

49

exploitation. In the absence of such permission, the local people either are deprived of or are locally collecting this NTFP in absence of valid permissions. This needs to be considered favourably. The population of Andaman requires small timber for domestic needs and also construction timber for their own households. The forest is capable of producing the requirements of these people if it is restricted to the local needs only without any opportunity of sale outside. Hon'ble Supreme Court has directed that forest can be worked under Government of India approved Working Plan. The Ministry is of the view that Working Plan Officer should prepare scientific working plan based on available growing stock, regeneration status, annual available yield of small timber and construction timber. Within this available yield, only limited harvesting of small timber and construction timber of appropriate species can cater to domestic need of all local inhabitation without restricting this operation only to worked areas. According to the discussion with the PCCF, Andaman, the Andaman Administration is also facing difficulty in supplying bona fide of small and construction timber for the local people and they are also moving the Hon'ble Supreme Court to grant exemption for this limited purpose.

MoEF is in total agreement with both the Expert Committees that there should be no forest based industries established in Andaman to exploit the local forest produce. There should be no export of timber in any shape, round log, sawn timber, veneer, block board, etc. from Andaman. If any forest based industry wants to come in Andaman, they can use imported raw material.

Regarding Saw mill industry, Andaman Administration has already obtained Hon'ble Supreme Court's permission to run earlier department saw mills and make shift saw mills to cater to the soil needs of the local people for their domestic consumption.

Regarding closure of Andaman & Nicobar Forest Development Corporation, MoEF has prepared a Cabinet Note which is being circulated separately suggesting the closure of the Andaman & Nicobar Forest Development Corporation in a phased manner over a period of five years in which the issues of Red oil palms and rubber plantation has been dealt with. This Cabinet Note comprehensively deals with the pay revision and VRS package, etc. for the A&N Corporation employees.

ii) Regarding Andaman Trunk Road, although C.R.Babu Committee mentioned that Government should take immediate steps to develop a sea route or land route parallel to ATR segment that passes through the Jarawa Tribe Reserve and reinforce sea transport system and helicopter service within a reasonable time