

Title: Need to accord B2 status to Puducherry.

PROF. M. RAMADASS (PONDICHERY): Puducherry, the capital city of the Union Territory of Pondicherry, remains as a Class 'C' city since the advent of independence in 1954. Much water has flown in the last 52 years and the city has grown both in size and quality. This is one of the most dynamic cities in the country where the growth of urban population is higher than the national average and it is ranked fourth at the All India level in terms of urban population growth. The city is the only capital city in the whole country which remains 'C' despite all characteristics of any other towns of India. The Ministry of Home Affairs and the Standing Committee on Home Affairs have recommended the grant of B2 status to the city of Puducherry. Recently the Ministry of Urban Development has recognized this city for its implementation of JNNRM Scheme. But the demand is not conceded on only one ground that the city has a population exceeds 5 lakhs. When we take the population of the city and its urban agglomeration into account the population exceeds 5 lakhs. But honorable exceptions for 5 lakh population norms has been given for certain special circumstances. For instance, Portblair which has an urban population of about 1.5 lakh population, Punjab which has less than 2 lakh urban population have been granted B2 status. The special circumstances surrounding these two towns are equally found in the city of Puducherry. Besides, the city is now evolving as an educational hub, technological city attracting large number of tourists. The rents are very high when compared to the neighbouring towns. The demand for B2 status has been voiced by me several times in the Parliament and outside. The people of Puducherry and the Government of Puducherry have also clamoring for B2 status. At least now the Ministry of Finance should assess the justification of B2 status and grant it to Puducherry.