

## **Confluence of Development and Lakshadweep Archipelago in India in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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**Abstract:** Development and benefit accrued from development has always been a subjective issue because it implies the gain of one and the loss of another. With the creation of the State greater importance was assumed by public purpose since it was now the State which acquired property and created something useful for all. Throughout the course of Indian history private rights and collective rights have been pitted against each other and recently this tussle has been highlighted by the proposed Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation, 2021. The research is aimed towards firstly, to understand the ecosystem of Lakshadweep and the suitability of the regulation; secondly, to look into the implementation mechanism and whether it allows for a participatory process. Since the regulation draws powers of acquisition from the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 which is a general law to acquire land and the Regulation provides for a special scenario, therefore, the modification of public purpose for this special purpose shall become the third component of the paper. Public purpose has always been construed in the economic sense therefore towards the end of the paper the viability of this economic construction shall be examined especially with respect to Lakshadweep.

**Keywords:** Development, Public Purpose, Ecosystem, Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning, Sustainable Development

### **1. Introduction**

In the beginning Man lived in the natural order of things and the Government had absolutely no existence to regulate the affairs. This gave rise to problems in primitive society as the weak were oppressed. To meet the oppression, Man entered into agreement which gave birth to the concept of State and with it law started to develop. During this time there were two agreements in particular which strengthened the state, *Pactum Unionis* which formed the society whereby protection to life and property was ensured and *Pactum Subjectionis* under which Man agreed to surrender his rights either partially or wholly and pledged allegiance to the State whose aim was now to establish order and peace in the civilized society (Pollock, 1908, p. 107). Thus, arose the concept of collective rights and the welfare of the public became paramount. This welfaristic approach is further supported by the doctrine of Eminent Domain which states that all property of the subjects is under the purview of the State and the State can at any time dispossess any person from private property and utilize that private property for “public use” and the State has frequently resorted to this practice for the common benefit (Caylor, 2019, p. 36). At the start there was no such problem regarding the

acquisition and development of land as firstly, there was enough land for everyone and secondly, nature was not in any kind of danger from anthropogenic activities.

But the interaction of human and nature increased with the increase in the human population and nature began to come under stress and strain owing to the increased anthropogenic activities. It was now the right time to strike a balance between environment and nature. This was the time when the report by the World Commission titled “Our Common Future” highlighted the need of sustainable development for the whole world and specified that actions today would have consequences tomorrow and if they are not curtailed or managed the future would be catastrophic (United Nation General Assembly, 1987). To further strengthen the concept of sustainable development and safeguard the volatility of sensitive areas the Government of India can impose “restrictions on the locations of an industry or the carrying on of processes and operations in an area” (Ministry of Environment and Forest, 1986, sec. 5(3)). According to the document all development projects or activities pertaining to modernization and expansion would now be required to obtain an environmental clearance by the Central, State, or Union Territory level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (Ministry of Environment and Forest, 2006, p. 1)

The proposed Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation, 2021 has brought topics like development, governance and tourism in the limelight once again. Since Lakshadweep is an ecologically rich area the proposed regulation and its effect become even more important when viewed with this angle. Because of the fact that the island is surrounded by water on all sides it faces an imminent danger from sea level rise and natural calamities and it remains to be seen what type of planning and development the proposed regulation brings forward to minimize the risk posed by climate change. Thus this becomes the primary objective of the research. Secondary objectives of the research include the implementation mechanism of the regulation since everything depends on the implementation.

## **2. The Ecosystem of Lakshadweep**

Lakshadweep is one of the most unique ecosystems in the world consisting of immense marine diversity. This diversity can be directly attributed to the climatic condition in and around the coast but this very attribute makes it fragile and vulnerable. Since it is surrounded by water on all sides’ cyclones and heavy rains are frequent. Being surrounded by water, Lakshadweep faces imminent risk of submersion owing to sea level rise and the Lakshadweep Action Plan on Climate Change report suggests that a predictable rise of one meter sea level rise may wipe out around 16% of land mass of the island (Union Territory of Lakshadweep, 2012, p. xvi).

