

1) Autonomous Council: -

The whole of Nicobars district is inhabited by the tribals predominantly and it is declared as reserved area under the A&N Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation - 1956. Entry of non-tribals into the reserved area is prohibited under the provision of the above regulation. The tribal area is excluded from the Panchayati Raj System. However, the Nicobarese tribals, which is the largest tribal group, have formed their traditional Panchayats i.e. Tribal Councils at village level and island level for day to day administration. The Tribal Council is composed of the representatives of the tribals elected by the tribals, but the administration is not involved in any way in the formation of Tribal Council.

At the instance of the Govt. of India, there was a proposal to formalise the existing Tribal Councils so as to involve them in their administrative development. In view of that a draft Tribal Council Regulation on pattern of the Panchayati Raj System applicable to the non-tribal area was formulated in 1995 and the views of the Tribal Council were invited, but they backed out. Therefore the proposal was shelved.

As reported by Deputy Commissioner (Nicobars) another draft Tribal Council Regulation on the pattern of autonomous district Tribal Council of Tripura has been formulated and referred to the Tribal Council, Car Nicobar to ascertain their views. Perhaps the Tribal Council is yet to come up with their opinion on the draft Tribal Council Regulation.

As they have come forward demanding autonomous Tribal Council, the Deputy Commissioner (Nicobars) may be asked to have their views expedited to process the proposal further.

2) Communication Problem: -

There are a number of islands inhabited by the Nicobarese tribals in Nicobars District and they are separated by the sea geographically. The communication link from Port Blair to different islands is maintained by plying ships from Port Blair to different islands of the Nicobars District. Besides, a few smaller boats are stationed at Kamorta, the headquarter of Nancowry group of islands, to provide inter-island communication link, but the frequency of the shipping service from Port Blair to different islands of the Nicobars District and inter-island shipping services within the Nicobars District appears to be inadequate and need improvement. In fact, the movement of men and materials for development purposes from Port Blair to Nicobars and movement of the agricultural produce of the Nicobarese and the Nicobarese themselves from one island to another solely depend on the Shipping Services.