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**A brief note on the draft Andaman and Nicobar Islands
(Tribal Councils) Regulation, 2009.**

The draft Tribal Councils Regulation envisages two tier system with (i) Village Councils and (ii) Island Councils has been formulated on the pattern of Andaman and Nicobar Islands Panchyat Regulation, 1994 to introduce Panchayati Raj institutions among the Nicobarese tribe. The existing traditional institutions i.e. Tribal Councils and Captains system among the Nicobarese have been taken into account in the draft Regulation.

The proposed draft Regulation also envisages a separate and independent District Planning Committee headed by Deputy Commissioner (Nicobar) to be constituted for Tribal areas only of Nicobar District, in which the Island-wise Tribal Councils would be given representation by considering these as independent entities and not a part and parcel of District level Tribal Council.

The main features of the draft Regulation are as under-

- (i) To enable the Tribal Councils to perform their functions satisfactorily and efficiently, their powers and functions have been defined wherever necessary.
- (ii) There will be direct elections to the representative bodies at all the two-tier levels i.e Village Council and Island Council.
- (iii) All Nicobarese of 18 years of age and above will be eligible to vote.
- (iv) Some of the features of the existing Tribal Councils are proposed to be retained by way of nomenclature of office bearers, i.e First Captain, Second Captain, Chief Captain and Vice-Chief Captain, to provide a sense of continuity.
- (v) It is proposed to reserve one third of the total number of seats in a Village Council for women.
- (vi) The Tribal Councils at all two tier levels shall be bodies corporate, so they will be able to acquire and hold property, to sue and to be sued, to enter into contract etc.