



पी.एस. कृष्णन्
P.S. KRISHNAN
TEL.: 6886820

सदस्य सचिव
राष्ट्रीय पिछड़ा आयोग
भारत सरकार
नई दिल्ली-110 066
MEMBER SECRETARY
NATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR BACKWARD CLASSES
NEW DELHI-110 066
21.6.1996

NCBC Advice No.1-2 Guj/96

Dear Shri Saxena,

I am sending herewith the unanimous Advices of the National Commission for Backward Classes under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, 1993 in respect of "Babar(Hindu)" and "Pakhali" castes/communities of Gujarat to include them in the Central List of Backward Classes for Gujarat, for necessary action under Section 9(2) of the Act by the Central Government.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

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

Shri K.B. Saxena
Secretary
Ministry of Welfare
Shastri Bhavan
NEW DELHI

Encl: As stated.

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

GUJARAT BENCH

CASE: Inclusion of BABAR caste in the Central List of OBC for Gujarat.

REQUEST: Shri Raghavbhai Jerambhai Gadhada of Talaja (opp: Jain Derasar, Gandhi Chauk, Distt. Bhavnagar, Gujarat), Vice-President, Babar Gnati Kelavni Mandal, Mahuva and twenty other members of the community made a written request to the Commission. Shri Gadhada filled up the questionnaire on behalf of the Babar caste.

The request highlights the following points:

- 1 Babar is one of the castes of barbers in Gujarat. Other synonymous castes of Babar viz. Valand, Nayi, Hajam all of whom are included in the Central List of OBC of Gujarat. It seems the Babar caste has been inadvertently left out by the Mandal Commission. The case is presented as of 'under-inclusion'.
2. In comparison with other barber communities of Gujarat, Babars are socially and educationally more backward. Even today, in the villages, they are treated as the caste of servitors, expected to do various chores for upper-caste households.

FACTS OF THE CASE:

1. The Babar caste was included in the Majamundar Committee List of 1953 for Backward Classes of the Saurashtra State at entry No.17 (in Group 'B' which comprised of most backward communities among the 'touchable' castes)

2. Babar caste was also included by the Socially and Educationally Backward Class Commission (Baxi Commission) in 1976 and as such it appears in the OBC List of Gujarat State at Entry No.76 along with other barber communities as follows: "Valand, Nayi and Babar(Hindu); Hajam, Khalipha (Muslim)".
3. In the Mandal List for Gujarat all barber communities contained in the State List (Baxi Commission) at entry No.76, except the Babar caste, are included at entry No.98: "Vale, Valand, Nai(Hindus), Hajjam, Khalipha (Muslims)".
4. Being excluded by the Mandal Commission, the Babar caste remained excluded in the Central List. Probably, the term Babar which refers to a specific caste of Hindu barbers in Gujarat got mixed-up with the generic and similar sounding term 'barber' and hence its mention in the State List might have appeared superfluous to the Mandal Commission; in the event it was not included in the relevant entry of the Mandal List.

HEARING OF THE BENCH:

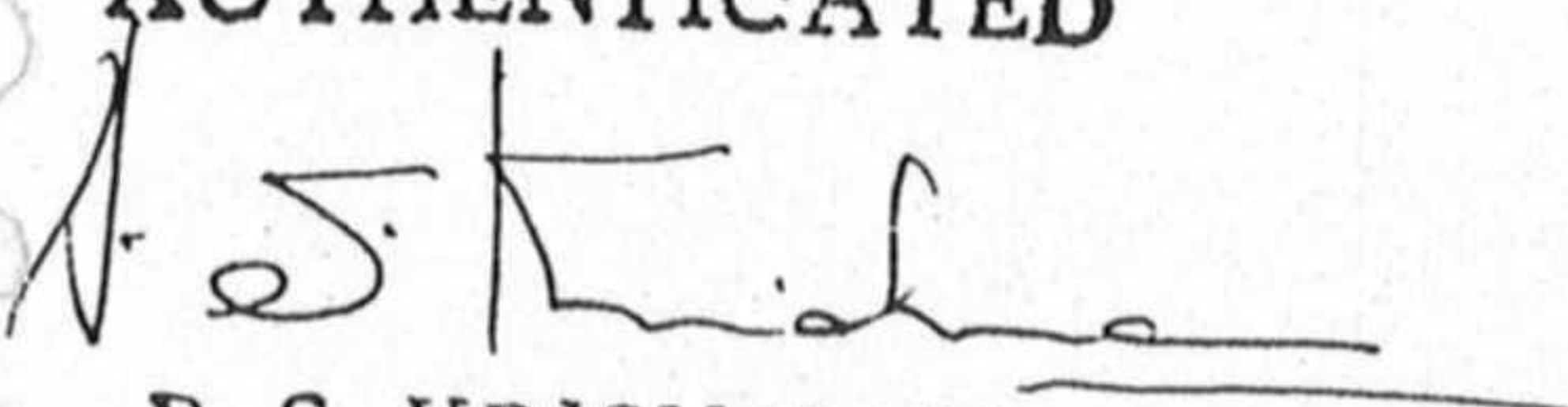
The case of the Babar caste was heard by the Gujarat Bench of the National Commission for Backward Classes consisting of Justice R.N.Prasad and Prof. D.L.Sheth at the Conference Hall of Gujarat State Guest House (Annexe), Ahmedabad, on 12.3.1996.

The following officers of the Gujarat Government assisted the Bench: (1) Director, Backward Class Directorate, (2) District Welfare Officer, (3) Secretary, State Commission for O.B.C.

