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भारत सरकार
नई दिल्ली-110 066
MEMBER-SECRETARY
NATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR BACKWARD CLASSES
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NEW DELHI-110 066

DO Case No. AP 24/96

9 January, 1996

Dear Shri Saxena,

I am sending herewith the Advice of the National Commission for Backward Classes under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act 1993 regarding inclusion of "Vamsha Raj" in the place of "Pitchiguntala" at S.No. 17 of the Central List of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh for necessary action under Section 9(2) of the Act by the Central Government.

With kind regards,

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

ANDHRA PRADESH BENCH

Findings

Case: Request for inclusion of "Vamsha Raj" in place of "Pitchiguntala" at S.No. 17 of the Central List of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh.

I. Request

Vamsha Raj Welfare Sangham, Hyderabad has requested for the inclusion of 'Vamsha Raj' at S.No. 17 of the Central List of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh in the place of ^{the} existing name "Pitchiguntala" on the ground that the existing name of their caste is derogatory.

II. Public Hearing

2. The two-Member Bench for Andhra Pradesh consisting of Shri P.S. Krishnan and Prof. D.L.Sheth held a Public Hearing at Hyderabad on 7th November, 1995 to examine this Request.

3. At the Public Hearing, the State Government was represented by the Secretary, Backward Classes Welfare Department, Commissioner for Backward Classes Welfare, Joint Director and Deputy Director, Backward Classes Welfare. S/Shri C.H. Mallesh and Ch. Balanarasimha, President and General Secretary respectively of the Vamsha Raj Welfare Sangham appeared before the Bench on behalf of the organisation along with others.

III. Facts

4. The Andhra Pradesh Government's List of Backward Classes is divided into four groups, viz., Group A, Group B, Group C and Group D. Out of these, Group A titled as "Aboriginal Tribes, Vimuktha Jathis, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes etc." Item No. 18 under this

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Member Secretary
National Commission
for Backward Classes

group is "Pitchiguntala". The following are the other relevant entries:-

Mandal List

"224. Pitchiguntala"

Central List

"17. Pitchiguntala"

4. The Vamsha Raj Welfare Sangham, Hyderabad made a representation dated 15.7.94 to the State Government that their caste name "Pitchiguntala" is treated with disgrace and disrespect, causing considerable humiliation to the members of their caste, more so to the school/college-going children of their caste and requested that the name of their caste be changed as "Vamsha Raj" and entry made accordingly in the State List. Under Section 9(2) of the Andhra Pradesh Commission for Backward Classes Act 1933, the State Government referred this Request to the AP State Commission for Backward Classes for its Advice. The Commission, after observing due procedure, recommended to the State Government that the name "Vamsha Raj" be substituted for the existing entry "Pitchiguntala" at S.No. 18 of the State List. Accordingly, the State Government by an amendment, vide G.O. Ms. No. 27 dated 23.6.1995, to its earlier order bearing GO Ms. No. 1793, Education dated 23.9.70 ordered the deletion of the name "Pitchiguntala" and insertion in its place of the name "Vamsha Raj" at S.No. 18 under Group A of the existing State list.

5. Syed Siraj ul Hassan in "The Castes and Tribes of H.E.H. The Nizam's Dominions" (1989, Asian Educational Services, first published 1920) under the head "Pichakuntala" described the community as "a Telugu Caste of wandering beggars, geneologists and mat-workers who are supposed to derive their name from Bhiksha

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Member Secretary
National Commission
for Backward Classes

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Kuntalu (Bhikha, begging, Kunta, lame) probably an opprobrious epithet denoting a lame beggar. They beg only from Kapus and Gollas by reciting their gotras and family history, of which they are believed to be the custodians." According to Syed Hassan's information, begging is the principal occupation of the caste and they also earn a livelihood by making mats of leaves of Shendi(wild date palm). He also says that "some of them are now engaged in agriculture as non-occupancy raiats and landless day-labourers." Another occupation of theirs is pig-breeding.

