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papers before the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India for constituting a bench appropriate strength to resolve the extent and nature of interplay & the interaction among Articles 16 (4), 341 (1) and 342 (1) of the Constitution in the matter of enlistment of Scheduled Tribe migrated to another State from the State of their origin.

As such, the **matter regarding recognition of migrant Ranchi Community as Scheduled Tribe in relation to the A&N Islands is sub-judice in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.** However, a proposal for grant of special status to Chotanagpuri (Ranchi Community) for 4% reservation in posts/services of the A&N Administration was submitted to the Govt. of India, Ministry of Home Affairs vide this Admn's letter No.1-554/2010-TW/43 dated 13th Jan, 2012. Home Ministry vide letter dated 13th September, 2012 has sought some clarification regarding the term 'Special Status' and constitutional /legal provision of this proposal, which is being replied.

Scheduled Caste Status to the Bengali settlers of A & N Islands

The Bengali settlers who are stated to be belonging to Scheduled Caste 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 not eligible for Scheduled Caste status here.

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. The un-touchability is not practiced in these Islands and no Scheduled Castes has been notified in these Islands. None of the communities including Bengalis suffers any 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.

Further the Bengali community enjoys all the benefits of OBC quota with other communities, the (Pre-1942 settlers of A & N Islands comprising of the (i) Local Borns (ii) Bhatus or the Bhantus (iii) the Moplahs and (iv) the Karens and (v) Post - 1942 Bengali Settlers settled in the islands under various rehabilitation schemes of the Central Government) for 38% reservation in recruitment to Group-C and D posts under the Administration. As such there is no cause to feel discrimination and claim for Scheduled Caste Status.

Yours faithfully,