Members of the Babar Gnati Mandal led by Shri Raghavbhai Jerambhai Gadhadra, represented the case of the Babar caste. Representatives of several Backward Castes Association of Gujarat were also present at the hearing.

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Member Secretary
National Commission

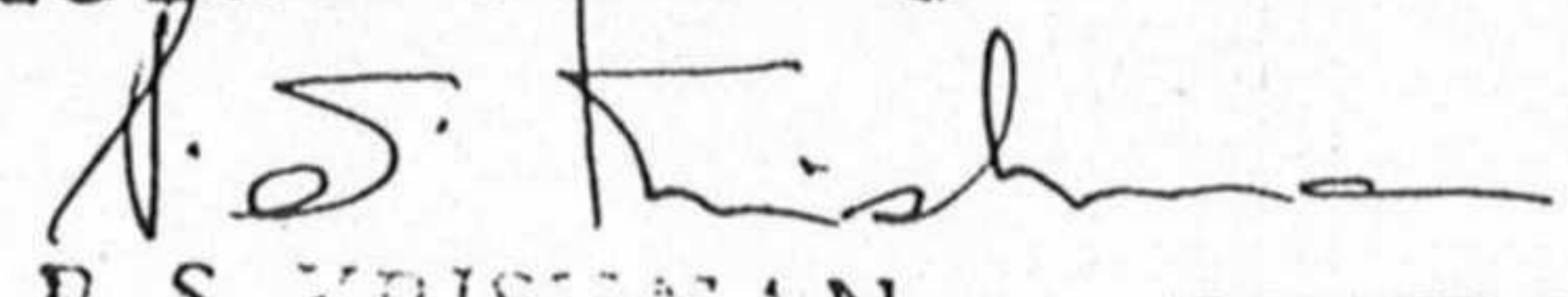
1. The representatives of all applicant communities and office-bearers of backward class organisations present at the hearing unanimously endorsed the plea of the Babar caste that they are a community of barbers and that a vast majority among them (over 90%) is engaged today in the occupation of hair-cutting. Socially and by occupation Babars are similar to the Hindu castes of Nayi and Valand. In fact Babars carry out their occupation even today by using traditional implements, giving haircut to clients at their houses. Only a few among them operate from shops. In comparison to their counter-parts, Nayi and Valand, Babars are socially and educationally more backward.

2. The name Babar is derived from the Gujarati term 'babri', meaning hair (more specifically, curly hair). R.E. Enthoven in his The Tribes and Castes of Bombay lists Babar as one of the five barber castes of Gujarat (cosmo publication, reprint, 1975, p. 134). Babars are mainly concentrated in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat. Besides practising hair-cutting and shaving as the main occupation, Babars are frequently called upon by the upper castes to serve as 'go-between' in marriages, as messengers of good and bad news and for carrying out small surgeries like opening boils, removing abscesses and giving massage. In some villages of Saurashtra, Babar men and women are expected to perform several chores, including giving baths, filling up 'hookas', making beds etc. for guests of upper-caste households at such occasions as weddings, deaths, etc. Babar women work occasionally as midwives. In the princely states of Saurashtra Babars were drafted for compulsory labour ('veth') by the feudals for doing various chores at the time of wedding, death, etc. They were referred to as 'hath rakhna' or valets.

4. A vast majority, over 90 per cent are engaged in the traditional, hereditary occupation of hair cutting and live in kuccha houses. The house-hold income is often supplemented by Babar men and women working as daily wagers. A majority among those who do not practice their traditional occupation are landless labour.

5. The literacy rate among Babars is estimated roughly to be

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Member Secretary

Public Administration
for Backward Classes

only 20 per cent. There are about 150 metriculates and 25 graduates as per the information supplied in the questionnaire. There is no female graduate in the community. The employed among the educated work as peons, messenger boys and clerks, mainly in the local Government, (panchayat) service. There are very few in the State Government service and none in the Central Government. Those few in the Government jobs are employed as Class III and IV levels

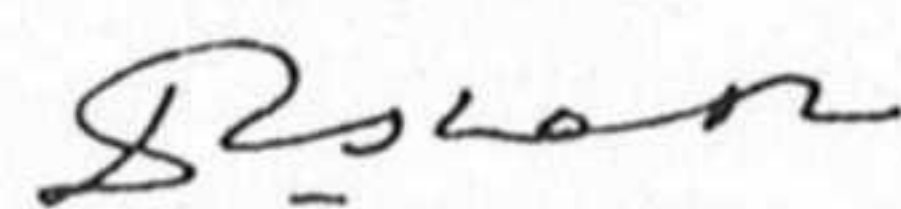
6. In the village caste-structure Babars are equated with such other castes as koloi, wagri, sadhu, dhobi, etc. Their condition has sharply deteriorated in recent years as they cannot compete in their occupation with valands, Nayis and other barber communities, due to the lack of resources required for upgrading their occupational activity. And because of lower educational level they are not in a position to switch to other, newer occupations.

