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सदस्य सचिव
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भारत सरकार

त्रिकुट - १, भीकाएजी कामा प्लेस, नई दिल्ली-११००६६

Member Secretary

National Commission for Backward Classes

Government of India

Trikoot-1, Bhikaiji Cama Place, New Delhi-110066

NCBC Advice No. Maharashtra 35/2003

13. 06. 2003

Dear Shri Reddy,

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 "Sindhi Sonar" caste/community in the Central list of backward classes for Maharashtra, duly authenticated, for necessary action by the Central government under Section 9(2) of the Act.

With regards,

Yours sincerely

(Signature)
(C. T. Benjamin) 13/6
O/c

Shri C. Gopal Reddy
Secretary to Government of India
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
Shastri Bhavan
NEW DELHI

Encl: As stated.

(Signature)
13/6/03

NCBC Advice No. Maharashtra - 35/2003

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

MAHARASHTRA BENCH

FINDINGS

Case : Request for inclusion of "Sindhi Sonar" caste/community in the central list of backward classes for Maharashtra.

I. Request

i) This case arises out of the request received in the Commission from Shri Balram M. Soni, Vice President, Sonara Navjawan Mandal Panchayat, Ulhasnagar, Maharashtra for inclusion of "Sindhi Sonar" caste/community in the central list of backward classes for Maharashtra.

II. Public Hearing

2. A four-Member Bench of the Commission consisting of Justice Ram Surat Singh, Chairperson, Smt. Neera Shastri and Dr. B.M. Das, Members and Shri C.T. Benjamin, Member-Secretary held a public hearing at Mumbai on 07.02.2003 to consider the above request. At the public hearing the State Government was represented by S/Shri S.N. Khatri, Chairperson, Iqbal Ansari, B.C. Idate and G.P. Sankhe, Members, State Backward Classes Commission, N.N. Bhadikar, Deputy Secretary and V.W. Meher, Section Officer, Social Justice, Cultural Affairs, Sports & Special Assistance Deptt., Govt. of Maharashtra. Shri Suresh Kumar, Principal Secretary, Govt. of Maharashtra, Deptt. of Social Justice ^{was} also present for some time. S/Shri Balram M. Soni, Rajkumar M. Valcha, Chiman Amrumal Rupani, Ramesh T. Rijhwani and others appeared at the public hearing on behalf of the caste/community.

III. Facts

3. The 'Sonar' caste/community has already been included in the central list of backward classes for Maharashtra.

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Member Secretary

National Commission For

4. Shri Balram M. Soni has stated in his representation that the local authorities like Tahsildar are not issuing caste certificates to the members of their caste i.e. 'Sindhi Sonar'. Though 'Sonar' has been included in the central list of backward classes for Maharashtra, it does not include 'Sindhi Sonar' and therefore, their caste members are not getting the caste certificate.

Shri Soni was advised to apply for caste certificate in the name of Sonar only without prefixing Sindhi. However, he replied that when he approached the local authority (Tahsildar) he was asked to divulge his identity as Sindhi Sonar which most probably indicated that they had migrated from western Pakistan. Thus, since 'Sindhi' is not being prefixed to 'Sonar' in the central list of backward classes for Maharashtra, the local authorities do not issue caste certificate in the name of 'Sindhi Sonar'.

He further stated that the local authorities have to be directed by the State Govt. to issue caste certificate in the name of 'Sindhi Sonar' and therefore requested this Commission to issue orders to the State Govt. of Maharashtra who in turn would instruct the local authorities to issue caste certificate in the name of 'Sindhi Sonar'.

5. Shri Soni appeared at the public hearing and submitted that though 'Sonar' has already been included in the central list of OBCs for Maharashtra, the local authorities are not issuing caste certificate to Sindhi Sonars. The Bench observed that it is a matter between the local people and the State Govt. and has to be sorted out by them only. He, however, requested that the State Govt. may be directed to issue instructions to local authorities to issue caste certificate in the name 'Sonar' without making a distinction among Sonars whether they come from Gujarat or Bengal. He emphasised the need for issuance of caste certificate in the name of 'Sonar' only. In reply to a query by the Bench, he stated that he was not seeking recognition of Sindhi Sonar as a separate community or as a synonym of 'Sonar' but only a clarification that a Sindhi Sonar is also entitled to obtain certificate to the effect that he also belongs to the Sonar community.

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National Commission for
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6. R.E. Enthoven, The Tribes And Castes of Bombay (Vol. III, pp. 338-344) describes the **Sonars, or goldsmiths**, from the Sanskrit *Suvarnakar* worker in gold.....

Like the other artisan castes such as Sutars, Lohars, Tambats, etc., they claim descent from Vishvakarma, the divine architect and occasionally call themselves Panchals.

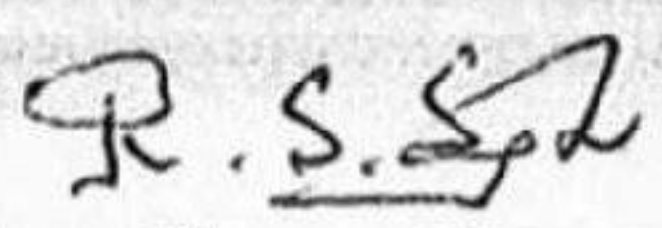
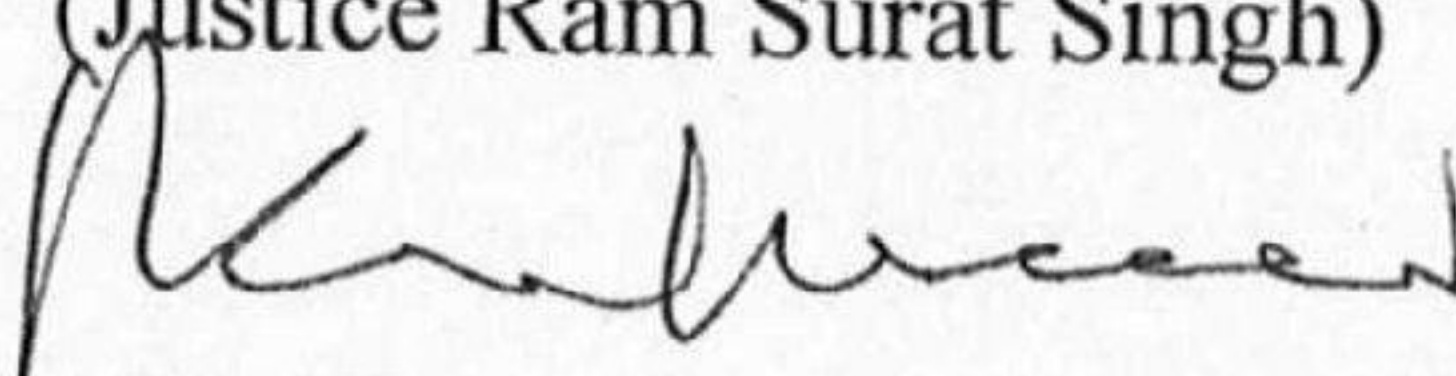
Sonars have twelve endogamous divisions

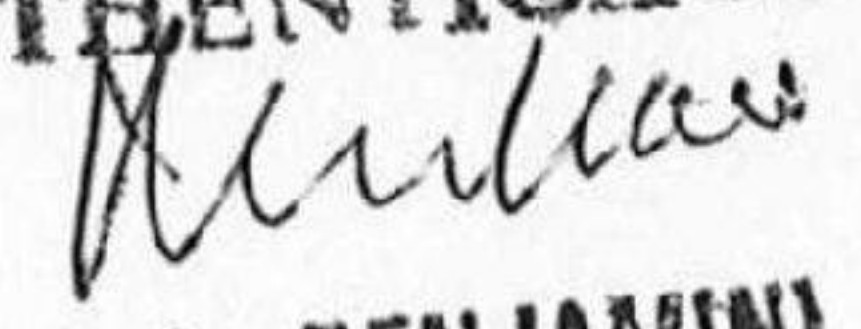
The others are mostly of the territorial type

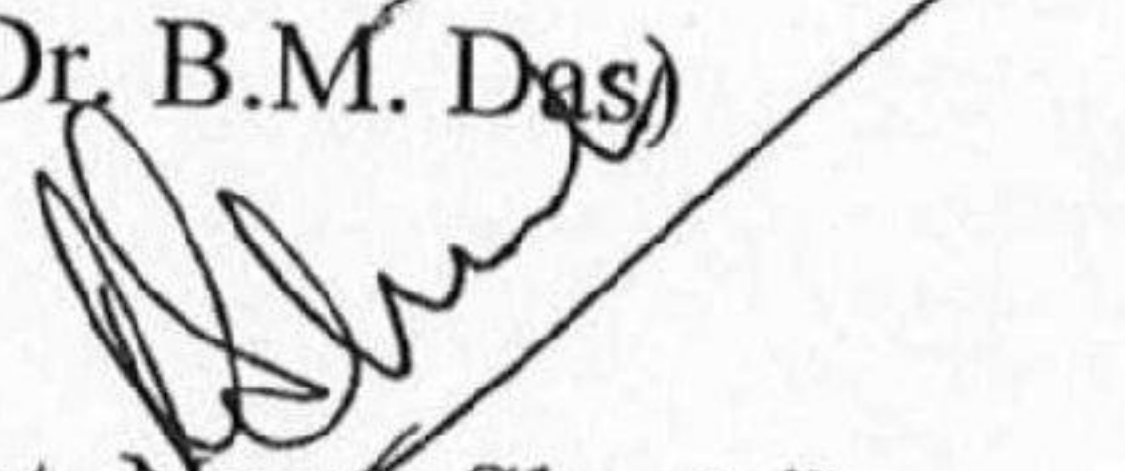
The hereditary occupation of Sonars is making gold and silver ornaments and setting precious stones

IV. Findings

7. From the above facts, it is the finding of the Bench that the Sindhi Sonar is in fact Sonar. The members of the community are engaged in the occupation of gold smithy and they have prefixed Sindhi in order to retain their regional identity. Sonar has already been included in the Central list of backward classes for Maharashtra. Therefore, there should be no difficulty for members of the listed caste to obtain certificates to the effect that they are members of a notified backward class and cannot be denied the benefit merely on the ground that they migrated from a particular territory or region and they have retained their regional identity. The Bench felt that this was a matter that the State Government should sort out. As regards the request for inclusion of Sindhi Sonar, in the Central list of backward classes for Maharashtra, was concerned, it was decided that the request should be rejected.


(Justice Ram Surat Singh)

(C.T. Benjamin)

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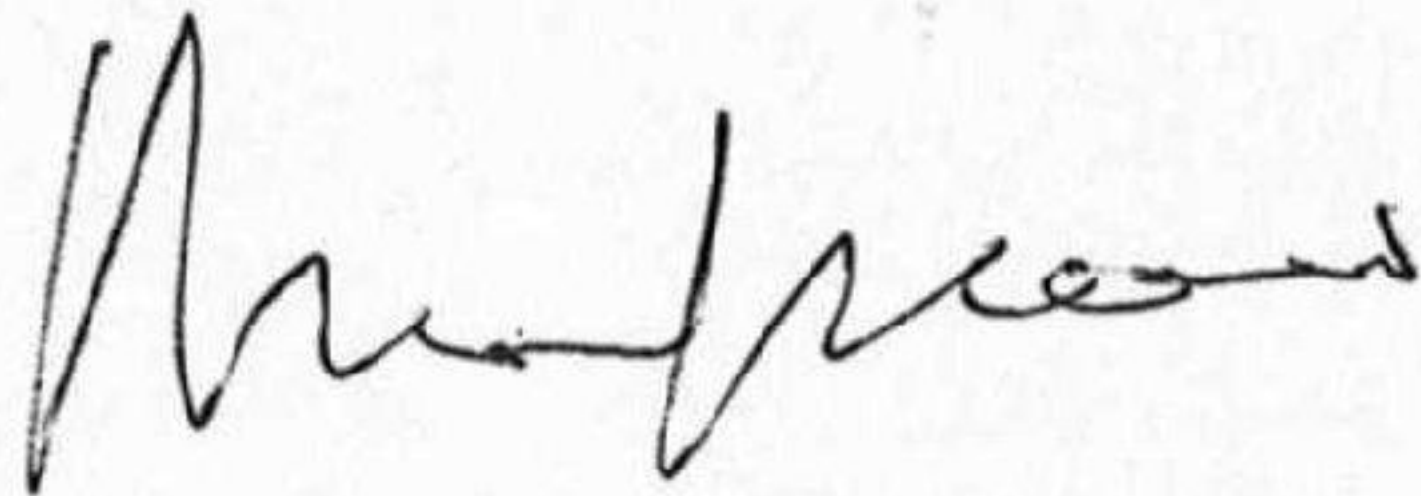

(Dr. B.M. Das)

(Smt. Neera Shastri)

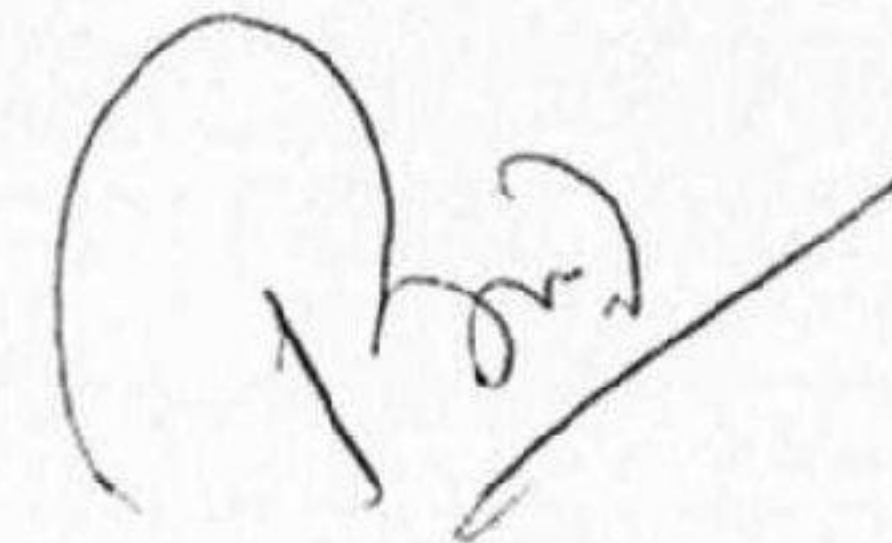
V. **Advice of the Commission**

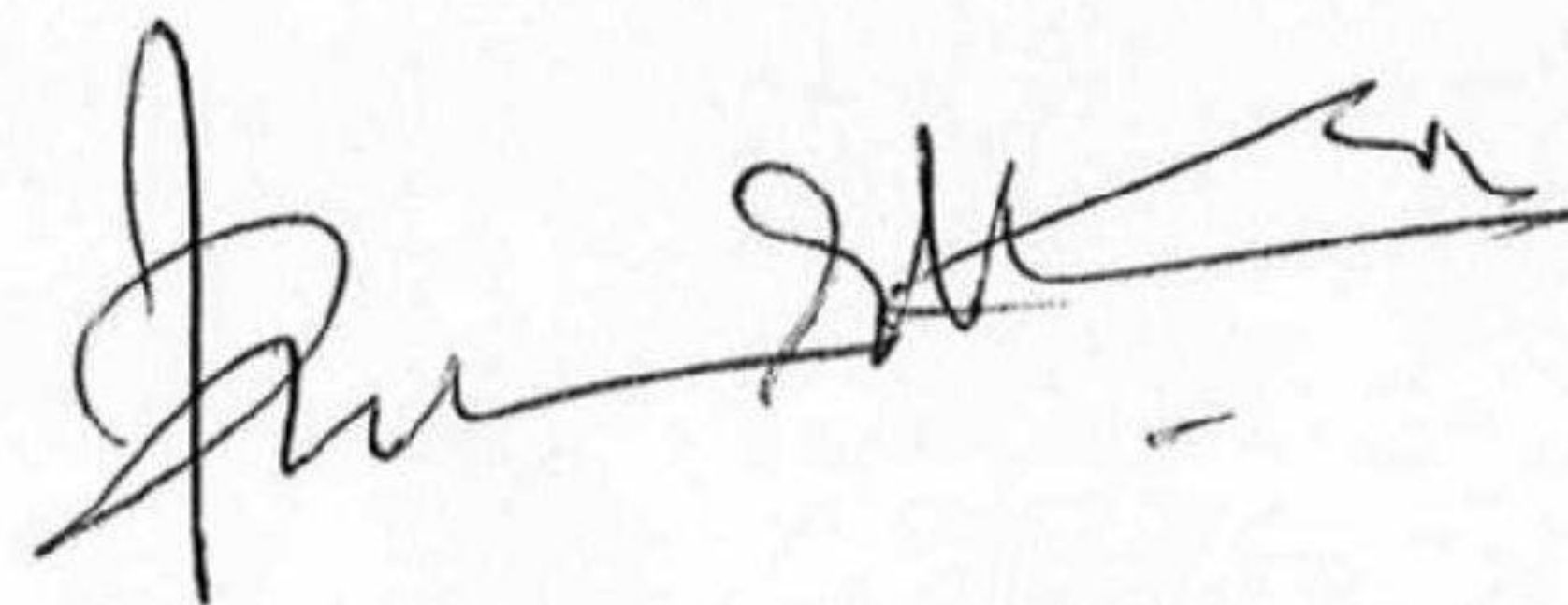
The Commission considered and agreed in full with the above findings of the Maharashtra Bench and decided to tender the following advice to the Central Government under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the Act :-

The request for inclusion of Sindhi Sonar in the Central list of backward classes for Maharashtra may be rejected.

R. S. S. J.









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(C. T. BENJAMIN)

**Member Secretary
National Commission for
Backward Classes**