.

Mulathandi and the Shipwreck areas have been identified as No-take areas because healthy coral cover including branching coral is found at these sites. The current moves from North to South and if this area is protected the spill over effect of the protection will flow southward and help regenerate the reef.

- Red Colour:** These are ecologically sensitive areas. These include mangrove patches, Salt Lake (Kalengefaanugaathu Fenga) and the South West reef.
- Yellow Colour:** Only limited activity such as bait fishing shall be allowed but no other type of fishing.

We are working towards protecting this area from disturbance of any kind.

Sd/-  
Chair, JCRMC







1623 Solano Avenue  
Berkeley, CA 94707, USA  
Tel: 510-559-3505 Fax: 510-559-3506

#### MINICOY COMMUNITY COVENANT

We, the leaders of the Minicoy Community, as the recognized authorities and leaders of the Minicoy Community, hereby affirm that we are legally and officially empowered in entering into a covenant with Seacology on behalf of the Minicoy Community for the purpose of establishing a 2,471 acre marine and mangrove protected area for 10 years in exchange for the construction of a natural and cultural heritage museum and two guard posts at Minicoy Island Lakshadweep archipelago, India.

#### **Responsibility of the Donors**


1. In consideration of the importance of the unique beauty and nature of Minicoy Island, Seacology will pay for the construction of a natural and cultural heritage museum and two guard posts. The total cost paid by Seacology for this construction is not to exceed US\$ 28,000.
2. Seacology claims no ownership over any land or sea belonging to the Minicoy Community with this agreement.

#### **Understanding**


1. The Minicoy Community agrees to establish a 2,471 acre marine and mangrove protected area for 10 years. The protected area is where no commercial or non-commercial fishing or netting, building, hunting, farming, logging, or any other activity that changes the natural state of the area is permitted. A detailed map showing the protected area must be sent to Seacology.

*On behalf of the Minicoy Community, I hereby certify my authority as a representative of Minicoy Community members, and acknowledge and agree that the terms and conditions of this covenant shall be binding from the date of signature upon all citizens of the Minicoy Community and their heirs.*

Moopan, Bada Village

  
Signature Date 5.3.09

Moopan, Aoumagu Village

  
Signature Date 5.3.09

Moopan, Boduathiri Village

  
Signature Date 5.3.09


Moopan, Rammedu Village

  
Signature Date 5.3.09

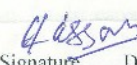
Moopan, Sedivalu Village

  
Signature Date 5.3.09


Moopan, Aloodi Village

  
Signature Date 5.3.09

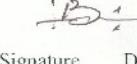
Moopan, Funhilol Village

  
Signature Date 5.3.09

Moopan, Kudchi Village

  
Signature Date 5.3.09

Moopan, Pallessery Village

  
Signature Date 5.3.09

Moopan, Kendiparty Village

  
Signature Date 5.3.09



## Cabinet 1 - Carpentry Tools

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**Wood Planer's** used for smoothening wood surface; small ones used for making carving on wood surfaces

**Round measuring tape** (maybe from the period the Lighthouse Light was built)

**Foldable wooden scale** It is made in Hungary and maybe from the period the Lighthouse was built.

**Atheli** - a Protective glove used while stitching tarpaulin and sails for boats.

**Hand drill** used for drilling holes in wooden planks.

Instrument used for Lathe work

Small wooden planers used for carving on wooden surfaces



## cabinet 2 - Fishing related items

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### Model of a Masodi di and Labari

**Masodi :** Traditional Pole & Line Tuna fishing boat with sails used until the early 70's before mechanization .

**Labari:** Fishermen collect live bait fish for tuna fishing and leave them in this floating tank in the lagoon.

**Heymas** is a dummy fish resembling a flying fish (fulangi) made from wood and it is used to lure seer fish (dhigumas)

**Manthras** - sacred stones used during Rahdhihamuhun - a ceremony to chase away the evil spirits, It is carried out after the monsoon to open the fishing season

**Measuring Instruments** used on sailing vessels to calculate the distance covered.





## Fishing related

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### **Heymas** - wooden dummy fish with Pole

Bamboo pole and line with a dummy fish made of wood dangling from the line. Used for Rahdhiha muhun - a ceremony for fishermen after the monsoon period to ward off evil spirits before launching fishing boats. This ceremony was stopped by the late 50's



## **cabinet 3 - Smoking equipment**

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### **Guduguda (Hookah) - Hubble bubble pipe**

Smoking tobacco using a hookah was a popular pastime activity .

These are hookahs used in Minicoy:

with glass base

brass base , wood base and clay base





## cabinet 4 - Shells and Miscellaneous

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**Faikala** (Spider Conch ) Cone Shells and Dhoala

**Bodu Boli** - Cowrie, 2 bowls filled with money cowrie, one bowl with three *hanthakilo*, used as currency = Rs 100/-

**Dhurra** - Whip : This whip was used for chastising men and women who had out of marriage relations by giving them 100 lashes.

very light floating stone

**muraka** - branching coral

part of old spear



## Fishing related - Top Shelf

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### Water sprayers (3)

water sprayers are used by the Tuna fishing boat crew to spray water on the sea surface to attract fish. The handle was made from local wood and scoop made from the stem of coconut flower.

