

Title: Need to grant B-2 Status to Pondicherry city for HRA purpose.

PROF. M. RAMADASS (PONDICHERRY): Sir, the issue of granting B-2 status to Pondicherry city for HRA purpose has not been approved by the Ministry of Finance on the ground that it does not have a population of five lakhs which implies that population is the criterion for deciding the status of cities. But it is understood that this criterion is not adopted in the classification of Goa, Portblair, Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the rural areas of Lakshdweep group of islands for the purpose of House Rent Allowance. For instance, Portblair city which has a population of less than one lakh, 99,984 to be exact, has been upgraded from C Class to B-1 Class. If these cities have been conferred higher status for peculiar situation, the same situation prevail in the case of Pondicherry city also. For instance, the cost of construction is higher, the rents are abnormally rising, the degree of urbanization is high (68.8 per cent of the population is the urban population), industrialisation is rapid, floating population is considerable and expansion of educational institutions is phenomenal.

Pondicherry, which is the capital city, is perhaps the only capital of a State or Union Territory in the whole country which still remains as Class "c" city even today. I request the Government to grant B-2 status to Pondicherry city immediately for House Rent purpose.