

in Panchayat Institutions. Under the provisions of the Regulation, the First Captains, who are elected directly to Village Council, also become members of the Island Council (indirectly) and one amongst them also becomes the Vice Chief Captain.

- (4) The tribal community has preserved its distinct identity and is characterized by commonality, equality, cooperation, consensus decision making, living in harmony with nature.
- (5) As opposed to the general view that Captains are be all and end all of the community, it has been noticed that major power in a village is wielded by the tuhets, which is the basic unit of the tribal village. Tribal Captain is at best a Spokesman of the village. All decisions are taken based on consensus (which they are accustomed and continue to cherish) as opposed to decisions based on majority.
- (6) The tuhet system is the strongest in Car Nicobar (which is more of a Patriarchical society) than elsewhere (as one goes to Central Nicobar, the society is more leaning towards matriarchical society). Even decisions, such as in which tuhet will the bride and groom stay is decided by the elders of the community, who from then-on become members of such tuhet leaving their own (bride's or groom's, as the case maybe) tuhets and are called 'inlom' (loosely translated as "gulam" in Hindi - a misnomer conveying a negative connotation). As a matter of fact many 'inloms' have gone on to become captains of their adopted village and even the Chief Captain of the Island Council). Interestingly, the fact that tuhet system has emerged stronger in Car Nicobar can largely be attributed to education.
- (7) Most of the nicobarese even today can be categorized as "Very vulnerable tribes". This is more evident in central and southern Nicobars.

C. Proposal/ Suggestion

1. The emphasis might be to build upon the system already in place amongst the tribal community. The rules have been drafted taking this aspect into consideration.
2. The draft rules could be vetted by the Law Department as well as the Election Commission (UTs) and published after appropriate changes by inviting claims and objections.
3. Simultaneously, it is proposed to conduct a study on the impact of the Regulation on the Tribal Community to allay apprehensions of it having any detrimental effect on the economic, social and cultural life of the tribal community. This has also been conveyed by the tribals as well as tribal leaders during informal interactions.