FINDING OF THE BENCH:

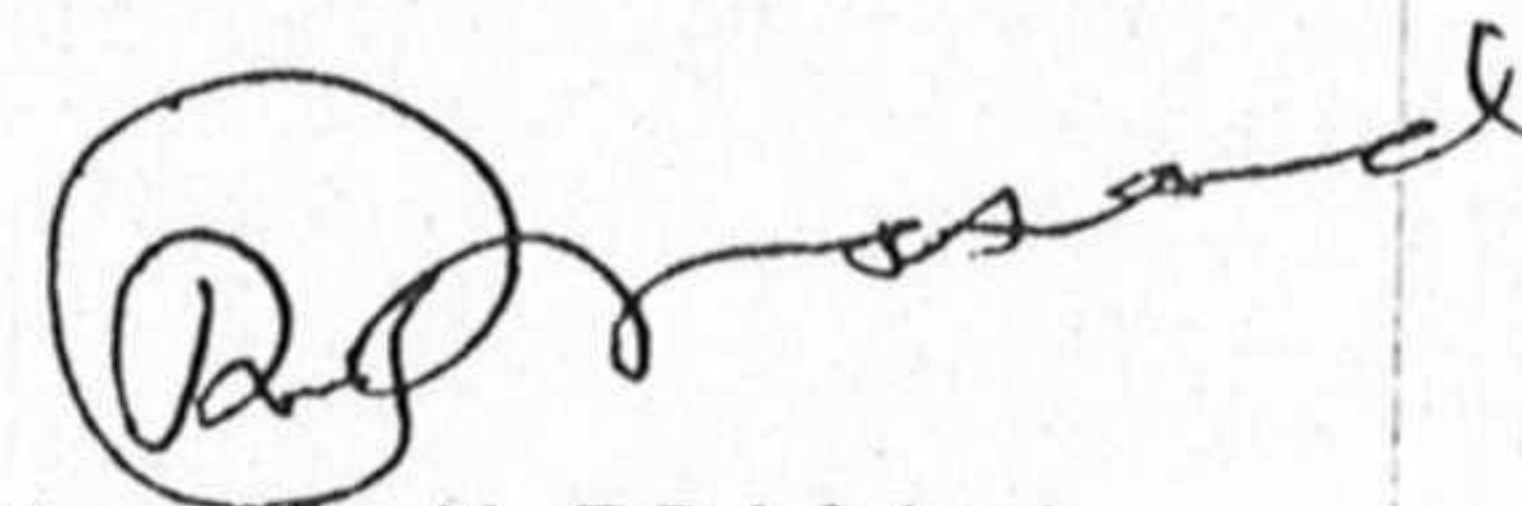
Babar is among the socially and educationally most backward castes of Gujarat. While other barber communities in Gujarat, and in other states are included in the Central List of O.B.C. Babars have remained unjustifiably left out. There is a clear case of 'under-inclusion'.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE BENCH:

The Babar caste should be included in the Central List of OBC for Gujarat, along with other barber communities, at entry No. 73 as follows: "Valand, Nayi, Babar (Hindu), Hajam, Khalipha (Muslim)"



(Prof. D.L.SHETH)



(Justice R.N.PRASAD)

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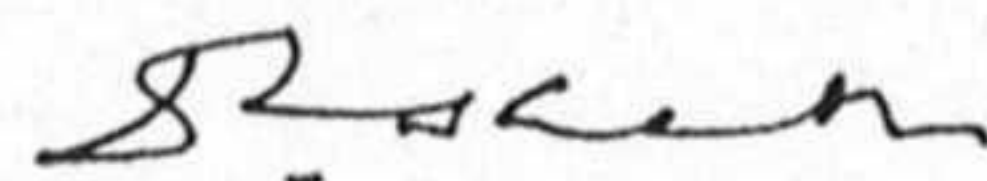

P. S. KRISHNAN
Member Secretary
National Commission
Backward Classes

ADVICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES IN
RESPECT OF CENTRAL LIST OF GUJARAT.

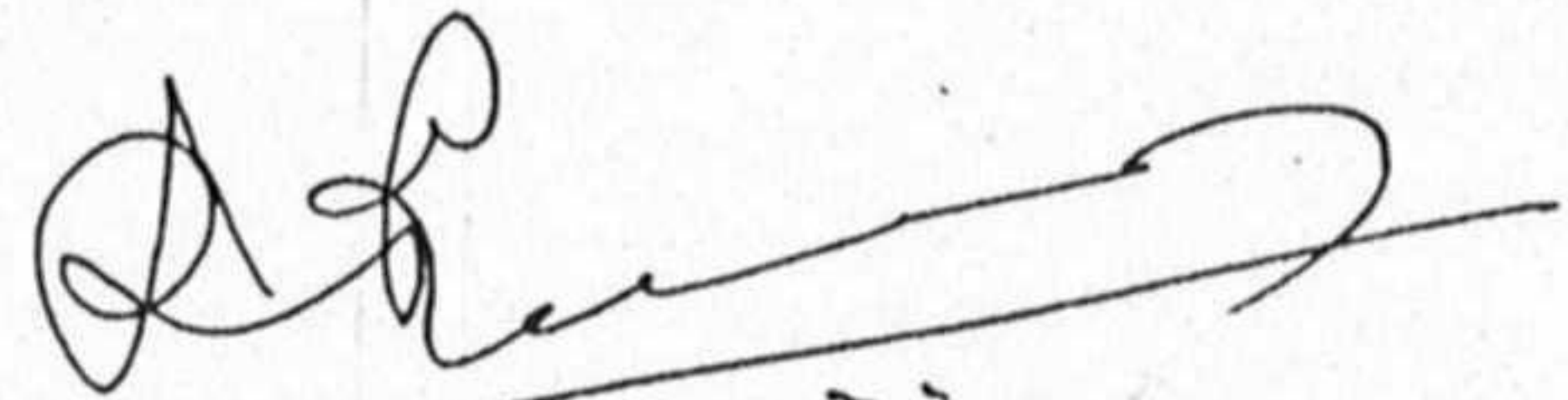
The Commission considered the findings of the Gujarat Bench and formulated its ADVICE to the Government of India as follows:

The Caste BABAR be added in the Central List of Backward Classes for Gujarat as given below:

