



पी. एस. कृष्णन्
P. S. KRISHNAN
TEL. : 6183190

सदस्य-सचिव
राष्ट्रीय पिछड़ा वर्ग आयोग

भारत सरकार
त्रिकूट-१, भीकाएजी कामा प्लेस, नई दिल्ली - ११००६६

Member - Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
Government of India
Trikoot - 1, Bhikaiji Cama Place, New Delhi - 110 066

NCBC Advice No. Gujarat 33/99

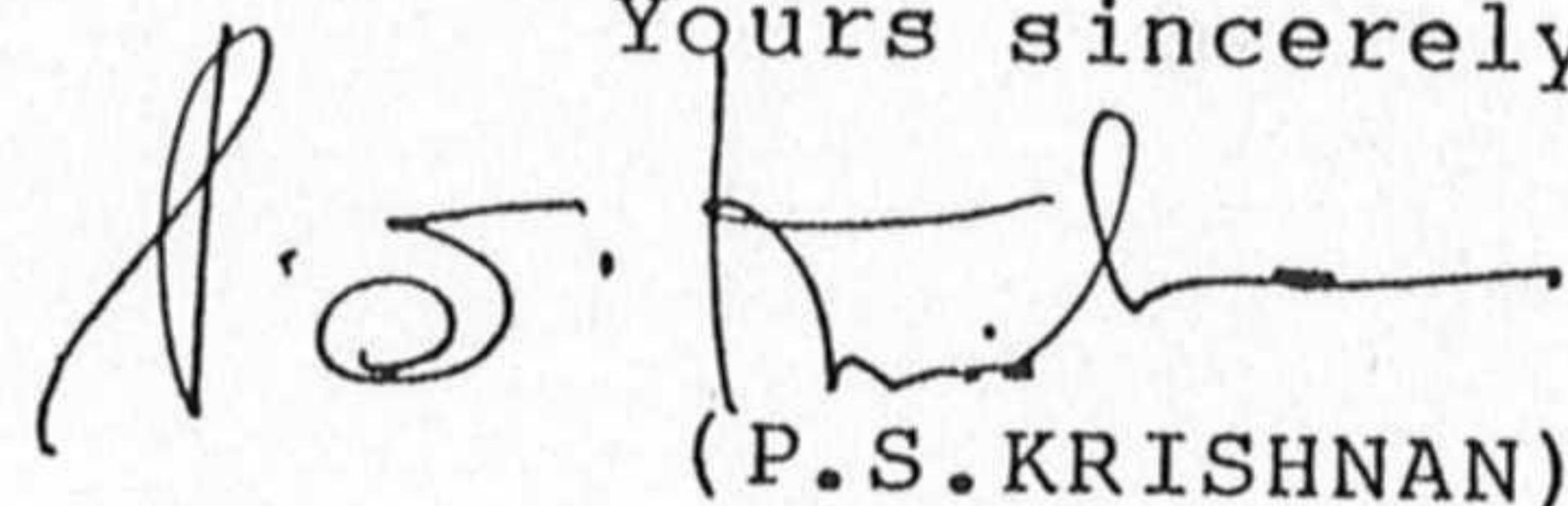
09.07.1999

Dear Smt. Das,

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

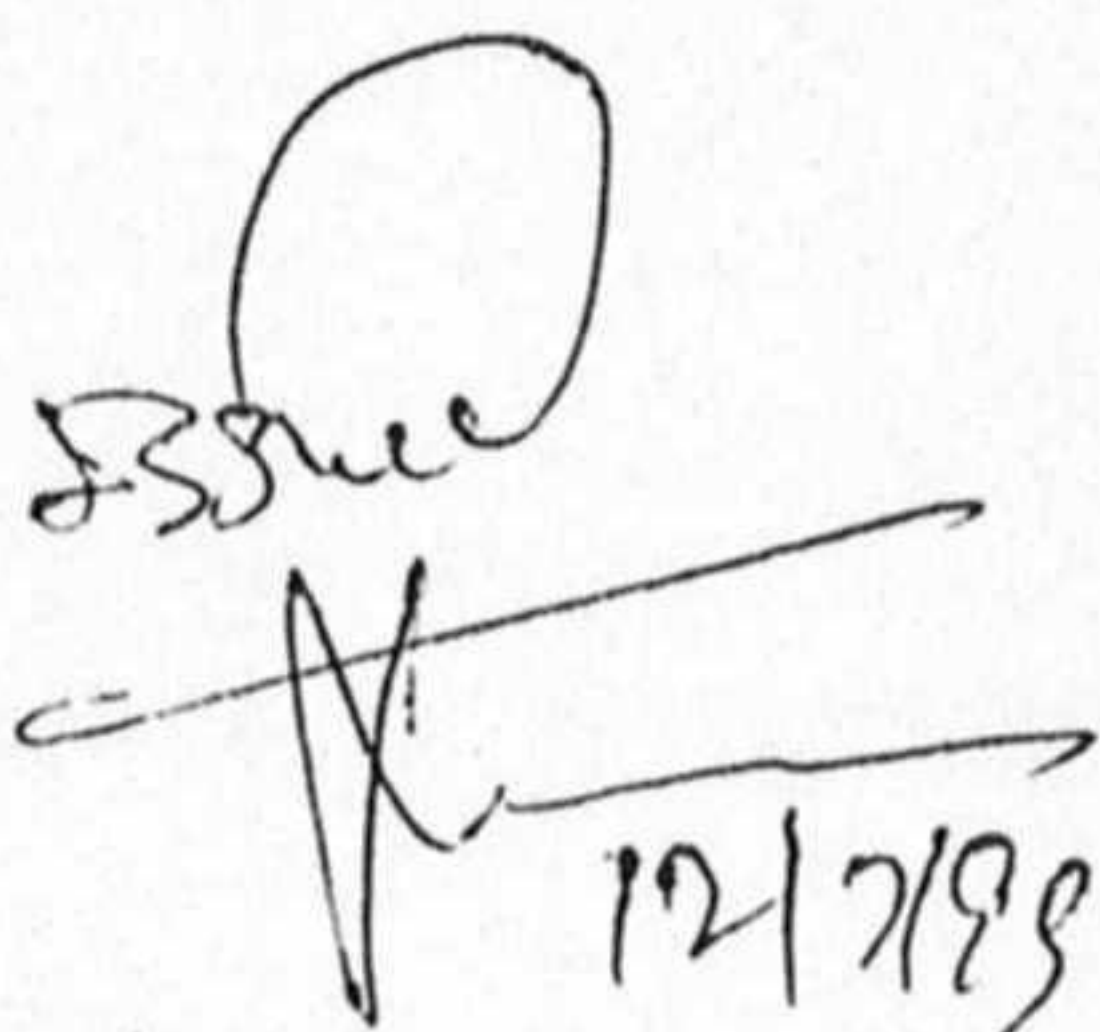
2. With this, Advices on 708 (354 for Inclusion + 354 for rejection) castes, sub-castes, synonyms etc. have been tendered to the Government by the Commission, after its reconstitution in 1997, of which 702 (348 for Inclusion + 354 for Rejection) are still pending with the Government for Notification.

Yours sincerely


(P.S. KRISHNAN)

Encl: As stated.

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


12/7/99

O/c

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

GUJARAT BENCH

FINDINGS

Case : Request for inclusion of "Bhandari" caste/community in the Central List of Backward Classes for Gujarat.

Per Shri U.P. Singh, Member

I. Request

This case arises from the Request received in this Commission from Shri K.V. Bhandari, At. Dara, P.O. Saronda, Dist. Valsad, Gujarat for inclusion of "Bhandari" caste/community in the Central List of Backward Classes for Gujarat. Shri Babubhai C. Bhandari, President, Bhandari Gnyati Mandal, Valsad (Gujarat) submitted the filled up NCBC's Questionnaire.

II. Public Hearing

2. The Two-Member Gujarat Bench of the Commission consisting of Hon'ble Members, S/Shri U.P. Singh and Navtej Puadhi held a Public Hearing at Ahmedabad on 6.5.1998 to examine this Request for inclusion in the Central List of Backward Classes for Gujarat. At the Public Hearing, the State Govt. was represented by Shri J.M. Luni, Director, Developing Castes Welfare, Shri N.L. Bhatt, Deputy Secretary and Shri A.M. Bhatt from Social Welfare Department, Govt. of Gujarat, Gandhinagar. Shri J.B. Baxi, Secretary-Incharge State OBC Commission, Gandhinagar was also present during the Public Hearing. The caste/community was represented by the following:-

- i) Shri Jivanbhai Kalyanbhai Bhandari
- ii) Shri Manibhai H. Patel

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- iii) Shri Lakhubhai Tatanjibhai Bhandari
- iv) Shri Peemabhai Ratanjibhai Bhandari
- v) Shri Govindbhai Gopalbhai Bhandari

III. Facts

3. At the time of preparation of the first phase Central List of Backward Classes, on the principle of commonality, (i.e., by inclusion in the Central List for each State of castes/communities which were found commonly included in the respective State Government's List of BCs that existed at that time and the Mandal Commission's List for that State), the caste/community was not included in the Mandal List as well as the State List of BCs and therefore the Expert Committee on Backward Classes, for this reason did not include this caste in the Central List of Backward Classes for the State.

