

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO –2864**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON- 12/12/2024

**IMPACT OF GREAT NICOBAR ISLAND PROJECT**

2864. SHRI RAJA RAM SINGH:

Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the infrastructure upgrade proposed under the Great Nicobar Island Project raises serious concerns on the impact upon Shompen and Nicobarese tribes which clearly stands in violation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the measures taken by the Government to protect the FRA Laws in context of the Great Nicobar Island Project; and
- (c) the measures taken by the Government to preserve the rights of the Shompen tribe in managing the tribal reserve?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRIBAL AFFAIRS  
(SHRI DURGADAS UIKEY)

**(a) & (b):** The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (in short FRA) seeks to recognize and vest the forest rights and occupation in forest land in Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers who have been residing in such forests for generations but whose rights could not be recorded. The implementation of the Act lies with respective State Government and UT Administration. The Andaman & Nicobar Administration (A&N Administration) has informed that no violation of The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act" (in short, FRA) has been done while proposing for infrastructure upgrade under Great Nicobar Island Project (GNIP) and all due procedures has been followed strictly. Further Government has also constituted an Island Development Authority with effect from 1.06.2017 under the Chair of Hon'ble Home Minister to oversee holistic development of identified Islands of Andaman Nicobar and Lakshadweep. Further, A&N Administration has informed that the several measures have been taken to minimize impact of infrastructure upgradation upon the Shompen and Nicobarese tribes of Great Nicobar Island as mentioned below.

(i).. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956, promulgated by the President of India provides protection of the interests of aboriginal tribes and declaration of the geographical area as reserved areas, which are predominantly and exclusively inhabited by these tribes. As provided in the Regulation, the ownership of the land is vested in the tribal communities wherein, they have unfettered right of meeting their day-to-day requirement for their sustenance and transfer, acquisition etc. of land in Tribal Reserved areas are strictly prohibited. The Regulation was amended in 2012 to make it stringent (penal action for photography/videography, introduction of intoxicants and poaching etc in the tribal reserve).

(ii). For the safety and protection of the tribe, the A&N Administration has notified the Policy on Shompen Tribe of Great Nicobar Island on 22.5.2015. With respect to the Great Nicobar Island Project, the Shompen Policy allows development proposals in Great Nicobar Island subject to due consultation with the concerned authorities which has been done. A&N Administration has informed that the project will not disturb or displace any Shompen PVTG.

(iii). Enforcement of SCs & STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 and Amendment Act 2015 & SCs & STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules 1995 and Amendment Rule 2016. UT and District level Vigilance & Monitoring Committees have been constituted.

(iv). Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands constituted an Empowered Committee, including the Head of Office/Superintending Anthropologist, Anthropological Survey of India, Port Blair, and Anthropologists. During a meeting held on 30.09.2020, the empowered committee discussed the matter at length to ensure that the interests of the tribes of Great Nicobar Island are safeguarded in the wake of holistic development of the GNI Project.

**(c):** Several measures are being taken to preserve the rights of the Shompen tribe : -

(i). A & N Administration notified the Policy on Shompen Tribe of Great Nicobar Island on 22.05.2015, which among others recognizes the social, ecological and economic diversity among Shompen with preservation and protection of their cultural heritage Including language.

(ii). As informed by MoEF&CC, . EC & CRZ Clearance granted for the project is subject to following conditions.

- a). To ensure tribal welfare and not to disturb Shompen tribe and their habitations.
- b). Clear demarcation of the land has to be done for specific purpose of land use in the vicinity of project area such that habitations of the tribal shall not be intervened.
- c). To establish a Special Medical Unit to monitor and mitigate human-induced diseases from increased domestic and international populations.

In pursuance of this, an amount of Rs.75.00 crores have been especially provisioned to carry out the welfare activities for tribals of Great Nicobar Island such as Purchase of boat ambulance and Installation of technology based Geo-surveillance towers for the protection of the tribes etc.

(iii). The Directorate of Health Services, A&N Administration has worked out a plan of setting up special medical and health care unit for prevention and control of the disease with special reference to tribal population of Great Nicobar Island. The plan envisaged major up-gradation of the medical facilities with advanced infrastructure, medicines, and qualified staff in the Great Nicobar Island alongwith setting up of special disease control/ surveillance unit. The medical plan envisaged an outlay of Rs. 126 Crore.

(iv). Andaman and Nicobar Islands (A&N) has informed that Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti (AAJVS) is working for the welfare, wellbeing and protection of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) and provides free ration and clothes to the Onges, Andamanese & Shompens and has also created amenities for supply of potable water, free ration, medical care, education, protection, communication through police wireless and

provided infrastructure as Community Hall, houses, footpath, jetty for berthing of the boats, helipad etc. in the tribal settlements for these tribal groups. It has also been informed that AAJVS implements several programmes for the promotion of traditional skills and craft of the tribal people in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

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