In the 1990s, India witnessed an era of liberalization, privatization and globalization wherein the economy was opened to foreign entities. This era witnessed unique things, on one hand there were flourishing businesses and on the other there was the fragile ecology, which necessitated the need of environmental litigation. Litigation helped in the development of environmental jurisprudence and the importance of ecology was recognized.

One such landmark decision of the Supreme Court of India was given in *Indian Council for Enviro-Legal Action v. Union of India* (*Indian Council For Enviro-Legal Action v Union Of India*, 1996) or the coastal zone case wherein the petitioner highlighted the “adverse direct impact of the

development activities” in and around the coastline. Pursuant to the order of the Supreme Court the Ministry of Environment and Forest issued the Lakshadweep Coastal Zone Management Plan and Island Protection Zone to “regulate the developmental activities in the Islands of Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep” (Lakshadweep Administration, 2016, p. 6) To implement this plan the administration was tasked to prepare an integrated island management plan.

The sensitive ecology in and around the coast was also acknowledged and sought to be preserved by the R.V. Raveendran Committee which established a “No Development Zone ” and highlighted the role of local self-government bodies in preserving the ecology of the island. The Committee also touched upon several relevant aspects like, preservation of ecosystems- corals and seagrass, modernization of agriculture and horticulture, deep sea fishing and overfishing, the encouragement of establishing non-polluting industries, beach erosion, energy generation from wind, promoting tourism although in a ‘restricted’ way so as to not harm the ecology (Lakshadweep Administration, 2016, pp. 7–9)

The matter of preservation of Lakshadweep is not a localized and unidirectional effort drawing its power only from the judiciary; instead consistent efforts have been put in by the Lakshadweep administration to combat climate change. The focus of this effort has largely been concentrated towards a “precautionary adaptation approach” which aims towards sustainable development, vulnerability of the local population and optimum utilization of natural resources (Union Territory of Lakshadweep, 2012, p. 68). On a reading of the LAPCC, a cycle seems to be forming with climate change being the reason for the increased vulnerability. For instance, owing to climate change the sea level shall rise owing to which the sea waves shall go above the corals and erode the coastline. Once the coastline is eroded, the land mass of the region is also reduced, once the land mass is reduced, livelihood opportunities are reduced once this happens poverty increases and when poverty increases pollution increases which again reinforces the climatic irregularities.

Lakshadweep aims towards a tourism that is “low volume high value” (Union Territory of Lakshadweep, 2012, p. 88) and recent trends suggest that the tourism sector contributes the lion’s share in the revenue generation. But judging by the emerging ecological fragility this will not be so unless strong actions are taken. Natural calamities shall require additional emergency preparedness and the expenses of insurance, back-up power, and evacuation etc., shall increase the overall operating expenses. Not only this, the natural disasters shall also alter water availability and reduce the natural beauty of the place and also raise issues pertaining to security owing to transport and communication interruptions (Union Territory of Lakshadweep, 2012, pp. 190–198). As a result, the tourism industry shall suffer.

The uniqueness of the ecosystem at Lakshadweep can also be attributed to the fact that it has been untouched by the modern concept of development and also to the fact that it has been subjected to the control of the indigenous population. This means that the indigenous population and the unique ecosystem are part of one and the same system whereby each depends on the other for its preservation and survival. With this being said, the government, when it is attempting to legislate on a sensitive subject, must pay proper attention to both these factors since they play an important role in the tourism industry. Therefore, the participation of the indigenous population which mostly falls

under the category of Schedule Tribe becomes very important for the well-being of the whole region (Office of Registrar General, India, 2011)

Thus, the scenario at Lakshadweep poses a unique problem as on one hand it is being considered a “no industry district” (Union Territory of Lakshadweep, 2012, p. 195) and on the other hand strategies need to be formulated to reduce poverty so that the local community can be made resilient against climate change. This has therefore highlighted the need for sustainable development so that the economy develops while preserving the natural beauty of the region. Thus, any new legislation with Lakshadweep as its jurisdiction must be viewed from the perspective of economy and ecology. The economic angle incorporates tourism and improvement and development of land along with facilities for tourism and allied activities, the ecological angle incorporates the ability of the environment to sustain the former. Thus the question boils down to the fact that whether the new regulation proposes sustainable development in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep?

