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भारत सरकार
नई दिल्ली-110 066
MEMBER SECRETARY
NATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR BACKWARD CLASSES
NEW DELHI-110 066

DO Case No. Ker 16/95

Dated the 12th June, 1995

Dear Shri Mata Prasad,

I am sending herewith the unanimous advice of the National Commission for Backward Classes under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, 1993, in respect of "Kumbaran" community to be included in the Central List of Backward Classes for Kerala, for necessary action under Section 9(2) of the Act by the Central Government.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

(P.S. KRISHNAN)

Shri Mata Prasad
Secretary
Ministry of Welfare
Shastri Bhavan
NEW DELHI

Enclosure: NCBC Advice No. Ker, 16/95

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

'KUMBARAN' Community of Kerala - Request for
inclusion in the Central List of
Other Backward Classes

The Government of Kerala, in its memorandum No.16156/C3/93/P&ARD dated October 25, 1993 has, inter alia, requested that KUMBARAN community of Kerala may be included in the Central List of Other Backward Classes. The following organisations representing the above community have also made similar requests to the Commission.

1. Bharatheeya Kulala Federation,
Cherur, Thrissur, Kerala.
2. Kerala Kumbaran Society,
Kunnenkadu Kalam,
Vadakkencherry PO
Palakkad Dt.
Kerala.

2. The Kerala Bench held public hearings at Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur, Kochi and Kozhikode on 26.9.94, 1.10.94, 30.11.94 and 1.12.94 respectively to examine the above requests. Representatives of the above organisations and a few others appeared before the Bench and gave additional particulars in support of their request.

3. In the annexure to the memorandum submitted by the Government of Kerala, it is stated that Kumbarans are a small Telugu speaking community of traditional potters, numbering about 10,000, who are found mainly in the districts of Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Kannur. They produce wheel-made pottery. While the

4. Further, it is specifically pointed out that, while all other pottery making castes in Kerala viz., Kusavan, Kulalan, Velaan, Odan, Andhra Nair and Anthur Nair are included in the Central List, 'Kumbaran' community, which is undoubtedly most backward, alone has been omitted.

FINDING OF THE BENCH

AUTHENTICATED

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7. Very little is known about the origin of this Telugu-speaking community and the circumstances under which they were compelled to migrate to the South. In the Madras Census Report of 1891, Mr. H.A. Stuart has mentioned (cited in 'CASTES AND TRIBES OF SOUTHERN INDIA', by Edgar Thurston and K. Rangachari, Vol.IV p.112) that "the potters of the Madras Presidency outside the Tamil Country and Malabar are called KUMMARA in Telugu, KUMBARO in Uriya and KUMBARA in Canarese, all these names being corrupted forms of the Sanskrit word KUMBHARAKA, pot maker."

8. KIRTADS is, however, of the view that some pot-makers from Telugu speaking areas, might have gone to Madurai in Tamil Nadu in their long and arduous quest for better living conditions and therefrom to the northern parts of Kerala where presumably good quality clay was easily available.

9. There they settled wherever they could get the raw materials for pottery making viz. clay, sand, firewood and water. At that time, they were totally at the mercy of the land-lords, who forced them to move from one place to another according to their whims. They lived in small thatched huts with walls made of unbaked bricks.

10. In the traditional caste hierarchy, Kumbarans had a low status, perhaps equal to that of Thiyyas and Ezhavas in Malabar area. The upper caste Nambudiris and Nairs had observed a certain degree of untouchability with regard to them. However, out of necessity, they were allowed to enter the courtyards of Nambudiris and Nairs for buying their products, which were used only after proper purification rites.

11. Even after the passage of time, there is no perceptible change in the living conditions of this hapless community. The land reform measures have also not

benefitted them to any appreciable extent. They continue to live in aggregate colonies called "KUMBARATHARA" or "SANKETHAM". When compared to other communities, these Kumbaran colonies are strikingly lacking in basic amenities.

12. According to the 'Guidelines for Consideration of Requests for Inclusion and Complaints of Under-Inclusion in the Central List of Other Backward Classes' laid down by the Commission, wherever a caste or community fulfills the criterion 2(e) or (f) or (g) or (h), the Bench/Commission may take it as adequate evidence of backwardness, unless there are sufficient grounds to take a contrary view regarding the backwardness of the caste or community making the request. (Procedural Clarification on Guidelines No.1) 2(e) of the Guidelines states that "Castes and communities, which in terms of the caste system, are identified with traditional crafts or traditional or hereditary occupations considered to be lowly or undignified."

