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Minutes of the meeting of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission, Govt. of India with the Senior Officers of Andaman & Nicobar Administration held on 15/3/2004 on 7 PM in the conference hall of the Secretariat.

(1). The list of the participants is annexed.

(2). At the outset welcoming the Chairman and other office bearers of the Commission, the Chief Secretary, A&N Administration stated that the issues informally raised by the Commission during its tour to the tribal areas had been taken note of and necessary follow up action will be taken to address them. The issues discussed are summed up as under category-wise: -

Nicobarese :

(3). Referring to the participation of the tribals particularly the Nicobarese, in the development process, Commission suggested to examine that the tribal area in Nicobar District may be declared as Scheduled area under the Fifth schedule of the Constitution, so as to extend the provisions of the Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996. Accordingly, the Administration may examine the issue.

(Action : Secy(TW), Secy(LSG), Secy(Law) & Dir(TW)

(4). Commission suggested that the Administration may take necessary steps to improve the quality of copra produced by the Nicobarese so that it can fetch remunerative price for the tribals.

(Action : Secy (Coop.), Secy(Ind)

(5). Commission observed that problem of drop-out of the tribals students from the schools needs to be addressed. Secretary (Education) stated that it was mainly at the Middle School level. The scheme of mid-day meals, which was earlier applicable to only Primary schools, has been extended to Middle Schools level. This will go long way to help reduce the drop-out rate.

(Action : Secy(Edn.)

Jarawas:

(6) While appreciating the intervention by A&N Administration from Medical/Health angle for the Jarawas, the Commission suggested that some basic education needs to be evolved for the Jarawas, taking their choice and attitudes into consideration after careful study.

(Action : Dir(TW), ES(AAJVS)