In the 1990's these were replaced by motorised automatic water sprayer attached to the boat ensuring that these crew members were no longer needed.

one big wooden drill in the centre used for boat building





# Models of Boats used in Minicoy- Top Shelf

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## **Masodi:**

Traditional fishing boat with sails used until the early 70's before engine was introduced.

## **Labari:**

Fishermen collect bait fish for tuna fishing and leave them in this floating tank in the lagoon.

## **Bodudhoni:**

used for carrying fire wood, stones and other heavy materials and toeing sailing vessels in the past.

## **Jahaadhoni :**

were originally made for towing sailing vessels and merry making. Later on they were used for racing during visit of dignitaries. They are the pride of Minicoy, every village owns one and are currently used for racing during the National Minicoy Fest.

All boats are built by fishermen and carpenters in Maluku.



## **On the ground**

### **Fengaugan - water container**

Fishermen used to carry water in this brass water container on the masodi, tuna fishing boat, during fishing trips,

collected from Funhilol Village.





## In-between the cabinets

Wooden rudders of masodi - they stopped using it in the early 1970s

A Steering wheel from old sailing vessels

Boyaa - A glass float with protective nylon rope case



## cabinet 5 -instruments used in daily life -

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**Wang** - instrument used for pounding areca nuts

**areca nut slicer**; maldivian knife for slicing areca nut, brought from fuvahmulah island near Addu atoll

**knives** with three cases: **Guduvang** a special knife used by Medhken'bin and Raverin for cutting coconut leaves and debarking screwpine logs. It was also used while harvesting coconuts. Whenever the youth were engaged in these activities, the knife with its decorated cover was tied to the waist, especially while going to the bandaara (forest). **Boduvalhi** is a strong knife with decorated handle for cutting firewood and breaking the coconut. One such knife was presented by the groom to his bride.

**Laambu** -safety rope used by coconut climbers while climbing trees

**Kasabu bovalu**: this is the base of a wooden stand used by women with balls of thread for embroidery work on the libas collar





## cabinet 6 - containers and measuring units

### Badhi (decorative container)

**Raadheybadhi-** a container made by fixing two coconut shells. It was used by the Raveries for carrying Raa, (neera nectar from coconut flowers) to the houses of landlords. The Boduns enjoyed great status. Raaveries carried special neera called Rathu raa to their *Gandavarus* (Palaces ) in special badhies called *Raadheybadhi* of comparatively small size decorated with beautiful carvings during the month of Ramzan. They were also used on special occasions and festivals like Bodu Salavai

A true love story revolving around the Raadheybadhi

“Moosa was a young boy belonging to a Raaveri family. One day his father asked him to continue the tradition of collecting rathuraa and delivering it in the beautiful Raadheybadhi to the designated ganduar.. The daughter of the Ganduar fell in love with him. Love matches between different castes are ill-fated and there’s was no different. The boy left the island deciding never to return. When he grew very old with an unhappy family life he decided to return to Minicoy to see his maternal family. Everything had changed, Only one member of the family knew who he was. The baadi was no longer in use and the family had displayed it in their hall. He recognised it immediately as a symbol of his leaving the island and tears rolled down his cheeks as he relived his youth.”



