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

DO NCBC Advice No. Kerala 27/97

15. 12. 1997

Dear Shri Baksi,

I am sending herewith the Advice of the National Commission for Backward Classes under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, 1993 for Inclusion of "Thachar" in the Central List of Backward Classes for Kerala, for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the Act.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely

(P.S. KRISHNAN)

Encl: As stated

Shri K.K. Baksi
Secretary to Govt. of India
Ministry of Welfare
Shastri Bhavan
NEW DELHI

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

Kerala Bench

FINDINGS

Per Shri P.S.Krishnan, Member-Secretary

Case: Request for Inclusion of "Thachar" in the Central List of Backward Classes for Kerala

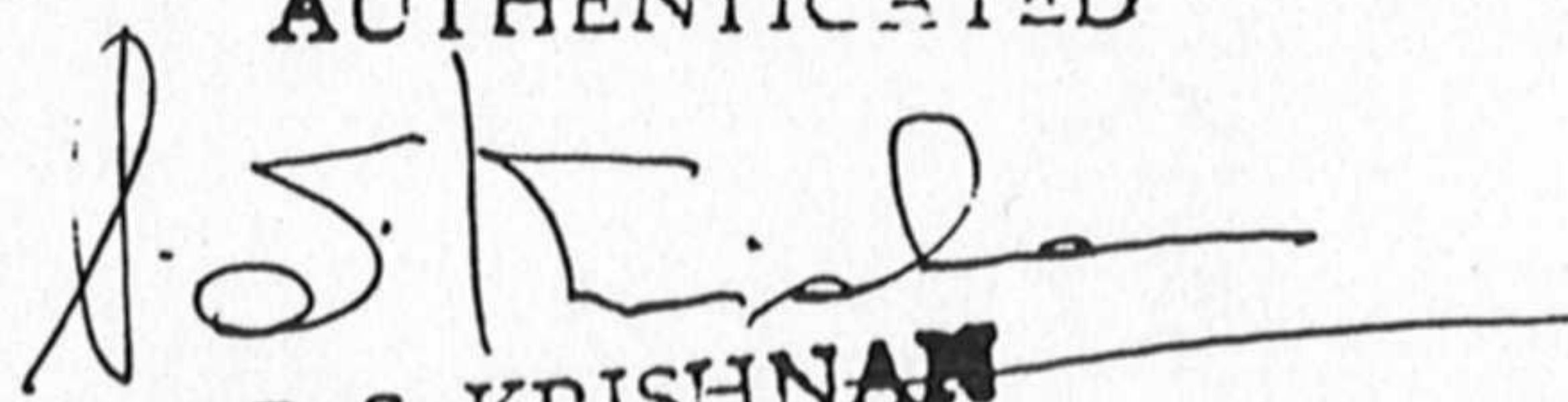
I. Request

This case arises from the Request received in this Commission from the Government of Kerala vide its Memorandum sent with DO Letter No. 16156/C3/98/P&ARD dated October 25, 1993 of the then Chief Minister of Kerala for the Inclusion inter alia of "Thachar" in the Central List of Backward Classes for Kerala.

II. Public Hearing

2. The 2-Member Kerala Bench of the N.C.B.C. consisting of Shri P.S.Krishnan, Hon'ble Member-Secretary and Shri Navtej Puadhi, Hon'ble Member held a Public Hearing at Thiruvananthapuram on the 17th September 1997 to examine this Request. During the Public Hearing the State Government was represented by Shri R.K. Raghunathan, Joint Secretary to the Government of Kerala in the Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes Welfare Department, Shri V.R.Padmanabhan, Director, Scheduled Tribes Development, Shri Viswanatha Menon, Director, Kerala Institute for Research Training and Development Studies and other officers.

AUTHENTICATED


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

III. Facts

3. "Thachar" caste/community is not included in the first-phase Central List of Backward Classes for Kerala prepared in 1993 on the basis of the principle of commonality because at that time this caste/community was included only in the State List of Backward Classes and not in the Mandal List of Backward Classes for Kerala. The relevant entry in the State List of Backward Classes for Kerala is as follows:-

"64A. Thachar"

4. In its Memorandum, the Government of Kerala has described the "Thachar" caste/community as follows:-

"Thachar is a Sanskritized name of a section of Thandans which is a recognised scheduled caste of Kerala.

Thachar (other than Carpenter) is a sub-section of Thandan scheduled caste community. The Thandans found in Travancore subsist on coconut plucking, tree climbing and on agriculture labour. Their womenfolk are engaged in coconut leaf plaiting, coir making etc. They also work as agricultural labourers. The Thandans are also known as Uraly in Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram Districts. The Thandans of Travancore in general are a landless class and many of them have only a homestead plot which in fact was received as right of Kudikidappu. A section of them live in houses constructed in various scheduled caste colonies.

