

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 educational, professional/technical Institutions and reservation in services/ posts under this Administration will be provided after the Karen community alongwith the other recommended communities are declared as OBC in respect of this UT".

✓ 3). **Granting of Scheduled Caste Status to the large number of Telugu, Tamil, East Bengal Refugees**

There are no SCs notified in relation to the A&N Islands. The Telugu and Tamils, who are stated to be belonging to SC category in the mainland, have migrated from mainland and settled in these islands. As per the policy laid down, the Govt. of India with regard to migrant SC/ST Committee, if a person migrates from one State to another State he / she can claim to belong to a caste / tribe / community only in relation to State which he/she originally belongs and not in respect of the State to which he / she has migrated. As such the Tamil and Telugu belonging to SC category in mainland are not eligible for SC status here.

The East Bengal refugees i.e., Bengali settlers who are also stated to be belonging to SC category in the mainland have been settled in these islands under the approved rehabilitation schemes of the Government.

The issue of considering the Bengali refugees as SCs in respect of A&N Islands was dealt earlier also in the year 1995. The decision of the Administration in the past has been to not to propose to recognize the Bengali refugees i.e. Namasudra as Scheduled Castes in this UT on the ground that untouchability does not prevail in these Islands and none of the communities including Bengalis suffer social disabilities like deprivation from the use of public places, places of worship and other social boycott unlike the Scheduled Castes in other parts of the country which warrant them to be classified as Scheduled Castes. They have equal status in the society in these Islands.