## **cabinet 6 - Measuring units**

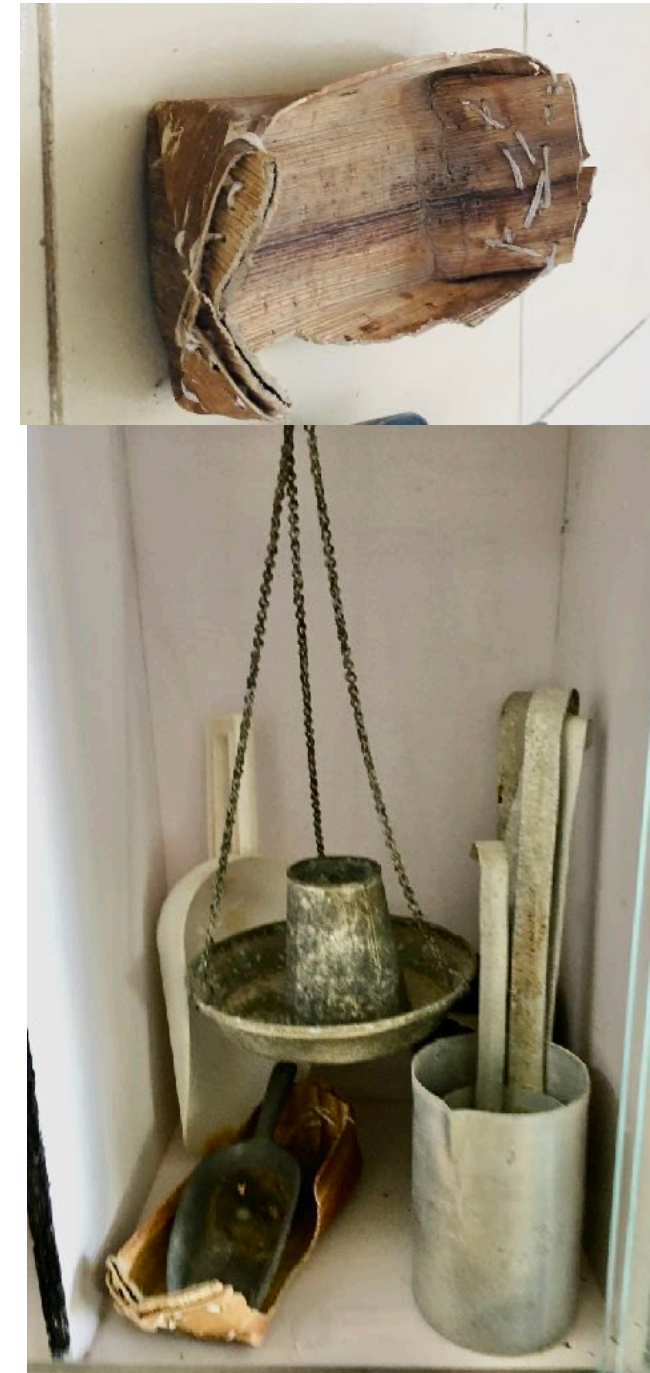
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**faala:** earlier such arecanut leaf containers of different sizes were used for carrying grocery items from the store.

**tharaadhu:** part of a weighing balance

**measuring jars:** shopkeepers used this for measuring and selling oil

**Scoopers:** earlier metal and now plastic





## cabinet 7 - ladels

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### **Dhaaniboa**

It is made by fixing a wooden handle to a coconut shell. The size of the shell varies depending on the purpose for which it is made. Large size *Dhaniboa* is used for taking water from a bilk (special masonry water tank) for washing feet before entering the mosque and smaller ones for drinking water. A *Dhaaniboa* of the volume of an Aduba (local measure) was presented to the bride at the time of delivery. The *Vihavvaadaatha* (local midwife) would help the woman wash herself by pouring water with the Dhaaniboa. They were also used for giving young girls a ceremonial bath at the time of puberty and for boys on completion of the bed rest after circumcision by the ***Edurubebe***. In both cases the ceremonial bath consisted of pouring three dhaniboas of fresh water were poured on their heads.

They were also used for the ceremonial washing of the dead and for bathing babies.

### **Badi Set**

model of badi set used for carrying meera by coconut climbers.



## cabinet 8 - Relics -

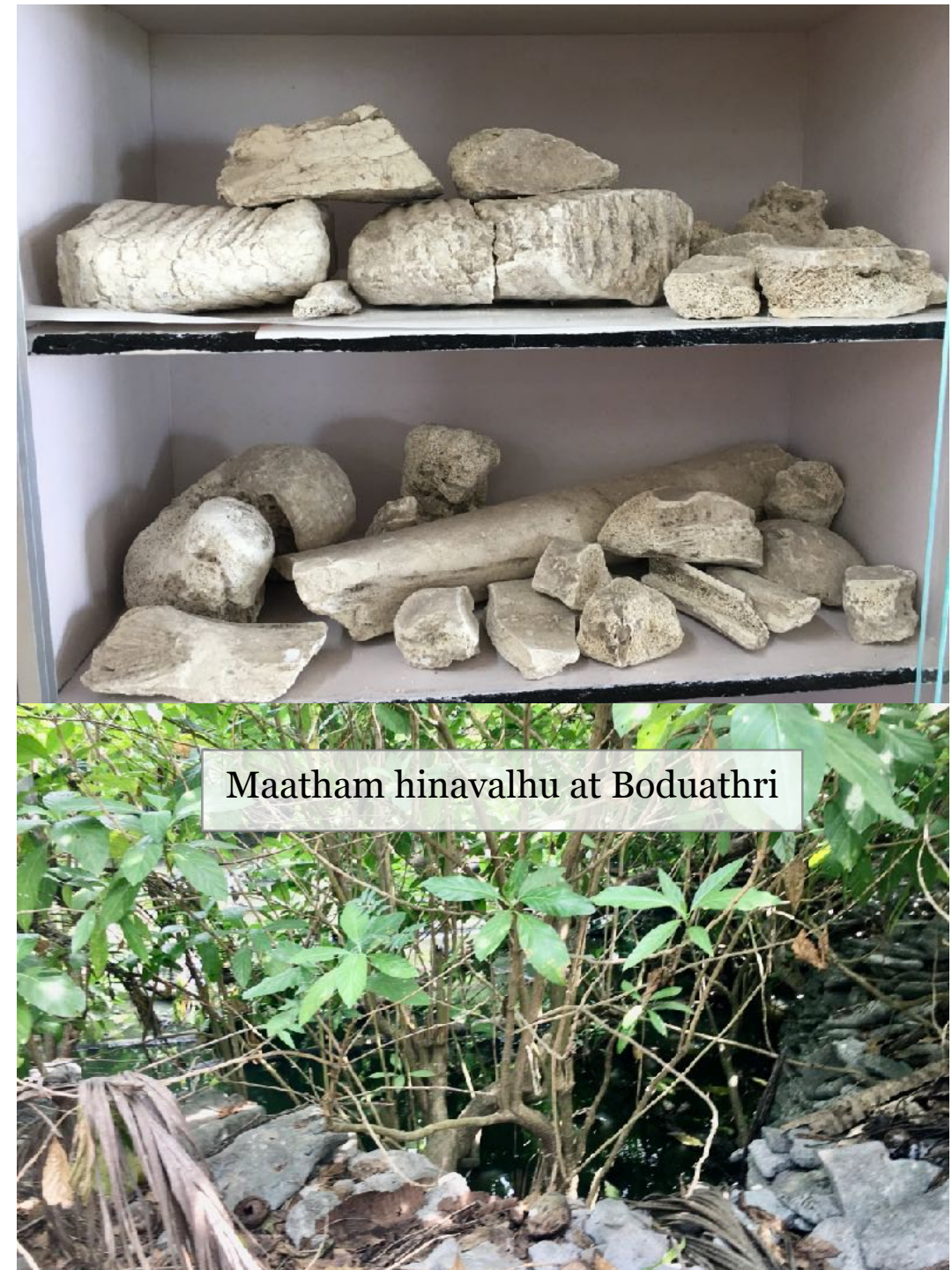
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### remains of a elephant skeleton:

to be confirmed but thought to be remnants of elephant skeleton collected from easa kuunu between kudehi and fallesery.

As per oral tradition, in the pre Islamic, buddhist period elephants were kept in Minicoy. Elephants are an important part of Buddhist ceremonies and rituals. Many Buddhist remains have been found in Minicoy. They used to bathe in public tanks known as “Maatham hinaavalhu,” one located at Fallesery and the other at Boduathiri village.

This indicates that elephants did live here. As this is not their natural habitat, Islanders must have imported elephants to the island as otherwise the tanks would not have this name. This is also keeping with the Buddhist tradition of keeping elephants with their stupas





## Relics 8th Cabinet - Continued

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**Pieces of Charcoal** that were collected from kodi point at the northern end and believed to be from the shipwrecks of steam vessels which used charcoal.

**Eetu** - Bricks brought from England to construct the light house between 1882-1885. The bricks have been collected separately by Ellen Kattner in 1990, Mohammed Kolugege and Vineeta Hoon in 2020. Each brick measures 8" length 4" wide and 3" height and are very heavy.



## **Stone anchor**

It was collected from Funhilol village seashore in the early 1990's.

This is a part of a stone anchor.





## Top shelf

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**Thagari** - wooden vessels for carrying tuna fish from shore landing to house

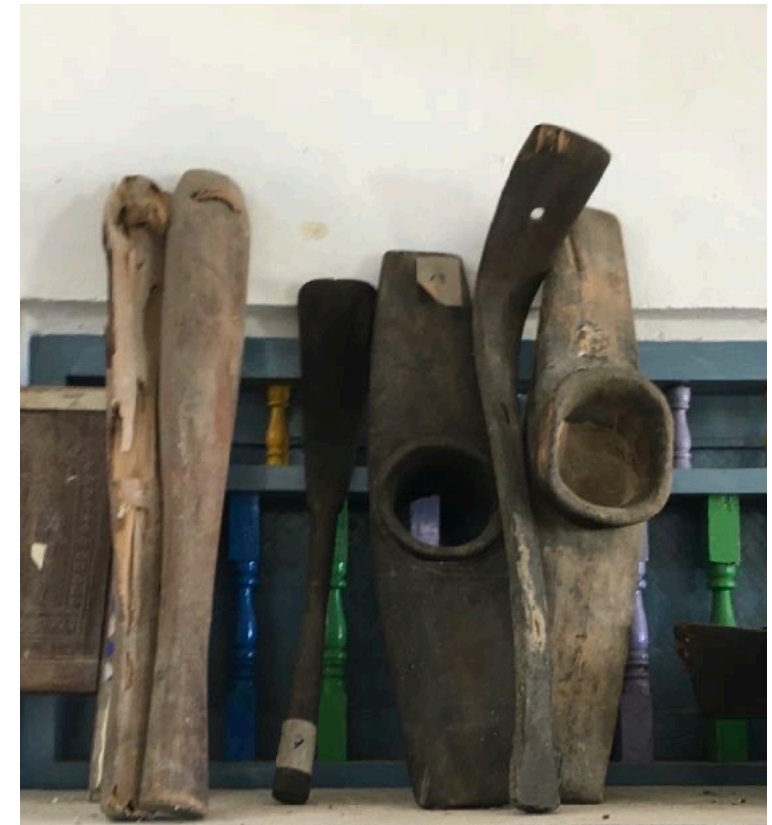
**Furani** used for filtering gardia to make rihakuru

**Sattuva** used for removing the tuna fish pieces from the boiling pot

**Dhathi** used for extracting oil from the coconut residue while making coconut oil at home in the traditional way by boiling the milk.

