

National Commission for Backward Classes

Bihar Bench

FINDINGS

Case : Request for the deletion of the word 'Mahto' from Kurmi(Mahto) in the central list of backward classes for Bihar.

I. Request

This case arises from the request received in this commission from Shri Ram Pravesh Singh, Convenor, Bihar Rajya Kurmi Chetna Maharally, Patna for deletion of the word Mahto from the caste/community Kurmi(Mahto) in the central list of backward classes for Bihar.

II. Public Hearing

2. The Two-Member Bench of the Commission consisting of Hon'ble Justice R.S. Singh, Chairperson and Smt. Neera Shastri, Hon'ble Member of the National Commission for Backward Classes held a public hearing at Patna on 6th October 2004 to examine this request for deletion of word Mahto from Kurmi(Mahto) in the central list of backward classes for Bihar. At the public hearing, the OBCs Commission, Bihar was represented by Hon'ble Justice Dharampal Sinha, Chairperson and Shri. Motilal Prasad, S.O. The State Government was represented by Shri. N.K. Chaudhary, Dy. Secretary and other officers in the Department of Personnel, Government of Bihar. The Kurmi Caste/Community was represented by Shri K.K. Singh, Vice President, Bihar Rajya Kurmi Mahasabha, Patna and others.

AUTHENTICATED



(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

III. Facts

3. The entries with regard to this Caste/Community as reflected in different lists is as follows:-

Mandal List: **101. Kurmi**
 110. Mahto

State List(Bihar): **6. Kurmi (Mahto)**
 Jharkhand Autonomous Council (Annexure-1)

 35. Kurmi(Mahto)(List of Backward Classes, Annx-II)

Central List: **15. Kurmi (Mahto)**
 Kurmi (Mahto) in Chhotanagpur Division only

Department of Personnel and Administrative Reform, Government of Bihar, circulated a letter No.91, dated 18.7.94 to all the Govt. Departments and Heads clarifying that both the Kurmi and Mahto are eligible for reservation purpose in the Central Services and they should be treated separately.

4. Shri Ram Pravesh Singh, Convenor, Bihar Rajya Kurmi Chetna Maharally who has made the request for deletion of Mahto from Kurmi(Mahto) in the Central List for Bihar issued in 1993 where it has been mentioned at Entry No. 15 as Kurmi(Mahto) and Kurmi(Mahto) in Chhotanagpur division only. In this connection he has submitted a copy of the list of backward classes for Bihar issued in 1956 in which at Annexure-1 of the list it is as follows: Entry No. 60. Kurmi(Mahto) (Chhotanagpur division), and at Entry No. 15(a) Kurmi(Outside Chhotanagpur). Previously Kurmi of Bihar were getting the benefits of reservation in the State services, Kurmi of Bihar are known by the name of Kurmi only and injustice has been done to them by including Kurmi(Mahto) in the Central List of OBCs for the state of Bihar.

5. At the public hearing, Shri K.K. Singh, submitted that the word 'Mahto' should be deleted from the word Kurmi in the Central List because it does not indicate caste or sub-caste of Kurmi and due to appendage of the word 'Mahto' with Kurmi this caste is

AUTHENTICATED



(S.K. Purkayastha)

Member-Secretary

National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

facing lot of problems in getting caste certificate. In the Mandal Commission report 'Kurmi' and 'Mahto' has been listed separately at Serial No.101 and 110. When the Government of India in 1993 announced reservation for OBCs in the Central Services and for the identification of backward classes and in this process 'Kurmi (Mahto)' was listed at Serial No.15 in the Central list of OBCs for Bihar. When objection was raised by the 'Kurmi' of Bihar for recognising them as Kurmi (Mahto) in the Central List of OBCs for Bihar, the State Government acted upon it and subsequently, Shri S.N. Biswas Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Department of Personnel and Administrative Reform, Government of Bihar, circulated a letter No.91, dated 18.7.94 to all the Govt. Departments and Heads clarifying that both the Kurmi and Mahto are eligible for reservation purpose in the central services and they should be treated separately. Again the then Chief Minister, Shri Lalu Prasad Yadav vide his D.O. letter No.511107, dated 27.7.94, addressed to the then Union Cabinet Minister for Welfare, Hon'ble Shri Sitaram Kesari, apprised about the situation in respect of Kurmi caste and requested that the caste certificate issued in name of 'Kurmi' be recognised in the Central Services.

6. Shri R.B. Singh, Ex-Professor, Patna University stated that owing to appending of Mahto with Kurmi, misunderstanding about this caste has arisen, whereas Mahto is only a title and not a caste in itself, which many other castes in Bihar uses as surname. Previously, 'Mahto' in this caste was used to show respect to the respectable persons because it also denotes 'Mahanta', but now a days it is not so.

7. In his affidavit Dr. K.D. Prasad has stated the following facts:-

- (i) That there is no caste or sub-caste by the name of 'Mahto'.
- (ii) That 'Mahto' is only a title or surname which several other castes add after their first name (Kushwaha, Bhumihar, Yadav, Kurmi, Koiri etc;)
- (iii) Many persons belonging to Kurmi caste, or sub-castes, are having different titles such as Chaudhary, Rai, Singh, Sinha, Mahto, Mandal, etc. and they do not write 'Mahto' as a part of their name.

AUTHENTICATED



(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

- (iv) That due to the existing entry of 'Mahto' with Kurmi in the Central OBCs List, Kurmis are finding difficulty in obtaining caste certificate for availing reservation in the Govt. services; and other jobs.

On the basis of the above facts, he has requested to delete the word 'Mahto' from Kurmi(Mahto), which is unnecessarily creating confusion and also difficulty in getting caste certificates.

8. The Kurmi Caste/Community has been described in the ethnographic accounts as follows:

- (i) K.S. Singh, in his book 'India's Communities, Vol. VI, p. 1922-1933', has described **Kurmi** as follows:

"They are numerically large and widely distributed community. The All India Kurmi Kshatriya Mahasabha claims the Kurmi as a national community and includes in its fold all agricultural communities. In Bihar, the Kurmi are mainly a landowning community and cultivation is their traditional and present-day occupation. Some of them are share-croppers, a few have diversified into various business activities, while the educated among them are in government and private service. Their traditional caste council, the Kurmi Kshatriya Mahasabha looks after the welfare and development of the community. Traditionally they have commensal relationship with Koiri, Kayastha, Agarwal, Yadav and other communities. The Brahman, Hajam, Dhobi, Kumhar, Barhi, Lohar maintain patron-client (Jajmani) relation with their Kurmi clients. They make use of modern medicines and have adopted modern methods of family planning."

- (ii) W. Crooke, in his book "The Tribes And Castes of North Western India, Vol. III, p.346-354", has described Kurmi, Kunbi as follows:

AUTHENTICATED



(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

“Their social status is respectable. They will not eat kachchi even if cooked by a Brahman who is not their Guru. The same rule applies to *pakki*. Some local Brahmans will eat *pakki* from their hands, and the same is the case with respectable Kshatriyas. All other castes eat *pakki* from their hands without hasitation. In Farrukhabad it is reported that they will eat *pakki* from the hands of Kayasths, *kachchi* of Brahmans; they will drink from the vessels of Banyas, but will smoke only with members of their own caste. Rajputs will eat *pakki* from them, and Nais and Malis their *kachchi*, while the latter will drink water from their vessels. In Oudh they have traditions of having been land-owners before the Rajput conquest, and Mr. Butts remarks that the same is the case in Lucknow, where “they do not seem to have been a low-caste tribe.....” They are about the most industrious and hard-working agricultural tribe in the Province.”

- (iii) H.H. Risley, in his book “The Tribes And Castes of Bengal, Vol. II, p. 528-537” has stated that Kurmi, Kunbi, Kurambi is a very large cultivating caste of Upper India, Behar, Chota Nagpur, and Orissa. In Behar Kurmis are sometimes employed as personal servants in the households of the higher castes; and this practice, which seems to have been mode widely prevalent in Buchanan’s time, must have played an important part in the refinement of their physical type. The great majority of the caste are occupancy or non-occupancy raiyats; some have acquired substantial tenure.
- (iv) Jogindra Nath Bhattacharya, in his book “Hindu Castes And Sects, p. 216-219” describes Kurmis and Kunbis as “Clean Agricultural Castes”. The most important agricultural castes of Northern India and those called Kurmis and Kunbis.

AUTHENTICATED



(S.K. Purkayastha)

Member-Secretary

National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

- (v) In Volume V (ii) of his *Linguistic Survey of India* Sir George Grierson writes that the Kurmis of Chota Nagpur “are an aboriginal tribe of Dravidian stock and should be distinguished from the Kurmis of Bihar who spell their name differently with a smooth instead of a hard *r* and whose traditional pursuits are cultivation and domestic service. These two quite distinct tribes have been mixed up in the census.”

During the public hearing, those present, who were from the different sections of society as well as the State Government representative did not object to the proposed deletion of the word ‘(Mahto)’ from ‘Kurmi (Mahto)’ in the Central List of OBCs for Bihar.

AUTHENTICATED



(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

IV. Findings

9. From the materials and evidences adverted hereinbefore, it emerges that the BC List of Bihar issued in 1956 (at Annexure-I) contains 'Kurmi (Mahto)' (Chhtanagpur division) at entry No.60 and Annexure-II contains 'Kurmi' (outside Chhtanagpur) at entry No.15(a). It is well known that Kurmi of Chhotanagpur division is known by Kurmi (Mahto) and Kurmi of other regions of the State are known by the name of Kurmi only. In Volume V (ii) of his *Linguistic Survey of India* Sir George Grierson writes that the Kurmis of Chota Nagpur "are an aboriginal tribe of Dravidian stock and should be distinguished from the Kurmis of Bihar who spell their name differently with a smooth instead of a hard *r* and whose traditional pursuits are cultivation and domestic service. These two quite distinct tribes have been mixed up in the census. In his affidavit Dr. K.D. Prasad has also stated that there is no caste or sub-caste by the name of 'Mahto' and 'Mahto' is only a title or surname which several other castes add after their first name (Kushwaha, Bhumihaar, Yadav, Kurmi, Koiri, etc.). **Therefore, the caste / community 'Kurmi (Mahto)' at entry No.15 of the Central List of backward classes for Bihar should read as 'Kurmi' after deletion of 'Mahto' from 'Kurmi (Mahto)'.**

15. Kurmi

Kurmi (Mahto) (in Chhotanagpur division only)


(Justice Ram Surat Singh)


(Smt. Neera Shastri)

AUTHENTICATED


(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

V. Advice of the Commission

10. The Commission considered and agreed in full with the above findings of the Bihar Bench 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.

'Kurmi (Mahto)' at entry No.15 of the Central List of backward classes for Bihar should read as 'Kurmi' after deletion of 'Mahto' from 'Kurmi (Mahto)'.

15. **Kurmi**

Kurmi (Mahto) (in Chhotanagpur division only)

R. S. SN

(Justice Ram Surat Singh)

M.S. Matharoo
(M.S. Matharoo)

Neera Shastri
(Smt. Neera Shastri)

B.R. Verma
(Dr. B.R. Verma)

S.K. Purkayastha
(S.K. Purkayastha)

AUTHENTICATED

S.K. Purkayastha

(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi