understanding of the import of the Sixth Schedule. With regard to the exemption sought from Income Tax, the Administration has submitted its proposal for consideration of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Tribal Affairs. We do not know the developments thereafter, and would like to be advised on its present status.

In the meanwhile, Hon'ble M.P. Shri Bishnu Pada Ray has forwarded the copy of his letter to the Secretary (Tribal Affairs), A & N Administration demanding elections in the Nancowry Group of Islands under the provisions of A&N Tribal Regulation and has requested the Commission to intervene in this regard.

As you are aware, the Commission cannot take any initiative to hold elections to the seats in the village councils and the offices of the First Captains under the Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Tribal Councils) Regulation 2009 until and unless the rules of the aforesaid Regulation are notified by the Administration. Even after the notification of these rules, the Administration would have to first initiate action for constitution of Village General Bodies under Section 3 and determine the areas of the said Village General Bodies under Section 6 of the Regulation as was done at the time of the constitution of Panchayats. The role of this Commission would commence only after that. The issue of finalization of the rules has been pending for nearly five years as the draft rules that were prepared and forwarded to the Director (Tribal Welfare) in March 2011 have remained inconclusive for want of any concrete or time bound action by the Tribal Welfare Department. Given the present scenario, it seems that finalization of rules by the Administration is to be completed with a sense of purpose in a time bound manner.

I would like to emphasise that extension of the democratic process in the Tribal Community would usher long term benefits to the people and ensure a continuous flow of funds through an institutional mechanism of elected tribal councils and First Captains and bring development activities at the grass root level within the