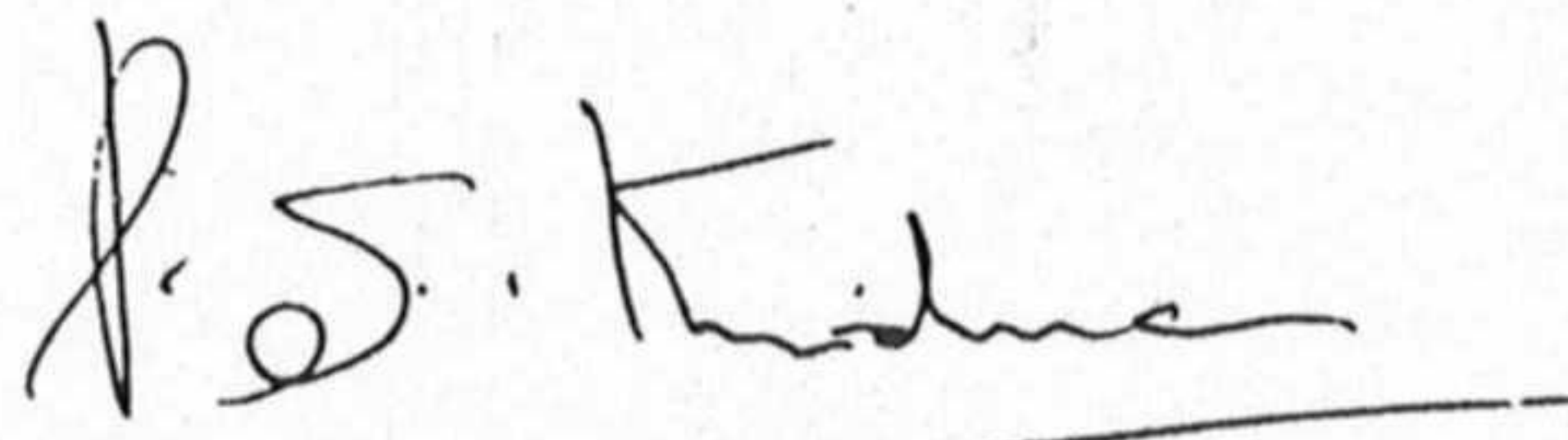
"No. 73. Valand
Nayi (Hindu)
Hajam (Muslim)
Khalipha (Muslim)
Babar (Hindu)"



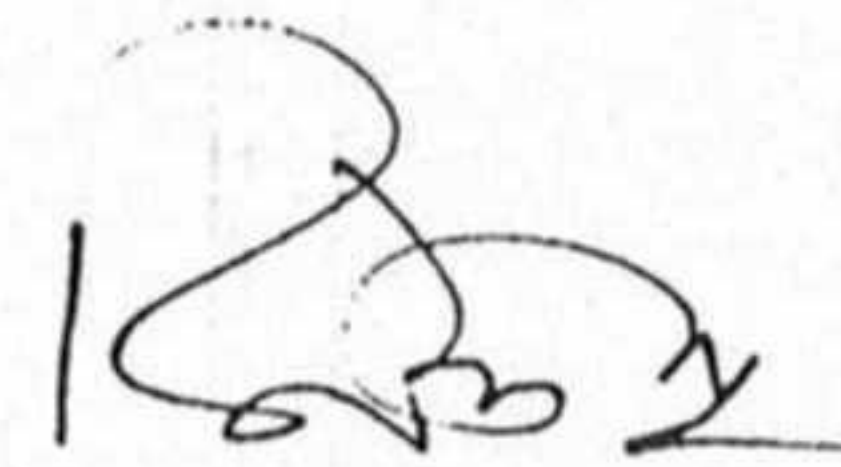
(Prof. D.L. SHETH)



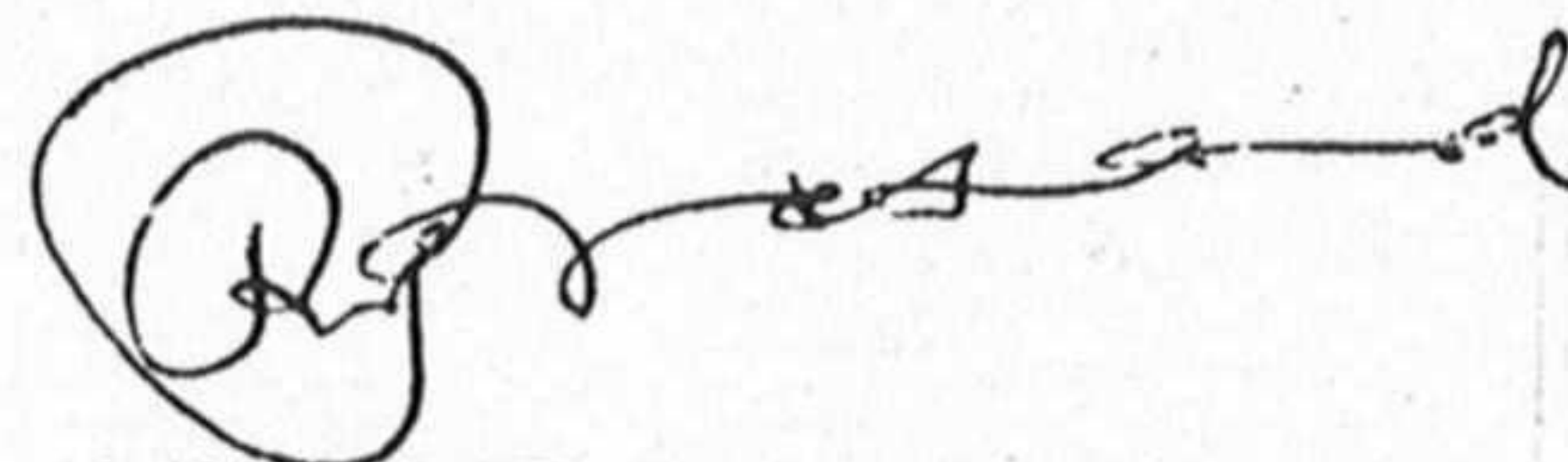
(Dr. R. PRASANNAN)



(P.S. KRISHNAN)



(Dr. D.S. YADAV)



(JUSTICE R.N. PRASAD)

21/6/96
Justice R. N. Prasad
Chairman
National Commission for
Backward Classes
New Delhi.