13. Undoubtedly, pot making is one of the traditional occupations coming under the above category. Kumbaran community, in terms of the caste system, is identified with the occupation of pot-making. There is also no ground to take a contrary view regarding the backwardness of this caste. It is also ironical that, while all other communities whose traditional occupation is pot-making have been included in the Central list of Other Backward Classes, Kumbarans, who were once considered to be socially inferior to them, have not yet succeeded in finding a place in the list. Obviously, this is an omission in the Mandal List and consequently in the Central List of OBCs.

14. It is the finding of the Bench that KUMBARAN community should be included in the Central list of Backward Classes as Item No.36 A after the existing entry 36.

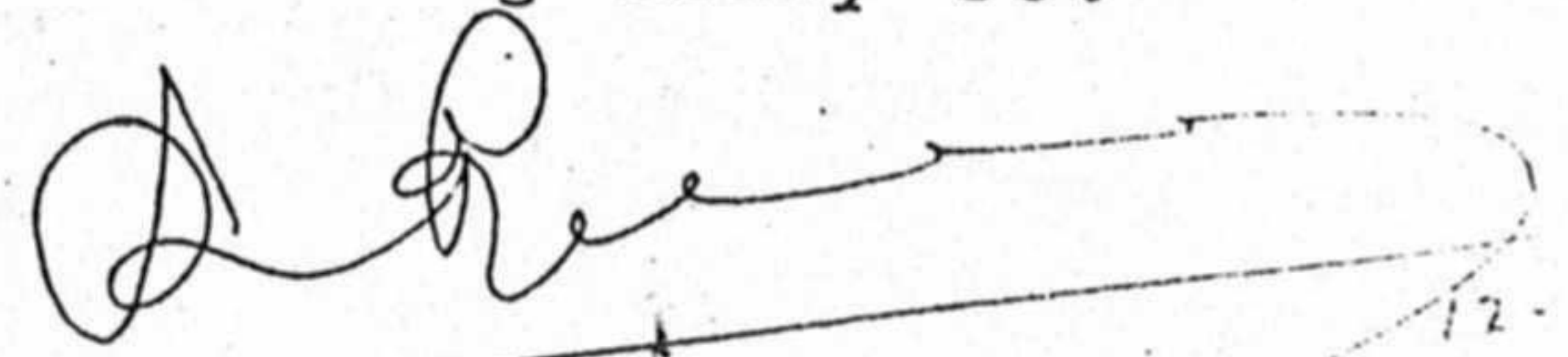
ADVICE OF THE COMMISSION:

The Commission at its Sitting held on June 12, 1995 considered the finding of the Kerala Bench and decided to give the following advice to the Government, as per Section 9(i) of the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993.

"KUMBARAN Community may be included in the Central List of Backward Classes as item No.36A after the existing entry 36."

