

BISHNU PADA RAY
Member of Parliament
(Lok Sabha)

Member :

- Standing Committee on Transport & Tourism
- Consultative Committee of Ministry of Home Affairs
- Committee on Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme
- Committee on Empowerment of Women
- Central Advisory Committee for Lighthouses



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F. No. BPR/17/99

29 April 2003

Respected Shri Jual Oram Ji,

I am writing this letter to support the claim for inclusion as Scheduled Tribes made by Karens, residents of North Andaman Island, Mayabunder Tehsil, District Andamans, Andaman & Nicobar Islands. I had earlier written to you on 31.01.2003 which letter you had kindly acknowledged vide your letter No MTA/VIP/SO/40/2003 dated 13th February, 2003.

Karens had made their first representation making the claim in 1990 and reiterated that vide their letter No KBCA/95/03 dated 18.05.1995 which was replied to by the Ministry of Welfare vide letter No 12016/30/95-SCD (R.Cell) dated 12.7.95 stating that the claim was under consideration with other representations [copy enclosed]. The Karens made several representations thereafter but no other response has been received by them till date.

Karens of Andamans are of Myanmarese origin but have been living in the Andamans from long before Independence. They have their own distinct traits which are quite primitive in nature and have been carried on through several generations. For example, Karens are perhaps the only people in the country who have male Traditional Delivery Assistants [male *Daij*]. Apart from these, they are educationally and economically backward. They do not encourage mixing with mainstream population, being shy of contact. They have a very distinct language and their own script. A population of around 2200 Karens live today in their own traditional architectures, having their distinct practices and way of living occupying six villages.

During the visit of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, on 19th January 2003, delegation of Karens met him at Raj Niwas in Port Blair, in presence of Hon'ble LG and myself. Hon'ble PM had received them and asked them to make proper representation and also seek my help in pursuing their claim.

In the circumstances, I earnestly request you to kindly have the matter examined under the procedures attached to the claim of the Karens. I also seek your personal intervention in the matter as their claim has remained pending for quite some time. The Karens and I shall be ever indebted to you for your kindness and fair mindedness.

With kind regards.

Sincerely yours,


[Bishnu Pada Ray]

Shri Jual Oram
Hon'ble Minister for Tribal Affairs
Government of India