### **Painting of light house**

The mirror stand was found at fallesery village along with painting both of which were presented by the painter to a local friend in fallasery village.



## Back Wall



### Islamic Period

Tomb stones from different decades. The shape denotes the gender of the person buried. Smooth rounded ones represented women and the ones with a point on top were for men. This indicator is still maintained, but the tomb stones are no longer so ornate.

Maldives got converted to Islam in 1153, So presumably Minicoy was converted to Islam around the same period.

### Pre Islamic period

Remnants of Buddhist Structures. These ruins were found in and around Fallesery Village. Indicating that a community of buddhists lived here. Another indicator is the bathing tanks called Maatham Hinnvalhu which translates to Elephant bathing tanks. one tank is located at Fallesery and the other at Boduathiri village.

A set of roof tiles from the remains of the roof and a carved stone from the tomb of the Kalayngefaanu ziyaaraiy. A spiritual site at Kodi.



## **Centre Display**

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### **Hadhoo - coloured**

A large Pot which was used for storing vinegar at the Fallesery Village store. Fallesery people love to ornate their daily use items with colours and designs.

Broken Hadhoo

### **Hadhoo White:**

A large clay pot that was used for storing water at the Juma Mosque. These clay pots kept the water cool and refreshing. K.G remembers that as a child he and his mates used to drink water here after getting tired and thirsty from playing around.



## Centre Display on the floor

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**Hirimi-** storing lonu ambu, rihakuru and variety of things

**Runvaa:** storing lonu ambu, rihakuru and variety of things including water.

a story goes that once a person who went to drink water out of the Runvaa saw the reflection of the moon inside it. He thought the moon had fallen into the Runvaa and got excited. He closed it tightly thinking that he has captured the moon and sailed with it all the way to the kings Island to give it to him as a gift.

**Thagari :** different sizes were used for different purposes, squeezing coconut milk, cleaning meat.

**Thagari (unpolished)** was used for carrying dead bodies of babies to the burial ground.

**Tappu:** a drum for carrying water made from aluminium sheet and painted colourfully by residents of Fallesary village





## centre cabinet 1

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**Mathagondi** - A board game played in Minicoy . The game set is handcrafted in Minicoy. It is a wooden plank with a specific number of oval cavities to put a number of small white cowries to play a game known as matha. Woman play this game in their leisure hours especially during Ramazan.

**Bandook** - A pistol made by children using wood and pieces of pic pipe. They used it to play war games and thief and police. Also used as a prop in dramas.

**Funaah:** A game played by women during leisure. The red counters are coloured seeds of the Funaah trees.

**Book stand** - A stand for placing and reading heavy books . These were used to place the Koran while sitting cross-legged and reciting



## centre cabinet 2

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**Baiynagaa logan:** A sieve made of copper fused or straining water from rice after it has boiled

**patila** : two small copper vessels for cooking small quantities.

**dani bo** - a metal ladel without a handle





## centre cabinet 3

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**Bandiya** - copper pots of different sizes. Women used them to carry water from the well to their home and the the in-laws relatives as well. The small silver aluminium pot was used to carry water from the mosque.

The bandia's represents the close relationships between the married girls and their in-laws, as they carried water to their in-laws house in them on a daily basis.

**Keenath Logan:** an iron cooking vessel having different shape moulds for making short eats with different designs.

**Tappu:** copper vessels to carry water

**Kurra:** An aluminium kettle to carry tea



## Corner display

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Two Joints of whales backbone found near Kodi beach.

A Piece of stone anchor

**Mo** - Pounding sticks for dehusking rice and making flattened rice called avial

**Rodhi enburung** - Spindle for twining thread to make fishing nets. Until 1980 fishermen used cotton twine to make fishing nets





## Cabinet 9

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**Lava dance** costume sets. & headgear of thakrufans.

**Koran** - one of which is handwritten by a person from Androth

**Caps and hats:** Bodun and Niyamin wore them while going out to the mosque

**Books:** in Mahal language and lakshadweep Gazette



## Cabinet 10

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**Bodudharhi.** Large Plate, boatharhi Bowls and milk jug. Minicoyans have been using ceramic crockery from all over the world for centuries.

**Kadalakka Filaaagan:** Used for making a deep fried snack using channa dal flour. The batter was placed in this so that small drops fell into the hot oil and were deep fried.