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Secretary
National Commission for
Backward Classes

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

GUJARAT BENCH

CASE: Inclusion of PAKHALI caste in the Central List of OBC for Gujarat.

REQUEST: Shri Chhaganlal S.Vaghela (Lal Bazar, Bharuch) made a request and filled up the questionnaire on behalf of Pakhali caste and in his capacity of the Trustee of Bharuch Pakhali Samast Panch.

HEARING OF THE BENCH:

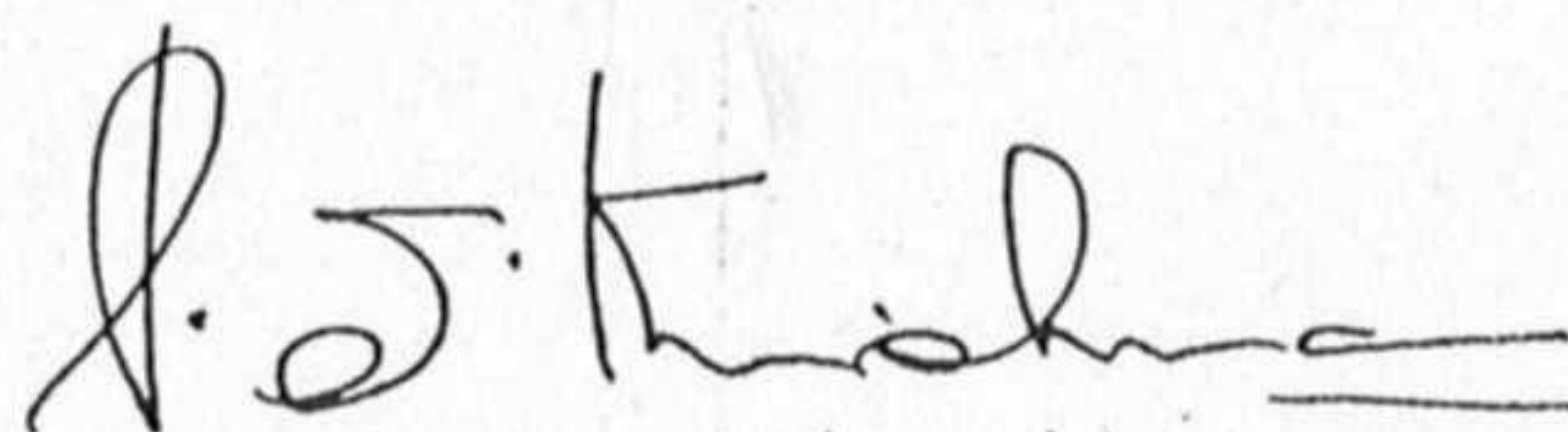
The two-Member Bench of this Commission consisting of Justice R.N.Prasad and Prof. D.L.Sheth, held a Public Hearing at State Guest House Annexe, Ahmedabad on 12.3.1996.

The Bench was assisted by the Director, Backward Class Directorate, Welfare Department, Gujarat State; Secretary, State OBC Commission and other officials of the Gujarat Government.

Present at the hearing were the following representatives of the Pakhali community: S/Shri Chhaganlal Vaghela (Trustee, Pakhali Panch), Bhupendra Mehta, Jaychandra (Both of Baroda). Also present were the representatives of several other backward class organisations of Gujarat.

1. Pakhali is numerically a small caste in Gujarat. They are similar to 'Bhistis' in other parts of the country. Their traditional occupation was of water carriers. As they carried water in 'pakhal' (animal-hide) they are known as Pakhalis. Some upper-castes avoided physical touch vis-a-vis pakhalis as they used animal hide for carrying water. Pakhalis claim their ancestry to Rajputs, but say they were 'degraded' due to accepting the occupation of water carriers in difficult times in the past.

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National Commission
for Backward Classes

2. Pakhali caste was included in the 1953 list of Backward Classes of Saurashtra State prepared by the Majamundar Committee at entry No.16 in Group 'B' which comprised of most backward communities among the 'touchable' castes. It was left out by the Baxi Commission (1976) along with many other socially very backward communities of Saurashtra which were included in the Majamundar Committee List. According to the representatives of the community, the reason for their non-inclusion by the Baxi Commission was their backwardness, as they were not aware of the Commission's work and had assumed that as they were already included by the Majamundar Committee, there was "no need to go before the Baxi Commission". Since the Baxi Commission did not include them in 1976, they were also left out of consideration by the Mandal Commission. Later on, this situation was corrected in the Revised State List of OBC(1994) and Pakhalis were included in the Gujarat State List at entry No.III, along with several other socially very backward communities which were included in the Majamundar Committee List, but not included in the Baxi Commission List.

