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being processed for clearance, which upon approval would extend coverage of Doordarshan and All India Radio to 99 per cent of the population of the Islands in the Tenth Plan period. The request of Member of Parliament, A & N Islands for local news bulletins would be considered once the expanded coverage is brought about.
(Action: Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting)

36. Regarding the proposal for Submarine Cable Landing Station, Secretary, Department of Telecommunications indicated that based on an expert report, it was not found necessary to go in for an undersea cable. However, a major upgradation of the facilities of BSNL was underway, and once this upgradation was completed, more than adequate bandwidth would be available for the needs of the Islands.

37. Member of Parliament, A & N Islands drew attention of the Meeting to 81 villages in Nicobar, which still do not have access to electricity. It was suggested by Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission that options of covering these villages by solar energy or bio-mass may be explored and local people be trained for maintenance of solar power units. Member, Planning Commission suggested that Jatropha plantations may be taken up for producing bio-diesel which could be used for electricity generation. Chief Secretary, A & N Administration indicated that the Administration would take into account all possible options, with a view to covering these 81 villages by 2007.

(Action: Chief Secretary, A & N Administration)

Agenda Item No. 7

Improving Human Development: Health, Education and Drinking Water:

38. Various proposals relating to the above subject on the agenda were discussed. Regarding the issue of translation of NCERT books into Tamil, Bengali and Telugu, it was agreed that as proposed by the Member of Parliament, A & N Islands, permission would be given for translation of these books by the Department of Secondary & Higher Education.

(Action: Secretary, Department of Secondary & Higher Education)

39. Member of Parliament, A & N Islands raised the issue of providing treated drinking water in tribal villages, and augmentation of drinking water in Port Blair Municipal Council area. Prime Minister expressed concern over the drinking water situation. Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission suggested that efforts may be intensified towards rain water harvesting and watershed development. Member, Planning Commission felt that Department of Atomic Energy may be approached for obtaining suitable models of desalination plants that may be appropriate. Chief Secretary, A & N Administration mentioned the Flat Bay project which