

300

and supervised by the Forest Department; the wood of rubber trees be utilized for house constructions; similarly the wood of Red Oil Palm be utilized in the same way as that of Malaysian countries.

14. Shekhar Singh's recommendation is that the land, after phasing out of plantations, could be regenerated as per his regeneration concept outlined in his recommendation. His regeneration concept is impractical as it does not take into account the life history strategies of rainforest tree species. The seedlings of climax species cannot survive in open areas until specific keystone species which enable to filter necessary light that trigger the physiological processes necessary for their growth. Consequently, the area, after phasing out red oil palm and rubber plantations, can be put to use in the following ways: At Katchal, the land belongs to tribes, who have been relocated from coastal areas to sites located in the middle of rubber plantations; the areas close to the tribal settlements be used for multispecies arboriculture such arecanut and spice yielding plants, and the rest of the area be brought back to its pristine forest cover using ecological restoration methods.

The land use pattern, after phasing out of red oil palm plantation at Little Andaman, is given in recommendation 27.

15. SC did not order the closure of Andaman and Nicobar Island Forest and Plantation Corporation of India (ANIFPDC), but Shekhar Singh recommended for its winding up because it was primarily set up to promote commercial forestry which is now stopped. The loss of livelihoods due to salinization of agricultural land and destruction of coconut and areca nut plantations as a result of 26 December 2004 earthquake and tsunami, closure of commercial timber operations (including saw mills) and sand mining, and phasing out rubber and red oil palm plantations have impacted on the socioeconomics of the Islands. Nevertheless, ANIFPDC, in its present form, is not viable and the Government of India may evolve an appropriate policy to restrict its number of employees to a level that can be engaged in ecologically sustainable activities.