It is observed that the occupational mobility has resulted in a group formation among the Thandans. A section of Thandans in a given area or some time even a member of a Thandan family take sawing for their livelihood. Later on this section is called Thachar. But locally they are identified as Thandans. This is because, in Travancore area, the traditional wood cutters, carpenters etc. are called Thachan. By assuming the

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Member Secretary

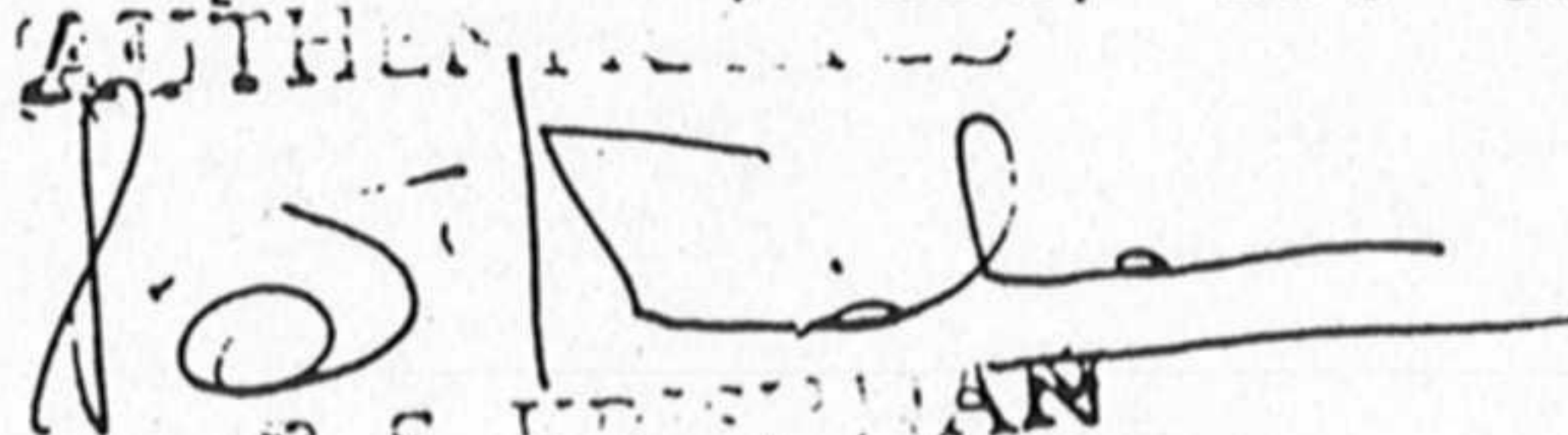
Commission

name Thachar, this section of Thandans were trying to elevate their social position equal to that of the Thachans. Compared to coconut plucking and tree climbing, sawing is considered to be a superior traditional occupation. So the wood cutters and sawyers among the Thandans tried to elevate their social status by adopting a new name for their caste name. But it can be seen that the Thandan Scheduled Caste of Travancore and Thachar are one and the same community.

The Thandans (Scheduled Caste) of Travancore are divided into four main illams, namely, Poovattillam, Elanyillam (Erunelli Illam), Pozhikanillam and Plakudi Illam.... These illams and the same type of social functionaries are seen among the Thachar too."

The above aspect, the Memorandum of the State Government states, shows that this community is at par with Scheduled Castes and at present they have not found their place in the Scheduled Caste List. Hence as an ameliorating measure they may be included at least in the Cental List of Backward Classes for Kerala.

5. The NCBC's Questionnaire filled up by the State Governement states that "Thachar" is a sub-caste of the main caste "Scheduled Caste Thandan". As per the Questionnaire, the "Thachar" community is concentrated mainly in the districts of Pathanamthitta, Kollam, Thiruvananthapuram and Alapuzha. The Questionnaire gives "Wood cutting, sawing" as the occupation on which the members of the "Thachar" caste/community mainly depend for their livelihood and further states that the "occupation of the main caste Thandan is tree climbing and coconut plucking. Owing to the occupational mobility a section of Thandan has taken up wood cutting and sawing as occupation and assumed the name 'Thachar' similar to the distinct sawyer caste 'Thachan'." The Questionnaire also states that the women of the "Thachar" caste/community, as a general practice, are, for their own or


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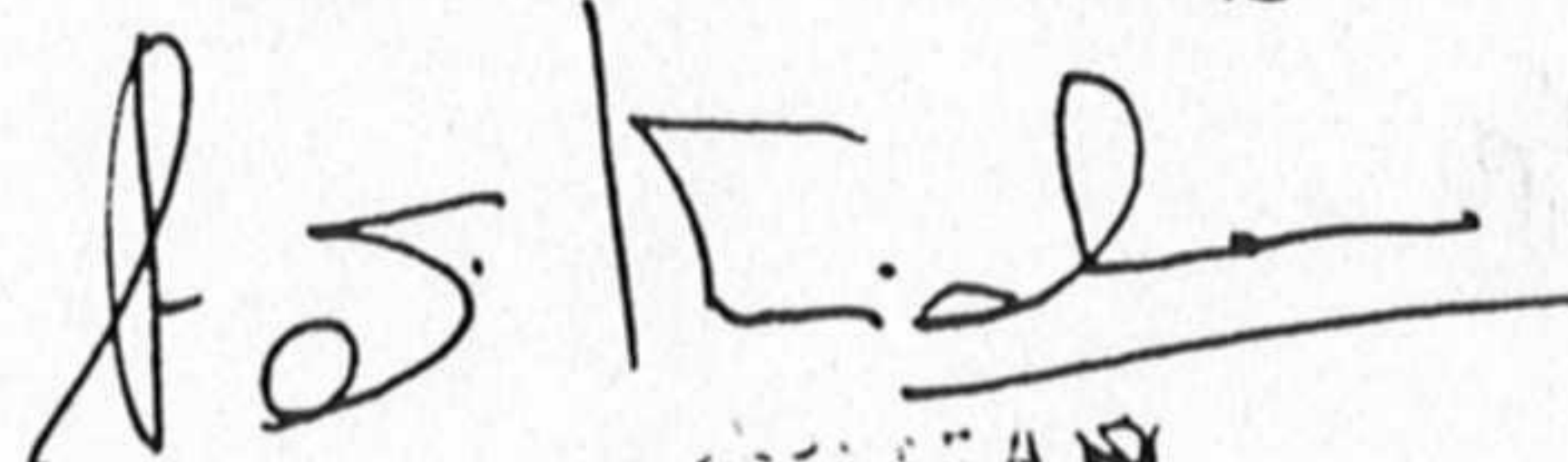
for their family's livelihood engaged in Coconut leaf plaiting and coir making. The Questionnaire gives "Ezhava" and "Kammalan", which have already been included in the Central List of Backward Classes for Kerala, as the two caste/communities which are considered as superior to "Thachar" in the social hierarchy.

6. The fact that a section of Tandans of Travancore are also called as Tacchan is attested to by Edgar Thurston and Rangachari ["Castes and Tribes of Southern India", Vol. VII, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, Madras, 1993, first published 1909]. Regarding the Thandans of Travancore, they write as follows:- "The castemen are known as Uralis to the south of Varkallay, and Tandans to the north of it. In some places to the east of Kottarakaray, they were popularly termed Mutalpattukar, or those who receive the first perquisite for assistance rendered to carpenters. In the days when there were no saws, the rough instruments of the Tandan served their purpose. Hence some members of the caste were called Tacchan(carpenter)....."

7. "Thandan" is included in the List of Scheduled Castes for Kerala at entry No. 61. "Thachar" was included in the List of Backward Classes recommended by G.Kumara Pillai Commission appointed by the State Government in 1964 for the purpose of Article 15(4). "Thachar (Throughout the State except Malabar area)" is also found included in the List of Other Backward Communities/Classes eligible for educational concessions normally allowed to Scheduled Castes kept by the Department of Harijan Welfare in 1957.

8. During the Public Hearing, there was no objection raised from those present who were from different sections of society to the proposed inclusion of "Thachar" in the Central List of Backward Classes for Kerala.

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IV. Findings

9. From the above evidence, it is the Finding of the Bench that "Thachar" is a sub-section of "Thandan" caste/community, which is included in the List of Scheduled Castes for Kerala. "Thachar" constitutes a Socially Backward Classes and therefore it should be included in the Central List of Backward Classes for Kerala at entry No. 74 as follows:-

"74. Thachar"

"74. തച്ചർ "

"74. तच्छर "

P. S. Krishna

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Secretary
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V. Advice of the Commission

10. The Commission considered and agreed in full with the above Findings of the Kerala Bench and decided to tender the

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Member Secretary
National Commission

following Advice to the Central Government under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, 1993, for action under Section 9(2) of the Act:-

"Thachar" be included in the Central List of Backward Classes for Kerala at entry no.74, as follows:-

"74. Thachar"

"74. തച്ചാർ "

"74. तच्छर "

P. S. Krishnan

3.12.97

Lakshmi

3.12.97

Kshayan
03.11.97

Madan Mohan

10.12.97

P. K. Shyamsundar
11.12.97

JUSTICE P. K. SHYAMSUNDAR
Chairperson

National Commission For
Backward Classes
Government of India
New Delhi.

AUTHENTICATED

P. S. Krishnan

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Member Secretary
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for Backward Classes