4. At the Public Hearing, the representatives of the caste/community submitted that their traditional hereditary occupation was palm juice drawers and distillers and were also engaged in labour work. It was further stated by them that they were Hindu Bhandaris different from Maratha Bhandaris and did not have marriage relations with one another. Maratha Bhandaris were above them in the social scale.

5. The filled up NCBC's Questionnaire submitted by Shri Babubhai C. Bhandari mentions that the Bhandari is the main caste having population of 21942 and largely concentrated in the Valsad and Surat districts of the State. The caste/community is stated to be socially backward and engaged in the occupation of "Toddy Tapping and Small Farming" which is considered as agricultural occupation and agri-labour work. The juice extracted from Khajur tree is called 'Toddy' and the process involved is known as 'Tapping' and required manual labour. 25% population of the caste/community involved in agricultural labour. 90% population is landless and 10% have land below one hectare. The caste/community, in terms of the caste system, is said to be identified/linked with the traditional craft of "Toddy Tapping". The literacy rate of the caste/community upto 1997 in both the districts of Valsad and Surat is shown 2.5% respectively.


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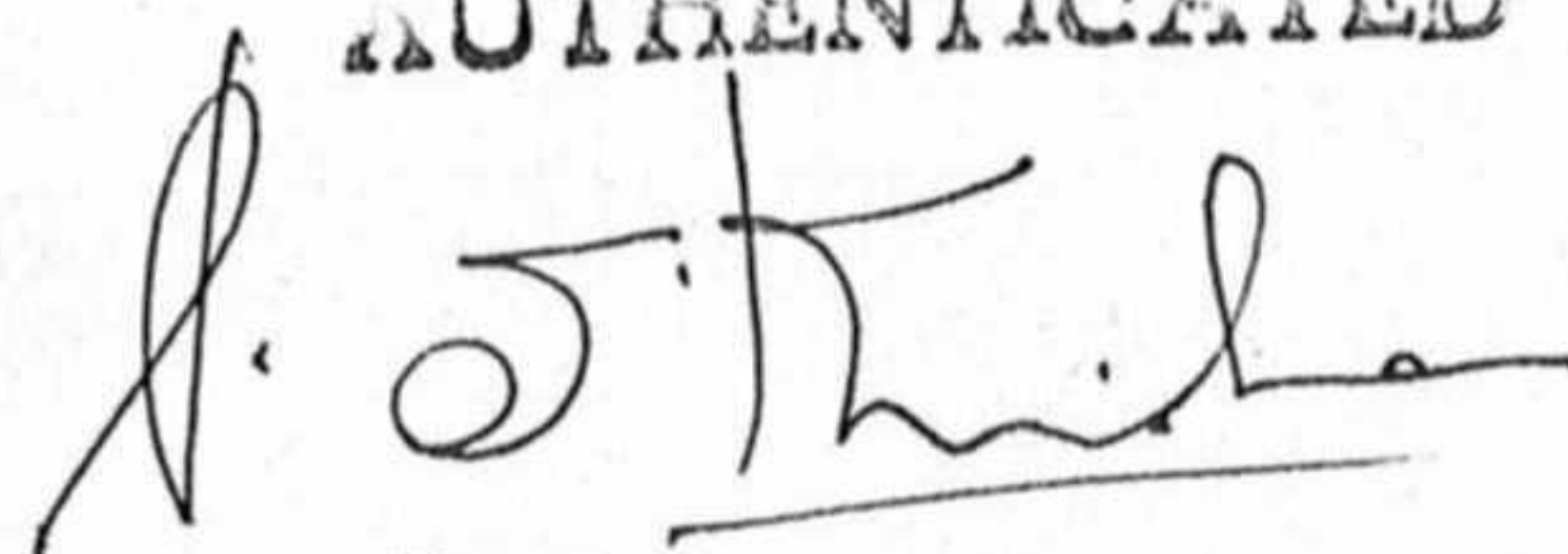
6. R.E. Enthoven (The Tribes And Castes of Bombay, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, Madras, 1990, first published in 1992, Vol. I, pp. 96-104) gives the following account about the community: "Bhandaris, also known as Bhavagunas, numbering 168,667 (1901), including 82,194 males and 86,473 females, are found in almost every district of the Presidency, and in most of the Native States, but chiefly reside in Ratnagiri, Kanara, Kolaba, Thana, Bombay City and the State of Savantvadi. Their occupation is drawing toddy from palm trees, and their name is probably derived from the Sanskrit **mandharak**, a distiller (Bombay Gazetteer, Vol. XV, Part I, p. 286). The caste members prefer to derive it from bhandar, a treasury, on the ground that they formerly acted as treasury guards. There is much historical evidence that they were once largely employed as foot soldiers by the Maratha and British....."

The hereditary occupation of the caste is believed to be palm-juice drawing and distilling, but since the rise in the palm-tree cess (1877) many have become husbandmen and labourers. Some are traders and contractors. Some have taken to carpentry, masonry, and tailoring, and some are sailors. A few own ships. Coir and cordage are chiefly manufactured by the Bhandaris. Many are employed in the police and infantry. They occasionally own land or occupy it as inferior holders. Many are landless day labourers and are paid either in cash or kind..... Those who abstain from tapping are considered to be raised in social estimation above those who do not."

7. Jogindra Nath Bhattacharya gives an account of the Bhandaris of Western India as: "The tadi-drawers of the Kankan and Bombay are called Bhandari. Their total number is about one hundred and seventy thousand souls. They themselves do not drink the juice of the palm in the fermented state." (Hindu Castes And Sects, Published by Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1995).

8. The Census of India, 1931, Bombay Presidency by A H Dracup and H T Sorley shows "Bhandari or Bhavaguna" under the Hindu Intermediate Castes, reported from the areas of Konkan, Surat, Broach, Sholapur, Bombay City, Sawantwadi State and their

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traditional or habitual occupation as palm juice drawers and distillers, husbandmen, labourers, traders, contractors, masons, carpenters, tailors, etc.” (Part I Report, p. 509)

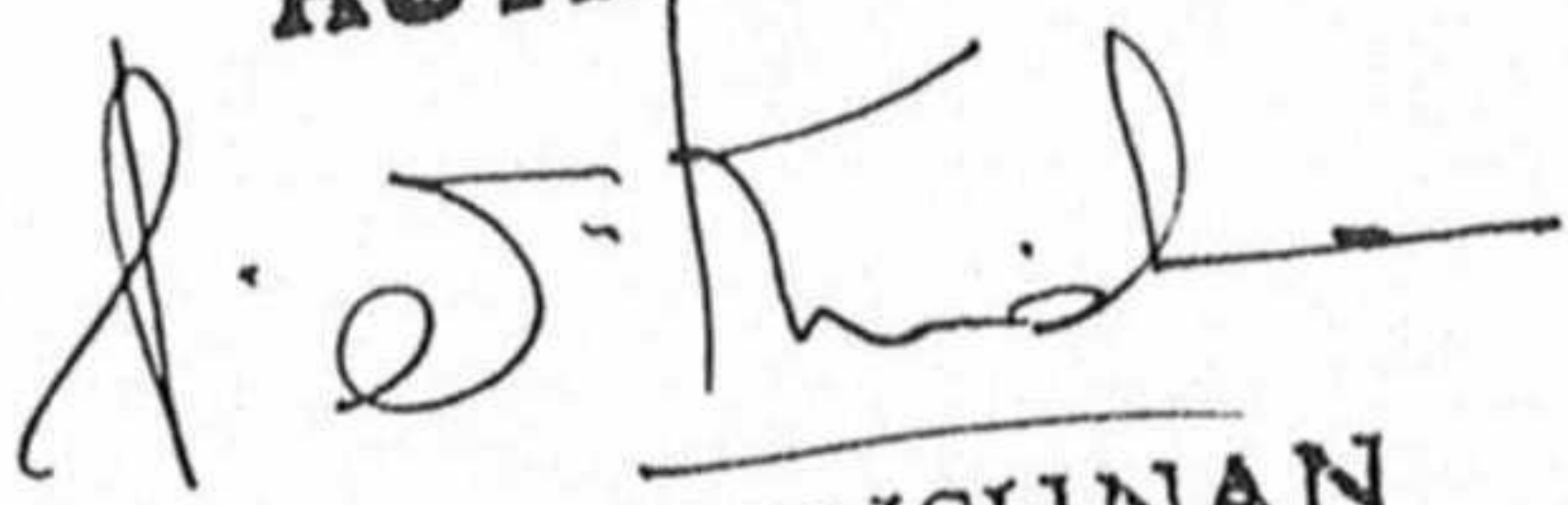
9. The book “People of India – Communities, Segments, Synonyms, Surnames and Titles” – National Series Volume VIII by K.S. Singh (Anthropological Survey of India, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1996, pp. 451) shows present distribution of “Bhandari” in Surat and Valsad districts of Gujarat according to census years 1881, 1891, 1911, 1921 and 1931.