**Aiydhonanigun** a dish used for hand wash for guests .

**Folla fihaalogan:** A moulded cooking vessel used for making Fola.





# Cabinet 11

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**Sufuraa** : It is a circular mat woven with (tender coconut leaves) by skilled men. The leaf is processed by warming ,before peeling and then colouring it. Normally red, blue and green colours are preferred. In the 60s coconut leaf was replaced by plastic cane for sometime and then with a plastic sheet decorated with designs using enamel paint. Sufraas came in three sizes.

**Bodu Sufuraa:** large one used for serving food to 5 or 6 people on the Bodu Arhifai ( Large Platform) in the Thalanmahthiburi or Gaydoruburi ( Hall meant for males) or in the Avarhuge (Village House). This has been replaced with a square or rectangular ready made plastic sheet.

**Thagarhi Sufuraa:** medium size for covering the loatharhi (round aluminium vessel) while carrying food to the friends and relatives of the bride and groom during the wedding function or in the village house for community feasts on festive occasions.

**Ondoalimahthi Sufuraa:** small size used by the bride for serving breakfast and evening tea to the bridegroom on the Ondoali (Traditional Swing cot) With the extinction of the Ondoali, this sufuraa is out of use. The original one on the right was made from or coconut leaf. The one on the left is plastic sheet with enamel paint.

**Healing ink pot and plate.;** the wooden pen was dipped in the a herbal ink and a mathura was written on the plate followed by chanting. some water was then put of the plate to rub of the mantra and the sick person drank it .

**gulbjal spayers** for spraying rose water on guests, aluminium bottle and dishes

**Crockery** various plates and dishes from different parts of the world. The red glasses are from Korea, the standing plate from Japan, bengal potteries from Calcutta.





## Cabinet 12 - Coir Making

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stages of making a coir rope.

1. Gan'du and muguru - made from coconut wood instrument used for beating the the soaked coconut husk and removing the fibre.
2. bonbi - coconut fibre
3. leeli - ist twist of the fibre yarn
4. roan foali - coir rope
5. coir toy gifted by Ibrahim Muthuge
6. various wooden containers





# Top Shelf

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## Varhaa Kani

is a stand with U or V shape. A Neeli or strand of coconut fibre . It is fixed to a kani gondi ( a base) and used for twisting coir.

It is sometimes used even now at the village level.



## Top shelf

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Thaara - Tamburine made from wood animal skin.  
used during mureedhu festival,

The stick was used by the Kateeb while delivering  
khuthba - sermon during friday prayer.





# Top Shelf

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## Bisagan

it used to be hung in front of the swing cot to keep important items that were required frequently.

foli & dandigan is a game played by two teams. using wooden bats and wooden smaller pieces.

hard hats were used during the tuna tagging program.

Mala Phi - containers for keeping things. Carrying food on festive occasions,

Malaphi dhinu These were used for presenting clothes for the bride.

Galli vashi woven basket fro Galle, Sri lanka



## Between the cabinets

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Baadi set : a collection of coconut shells used as containers. They were hung on both sides to distribute the weight on the wooden hanger. The River carried the hanger on his shoulders and transported the meera containers home to further process.

meera was converted into hakkaru - palm sugar and vinegar

khari gobble: in 1989 there were two trees that yielded minor coconuts. These coconuts contained kernel and water just like the big ones





## Cabinet 13- Lanterns

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Lantern from Ship wreck

Lantern from Ship wreck

Lantern got from a waste collector



## cabinet 14

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**Ghali vashi** : A woven container got from Galle in Sri Lanka

**Dhurun** - a cloth ring base placed on head while carrying a drum of water or container.carry

**Maravali** - it is a sandal made of wood and is similar to wooden slippers called *khadaon* worn by sadhus in North India. This particular Maravalli has carvings on its base and was included with the items to be gifted to the bride. included in the gifts. It was used after washing feet for prayer or before going to bed. It was mainly used by the *bodun* or upper caste families.

**Transistor radios** - Panasonic and a Two in one tape recorder these were very popular in the 1970's and upto the 1990s

**hard hats** were used during the tuna tagging program.

tridecna shell





## Lanterns CABINET 15

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oil lamps - used in the mosque

lanterns and oil lamps commonly used in households until electricity was brought to the Islands in the 1960's

a lock, a seed and some shells collected by K.G on 28/2/2020 from the Gemendhoo Island aka Tsunami Island, in Nilhandu atoll, the Maldives. It was devastated during the 26th december 2004 Tsunami and the Island is now deserted.



## Cabinet 16

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Foli - a popular game on the island played by two teams with a minimum number of 5 members and no limit for maximum. It consists of a bat and smaller cylindrically shaped wooden pieces. The batsman has to knock 4 pieces into the air and the fielders have to try to catch them. If his bat misses the wooden piece in the air he loses a point.

some pieces of charcoal

some sticks

some odds and ends souvenirs





## corner

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**Hethuru** - A strong rope made from coir was hung through a pulley - from a coconut tree and climbed to pluck betel leaf. petal leaf vine was grown on the coconut tree.

