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No.1-554/2000-TW/

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Reference Director (TW's) minutes at para 92/N.

(93) The issue under consideration in this file is regarding recognition of Bengali refugees belonging to Namasudras, Pondras etc of A & N Islands as per the letter dated 3rd June 2003 (P.U.C) of the Assistant Secretary (Home), A & N Administration forwarding a copy of the letter dated 8th May 2003 at page 100/C of the Assistant Director, Govt. of India, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, New Delhi. This Administration has been requested to furnish a detailed ethnographic information of each of the communities along with the views of the State Government in the prescribed format.

(94) As for the A&N Islands, the Bengalee refugees mostly Namasudra from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) have been settled in South, Middle & North Andaman under the colonization / rehabilitation scheme of the Govt. of India. The Bengali Refugees from East Pakistan had initially migrated to West Bengal, where they were kept in transit camp and from there they were shifted to various States / UTs including the A&N Islands for permanent settlement under rehabilitation scheme of the Govt. of India.

(95) With regard to their claim for SC status in relation to this UT, it is stated that the Bengalee refugees belonging to Namasudras were accorded SC status in relation to West Bengal, having been settled there initially, but they have not been recognized as such in respect of this UT after they have been settled here. There is no untouchability practiced in this UT, nor is there any discrimination on the basis of caste existing here. Rather there is a homogeneous and caste-less society. They do not suffer from any kind of social disabilities like untouchability, deprivation from use of public places and places of worships and other social boycotts unlike the SCs of other parts of the country. They have equal status in the society.

(96) In this context, it may be recalled here that the issue regarding inclusion of Namasudras, Pondaras etc as SCs in the list of SCs had earlier been examined in connection with the revision of the list of SCs & STs by the Central Government vide notes from para 126 to 147/N (a xerox copy is placed at pages 120-127/C) and a reply sent to Govt. of India vide letter dated 5th April 1995 at page 130/C of the then Chief Secretary. The views of the Administration with regard to the inclusion of Namasudras, Pondaras etc in the list of SCs as mentioned in the annexure at page 131/C attached to the above said letter of the then Chief Secretary are reproduced below: