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राष्ट्रीय पिछड़ा वर्ग आयोग
भारत सरकार
त्रिकूट-१, भीकाएजी कामा प्लेस, नई दिल्ली - ११० ०६६
Member Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
Government of India
Trikoot - 1, Bhikaiji Cama Place, New Delhi - 110 066

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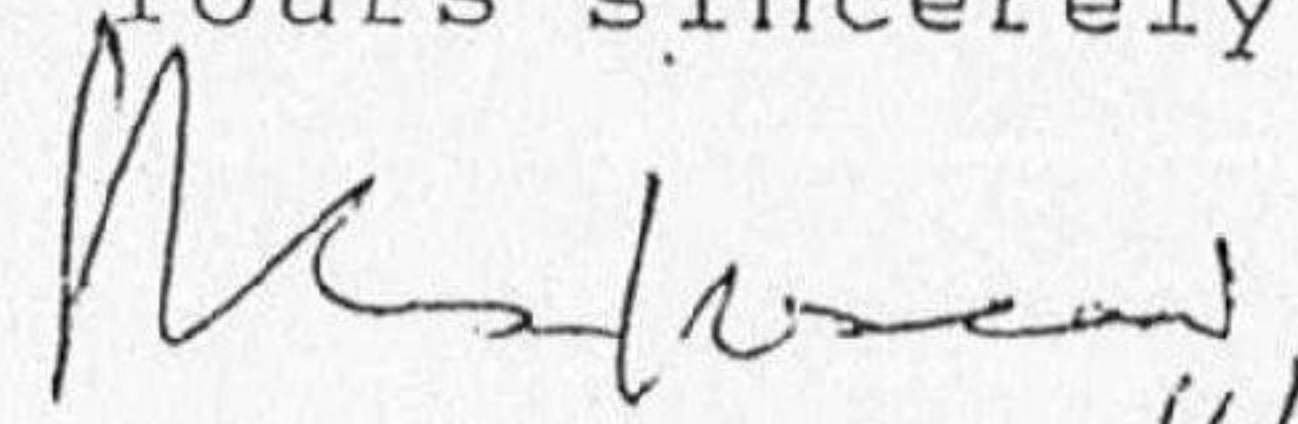
NCBC Advice No. Pondicherry/89/2001

11.06.2001

Dear Smt. Asha Das,

I am sending herewith the advice of the National Commission for Backward Classes under Section 9(1) of the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993, for rejection of the request for inclusion of "Kapu, Telaga, Baliya, Ontari" caste/community in the Central list of backward classes for the Union Territory of Pondicherry, duly authenticated, for necessary action by the Central government under Section 9(2) of the Act.

Yours sincerely


(C.T. Benjamin) 11/6/01

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

Issued

11/6/01

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES
PONDICHERRY BENCH
FINDINGS

Case: Request for inclusion of "Kapu, Telaga, Balija, Ontari" caste/community in the Central List of Backward Classes for the Union Territory of Pondicherry.

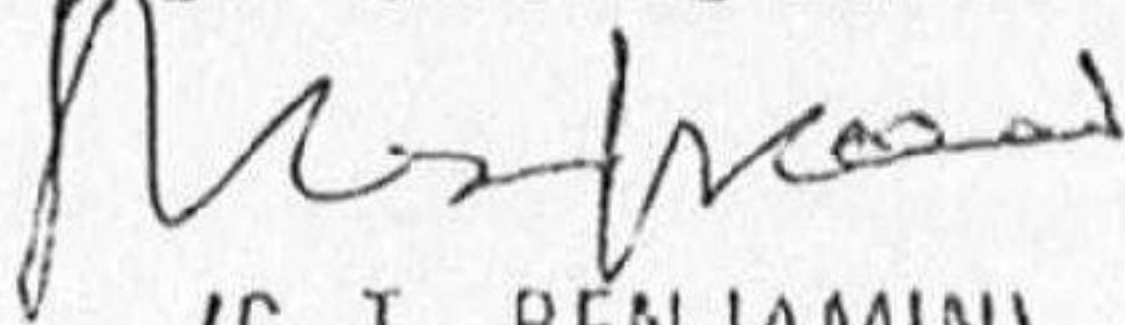
I. REQUEST

This case arises from the request received in this Commission from Yanam Telaga Abhyudaya Sangham, C/o Anyam Ramakrishna Rao, Anyam Gardens, Yanam, Union Territory of Pondicherry for inclusion of "Kapu, Telaga, Balija, Ontari" caste/community in the Central list of backward classes for the Union Territory of Pondicherry. A similar request has also been received from Shri Velaga Rajeswara Rao, Ex-MLA, Yanam, Union Territory of Pondicherry.