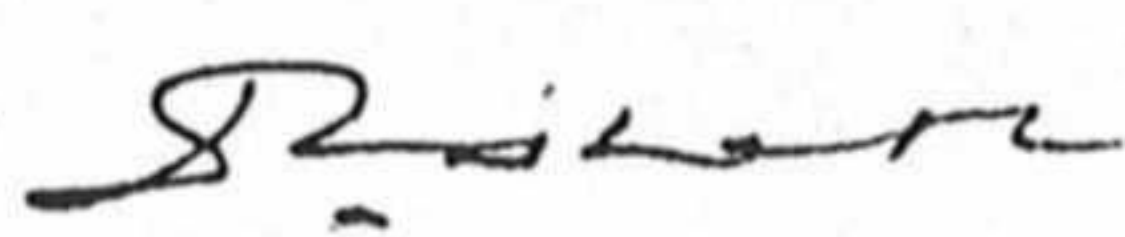


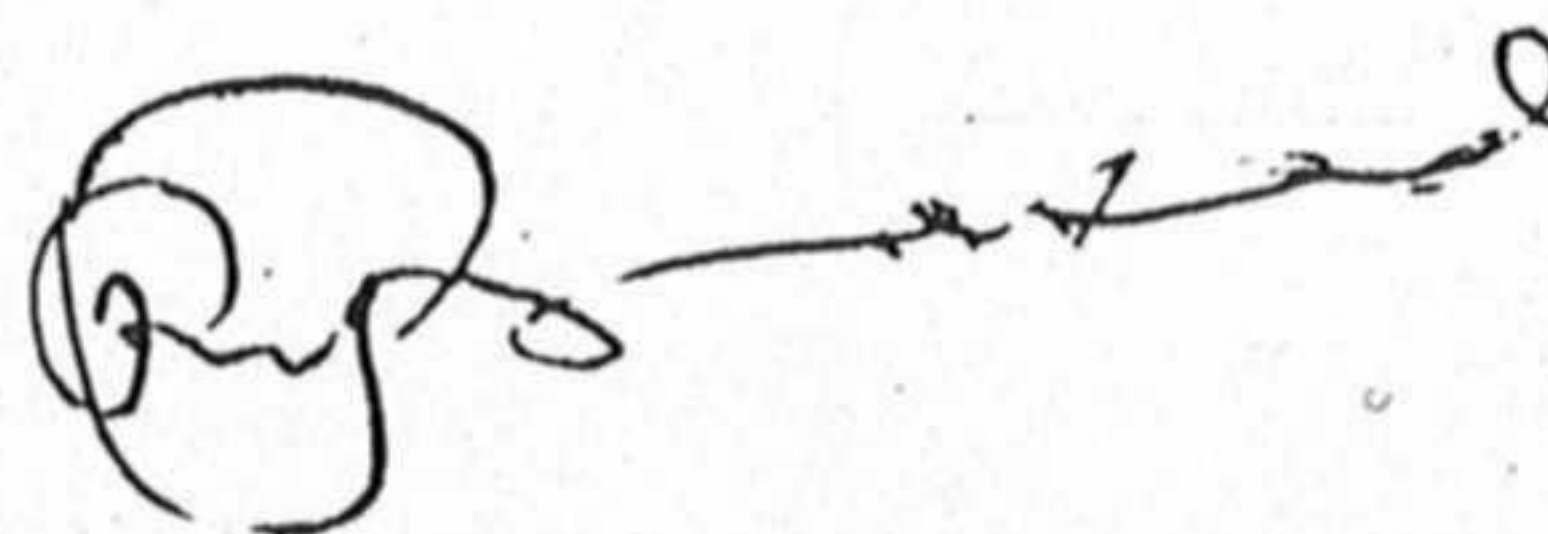
(P.S. KRISHNAN)
Member, Kerala Bench



DR. R. PRASANNAN
MEMBER, KERALA BENCH


(Dr. D.S. YADAV)
Member, NCBC

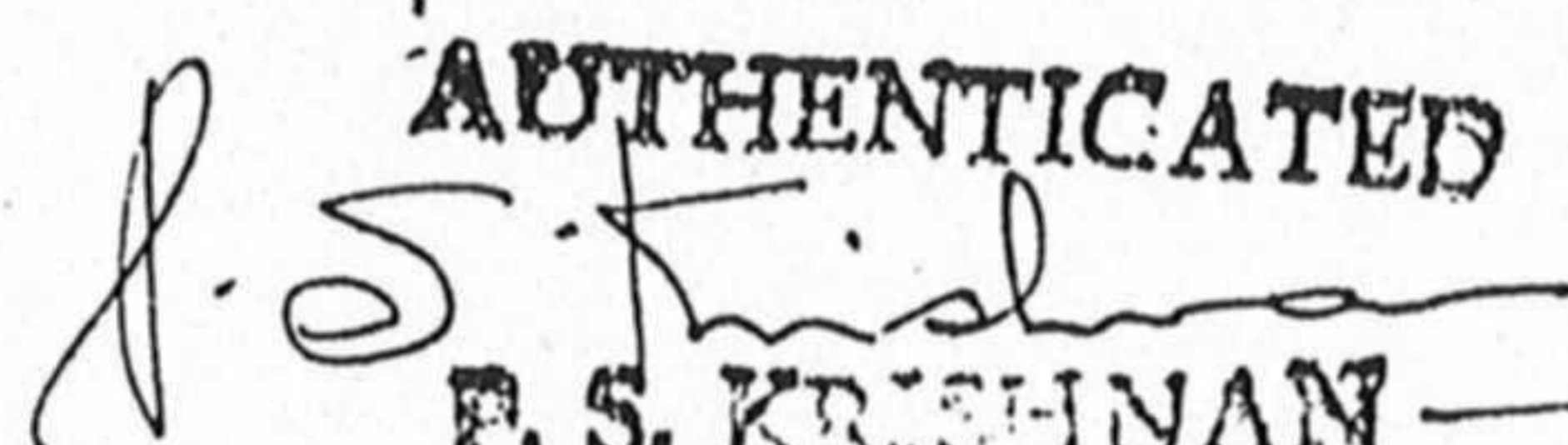

(Prof. D.L. SHETH)
Member, NCBC



(R.N. PRASAD)
CHAIRMAN (NCBC)

12/8/95

12/8/95


P. S. KRISHNAN
Member Secretary
National Commission
for Backward Classes