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सदस्य-सचिव
राष्ट्रीय पिछड़ा वर्ग आयोग

भारत सरकार
ट्रिकूट-१, भीकाजी कामा प्लेस, नई दिल्ली - ११००६६

Member - Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
Government of India
Trikool - 1, Bhikaiji Cama Place, New Delhi - 110 066

NCBC Advice No. Orissa 48/99

18.05.1999

Dear Smt. Das,

I am sending herewith the Advice of the National Commission for Backward Classes under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act for the Inclusion of "Bhanja Puran" caste/community in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa, duly authenticated, for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the NCBC Act.

Yours sincerely,

P. S. Krishnan
(P.S. KRISHNAN)

Encl: As stated.

Smt. Asha Das
Secretary to Govt. of India
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
Shastri Bhavan
NEW DELHI

18/5/99

P.O. 1/6/99

NCBC Advice No. Orissa 48/99

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES
ORISSA BENCH

FINDINGS

Case: Request for inclusion of Bhanja Puran/Puran Caste in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa.

Per Shri U.P. Singh, Member

I. Request

1. This case arises from the request received in this Commission from Shri Padmolachan Deo, Mayurbhanj, Orissa and Shri Basant Kumar Dhal, Secretary, Bhanja Samiti, Baripada, Dist. Mayurbhanj, Orissa for inclusion of Bhanja Puran/Puran caste in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa.

II. Public Hearing

2. The 2-Member Bench of the Commission consisting of Hon'ble Members Shri U.P. Singh and Shri Sahu Akshaya Bhai held a Public Hearing to examine the request for inclusion of Bhanja Puran/Puran caste in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa on 9.10.98 at Bhubaneswar. The State Govt. was represented by Shri R.B. Naik, Director O.B.C. and the State Commission was represented by Shri Bharat Bhusan Jagdev, Administrative Officer. The caste community was represented by Shri Basant Kumar Dhal, Shri Dilip Kumar Dhal and others.

III. Facts

2. At the time when the Expert Committee on Backward Classes prepared the first phase Central List of Backward Classes on the basis of the principle of commonality, i.e., by listing castes common to both the Mandal List for each State and the respective State Lists and when, on the basis of the Expert Committee's Report, the Government of India

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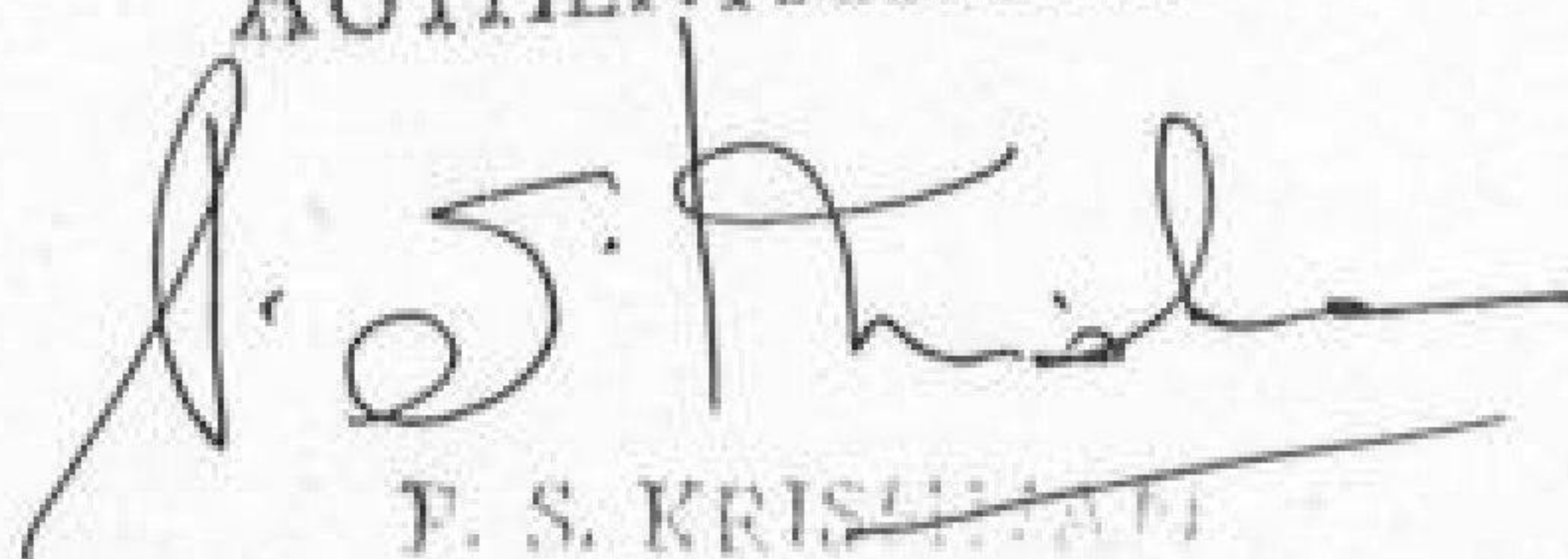
notified the first-phase Central List in 1993, Orissa was one of the States which did not have a State list of its own. Therefore no Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa was prepared at that stage. It was only after the Supreme Court's judgement in the Mandal case that the State List of Orissa came into existence in 1994 on the basis of the one man (Justice N.K. Das) Commission report. Thereafter The Central Government vide Ministry of Welfare's Resolution No. 12011/9/94-BCC dated 19-10-94 issued a "Common (Central) List " of Backward Classes for Orissa. Bhanja Puran/Puran caste was not included in the Central List of Orissa because the caste was not included both in Mandal List and State List existed at that time.

The Government of Orissa, on advice of the State Commission for Backward Classes, (vide Resolution 11177-OBC-4/95-W dated 01-05-95 included Bhanja Puran in the State List of Backward Classes at Sl.No.183 as:

" 183. Bhanja Puran"

4. In his original request for inclusion of Bhanja Puran and Puran caste in the Central List of Backward Classes, Shri Padmolachan Deo has stated that Purana and Bhanja Paurana names are synonymous and the same caste (Purana). The population of the caste is about 1.5 lakhs, concentrated mainly in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh and Sukinda in Jajpur. Only 5% of the population is literate out of which 3% upto primary and middle level 1% matriculates and ½% graduates. The occupation of this community is agriculture and agricultural labour. Sixty percent population of the caste own land; 35% of the members of the caste are agricultural labourer and 5% industrial workers, Businessmen and casual labourers. The economic condition of the caste/community is under poverty line and they maintain their livelihood from sabai grass and as daily labour. The community has its own customs which are different from the higher castes. This community takes snails, white/red ants as their food. Brahmins are not allowed in their homely worship. Mostly they live in nature, worship upon trees and animal, widow remarriage is widely prevalent in the community.

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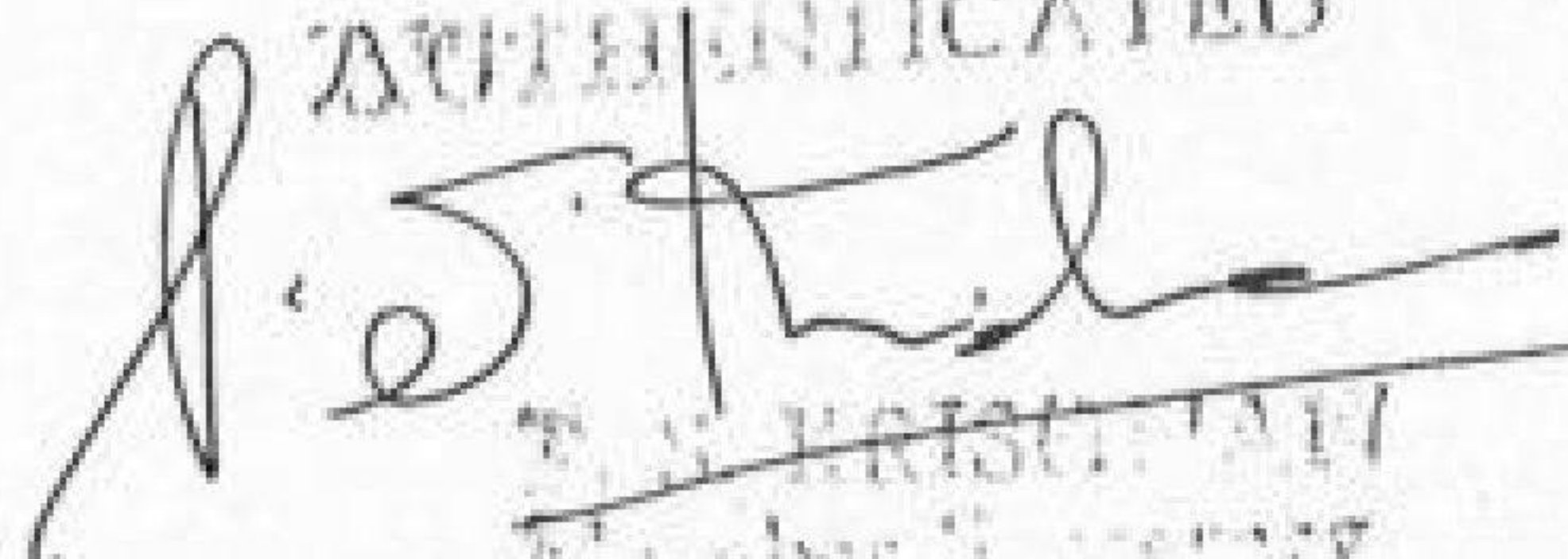
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Member Secretary
National Commission

5. In the NCBC's Questionnaire filled in and submitted by Shri Basant Kumar Dhal, Secretary, Bhanja Samiti, Baripada, Distt. Mayurbhanj they have stated that the population of Bhanja Puran/Pauran caste is 1.5 lakh which is concentrated in Mayurbhanj District. The caste is generally regarded as socially backward. The occupation on which the members of the caste mainly depend for livelihood is Agriculture and daily labour which involves manual laboaur rendered for wages and on own land. The members of the caste are also engaged in traditional craft of Rope makiang (Sabai grass). The literacy rate of the Caste/community in the State is 20%. Total No. of literates of the caste is 30,000 out of which 3000 are female, 5000 are matriaculates and 750 are all graduates in 1994.

Further it has been stated that Puaran/Bhanja Puran caste were enlisted as Tribal Hindus in the Census of 1931 of Mayurbhanj State and the caste Bhuyan, Bathudi, Puran, Bhanja Puran and rajuar were brought together in one tribal group. Except Pauran/Bhanja Puran the other three castes are now enlisted as Scheduled Tribes but Puran/Bhanja Puran caste is neither included as scheduled tribe nor other backward classes. The social customs and superstitions have not been changed due to illeteracy. The tribal habits like taking of Handia, wine etc. still continuing for which their economic condition is deteriorated day to day.

6. Shri Anukul Chandra Si, Secretary, Tamadia Cultural & Welfare Association Dist-Mayurbhanj have opposed the inclusion of Puran caste in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa on the groud that Bhanja Puran and Puran castes are different and not same. Puran caste, otherwise known as Tamadia has been included in the List of Scheduled castes for Orissa at Sl.No.87.

In support of their contention that Bhanja Puran and Puran are different castes they have enclosed a photo copy of extract of the Final report of the settlement of the Bamanghaly sub-division for the year 1902 to 1906 in page No.21 chapter VI(2) Sl. No.59 about Bhanja Puran it is written that, "The Bhanja Purans are also Hindus. They live in Gandida Kulgi and Dalmia Pirhs. Beyond cultivation they have no other occupation. Their women wash the feet of the Maharaja with water mixed with powered

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Turmeric and make offerings of flowers whenever the Maharaja happens to pass through any village in which the Bhanja Purans live. There is another class Purans called Tamria Purans. They drink liquor and take fowl. They are not regarded as Hindus."

7. Tamadia Cultural & Welfare Association has enclosed photocopy of Census of Mayurbhanj Statat, 1931, in which the Bhanja Puran and Puran castes have been discussed as follows:

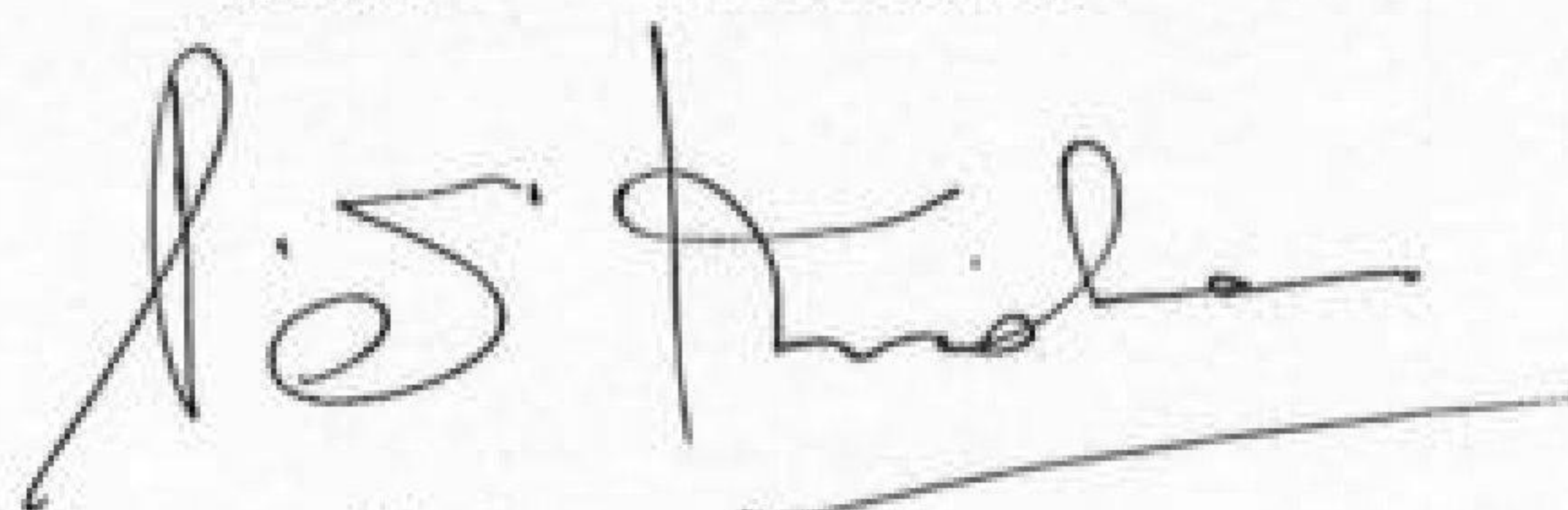
Bhanja Purans

"The Bhanj Purans have till now escaped the notice of the census authority with the result that up-to-date no authoritative pronouncement has been made regarding their original. To all interests and Purans however they are believed to have very early allied to the Bhuinya. Like the Bhuinyas, Bathudi they wear sacred thread and considered themselves to be a Kshetriya Origin.

The Bhanj Purans are also Hindus. They live in Gandida, Kulagi and Dalim Phirhs. Beyond cultivation, they have no other occupation. Their women wash the feet of Maharaja with water mixed with powder turmeric and make offering of flowers whenever the Maharaja happens to pass through any village in which the Bhanj Purans live. There is another class of Purana called Tamaria Purans.

The Bhanj Purans for long time were considered to be a section of the Bhuinys in the state. They are now recognised as a separate community by themselves and are distinguished from the ordinary Purans who are otherwise known Tamaria. As their name implies, the Bhanja Purans are a particular caste or tribe of Mayurbhanj. The Bhanja Purans in their customs and manners have nothing in common with the other aboriginal tribes of the states. The present estimate of their social status is that they are now completely Hinduised."

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Purana(Tamaria)

"3,135 persons or less than 2/5 percent of the total state population returned themselves simply as Purans. Their full name is Tamaria Puran. About 48% of them are returned from Sadar and about 37% from Baman Ghaty. In panchpir, only 14% of them are found while the remaining 1% is returned from the Kaptipada Sub division.....

These Purans are ordinarily called Tamaria Puran like the Tamaria Bhumij, their original home was probable in Tamaria in the district of Ranchi. The Bhanja Purans who consider Mayurbhanj to be their home regard these Tamarias as out siders who have migrated in to the state from time to time. The tamaria Purans, however, contend that they were originaly in Mayurbhanj and formed a part and parcel of the Bhanja Purans community, that they migrated to Tamal and have eventually returned to their original home. There is no inter-marriage or inter-dining between the Bhanja Purans and Tamaria Purans. Unlike the Bhanja Purans, the Tamarias are considered to be a mixed caste, though both the sections have been completely Hinduised and have adopted Oriya as their mother tongue and have taken to agriculture as their Principal occupation."

Further at page 198 of the Report under the title Bhanja Puran it is mentioned that, "The Bhanja Purans for a long time were considered to be a section of the Bhuinyas in the State. They are now recognised as a separate community by themselves, and are distinguished from the oridinary Purans who are otherwise known as Tamaria. As their name implies, the Bhanja Purans are a particular caste or tribe of Mayurbhanj. The Bhanja Purans in their customs and manners have nothing in common with the other aboriginal tribes of the State. The present estimate of their social status is that they are now completely Hinduised -----.

The Bhanja Purans enjoy the services of Brahman, barber and washerman. They neither take fowl nor drink Handia. Marriage is both adult and infant. Bride's price

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amounts to Rs. 10 and over and four pieces of cloth. Marriage ceremony is usually held at the bride's house. Both males and females join the marriage party, though recently there has been a tendency to discontinue the practice of allowing females to join the party. Divorce and widow remarriage are allowed. The mourning period lasts for 10 days. They both cremate and bury their dead. They have no dance of their own, nor do they take part in any other tribal dance. Some of the members of the caste having been initiated into Vaishnavism, have turned Gurus and minister to the other members of the community. The chief occupation of the Bhanja Purans is now cultivation. A member of this tribe now occupies a position of distinction in the State Revenue Judicial service."

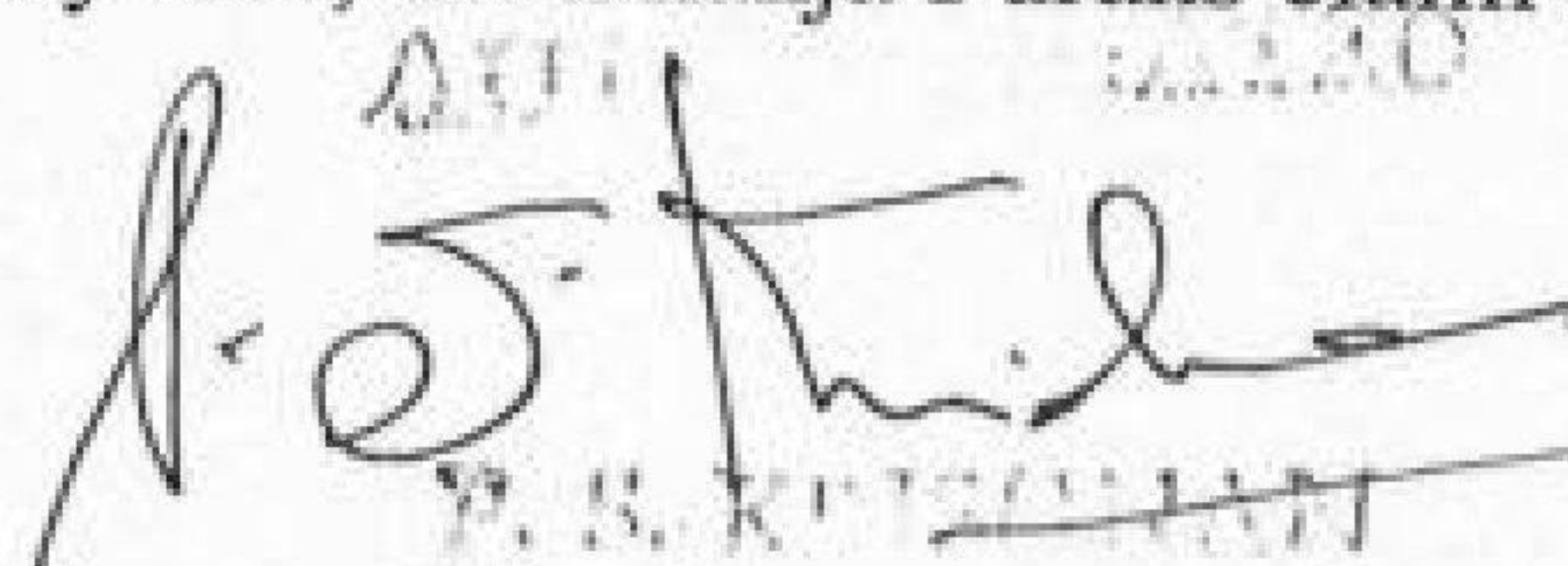
8. H.H. Risley (The Tribes and castes of Bengal' Ethnographic Glossary' Voll, Firma Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta 1981, First edition Calcutta, 1891, p.95) has a mention of Bhanj, Bhanja as

"Bhanj, a sub-caste of so called Rajputs in Singbhum and the Tributary States of Orissa".

"Bhanja, a title of Dakshin Rahi and Bangaja Kayasthas"

About 'Puran' Risley (ibid Vol II P.180) writes that, "Puran, a section of Bhats who read out verses in sabhas or caste assemblies; a sept of Tipperahs in the Hill Tracts of Chittagong; a synonym for Bhuiya in Moharbhanj."

9. A study of Bhanja Puran and the Tamadia or Tamaria Puran was conducted by Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-training Institute, Bhubaneshwar in 1994-95 to determine the relative socio-economic status of both the communities and see if they can be included in the Scheduled list. The field work was conducted in some Tamadia Puran and Bhanja Puran villages in Baripada sub-division of Mayurbhanj district. Regarding the corresponding social status of the two castes it is mentioned that ".....it was observed during the present study that, the Bhanja Purans claim a higher social status than those of

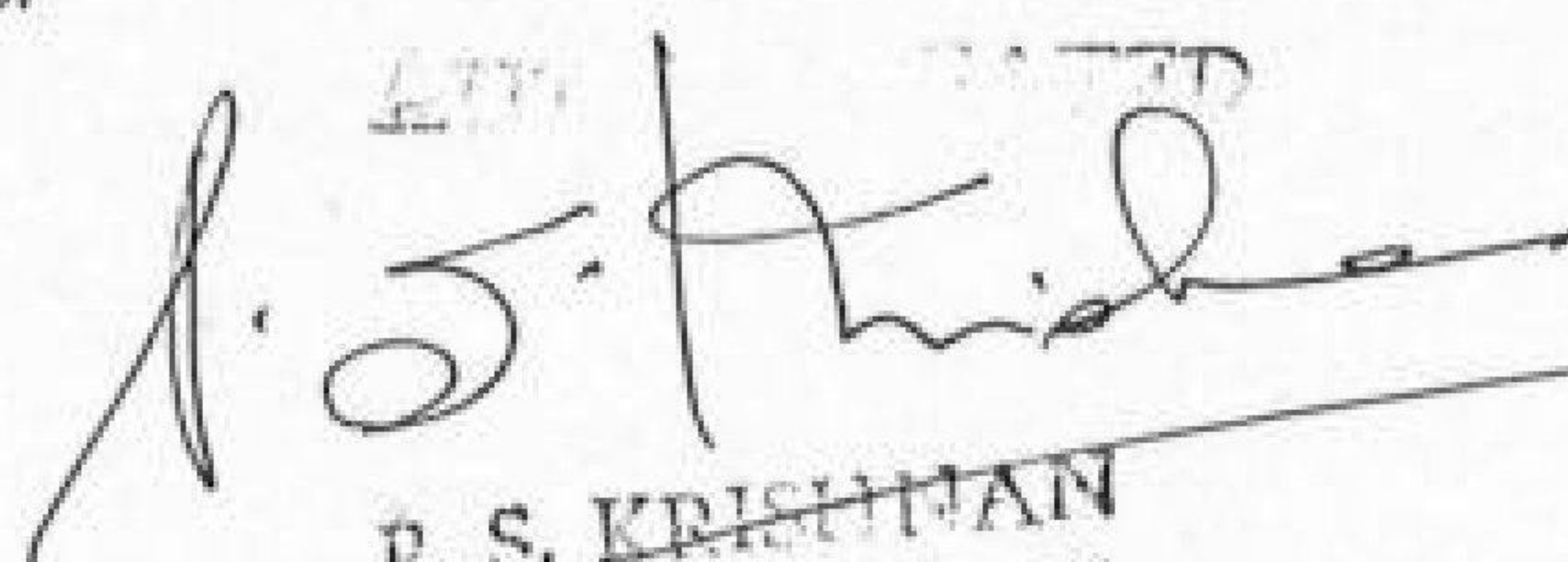

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the Tamadia Purans treating them as younger brothers. The Tamadia Purans not only have a different dialect, they also follow many tribal customs and manners like using cows for ploughing, preparing, selling and drinking the "handia" (rice-beer) beverages which are taboo for Bhanja Purans and for such unclean practices the Bhanja Purans look down upon the Tamadia Purans and do not keep marital ties with them. They also do not take cooked food and water from the Tamadia Purans."

On the basis of the study the Institute concluded the study as follows:-

"The data presented in the preceeding pages of this report about the ethnic status of the Bhanja Puran, and Tamadia/Tamudia/Tamaria/Tamura Puran Commuinities of Mayurbhanj district establishes the following important characteristic features of both the communities.

- i). They are socially, economically and educationally backward. Their literacy level as per our study is only twenty percent which is much below ~~that~~ of the State -----.
- ii). They are the aboriginal inhabitants of Mayurbhanj like other aboriginal tribes such as the Bhuiyan, Bathudi, Santhal, bhumij, Kharia etc. who have already been recognised as Scheduled Tribes except the Purans.
- iii). They have a lowly status in the traditional inter-community heirarchy and the clean castes maintain social distance from them for their tribal life-style and certain unclean habits, practices and social customs which have been described above.
- iv). They are distinct ethnic groups, distinguished from other groups by their separate dialect, dance, rituals, food habits, marriage and other social customs.

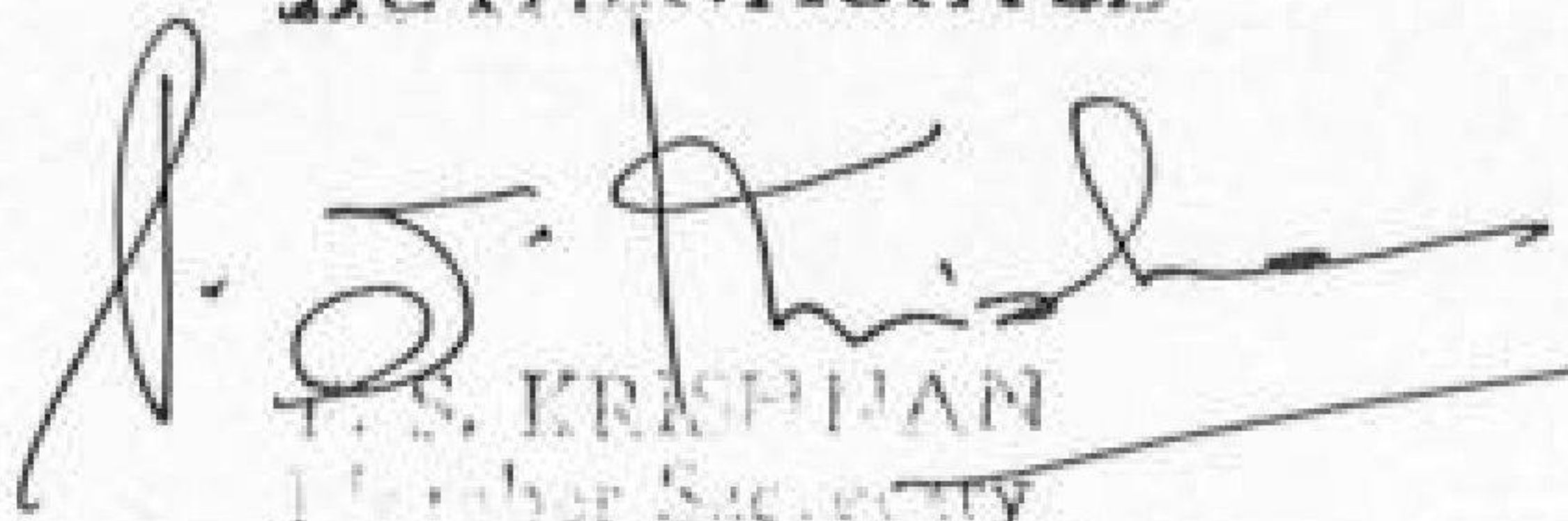

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- v). While clean castes maintain social distance from them, they have free social interaction with the neighbouring tribes like, Bhiuyan, Bathudi, Bhumij etc. whom they treat as their equals.
- vi). Their legendary traditions, the observations of the earlier ethnographers like Dalton, Risle, Laeequddin and the distinctive tribal way of life of both the communities indicate towards their tribal origin.
- vii). Both the communities have consciously tried to elevate their social status by hinduising and modernising themselves over period of time like other neighbouring tribal communities and have become partly successful. But they have not yet achieved the status of a clean caste.
- viii). The present social status in the inter-community hierarchy of their locality have remained at par with those of the neighbouring tribes like the Bhuiyan, Kharia, Santal, Bhumij etc.
- ix). Besides their legendary origin, their socio-cultural life-style has many things in common with the local mudari group of tribes. Particularly the bear close cultural resemblances with the Bhuiyan tribe.

In view of all the above facts, it appears that the Bhanja Puran and the Tamadia/Tamudia/Tamaria/Tamura Purans are probably an off-shoot of the Bhuiyan tribe.

Considering their socio-economic backwardness and aboriginal life-style they may be recognised as a Scheduled Tribe of Orissa and necessary developmental assistance may be liberally extended to them to bring about their all round socio-economic development."

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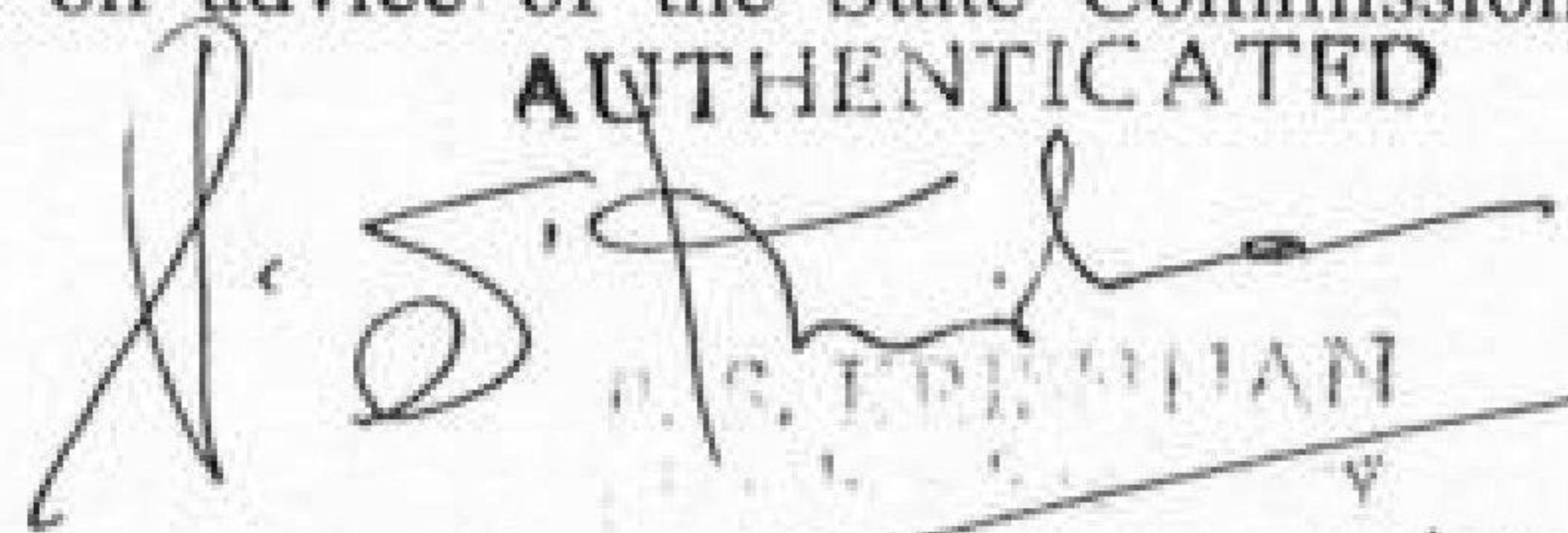

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10. At the Public Hearing two groups of the representatives of the caste appeared before the Bench. One group requested for inclusion of Bhanja Puran and Puran caste in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa while the other group opposed the inclusion of Puran caste on the basis that Puran caste is already included in the list of Scheduled Caste of the State of Orissa as Tamadia. The representatives of the State Govt. stated that on advice of the State Commission, the State Govt. has included only 'Bhanja Puran' in the State List. Puran caste has not been included in the State Lists as 'Tamadia' caste which is also known as 'Tamadia Puran' has already been included in the list of Scheduled castes for Orissa. When the Bench asked the representatives who were opposing inclusion of puran caste that whether they oppose inclusion of both names or Puran only, the representatives stated that they have objection on inclusion of 'Puran' caste because Puran and Bhanja Puran are not same but two different castes. Puran is also known as Tamadia/Tamaria and have been included in the list of Scheduled Castes. They have no objection on inclusion of 'Bhanja Puran' caste in the Central List of Backward Classes. When the Bench asked the representatives who had requested for inclusion of Bhanja Puran/Puran caste that whether they agree for inclusion of Bhanja Puran only, they stated that only Bhanja Puran should be included in the Central List and Puan should be left as have been done in the State List.

The representatives also stated that a request for inclusion of Puran (Bhanja Puran and Tamadia Puran) in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Orissa is also under consideration of Govt. of India but no decision have been taken for more than ten years.

IV. Findings

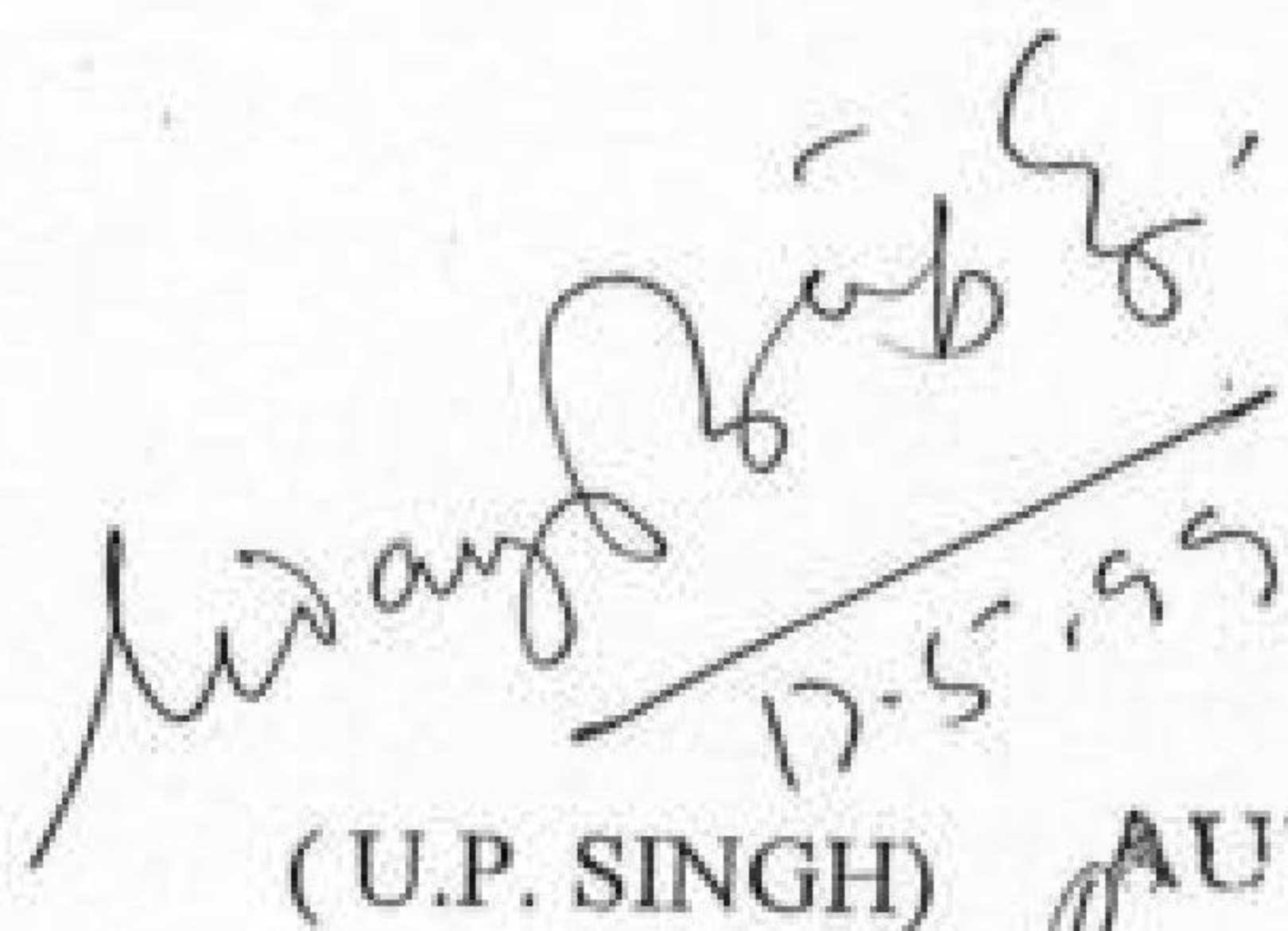
11. From the foregoing material the Bench finds that at present Bhanja Puran and Tamadia Puran are two different castes/communities, though both the castes/communities might have originated from one Tribe. Tamadia have been included in the List of Scheduled Castes for the State of Orissa at Sl. No. 87. According to representatives of the Tamadia Puran, who were present, Tamadia Puran is synonymous with Tamadia. Bhanja Puran, on advice of the State Commission for Backward Classes, has been