10. During the Public Hearing, those who were present from different section of the society as well as the representatives of the State Govt. not only di not object to the inclusion of “Bhandari” caste/community in the Central List of Backward Classes for Gujarat but also supported it.

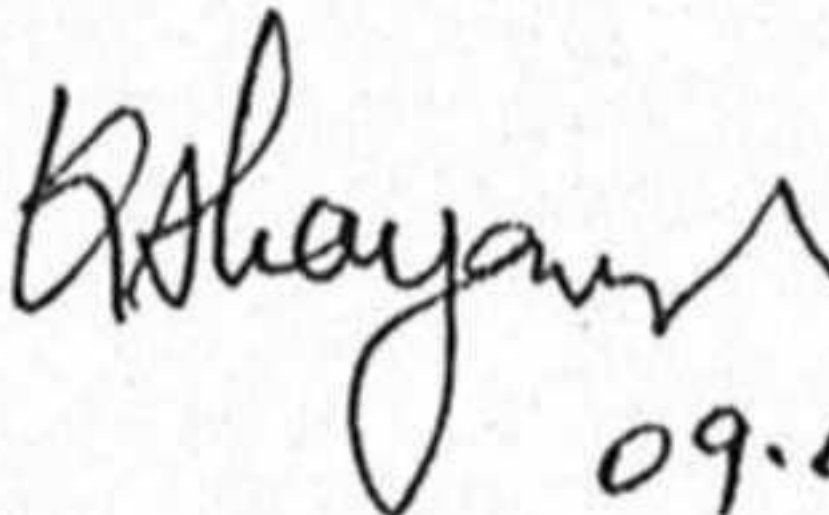
IV. Findings

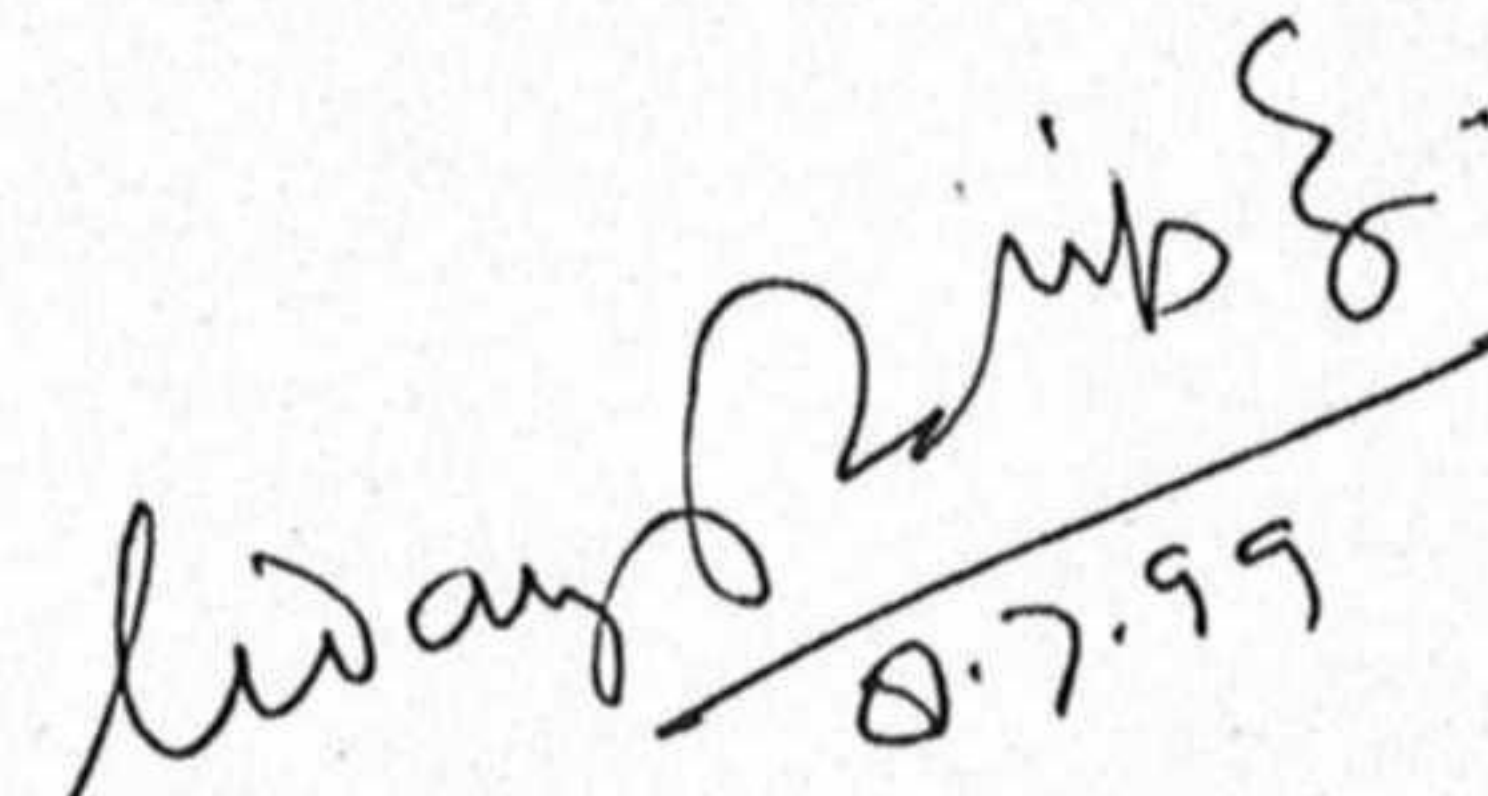
11. From the foregoing material, the Bench finds that the “Bhandari” caste/community is, in terms of the caste system, linked with the traditional hereditary occupation of “Toddy Tapping”. The caste/community thus falls under the “Fast Track” category and covered under item 2(e)-A.Social of the “Guidelines for Consideration of Requests for Inclusion and Complaints of Under-Inclusion in the Central List of Other Backward Classes” and Para 7 of “Procedural Clarification on Guidelines” evolved by the NCBC.. **The Bench thus concludes that the “Bhandari” caste/community should be included at entry No. 94 in the Central List of Backward Classes for Gujarat as follows:-**

