

Sub:-Demand for granting Scheduled Caste Status to the Bengali settlers of A & N Islands - reg.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to your letter No.U-14035/42/2012-ANL dated 25th October, 2012 regarding the above mentioned subject and to offer comments of this UT Administration on the demands for granting Scheduled caste status to the Bengali settlers as under:-

1. The History & Demography

The 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. As per the policy laid down by the Govt. of India in respect of SC migrated from one State to another, they are also not eligible for SC status here. The untouchability is not practiced in these Islands and none of the communities including Bengalis suffers 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 Castes. 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.

2. Permanent residents of A & N Islands.

It is stated that in A & N Islands no census has been conducted since 1931 onwards to enumerate caste wise population. Therefore, present status of caste wise population of various communities including the details of Bengali Settlers of these islands is not available. However, the A & N Commission for Other Backward Classes Report in respect of these islands published contains some data related to Bengali Settlers (post 1942 settlers). As per report of the A & N Commission for OBCs, projected population of Bengali Settlers in these islands as on the year 1998 was 57,948. Post 1942 Bengali Settlers settled in the islands under various rehabilitation