

Apparently, they appear to be more advanced than even the progressive tribe, the Nicobarese of this UT, let alone the Primitive Tribes. In view this, the Administration feels that classification of the Ranchis as Scheduled Tribe of this UT will be detrimental to the interests of the Scheduled Tribes of these Islands.

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2) Granting of Scheduled Tribe Status to Karen Communities:

The President and Joint Secretary, Karen Youth Organisation, Wetri Village, Mayabunder Tehsil had submitted a representation to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India during his visits to A&N Islands in January 2003, demanding Scheduled Tribe status to the Karen Community. The issue was examined and the report was sent to the Govt. of India vide this Administration's letter No. 1-554/2000-TW/369 dated 1st April, 2003 at page 162/C. The relevant portion of the report is reproduced below:

"That the Karens were far more developed than even the Nicobarese, let alone the other five Primitive Tribes and the Karens already are getting preference in recruitment to Group-C and D posts under the Administration alongwith the other locals. So classifying them as a ST in respect of this UT would be detrimental to the interests of the Scheduled Tribes of this UT. Therefore the Administration did not recommend classification of Karens as ST earlier. The same view is still held by the Administration so far as according ST status to the Karens is concerned, as the aboriginal tribes of this UT are much backward when Compared to the Karens. Moreover, the Karens are not original inhabitants of this UT unlike the six STs namely - Great Andamanese, Onges, Jarawas, Sentinelese, Nicobarese and Shompens. The Karens were brought to this UT by the British colonial Administration to work as labourers in the forest in 1925-26 and subsequently settled. "

The Hon'ble Minister of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India has recently sent a reply to M.P of A&N Constituency stating that the Karens are yet to become eligible for inclusion in the list of ST of A&N Islands.

However, the Karens have opted for Other Backward Class status and the OBC Commission of A & N Islands have since recommended for declaring them as OBC alongwith a few other communities in respect of A&N Islands. The report is being examined by the Administration. Necessary reservation of seats in