II. PUBLIC HEARING

2. The Full Bench of the Commission consisting of Justice Banwari Lal Yadav, Hon'ble Chairperson, Shri C.T. Benjamin, Hon'ble Member-Secretary, Shri M.S. Matharoo, Dr. B.M. Das and Smt. Neera Shastri, Hon'ble Members held a public hearing to examine this request at Pondicherry on 5th March 2001. At the public hearing, the State Government was represented by Ms. M. Sathyavathy, Secretary, Shri Sitaraman, Director, Shri Venkanna and Ms. Chand Sultana, Deputy Directors, Social Welfare Deptt. and other officers. The caste/community was represented by Dr. P. Vittal Rao, Shri Velaga Rajeswara Rao, ex-MLA and Davulury Nageswara Rao.

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III. FACTS

3. Kapu, Telaga, Baliya, Ontari are not included in the central list of backward classes for the Union Territory of Pondicherry issued by the Central Government vide Ministry of Welfare's Resolution No. 12011/9/94-BCC dated 19.10.1994 as they were not included both in the Mandal Commission's list for Pondicherry and in the Pondicherry Government's first list of backward classes issued by its G.O.Ms.No.20/94-Wel(SW II) dated 6.7.94 and, therefore, did not satisfy the criterion of commonality based on which the central list was prepared. They are also not included in the latest list of backward classes issued by the Government of Pondicherry vide G.O.Ms.No.9/2001-Wel(SW II) dated 19.2.2001.

4. The Yanam Telaga Abhyudaya Sangham in its letter of request has stated that there are about 1500 Kapu caste households in the Yanam region of Pondicherry. They mainly live in Kanakalapet village and Yanam town area. Telaga, Baliya and Ontari are sub-castes of Kapu caste/community. The majority of the members of the caste are poor and are mainly agricultural labourers, bullock-cart lessees and manual workers. Most of them are uneducated, illiterate and eke out their livelihood through hard labour. During the pre-independence era, they were working as soldiers/warriors in the then kingdom and also under the French rule. Once the French establishment lost its position in India at Vizianagaram and Bobbili, they brought several families of soldiers and warriors to Kanakalapet village of Yanam region which was under French rule. These families chose agriculture for their livelihood and due to adverse circumstances they were reduced to the position of becoming agricultural coolies. A majority of their population now depends on manual labour for their livelihood, live in Katcha houses and most of their children in the age group 5 to 15, do not go to school. Considering these factors, the Sangham has requested that the "Kapu" community be included in the Central list of backward classes for the Union Territory of Pondicherry. Shri Velaga Rajeswara Rao in his letter of request has, apart from stating similar grounds, also mentioned in support of the inclusion of Kapu community of Yanam in the Central list for Pondicherry that "their brethren 'Munnuru Kapu' of Telengana region and 'Turpu Kapu' of Srikakulam,

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Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam districts have already been declared as backward castes in Andhra Pradesh.

5. During the public hearing, Dr. P. Vittal Rao, who resides in Pondicherry town area, stated that educated people in the Kapu community are very few. He admitted that most of the community members are in various services, but he further stated that since his community people are comparatively less represented in good positions and in the educational institutions compared to other high caste people, his community should be considered socially and educationally backward and included in the list of backward classes. He mentioned that if one takes a look at data from a medical or engineering college, one can hardly find even 1% Kapu community people among the students and also said that his daughter-in-law, who also came with him, had failed in medical entrance test twice. He further stated that other high caste people look down upon his community members as they are less educated and also because they are very small in numbers. He however agreed that his community is definitely not looked down upon like other low castes which are looked down upon in the society. Shri Velaga Rajeswara Rao and Shri Davulury Nageswara Rao, who came from Yanam, said that their community Kapu is not the same as Reddy though in the Rayalaseema districts, the Reddis are also called 'Kapu' and their community Kapu is known as Baliya in these districts. They also said that the Kapus are mostly agricultural labourers and do not have land.