“94. Bhandari”

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As one of the Members of the Bench, Shri Navtej Puadhi unfortunately passed away on 16.8.1998, subsequent to the Public Hearing, the Findings are formulated and signed only by the Co-ordinating Member of the Bench.


09.07.99
(Sahu Akshaya Bhai)


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(U.P. Singh)

V. Advice of the Commission

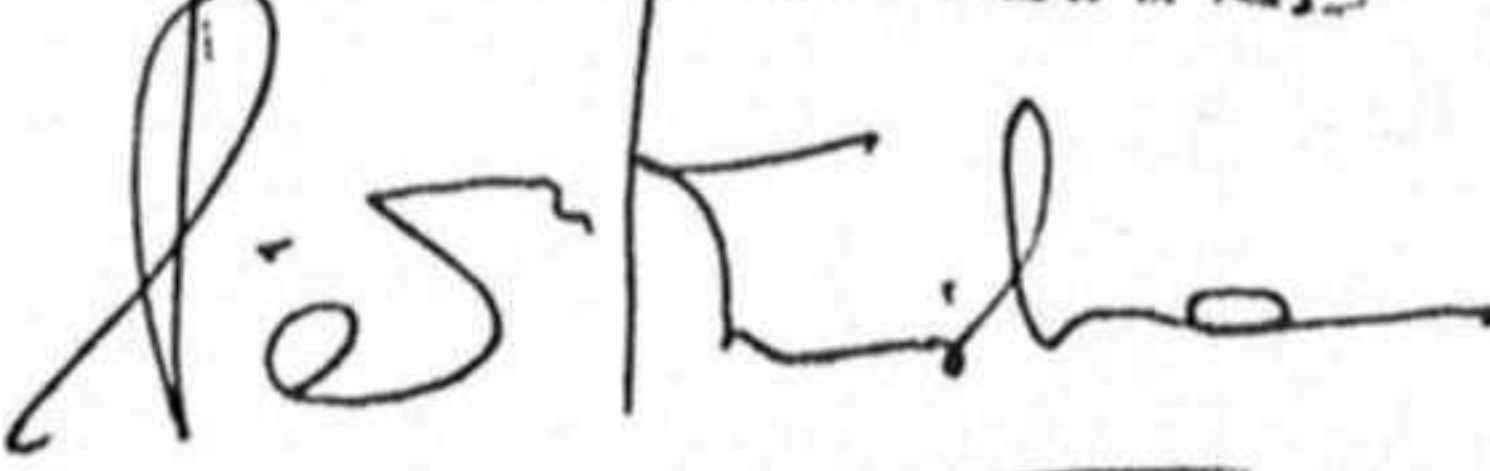
12. The Commission considered and agreed in full with the Findings of the Gujarat Bench and decided to tender the following Advice to the Government as per Section 9(I) of the NCBC Act 1993 for action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the Act, 1993:-

"Bhandari" caste/community be included in the Central List of Backward Classes for Gujarat at entry No. 94 as follows:-

