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Title: Need to accord the status of Scheduled Tribes (STs) to the tribal communities of Puducherry.

PROF. M. RAMADASS (PONDICHERRY): The Scheduled Tribe communities constitute one of the segments of the population of the Union Territory of Puducherry. But the Census of India has neither included them in their Report nor classified them as Scheduled tribes in various censuses taken so far. The plea for recognition of these communities was raised many times by Scheduled Tribe population of Puducherry. However, the Government of India refuses to recognize these communities on the ground that they are not the original inhabitants of the Union Territory. This is a myth. The Scheduled Tribe population have been living in the Union Territory for ages together and more specifically before the advent of freedom to the Union Territory of Puducherry in 1954. In fact, the villages of the Union Territory are named after the names of their communities such as Irulansandai, Vettaikkaran Pudur, etc. The Government of Puducherry has recognised the existence of these communities and passed Resolutions in the Assembly requesting the Government of India to recognize these communities as Scheduled Tribe communities. The study by the Anthropological Survey of India, the Backward Classes Commission and a specially designed study for identification of Scheduled Tribes by Pondicherry University have conclusively proved the existence of Scheduled tribes in the Union Territory of Puducherry. However, it is unfortunate, the Government of India refuses to acknowledge these evidences and accord recognition to Scheduled tribe population. Consequently, we are rendering a grave injustice to these communities. They are neither classified as Scheduled Castes nor Backward Classes and extended reservation in education, employment, policies and schemes.

The UPA Government which is now addressing the issue of social justice should look into this issue with utmost importance and arrange to accord recognition to tribal communities of the Union Territory of Puducherry.