### **3. Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation, 2021**

Pertaining to land and its development, the Regulation mentions the development of land in urban and rural areas and seeks to improve and preserve amenities in both rural and urban areas. The regulation seeks to grant permissions so that land can be used and developed. Further, the power of land acquisition has also been specifically mentioned. Apart from recognizing the need for sound planning and good governance the regulation also emphasizes on promoting tourism and the general welfare of the people who reside there (The Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation, 2021, n.d.). This being said, it becomes important to understand the present situation regarding infrastructure and tourism at Lakshadweep.

Generally speaking the infrastructure largely “consists of houses, roads, buildings, ports and harbours, airports and helipads, boats, crafts and catamarans, automobiles and vehicles, communication facilities etc.” (Union Territory of Lakshadweep, 2012, p. 51) A unique thing about the infrastructure present at Lakshadweep is that it is situated around the coastline and beaches. This factor makes the infrastructure vulnerable because in case of calamity the infrastructure gets disrupted and with it the transportation thereby making the whole island an “isolated pocket” of calamity. But as per the Task Force Report, 2007, the criterion of “safe construction” has not been adhered to while building new residential and official buildings and a large number of housing units are stone walled which make them vulnerable to earthquakes. Judging by this it would be assumed that any new legislation would give effect to this lacunae, but the proposed regulation defines building operation as the erection or re-erection of a building, roofing or re-roofing of any open space, materially altering or enlarging the building where the alteration shall affect drainage or sanitary arrangements etc. (The Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation, 2021, n.d., sec. 2(4)) There is no doubt in the fact that the definition is quite wide but the proposed regulation does not mention as to how it shall address the existing lacunae.

The livelihood of the natives of Lakshadweep depends mainly on land and surrounding water bodies. Economic activity on land mainly includes agriculture and the cultivation of coconut while fishing is the main economic activity which depends on the surrounding water bodies, though tourism is another upcoming economic avenue for the Union Territory. Coconut cultivation in the region has its own challenges and since pumping of water for irrigation was stopped in 1995, the only option for

irrigating the coconut crop is that of rain harvesting. The reducing coastline coupled with decreasing fertility also pose a challenge in coconut cultivation in the region. Coral reefs, coastal erosion and fishing are all interdependent activities and their well-being has a direct impact on the well-being of human beings. With damage to coral reefs, there shall be a reduction of the reef fish species and their reduction would decrease the number of fish higher-up in the food chain as a result of which the fishing as an economic avenue will suffer (Union Territory of Lakshadweep, 2012, pp. 74–76).

Considering the seriousness of the matter the regulation should have proceeded on the lines of development with a tinge of safeguarding the sensitive habitats. Instead the regulation has defined development as “the carrying out of building, engineering, mining, quarrying or other operations in, on, over or under, land, the cutting of a hill or any portion thereof or the making of any material change in any building or land, or in the use of any building or land, and includes sub-division of any land” (The Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation, 2021, n.d., sec. 2(6)). The Raveendran Committee placed immense responsibility on the local communities in the matter of development in the region (Lakshadweep Administration, 2016, para. a(iii)) but the proposed regulation calls for the drastic measure of relocating the population on grounds of obsolete development and the existence of slum areas (The Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation, 2021, n.d., sec. 2(29)).

The importance of tourism as an industry was recognized by the administration and therefore environment friendly water sports and other environment friendly activities have been promoted around various islands. The regulation therefore aims towards liberalizing tourism by providing an easier process to set up eco-tourist activities (The Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation, 2021, n.d., sec. 34). The LAPCC recognized that the traditional model of tourism will not be effective owing to the sensitivity of the environment therefore locations shall be developed as “cruise lines” which is ideal for eco-sensitive island (Union Territory of Lakshadweep, 2012, p. 87). Likewise, the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management recognized the fact that the Union Territory administration must intervene and act to prevent coastal degradation while promoting tourism (Lakshadweep Administration, 2016, p. 10). However, the provision to set up eco-tourism, as the name suggests, allows for the setting up of tourist activities in the zones declared as eco sensitive zones under the Environment Protection Act, 1986. Not only shall the sensitive zones be damaged but also the purpose of declaring eco-sensitive zones to act as a “shock absorber” shall be diluted owing to the increased human presence (Ministry of Environment and Forests, 2011, p. 5).