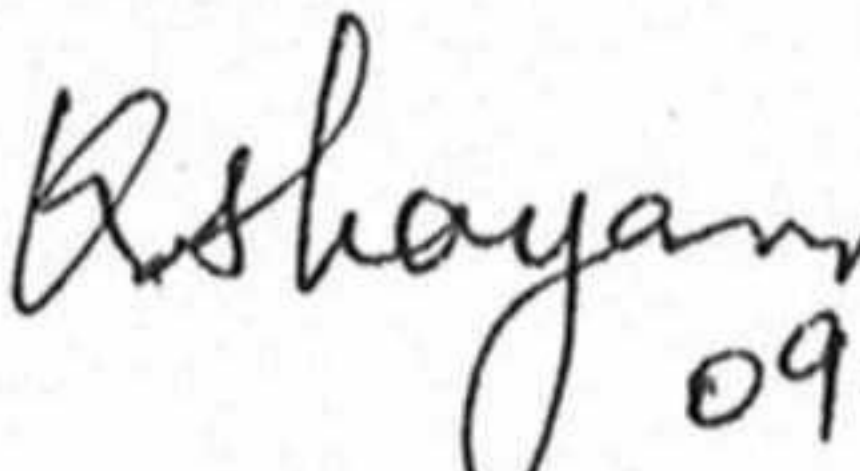
"94. Bhandari"

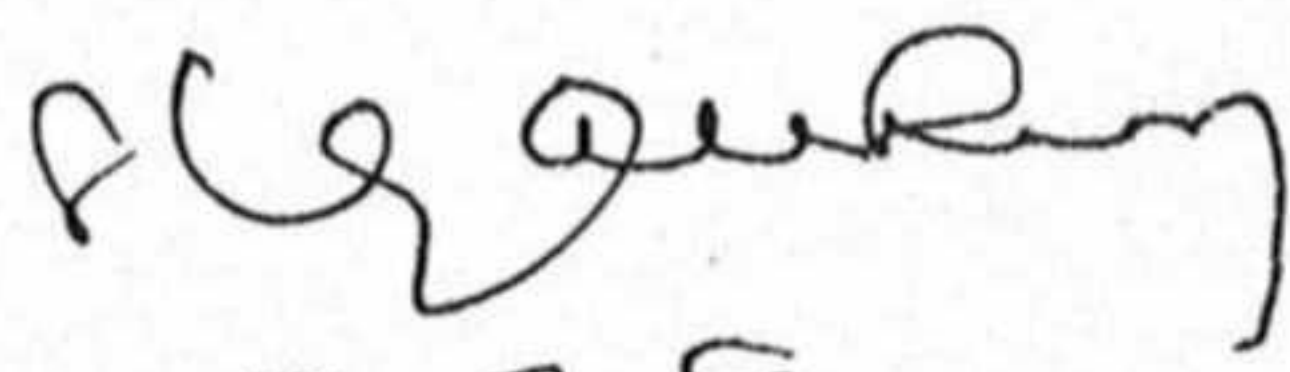
On account of the unfortunate demise of one of the Members Shri Navtej Puadhi on 16.8.98, this unanimous Advice of the Commission does not bear the signature of that Member. The validity of the Advice notwithstanding the vacancy caused by the demise of the aforesaid Member, is protected by Section 7 of the NCBC Act, 1993.

