

65

Government of India's Forest Policy

5. What has been the impact of Government's forest policies on the economy and psychology of the tribals inhabiting forests? Please explain fully with reference to the earlier policies and particularly the Govt of India's Forest policy resolution of 1952 and forest policy resolution 1988. So far as the tribals are concerned, do you think that the Resolution of 1988 is an improvement over that of 1952 and, if so, in what way? Does the 1988 Resolution require any further modification and amendment suit the tribal situation better? Please explain.

In these islands even before the change of policy in 1988 the tribals were meeting the needs from forests without any restriction. The Forest policy of 1988(NFP) was a total paradigm shift vis-à-vis the earlier two policies. Unlike the user oriented policy of 1952, the present policy gives major emphasis on the ecological roles of forests, and envisages that the rights and concessions from forests are to be primarily for bona fide use of communities living within and around the forest areas, especially tribals. Such communities are required to be motivated to protect and develop such forests from which they derive their benefits.

5. Records show that most tribal families used to occupy forest lands. In the middle of the 19th Century, the colonial power took over their ownership. Since tribals did not have recorded rights in these Islands, they could not have say in the matter, despite their age-long possession. The National Forest Policy 1988 enjoined that the rights and concessions enjoyed by them should be fully protected their domestic requirements of fuel wood, fodder, minor forest produce and construction timber should be the first charge on forest produce. The Dhebar Commission had touched on this matter and desired that the right and concession of tribals in land and forest produce should be recorded. How far has that work progress in the state? If no action has been taken please state that reason why and what steps the State Government proposes to take in the matter?

In A&N Islands, Reserved forests areas where the original tribes are living have been constituted into tribal reserves and they are free to collect any forest produce without any kind of restriction.

7. Some tribal communities depend for their living on grazing of animals like cattle particularly buffaloes, cows, goats, sheep. Please indicate which communities in your state undertake what animal grazing, mentioning their strength, area and extent of grazing and other particulars.

There are no such tribal communities in A&N islands.

8. Has it come to the notice of the State Government that the effective grass-lands have been diminishing in extent? If so, please support with facts and figures and explained what way (s) the affected tribal families are meeting the situation.

Keeping in view the answer of Question (7), it is not applicable.