

2. As per the Classification Table; (Copy of Classification Table filed in Bhantu File and the other files separately) drawn up on the basis of the sample survey Source of Income of the Bhantus in % is as follows:-

Agriculture - 13.06 Wages - 10.92

Others - 74.53 (Daily Rated Workers, small

businessmen etc.)

These figures were not agreed to by the leaders of the Community. It was stated to the Commission at the meeting held on 30.10.99 at Ferrargunj that the then Government gave 4 acres of land to each family when they were brought to the Islands. The members of the extended families hold and cultivate these lands and divide the crops amongst themselves. In the meeting held on 8.8.2000 Mr. Nelson Prasad, Pradhan of Ferrargunj Gram Panchayat and a leader of the Bhantu Community asserted unequivocally that his community in its entirety depended on agriculture. He was fully supported by Mr. Sunder Singh, Retired Cattle Development Officer, Animal Husbandry Department, who said that the people of his community were engaged in agriculture from April to December every year and that thereafter they were free to work anywhere else. Commission accepts the contentions of Messrs Prasad and Singh. The figure 74.53 shown as 'Others' under col.8 of the first page of the Classification Table must be the figure showing off season agriculturists, though some of them may be regular day - labourers.'

3. The figure 1.49 under col.9 of the first page of the Classification Table showing Women's contribution to the Income of the Community has also been challenged. Smti Kamlavati, Member of Panchayat said during the meeting held on 30.10.99 that the women of her community do all the agricultural work in the fields except ploughing which is done by the males. This is also the version of Mr. Deepak Johnson, a Govt. servant. The Commission finds their assertion reasonable and acceptable.

Contd. 18/-