### **3.1 Implementation of the Regulation**

The Government declares areas as planning areas and then constitutes a planning and development authority to execute the said plan. The planning and development authority then utilizes the provisions of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (hereinafter referred to as RFCTLARR) to acquire land for public purpose and award compensation for such acquisition (The Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation, 2021, n.d., secs. 5, 9, 29). Thus, the doctrine of eminent domain comes into play wherein it is deemed that all land belongs to the State and the State can acquire the same for the larger good.

The instrument allows for fair hearing and any person aggrieved by the development plan may go to the district court and challenge the validity of the development plan on the ground that the plan is not within the powers conferred by the regulation and any requirement of the regulation has not been complied with. The provision looks fair only until the constitution of the planning and development authority is understood and since the authority is the main executive body and plays the main role in implementing the provisions of the regulation this becomes even more important as all decisions of the planning and development authority are taken by the majority of members present and voting.

The regulation vests all power in the administrator and establishes that government and administrator of the Union Territory mean one and the same thing (The Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation, 2021, n.d., sec. 2(12)). The planning and development authority shall have a chairman *appointed by the government*; it shall have a town planning officer who shall be *appointed by the government*, the authority shall also have representatives of local authorities and such other members not exceeding three who have special or practical knowledge in matters of town and country planning etc., in the opinion of the government and shall be *appointed by the government*. In case the local authority is appointed as the planning and development authority the chairman shall be *appointed by the government*, the town planning officer who “shall be the Member Secretary to the Committee” and five other members of whom two shall be *appointed by the government* (The Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation, 2021, n.d., sec. 2(17)). In the former it can be clearly seen that the government representatives are in majority while in the latter the representatives of local authority and government stand in an equal deadlock like situation might arise. But the very fact that the presiding member’s vote acts like a casting vote tilts the balance in the favour of the government.

The appellate procedure enshrined by the regulation no doubt provides a relief from the lopsidedness but stands severely restricted when it comes to the grounds on which the district court can stay or quash the development plan. The regulation only provides for procedural infirmities which can be called into question by the district court. And judging by the aforementioned provisions not many procedural infirmities would be there in practicality. But since the Indian Constitution has recognized the doctrine of separation of powers the action of executive restricting the scope of appeal becomes interesting to note here.

The regulation at hand can be compared with the Indian Councils Act, 1909 wherein the principle of elections of members to the central and provincial legislative council was recognized but at the same time severely restricted the participation of the elected members in the democratic process (Centre for Law & Policy Research, n.d.). Likewise, the regulation is also similar to the Simon Commission in the sense that the Commission consisted mainly of foreigners but the purpose was to report on the working of the Indian Constitution which it did and suggested that India was not ready for parliamentary responsibility and recommended just provincial autonomy (Venkatraman, 2019, p. 10).

And just like the above documents had far reaching effects the consequences of which can be felt till date, the regulation might also have several foreseeable severe impacts on the integrity of India. Because of the fact that the regulation lays more emphasis on procedural matters rather than on the prevailing socio-legal conditions and also restricts the jurisdiction of the court it shall erode the

confidence of the local population from both the established governmental machinery and the judiciary.

### **3.2 Public Works Department V/s Planning and Development Authority**

The Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation, 2021 provides for town planning schemes and vests the execution of these schemes with the Planning and Development Authority which is an authority created under the regulation. The authority under the regulation is supposed to lay a plan in which land is laid and/or reclaimed, streets, roads are constructed/diversified/improved/alterd, buildings are constructed/removed/alterd, land is reserved for recreational and other like spaces, water supply is established along with drainage and lighting facilities, etc. (The Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation, 2021, n.d., sec. 48). In short all functions of the public works department are entrusted with the planning and development authority. This being said, one must believe that there is complete absence of a public works department therefore a new body is being established to carry out the functions. But that is not the case as a Public works department is very much there in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep (Government of India, n.d.). This raises a question that when a public works department is present then what is the need to establish another body which carries out similar functions? To answer this question, we will have to revisit the British era once again.

