

PUC is a letter dated 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2000 regarding maintenance of street lights at Harminder Bay, the Nicobarese tribal settlement in Little Andaman. In this connection it is stated that the issue regarding payment of energy charges for the street lights provided at Harminder Bay and their maintenance was raised in the tour note of the former Chief Secretary vide para 'g' at page 2/c. The issue was referred to the Finance Department, A & N Administration, who asked for certain clarifications vide their note dated 7<sup>th</sup> September, 99 at para 16 at page 4/n. As the Tribal Welfare Department was never concerned with the maintenance of the street lights in the tribal areas, the points were referred to the DC, Andamans and DC, Nicobars for furnishing the required information. The DC, Nicobars vide his fax message dated 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2000 at page 42/c has furnished the following information.

- i. Tube light and other fixtures for the street lights at Car-Nicobar are being purchased under a scheme called roads and street lights under annual block scheme of community development block, Car-Nicobar and expenditure is met out of major head 2215 (Non-Plan).
- ii. As regards payments of energy charges, it is being met out of the office expense of the District Administration-Major Head 2053 (NP).

As per the details received from the SE, Electricity, vide his letter dated 11.11.99 at page 13/c, a total amount of Rs. 17.82 lakh was outstanding towards electric charges against DC, Nicobars.

As far as Harminder Bay is concerned, an estimate for Rs. 59,874/- was received from EE, (PPS&W), Port Blair vide his letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> October, 99 at pages 35-36/c towards maintenance and repairing charges of the street lights at Harminder Bay, but no fund could be made available to the Electricity Department to carry out the maintenance and repairs as the Tribal Welfare Department do not have any specific provision to meet the expenditure. Earlier the street lights of Harminder Bay were maintained by Panchayat. Panchayat is reported to have stopped the payment of energy charges in respect of street lights at Harminder Bay because it being a tribal area does not fall under the purview of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Panchayat Regulation.

There appears to be no other option, but to make available fund towards maintenance of the street lights at Harminder Bay under non-plan budget of the Tribal Welfare Department if additional fund is allocated by the Finance Department in the RE. However, we have not projected any fund for this purpose in the RE under Non - Plan for 2000-2001. Even so we may ask the Finance Department to allocate an additional fund of Rs. 5.00 lakh in the RE under Major Head '2225' (Non-Plan) to meet the expenditure towards energy charges and maintenance of street lights at Harminder Bay (an amount of Rs. 3,47,404/- was outstanding as on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2000 + Rs. 72,000/- @ Rs. 8000/- per month being average electricity charges from July to March, 2000 + Rs. 59,874/- being estimated cost towards repairs of street lights, fitting etc.), if approved.