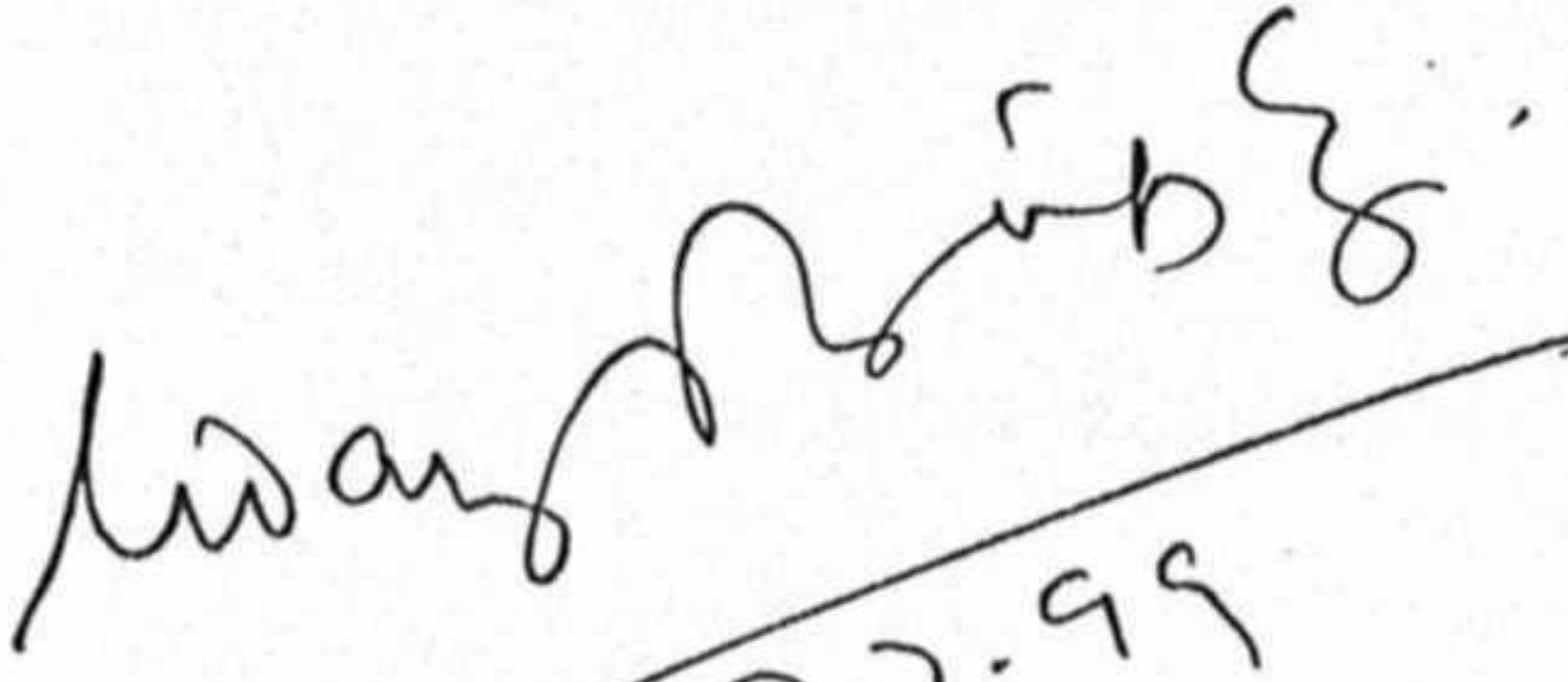
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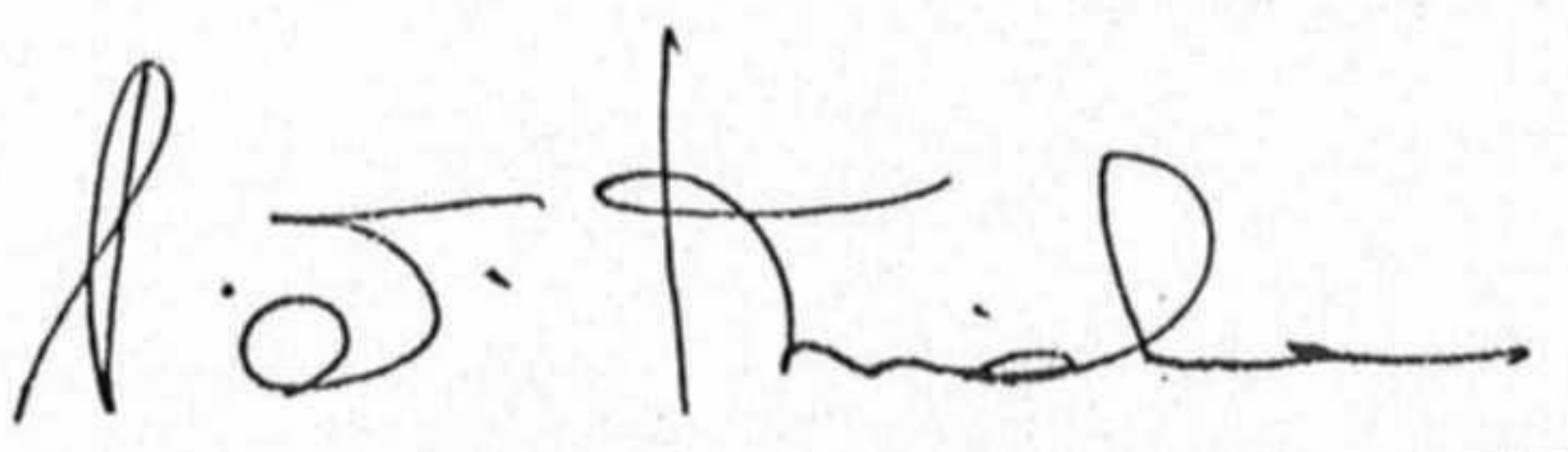


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