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20/11/08

(पर्यावरण एवं वन विभाग)
ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ADMINISTRATION
(DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS)

May kindly peruse the D.O. letter No.N-11015/7/2008-RBH dated 15.02.2008 (Flag-'A') received from the Hon'ble Minister, Panchayati Raj, Youth Affairs & Sports and Development of North Eastern Region, Govt. of India regarding expeditiously implementing the Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act and Rules, which was received on 27.02.2008. Hon'ble Minister has requested to organize Gram Sabhas on 28.02.2008 so as to make Gram Sabhas and Forest Rights Committees aware of their roles and responsibilities. A similar communication was received from Ms.Sushma Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj vide her letter dated 15.02.2008. In response to her letter, this department had submitted a U.O. Note No.F.20(G-I)/3/1042 dated 27.02.2008 to the Chief Secretary, A&N Administration (copy of which is placed at Flag-'B'). On the same subject, letter of Hon'ble Prime Minister was also received through Lt. Governor's Secretariat and which was sent to Special Secretary (Tribal Welfare) (Flag-'C') as the subject matter was related to them.

It is to clarify that even before finalization of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers Act, 2006 and its rules (Flag-'D' & 'E'), the Tribal Welfare Department has been acting as Nodal Department on these issues. On earlier occasion also Tribal Welfare Department gathered information on various issues pertaining to Scheduled Tribes and Forest Dwellers rights and after compilation, submitted them to the Draft Committee of the Parliament on the above mentioned Act. The Act is to recognize and determine forest rights to forest dwelling Schedule Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers. As per Act, the traditional forest dwellers are those communities who have resided for at least three generations (75 years) prior to 13.12.2005. It is worthwhile to mention here that in A&N Islands, there are no non-tribal forest dwellers as defined in the said Act. Therefore, the Act would be applicable only to the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes of these Islands for which Tribal Welfare Department is the Nodal Department. Therefore, Tribal Welfare Department, A&N Administration may be asked to take necessary action.

PCCF/Secy. (E&F)

CCF (A&V)/Spl. Secy. (E&F)
28.02.2008

SS (T&F)

PCCF/Secy. (E&F)

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