

333 (1)

4. Government of India, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi has issued directions to the Principal Secretary of various State Governments including the A & N Administration vide letter No. 12016/13/2001-SC(R.L.Cell)-AP dated 7/10/2003 to furnish the necessary ethnographic details for declaring Bengali Refugees belonging to Namasudra, Poundria, etc. communities as Scheduled Castes and inclusion in the list of Scheduled Castes of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Delhi, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands where they have been rehabilitated by GOI. The Andaman & Nicobar Administration has not responded to the letter or furnished the details yet.

5. There are special provisions in the Indian Constitution for the Scheduled Castes, viz., reservation in government jobs, social protection (more stringent punishment to the accused persons for committing atrocities against SC and ST), etc. The atrocities are being committed ^{often} against the namasudra, pondro-kshatriya and sudra Bengali Settlers in A & N Islands ~~even~~ since 1949 after settlement; but ^{these} are not being recorded and reported in these remote and isolated islands except a very few cases that are the tip of the ice-burg only, viz., murder of two students at Rangat on 28.01.1982, murder of Ranjit Majhi, a forest guard at Webi, Mayabunder in 1984, rape of two ladies and murder of their 12 year old son at Chouldari in 1994 during Durga Puja, murder of Swapan Das, inspector of police at North Andaman in 1996 and so on. Most of the suspected accused persons had been the descendants of the convicts. None of the accused persons has ever been convicted for the atrocities committed against the Bengali Settlers in A & N Islands.

The Bengali Settlers, mostly dalits, are the most under-privileged community in A & N Islands and are very vulnerable to be converted to other religions; poverty, lack of awareness and extreme backwardness made them very susceptible community to be motivated easily by the religious fanatics. A few families at Tal Bagan, North Andaman have already been converted to Christianity; some have been lured by the Penal Settlers. Declaring these dalit Hindu Bengalis of A & N Islands as Scheduled Castes, the well deserved provision of Indian Constitution, will prevent their conversion to other religions.