3. Pakhalis are spread all over Gujarat but are concentrated in the Saurashtra region and in Bharuch and Vadodara districts of Central Gujarat. Traditionally, many among them lived in towns and worked as water carriers. Some of them were employed by the town municipalities for spraying water on dusty roads. With the provision of tap water in towns, and introduction of motorized tankers for carrying water Pakhalis lost their traditional employment and began to work as daily wagers. This change, however, proved for them a blessing in disguise as they were relieved of their somewhat stigmatized work as water carriers.

4. Being largely an urban caste Pakhalis gradually took to modern education. The representatives of the community reported that the boys and girls of their community are now attending schools and a few among them "have become matriculates and some graduates". Although number of graduates, as one Pakhali educational representative put it "is very small and could be counted on one's

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A. S. Kishan

finger", they feel proud of this development in the community. At the same time, those among the younger generation of Pakhalis present at the hearing expressed their acute disappointment about 'futility' of their education, as they were not getting jobs or any financial support for starting a small business of their own.

5. In some towns Pakhalis live in separate localities, but by and large they are dispersed in the city's slummy localities. Since they are no longer tied to their traditional occupation, they indeed have been able to overcome collective stigma attached to them due to their traditional occupation. But the occupational structure of the community remains, by and large, of wage-earners and casual employment in small business and industrial sector. They use established Rajput surnames. In the outside, anonymous world of towns, they may pass-off as Rajputs, of course until their caste is revealed.

6. Pakhalis are an endogamous caste divided in several exogamous groups bearing Rajput-like surnames such as, Vaghela, Solanki, Chauhan, etc. Despite some growth of education in their community, their representation in Government jobs is negligible.

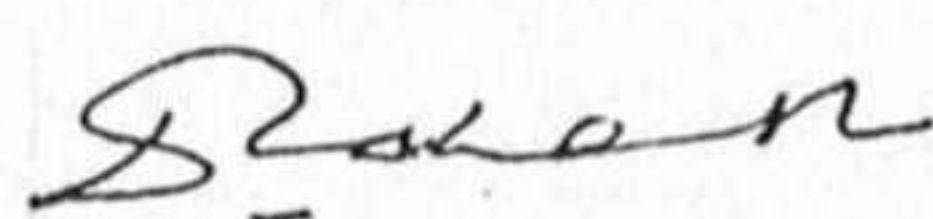
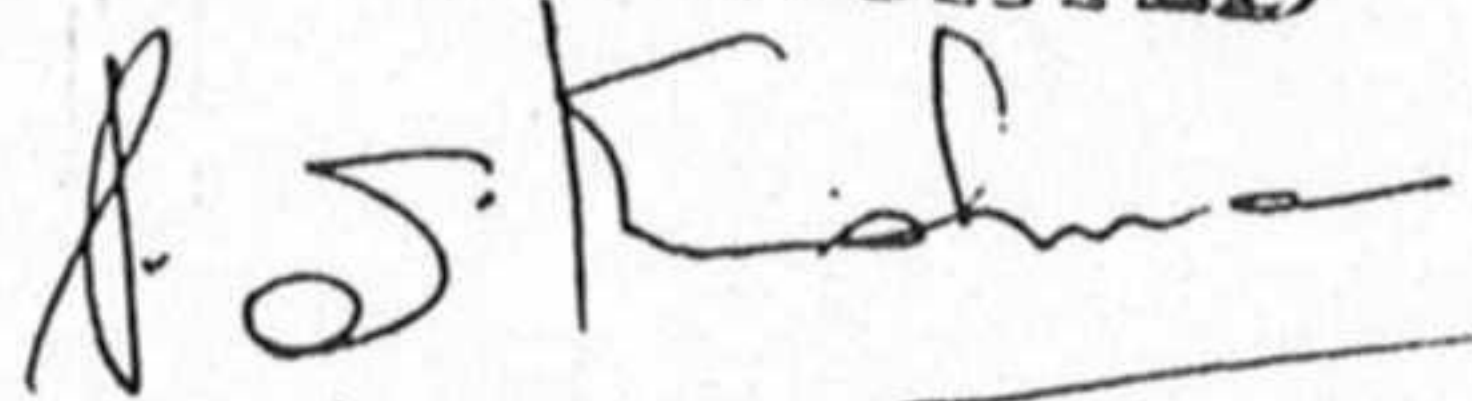
FINDING OF THE BENCH:

On the whole, Pakhalis are among the socially most backward communities of Gujarat. Their counterparts in other states are included in the Central List of O.B.C. In Maharashtra they are included as "Bhisti or Pakhali" at entry No.11.

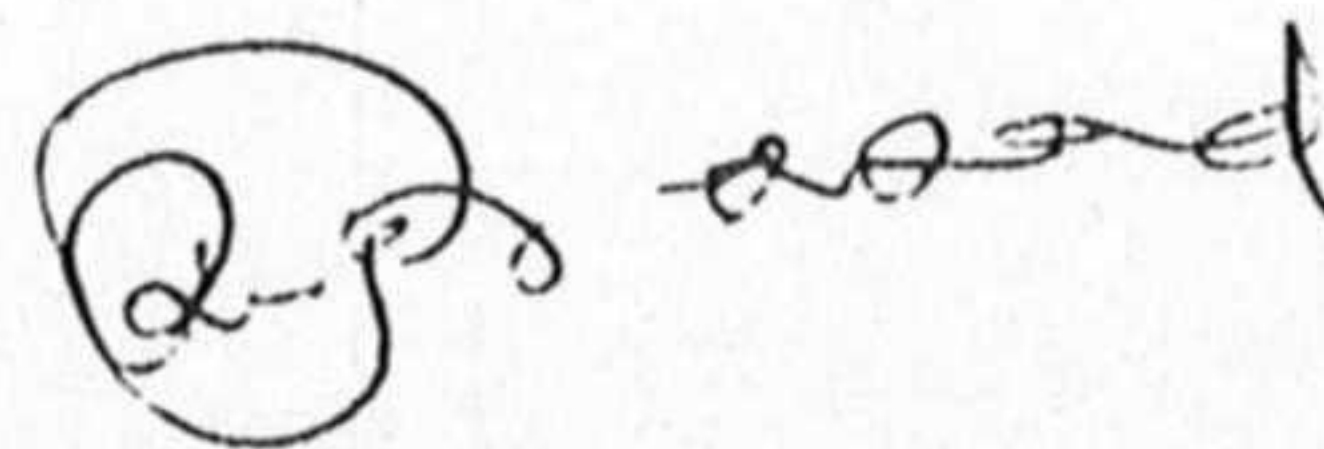
RECOMMENDATION OF THE BENCH:

Pakhalis are, without doubt, a socially and educationally backward community of Gujarat and should be included in the Central List of O.B.C. for Gujarat.

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(Prof. D.L. SHETH)



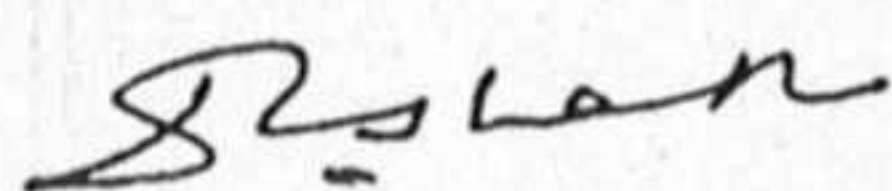
(Justice R.N. PRASAD)

ADVICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD
CLASSES IN RESPECT OF CENTRAL LIST OF GUJARAT.

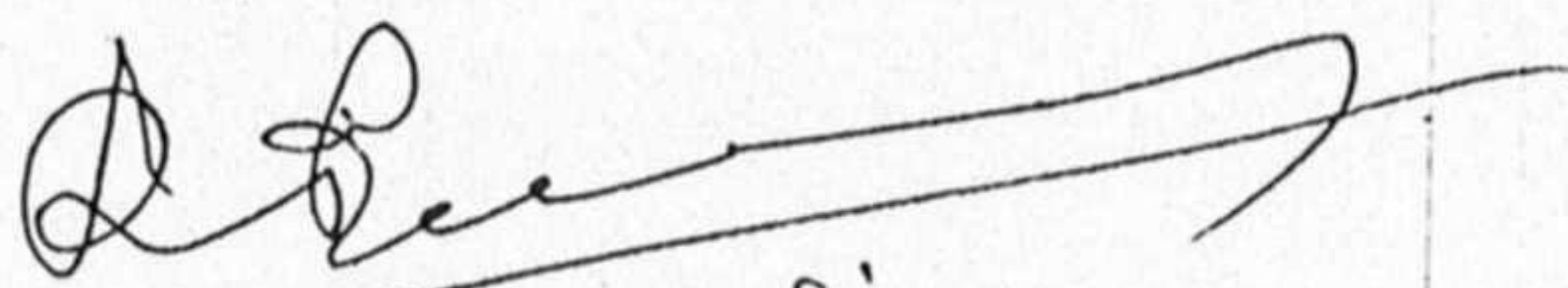
The commission considered the findings of the Gujarat Bench and formulated its ADVICE to the Government of India as follows:

The Caste PAKHALI be added in the Central List of Backward Classes for Gujarat as given below:

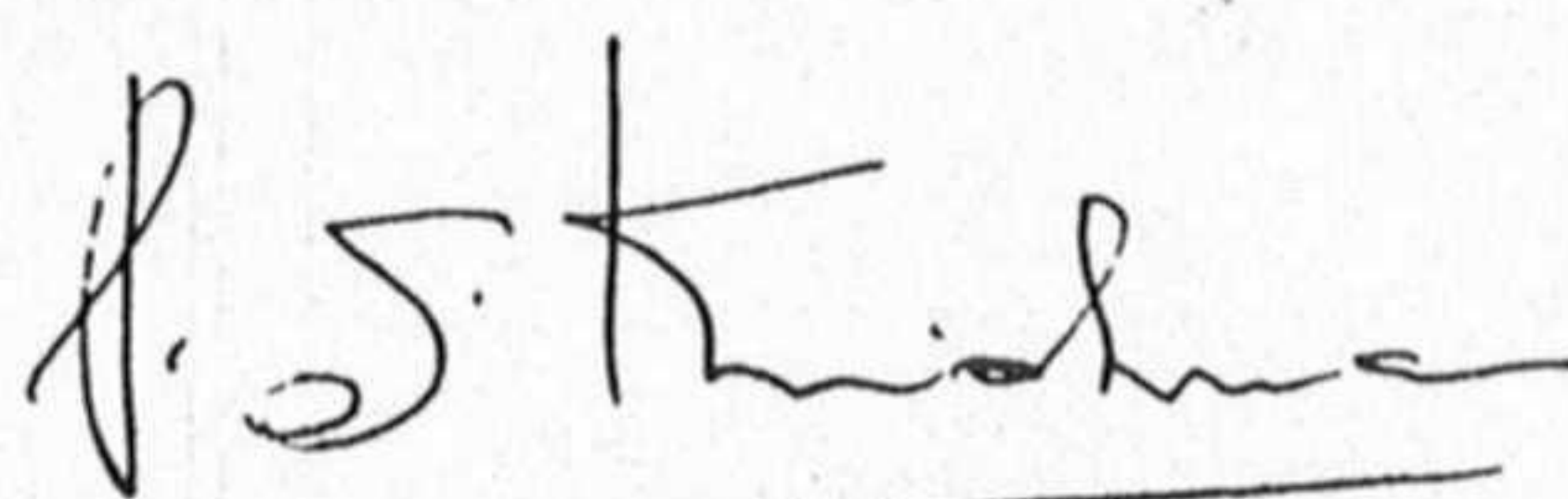
" No. 80. PAKHALI"