In the last years of the nineteenth century when the bubonic plague was at its nadir and the authorities were concerned over the unsanitary living conditions of the masses which threatened the public health of Bombay. Thus, the Improvement Trust Act, 1898 was born with its aim of “destroying slums, mitigating the abysmal living conditions of the urban poor and restoring the health of the city. The trust was entrusted with the work of making new streets, opening out crowded localities and carrying out land reclamations to provide room for the expansion of the city.” Interesting to note here is that the improvement trusts owes its existence to the English and Scottish Improvement Schemes which have two underlying features. The first feature is that these schemes were aimed towards the usurpation of private property in the name of collective good and second is that, that the improvement schemes consisted of a “physical planning concept” and its central powers were “clearance powers” which implies a right to acquire property, demolish it and redevelop it (Kidambi, 2007, pp. 71–72). This is something which is present in the Lakshadweep Town and Country Planning Regulation, 2021 as well.

Thus, it was to make the governance easy and simple that a separate body was created wherein specific officials could proceed “unencumbered by accountability to representatives of local self-governing institutions”(Kidambi, 2007, p. 72). Thus, at that point of time it was public health which necessitated such departure from responsibility and today it is the welfare, promotion of tourism, good governance along with public health which makes the departure necessary.

### **3.3 Inherent Tendencies of the Regulation**

As has been earlier discussed the regulation reserves or designates land for public purpose within the meaning of RFCTLARR and for bringing this land acquisition into effect the planning and development authority has been granted certain powers. These powers include the power to evict any person not entitled to hold the land and the power to impose fine with or without punishment in case

of breach the provisions of the regulation. Since, the power of execution is vested with the planning and development authority which functions on the basis of majority of votes by members present and voting and because of the flawed constitution of the authority owing to its inherent majority of numbers the proposed law becomes arbitrary.

Further, when the Constitution of India lays down under Article 300A that “no person shall be deprived of his property save by authority of law” it means that the State cannot utilize its strength to dispossess persons who own property in the garb of public purpose and that the right to property is a basic human right and that it “is the seed bed which must be conserved if other constitutional values are to flourish”(M/s *Delhi Airtech Services Pvt. Ltd. V State Of Uttar Pradesh*, 2011, para. 10). There is no doubt in the fact that the doctrine stands disproportionately in favour of the State but the State cannot use this indiscriminately and it must face absolute necessity furthermore, the individual whose property is acquired must be compensated. However, even with these checks the courts have frequently stated the urgent need of imposing limits on the use of this power and the Supreme Court has recently opined that “a welfare State which is governed by the Rule of Law, cannot arrogate itself to a status beyond one that is provided by the Constitution...It is not permissible for any welfare State to uproot a person and deprive him of his fundamental/constitutional/human rights, under the garb of industrial development” (*Tukaram Kana Joshi v M.I.D.C. & Ors*, 2012, paras. 10, 17)

The regulation shall reignite the debate of public purpose versus private interest and it shall subjugate Lakshadweep in the turmoil which India had to face during the struggle for independence and afterwards. Though the justice delivery mechanism is sound but the way the scope of judicial intervention has been restricted raises questions regarding the quality of justice delivery. On the basis of these things it can be said that the regulation shall not only violate the fundamental provisions of the law of the land but also prove to be a regressive regulation because it shall be raising questions already answered by the courts.

#### **4. Reimagining ‘Public Purpose’**

Law has limited the purposes for which the government can acquire the property of an individual and use for itself or transfer the acquired property to a third entity(*Raja Suriya Pal Singh v State of Uttar Pradesh and others*, 1952, para. 11). In most cases expropriation is allowed only when the government shows that the property is required for public purpose. But since the meaning of public purpose has been obscure it has been mostly interpreted by the State in the economic sense. This narrow interpretation of the term has led to a distorted perception such that the poor are dispossessed of their lands to “elevate the rich” (Hoops & Tagliarino, 2019, p. 3). This dispossession and the elevation concept has frequently spiraled into conflict which ultimately clogged the wheels of economy (Wahi, 2020). This is not a local problem instead it is a global problem which has made the Food and Agriculture Organization to promulgate “Voluntary guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forest in the context of National Food Security” and it specifically suggests that the State must clearly define public purpose so that judicial review is not obstructed and that the planning process for expropriation is transparent and participatory at each step (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2012, p. 27).



