

Comments of the Andaman & Nicobar Administration on the points raised in Shri Ganga Das, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Welfare, Govt. of India's DO letter No.12016/17/81-SCD(R.Cell)-A&N dated 10.2.95.

Item No.(i): Inclusion of Namasudra, Pondras, Chamar and Balmiki in the SC List.

Untouchability is not practised in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. No caste has been scheduled in relation to this territory. Inter-caste marriages are common among the local people.

According to the 1901 Census, the population of these islands was 24,649 which included 351 Chamars (347 Hindu + 2 Sikh + 2 Muslim). The caste 'Balmiki' does not figure in the 1901 Census. However, till recently, the practice of manual scavenging was prevalent in this territory only in the Municipal area of Port Blair. There were 273 scavengers on the pay roll of the Municipal Board. After the elimination of manual scavenging, all these erstwhile scavengers have been deployed on other jobs.

The first Census after the Independence was taken in 1951. The population of these islands in that year was 30,971. It rose to 63,548 in 1961, to 1,15,133 in 1971, to 1,88,741 in 1981 and to 2,80,661 in 1991.

According to information available, 4507 families from different parts of the mainland were resettled in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands by the Govt. of India under various Colonisation/Rehabilitation Schemes between 1949 and 1980, as per details given below:-

1. East Bengal	- 3654
2. Kerala	- 186
3. Tamil Nadu	- 114
4. Burma	- 50
5. Mahe & Pondicherry	- 4

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