

be allowed after completion of the necessary impact assessment studies and as per the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980. In extreme cases where no other land is available except for tribal reserve/protected area, the diversion of a piece of habitat from tribal reserve to developmental activities/defense purposes be considered only after assessing the impacts on the food base of tribes, loss of habitat of any specific species/community, loss of any marine-mangrove- and coastal species/communities and invasibility of the habitat by alien species. Any such diversion be assessed case by case and habitats of highly restricted endemic species or groups of species of terrestrial/ mangrove/ coastal/ marine ecosystems be not allowed for diversion. Land use change be avoided if it impedes rights of tribals. In all these cases, land use change should be within the limits of land use ratio notified.

The cases pending with MoEF for clearance of forest land for minor irrigation schemes (Recommendation 27 of Shekhar Singh's Report) be reviewed as per the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980, after the Environmental Impact Assessment and Cost-benefit analyses. It may be noted that no mechanized farming be allowed to practice in Great Nicobar. Such practices will deteriorate the ecology of islands, since much of the cultivation is on the steep slopes and hilltops which are prone to erosion and landslides.

10. Tropical rainforests show high species richness with individuals of different species scattered over a large area so that the maximum number of species can co-exist, species found in natural gaps of different ages are different from climax species and these do not exist in the climax formation. Further, natural gaps or canopy breaks occur regularly and bring out changes in the structure and dynamics of equatorial forests. In fact these natural gaps regulate the biodiversity in tropical rain forests. Mycorrhizal communities in soils also determine the structure and composition of rain forest communities.

The studies carried out by the Forest Department on the structure and composition of unworked out and more than 75 year old regenerated worked out forests suggest that conversion forests may not exist and the worked out forests showed natural regeneration