



सत्यमेव जयते

Ms. Bhupinder Prasad, IAS (Retd.)

ELECTION COMMISSIONER

**ELECTION COMMISSION FOR UT's**

(Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep,

Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu)

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Honourable Lt. Governor,

As you are aware, with a view to bring the Nicobar Group of Islands in the fold of Local Self Governance, the Ministry of Law and Justice, (Legislative Department) Government of India published the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Tribal Councils) Regulation, 2009 (No. 1 of 2009) promulgated by the President of India in December 2009. The Andaman and Nicobar Administration thereafter drafted the Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Tribal Councils) (Preparation of Electoral Rolls and conduct of Election) Rules, 2011, a copy of which was sent to this Commission in March 2011. Though some communications have been exchanged thereafter with the Commission, it appears that these rules are yet to be published. It would be appropriate if your Administration could advise this Commission the status of both the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Tribal Councils) Regulation, 2009 and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Tribal Councils) (Preparation of Electoral Rolls and conduct of Election) Rules, 2011. Since the aforesaid Regulation has remained inoperative for several years, it would be appropriate to let us know whether a fresh Regulation is being brought in its place.

Informally, we have learnt that there was some reluctance amongst the senior tribal leaders to accept the institution of Tribal Council sought to be introduced through the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Tribal Councils) Regulation, 2009. One of the reasons could be the apprehension of the village leaders regarding the disintegration of their social and cultural values and dilution of their authority. In this regard, the Commission would like to share the experience of the traditional Moopen System prevalent in Minicoy in the Lakshadweep Group of Islands. The Moopen, who is similar to the Captain in Nicobar Tribal Society, plays a dominant role in the social and cultural life of the Minicoy people. We are told that though there was initial reluctance in accepting the PRI System in Minicoy yet with the pursuation of the Administration, the PRI System of Tribal Council was graciously accepted and both the traditional Moopen System and the PRIs are working concurrently very smoothly since latter's introduction in 1995. Though the Moopen remains the most respected member of the Community and plays an important role in the social and cultural life, the Pradhans and the Panchayat Members are also given due recognition as they work towards bringing the benefits of development to the local people through the institution of Local Self Governance. There is a significant devolution of funds which the Panchayat enjoys and is now playing an important role in the fields of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Education, Fisheries, Medical & Health Services. Another example is of Nagaland

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