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12 Recognition of Bengali Settlers, mostly namasudra, pondro-kshatriya and other sudra communities as Scheduled Castes, as done in West Bengal.

Post 1942 Bengali Settlers settled in the islands under various rehabilitation schemes of Central Government has already been specified as Other Backward Classes in respect of A & N Islands. There are no Scheduled Castes notified in relation to the A&N Islands. As per the policy laid down, the Govt. of India with regard to migrant SC/ST Community, 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. There are six original inhabitants of this UT (scheduled tribes) namely - Great Andamanese, Onges, Jarawas, Sentinelese, Nicobarese and Shompens.

The un-touchability is not practiced in these Islands and none of the communities including Bengalis suffer any caste discrimination or social disabilities by deprivation from the use of public places, place of worship and other social boycott, which warrant them to be classified as Scheduled Caste. They have equal status in the society in these Islands. The policy of A & N Administration is to maintain the existing social harmony and continuing a casteless society in these Islands. Further the Bengali community enjoys all the benefits of OBC quota with other communities, as such there is no cause to feel discrimination and claim for Scheduled Caste Status.

Yours faithfully,

Harcel An

Assistant Commissioner (TW)

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