6. According to the information furnished by the State Government representatives in a note signed by Member-Secretary, Pondicherry State Backward Classes Commission, during the public hearing, there are 5096 persons belonging to 1204 households of Kapu caste in all the four regions of the Union Territory of Pondicherry, but Telega, Baliya, Ontari sub-castes do not find a place in any of the four regions of Pondicherry, though there is a Chetti Baliya caste existing in Yanam region and a caste named "Naidu, Baliya" existing in the Pondicherry and Karaikkal regions.

7. The Anthropological Survey of India's People India series volume on "India's Communities" describes "REDDY/REDDIAR/KAPU" as "a large dominant community

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of Andhra Pradesh, the Reddy are also distributed in Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa and Maharashtra and are concentrated in 36 districts. Theoretically, the Reddi belong to the fourth of the Hindu varnas, Sudra. However in the present day socio-economic or political set up, they occupy a place next only to the Brahman." Thurston and Rangachari (Caste and Tribes of Southern India) write that "The Kapus and Reddis are the largest caste in the Madras Presidency,... and are the great caste of cultivators, farmers, and squireens in the Telugu country. In the Gazetteer of Anantpur they are described as being the great land-holding body in the Telugu districts, who are held in much respect as substantial, steady-going yeomen, and next to the Brahmans are the the leaders of Hindu society..... 'The term Kapu', Mr. H.A. Stuart writes, 'means a watchman, and Reddi means a king. The Kapus or Reddis (Ratti) appear to have been a powerful Dravidian tribe in the early centuries of the Christian era, for they have left traces of their presence at various places in almost every part of India. Though their power has been put down from time to time by the Chalukyas, the Pallavas, and the Bellalas, several families of zamindars came into existence after the captivity of Pratapa Rudra of Warrangal in A.D. 1323 by the Muhammadan emperor Ghiyas-ud-din Toghluq."

8. "Telaga" is described in the People of India series (ibid) as "a Telugu speaking community who served as soldiers in the armies of Hindu sovereign kings of Andhra Desam" and "Ontari" is described as "a section of the Kapu or Telaga community in Andhra Pradesh. Literally, Ontari means a lonely one... The title Ontari was awarded to them during the time of Sri Krishna Devaraya in the sixteenth century as a reward for their bravery in the warfare. Prior to this, they were only known as Telaga. In the later period they continued as soldiers and army chiefs under the dynasties of Pithapur, Tuni, Vengi, etc."

IV. FINDINGS & ADVICE OF THE COMMISSION

9. From the above material and evidence, the Bench finds that the Kapu caste/community is not socially backward, but on the contrary is a socially advanced

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caste/community and, therefore, it does not deserve to be included in the list of backward classes. The Kapu caste/community has not been included so far in the list of backward classes for Andhra Pradesh to which it originally belongs. The statement of Shri Velaga Rejeswara Rao that the Turupu Kapus and Munnuru Kapus have been included in the list of backward classes in Andhra Pradesh is true, but Turupu Kapus and Munnuru Kapus are distinct and separate small communities with their own specific social customs and therefore their inclusion in the AP list cannot support the claim for inclusion of the Kapu caste/community in the list of Pondicherry. Hence, the request for inclusion of "Kapu" and its sub-castes/synonyms "Telaga, Baliya, Ontari" in the Central list of backward classes for the Union Territory of Pondicherry should be rejected.

10. In view of the above findings, the Commission decided to tender the following advice to the Central Government under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the ACT:-

Request for inclusion of "Kapu, Telaga, Baliya, Ontari" in the Central list of backward classes for the Union Territory of Pondicherry be rejected as they are not socially backward.

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