(PROF. D.L. SHETH)



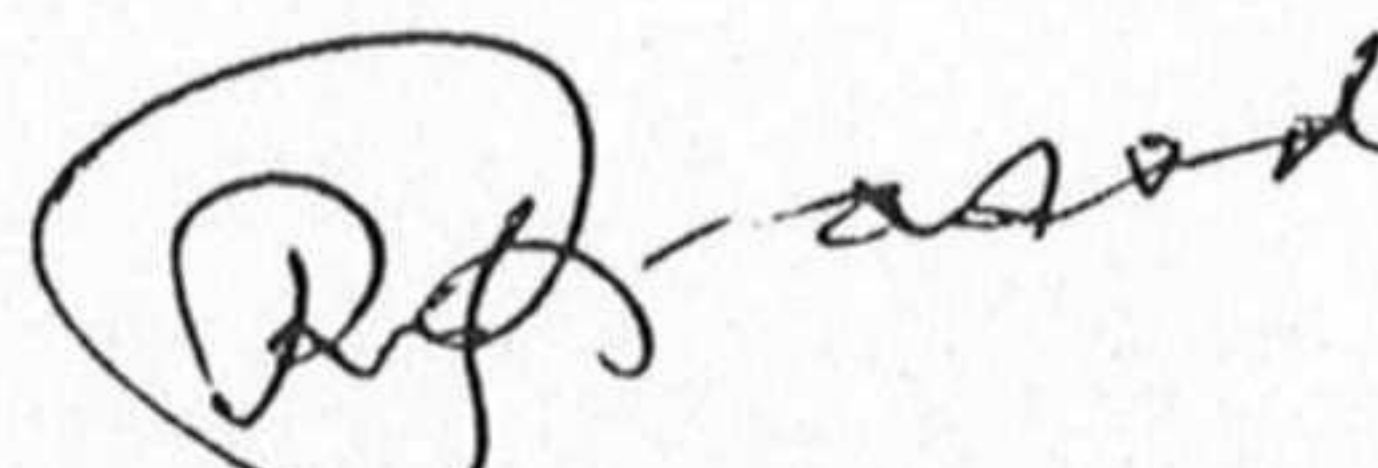
(Dr. R. PRASANNAN)



(P.S. KRISHNAN)



(Dr.D.S. YADAV)

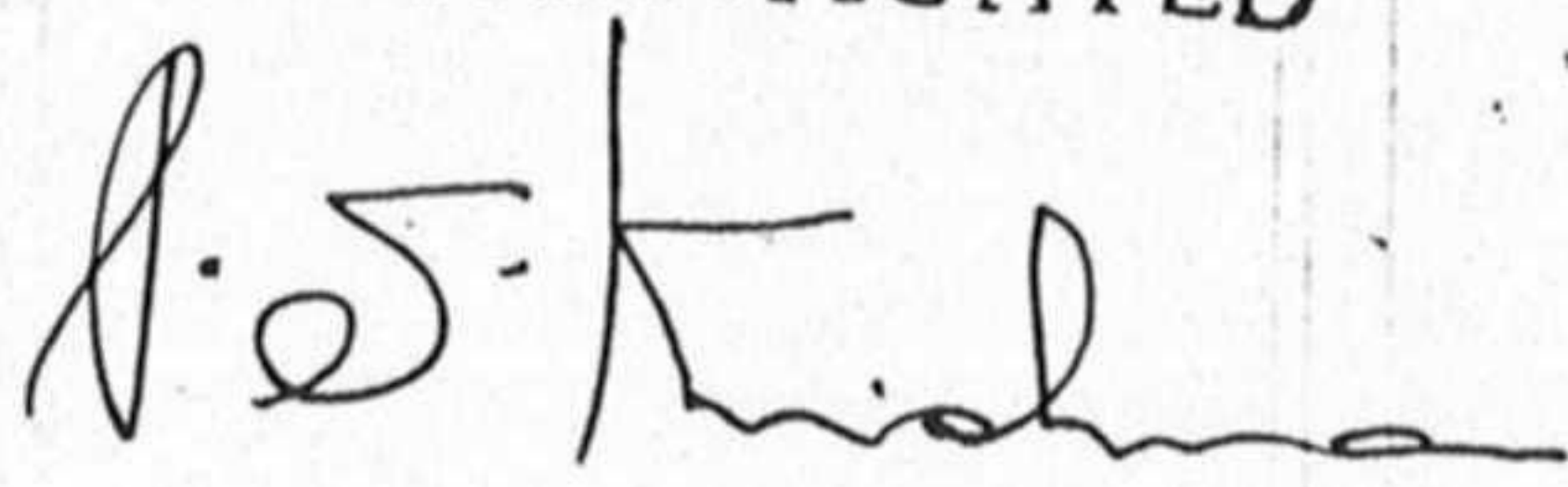


(Justice R. N. PRASAD)

21/6/96

Justice R. N. Prasad
Chairman
National Commission for
Backward Classes
New Delhi.

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Member Secretary
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for Backward Classes