This being said the approach of the Supreme Court of India must be remembered when it said that the scope of public purpose is flexible and should be interpreted as per the needs of the society-

“The expression public purpose is not capable of a precise definition and has not a rigid meaning. It can only be defined by a process of judicial inclusion and exclusion. In other words, the definition of the expression is elastic and takes its colour from the statute in which it occurs, the concept varying with the time and state of society and its needs. The point to be determined in each case is whether the acquisition is in the general interest of the community as distinguished from the private interest of an individual.” (*Raja Suriya Pal Singh v State of Uttar Pradesh and others*, 1952, para. 11).

Thus, importance has been given to the elastic nature of the definition and the fact that it depends on the time and the society in which it seeks to operate. It is with this thought that the preamble of the regulation must be studied. After such study, it can be understood that since tourism is the bread and butter of Lakshadweep, all acquisition and development of land is being done for the sole purpose of promoting and giving a boost to the tourism sector. Thus, it is tourism and the general welfare of the people of Lakshadweep accruing from the tourism sector. Therefore, tourism is the “public purpose” within the definition and meaning of the regulation and it is only for this public purpose that any land acquisition and development take place after strict adherence to a participative process. This although has been recognized at many instances in the regulation but the implementation mechanism provides otherwise.

## 5. Conclusion

The modern day government is largely focused on maximum governance with minimum interference with the focus being on the common man’s benefit and this aspect of the modern day government was highlighted by the Indian Prime Minister very recently (Langa, 2020). Some deviation is allowed but the very fact that the regulation channelizes all authority towards and through the government makes it absolutely contrary to the vision of the government and thus injurious to the democratic set-up of India.

In today’s time when the interaction of man and nature has given rise to zoonotic diseases the need of a progressive law is felt which reimagines public purpose as the natural development of things because the time has come when human intervention in the state of affairs will only increase the risks of zoonotic diseases. Since the beginning of the decade huge stress has been laid on sustainable development but the growing population which necessitates the development has not been given due importance. This can also be understood in the way that the ‘sustainable’ part in sustainable development is a fluid concept and it depends upon the need to satisfy human wants. This means that sustainability and population have an inverse relation and as the population increases the sustainability decreases and vice-versa. Thus, all efforts to make development sustainable must be aimed toward restricting the growing population which is being done countrywide by way of population control legislations.

Representation for the sake of representation is injurious not only for the welfare but also for the democracy. The regulation aims to promote the general welfare of the people living in Lakshadweep but the way in which the local authorities and their representatives are involved or rather excluded in the decision making process makes the situation comparable to that in the British period.

Lakshadweep is a place where man and nature have coexisted and will coexist in the future as well if man does not interfere in natural affairs. In this regard the Raveendran Committee specifically mandated that the officials and natives be sensitized and educated about the sensitive ecology but the regulation with its English components make it a scenario far too distant.

Land, lagoon and reef are inextricably linked in Lakshadweep such that the slightest of actions affecting one can have long lasting and disastrous consequences. The regulation begins with the promotion of tourism and the common welfare but misses these objectives and lends its focus towards buildings, roads, buildings and a network of amenities to make the region immune against disaster and commercially viable. The thing to understand here is the tagline of Lakshadweep tourism is “99% fun 1% land” and the tagline signifies the richness of the surrounding water bodies and the fact that these water bodies form the heart and soul of Lakshadweep tourism. Along with this, Lakshadweep is known for its pristine and clear beaches and these along with the rich biodiversity attract tourists from all over the world. This being said, good connectivity, infrastructure and resistance towards disaster can only aid in the experience but sadly cannot replace the experience. In other words, people go to Lakshadweep to experience the natural beauty and the culture of Lakshadweep and not perfectly aligned roads and five star amenities. Convenience, no doubt, has a role to play here but not at the cost of sustainability, livelihood and welfare of the local population.

Since the population of Lakshadweep is mostly comprised of tribes and historical records suggest that tribes generally reject attempts of development and refrain from integrating into the mainstream society it remains to be seen what the government does this time to convince the tribes to accept the notion of development and whether the notion of development has undergone some change, a change that suits them? This being said, the survival of the ecosystem of Lakshadweep and its indigenous population remains in the hands of the government and on the fact that how ‘skillfully’ it implements the regulation to promote ‘tourism’

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