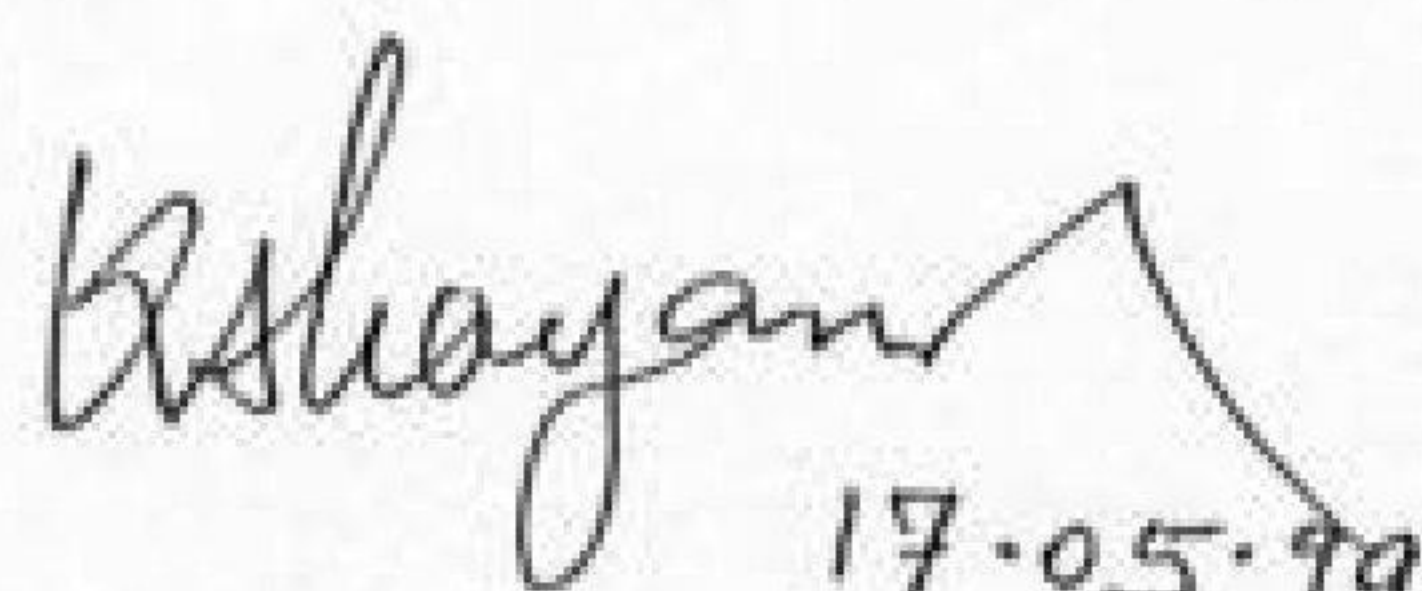

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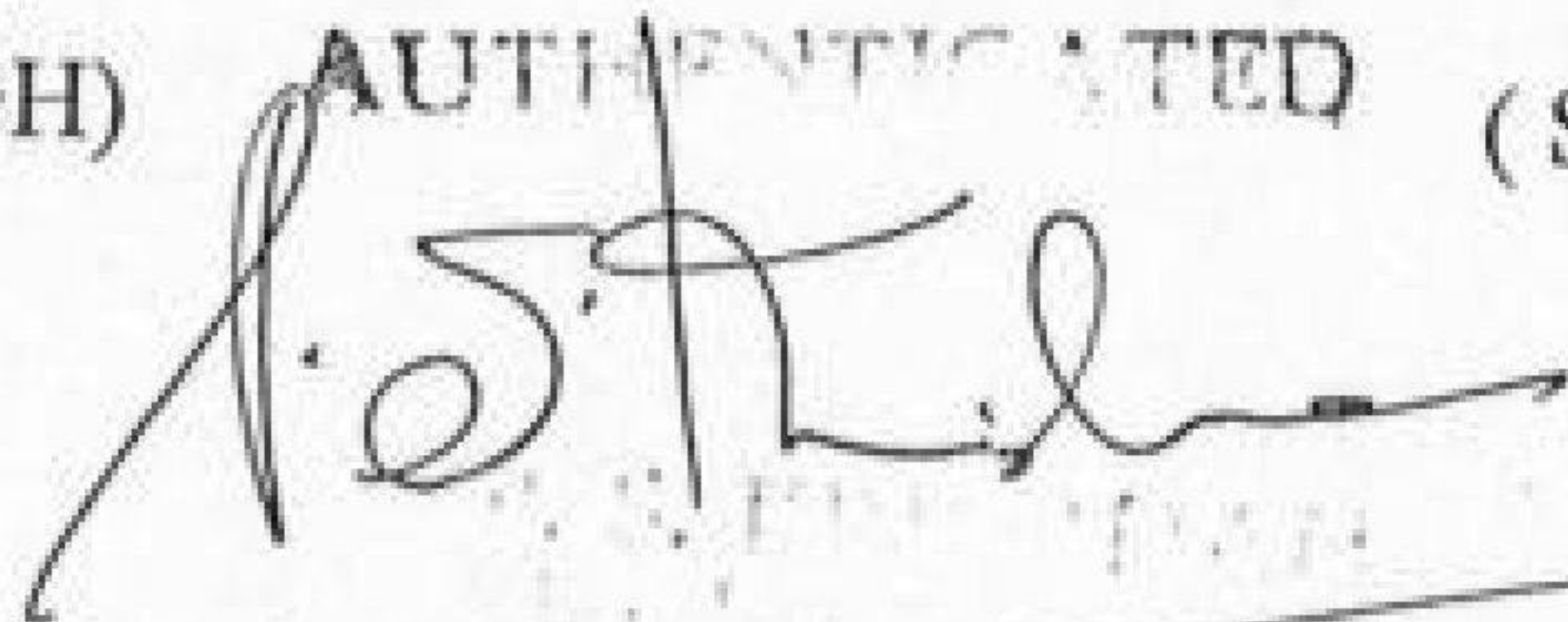
included in the State List of Backward Classes by the State Govt.. Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-training Institute, Bhubaneswar in a recent study found the caste is socially, educationally and economically backward and recommended for inclusion in the list of scheduled tribes of Orissa. The representatives of the caste also stated that a request for inclusion of the caste in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Orissa is pending with Government of India for more than ten years. The representatives at the Public Hearing requested for inclusion of Bhanja Puran only. Thus the finding of the Bench is that the caste 'Bhanja Puran' is socially and educationally backward. Considering the pending request of the caste for inclusion in the List of Scheduled Tribes, The Bench recommends that untill and unless the 'Bhanja Puran' caste/community is included in the List of Scheduled Tribes, they should be included in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa at entry No. 185 as:

"185. Bhanja Puran"

Since no caste or community can be both in the Scheduled Tribes List as well as in the Backward Classes List, if later on it is decided to include 'Bhanja Puran' caste/community in the list of Scheduled Tribes, this caste/community will automatically stand deleted from the list of Backward Classes. The Central Government is advised to note this so that at the appropriate stage, in the event of inclusion of Bhanja Puran in the List of Scheduled Tribes, the entry in the list of Backward Classes for Orissa may be deleted. This may also be conveyed by the Central Government to the State Government of Orissa so that action along these lines is taken at both ends.


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(U.P. SINGH)


17.05.99
(SAHU AKSHAYA BHAI)


BENCH

V. Advice of the Commission

12. The Commission considered and agreed in full with the findings of the Bench for Orissa and decided to tender the following advice to the Central Government under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, 1993 for action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the Act:

'Bhanja Puran' be included in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa as a new entry at Sl.No.185 as under:-

"185. Bhanja Puran"

Since no caste or community can be both in the Scheduled Tribes List as well as in the Backward Classes List, if later on it is decided to include "Bhanja Puran" caste/community in the List of Scheduled Tribes, this caste/community will automatically stand deleted from the list of Backward Classes. The Central Government is advised to note this so that at the appropriate stage, in the event of inclusion of Bhanja Puran in the List of Scheduled Tribes, the entry in the list of BCs for Orissa may be deleted. This may also be conveyed by the Central government to the State Government of Orissa so that action along these lines is taken at both ends.

On account of the unfortunate demise of one of the Members Shri Navtej Puadhi on 16.8.98, this unanimous Advice of the commission does not bear the signature of that Member. The validity of the Advice notwithstanding the vacancy caused by the demise of the aforesaid Member, is protected by Section 7 of the NCBC Act, 1993.

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Member, ...
National Commission
Backward Classes

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