This rope was used by the Donkunnuge members.



## As you enter

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This chair was built to seat the president of India - Zakir Hussain when he visited Minicoy in 1964 to inaugurate the electricity service in Minicoy.





# Household items

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**These kitchen items were presented by the groom to the bride as part of the wedding gifts .**

**Hunigondi:** It is a small oval beautifully coloured and carved stool and fitted with a sharp serrated blade for scraping coconut. Women sit on it while scarping the coconut from the shells. Later models were fitted with mica sheets instead of carvings. locally available Kandhu (Hemanda Feltata) wood issued for making this stools. Collected from the waste dump at Kodi on 15/4/2020

**Fundang Ihthaa Gondi:** it is a small stool for the ladies to sit on while cooking or grinding soaked rice and spices. This one was made in 1978 from ayni wood. It was presented to Ayesha Gandige Fathimage as a part of the wedding gifts from her bridegroom Ali Medunouge They have both passed away and have two children Ameena GF and Abdul Shareef GF. Gifted to the Museum by Aneesa GF on 21/4.2020

**Appang Jahaa Gondi:** A small circular base made of wood with a sun mica surface for rolling apang such as fathafoli, kaludiri aping, chappathi, thuneburi etc. Collected from the waste dump at Kodi on 15/4/2020

**Varhan Ihthaa Gondi:** It is a stool almost the size of a teapoy, present to the bride on the happy occasion of her first delivery. The new born baby is washed on this special stool. It is also used for coir twisting at home or at the varhange (house for coir twisting) where Lava - a folk dance was performed by male villi group. Collected from the waste dump at Kodi on 15/4/2020



# Historical Places Of Minicoy

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1. Fallesery Village House
2. Matham Hinavalli
3. Kalayngefaanu Ziyaaraiy
4. Light House
5. Light house keepers residence
6. Observation tower at Meteorological station
7. Telegraph?radio Office at Meteorologcical station
8. Valumaougothi Bidarge.
9. Boduganduar House



# Historical Places Of Minicoy Fallesery Village House

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The Fallesery village house is the oldest village house in Minicoy. The village was a cluster of thatched houses. The pucca village house was constructed on 10/3/1701 replacing the thatched village house. It was reconstructed on 28/2/1985. In all probability Fallesery maybe the oldest village in Minicoy. According to the oral tradition, several new villages were formed from the breakaway groups of Fallesery. Aoumagu was formed by a breakaway group of people from Fallesery. they called themselves dekolu raveri's - raveries on both ends. of the villages in Minicoy a second break away group formed Bada and after that a third breakaway group that formed kendiparty.

It is the largest village in area and population. There are 287 households with a total population of 3000+ . The people are coconut tree climbers and neera tappers. Because of their occupation they did more physical labour than other villages and therefore developed a good physique. They helped other villages for hauling up masodis for weekly maintenance. They had a special role in hauling up and launching all sailing vessels. Like other villages they too are skilled boat builders. They are talented in singing thaufeedhu (thauheedh) and have special song of falessery for eg "Jehadoni fygun" and performing folk dances. Each village house is governed by two Bodukaka's and women's activities are managed by 2 Boduthatha's.

They are the keepers of oral tradition, stories, dance, song and crafts. They are the only village in Minicoy who continue to follow all the old traditions and customs of Minicoy and try to keep all the village population involved. They still use old punishments for the young. Boys are made to make Lambu a safety rope for coconut climbers. Most of the buddhist remains were found in Fallesery Village. Recently the remains of a large buddhist temple were found at Moolaadhu. They have been kept in our museum and marked pre islamic era. Several dignitaries have visited the Fallesery village house including Vice President Zakir Hussain in 1964, Prime minister Indira Gandhi in 1976 and Prime Minister Morarji Desai in 1982. They also have the oldest existing race boat named Courageous fallesery (Rai Arumadhu) built in 1962.



# Historical Places Of Minicoy - Light House

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The Minicoy light house was established on 2nd february 1885 at the southern end of the island. Its tower is 49.5 m (162”) in height. and has now a range of 40 nautical miles (74km). It is of cylindrical shape, built of brick masonry and has a lantern and gallery (balcony). The black bricks used were specially brought from “ Birmingham, England and a special adhesive compound from Holland. Tt has modern instrumentation of electrification and an automatic system of shining mirrors that flash light every 15 seconds. it is also equipped with differential global positioning system (DGPS) the light house was brought under the control of the Government of India when the indian national flag was unfurled over its top on 2nd april 1956.

Until 1934 the Light House was under the direct control of board of Trade London and there after it was completely transferred along with Light Houses of Ceylon and Burma to a Board appointed by board of trade London.

Although India attained her Independence on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947 the British Government did not transfer the administration of Light house till April 1956. The De-jure transfer of administration to the Government of India has to wait further till 19<sup>th</sup> September 1963. As both houses of British Parliament has to pass a requisite legislation which require the assent of Queen of England.

This meticulously designed light house provides a pan island view from the top. One can have an unobstructed view of the most beautiful sunrises and sun sets. The architect of this light house is Sir James Nicholas Douglas the famous British lighthouse engineer who was awarded the knighthood by queen.





# Historical Places Of Minicoy - Light House Keepers Residence

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The Light house Keepers residence consisted of a two bedroom home with a fireplace and veranda and a common kitchen and dining room. It was built in 1885 using the same bricks as the Minicoy lighthouse.

Some elders in Minicoy remember using the kitchen to cook food whenever they went to spend the day in south Pandaram. Minicoyans were always welcome to visit and use the kitchen as well. They would be offered biscuits to eat along with the tea they prepared.

The place is in disrepair and needs to be repaired and preserved.



## Historical Places Of Minicoy Maatham hinaavalhu,

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As per oral tradition, in the pre Islamic period elephants were kept in Minicoy. They used to bathe in public tanks known as “Maatham hinaavalhu,” one located at Fallesery and the other at Boduathiri village. The name indicates that elephants did live here. As this is not their natural habitat, Islanders may have imported elephants to the island as otherwise the tanks would not have this name.

These tanks are in disrepair. The Boduathiri one is overgrown with trees and shrubs and their historical value forgotten. The Younger generation do not even know of their existence





# Historical Places Of Minicoy Observation Tower at Meteorological

The meteorological observatory in Minicoy was established on 21.01/1891 by the British as a class II Observatory. It was upgraded to class I observatory in 1963. The observation tower was used for taking upper air observations. A pilot balloon used to be released from the top of the tower to measure the azimuth speed and direction of wind.

It was built from coral stone and lime mortar.

The observation tower has 42 steps.



# Historical Places Of Minicoy Mlnicoy Radio telegram office

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The Minicoy Radio office was established by the British probably in the same period as the light house.

People above 60 recall this place very vividly. There used to be a very big orange tree in the compound. As children they used to come and play in the compound. Some of the school activities would also take place in the large compound of this radio office.





# Historical Places Of Minicoy - Kalayngefaanu ziaaraiy.

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This is a spiritual Site of Minicoy - with a oral story attached to it.

A long time ago, some young boys while going to Thundi for fishing came across a strange being and they presumed it was a ghost. At first they were afraid but being a group of boys together decided to tackle the being. They went closer to the being and started beating him. The ghost started speaking to them and said “please do not beat me, I have travelled here from a far away land on a piece of husk and I am here to protect your Island, I can change your fortunes and make sure that you always get tuna fish” and promised them many other things. The boys did not believe him and continued to beat him. So he said if your intention is to kill me all you have to do is remove the Taavis from my waist and I shall die. The boys removed the Taavis and he fell inert on the ground. They noted that the body had fallen below the high tide line and figured that it would be washed away by the sea and returned home to brag about what they had done. The next morning all the curious villagers went to see the body of the dead ghost. On reaching there they were surprised to see that land had formed around the corpse. This meant that something miraculous had happened. The boys recounted everything the ghost had said about saving the island and came to the realisation that they had committed a huge crime by killing a holy man. Out of remorse a small building was built as a shrine to this spirit and some believers still go and do some ritual here as can be seen with incense sticks lit here now and then. The building doesn’t exist here anymore.



## Historical Places Of Minicoy - Valumaougothi Bidarge.

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This is a 100 year old house, which is still being maintained by the family who own it.

There are two big rooms with the Hondoli - Swing cot and sleeping platforms. All the big houses in Minicoy had this architecture and decor until the mid 1990's.

This house is special since they have also maintained the bathing pond that is attached to the house.





# Historical Places Of Minicoy - Boduganduar

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Bodu Ganduar as its name suggest is the biggest and oldest house in Minicoy,.





# Areas of Ecological Importance in Minicoy



**Minicoy** is an Oceanic Island Lying between the 8 and 9 degree Channel. It is an Island of great Biodiversity. Since it is an isolated Island it has to rely on its own sources to recruit and replenish the coral colonies and other marine life. Its sensitive ecosystems include:

1. Coral Reef
2. Mangroves (B.Cylindrica) at well no 3
3. Mangroves (Ceriops tagal & Aecinia) at Salt lake.

4. Salt Lake near helipad
5. Seagrass beds
6. Branching & reef building coral at dheradhethere
7. Salt Marsh in Viringli
8. Patch reef in Tharathre & Gaube
9. New coral recruitments in Mulathandi
10. Ship wreck at the Saalumagu
11. Shipwrecks in the North East.

All these areas provide special eco-system services. Reefs protect the

island keep it safe from the ocean waves and storms.

Mangroves trap and bind sediments and help build land. They ensure that the corals and sea grass meadows remain sediment free. They provide a specialized habitat for the juvenile fish

**A Healthy reef is imminent for our survival**

These eco systems have been providing for our needs and livelihood since time immemorial. Its time that we started taking care of them!