6. Thurston and Rangachari ("Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol. VI, 1993, Asian Educational Services, first published 1909) record under the head "Pichigunta" that "the name Pichigunta means literally an assembly of beggars". Drawing upon the Manuals of Nellore and Kurnool districts, they say that the Pichiguntas are "in the Telugu country, a class of mendicants, who are herbalists, and physic people for fever, stomach-ache, and other ailments. They beat the village drums, relate stories and legends, and supply the place of a Herald's Office, as they have a reputation for being learned in family histories, and manufacture pedigrees and gotras (house names) for Kapus, Kammas, Gollas, and others." They also refer to the description of this community under the name Picchai or Pinchikuntar in the Salem Manual as servants to the Kudianavars or cultivators. They are treated as inferior by the latter and do service to the latter, by relating thier genealogies. Some serve in the fields, and others live by begging.

7. Asked by the Bench why they chose the name "Vamsha Raj", they said that since it was their distinctive occupation to recite the genealogy or Vamshavali of their patrons, they identified "Vamsha Raj" as the appropriate dignified name for themselves. Again, on the query of the Bench, they said that there is no other

caste/community which has got a name similar to the name that they have adopted and therefore this change in their name will not offer any opportunity for any unintended community to take the benefit of reservation under its cover. It was suggested by them and agreed to by the Secretary, Backward Classes Welfare Deptt. that the change of name will be announced through TV, Radio and other public media in order to eliminate any possibility of difficulty for members of the community in getting BC certificates by the new name, on deleting the old name.

8. Their request was not only not objected to by any of the members of the different castes/communities present, but was positively supported by them and also by the State Government representatives.

IV. Findings

9. The Bench came to the conclusion that this is an example of a community downgraded and degraded not only occupationally, as is evident from the ethnographical accounts, their own evidence, State Government's evidence and their placement in Group A of the State List, but by the very name given to them. The Bench noticed that the representatives of the community were young people who had just entered the modern sectors of occupation. Understanding their agony, the Bench came to the conclusion that their Request deserves to be honoured. It is the Finding of the Bench that the name "Vamsha Raj" be entered at S.No.17 of the Central List of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh in the place of the existing name "Pitchiguntala".

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Member, Andhra Pradesh Bench.

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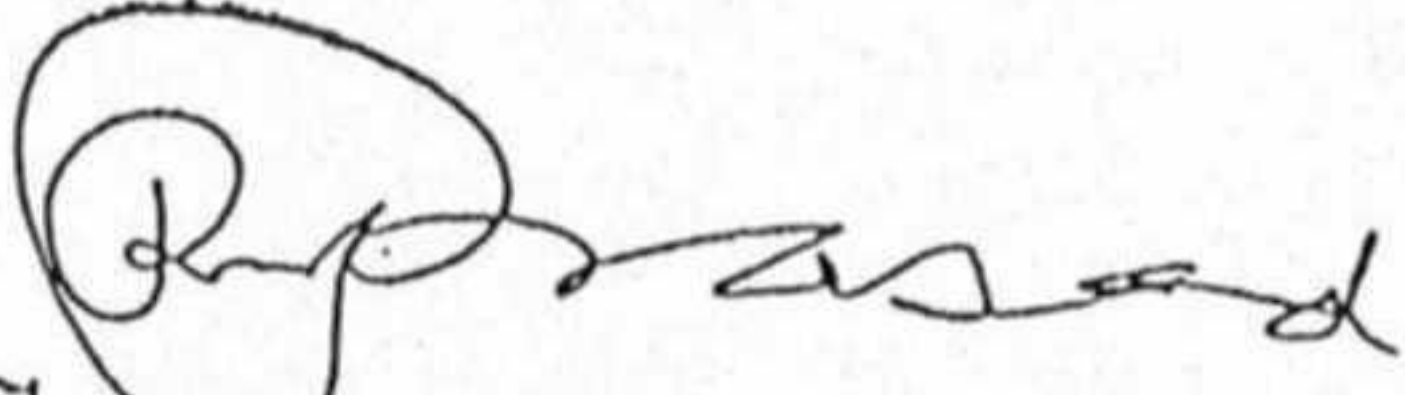
Member, Andhra Pradesh Bench.

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National Commission
for Backward Classes

V. Advice of the Commission

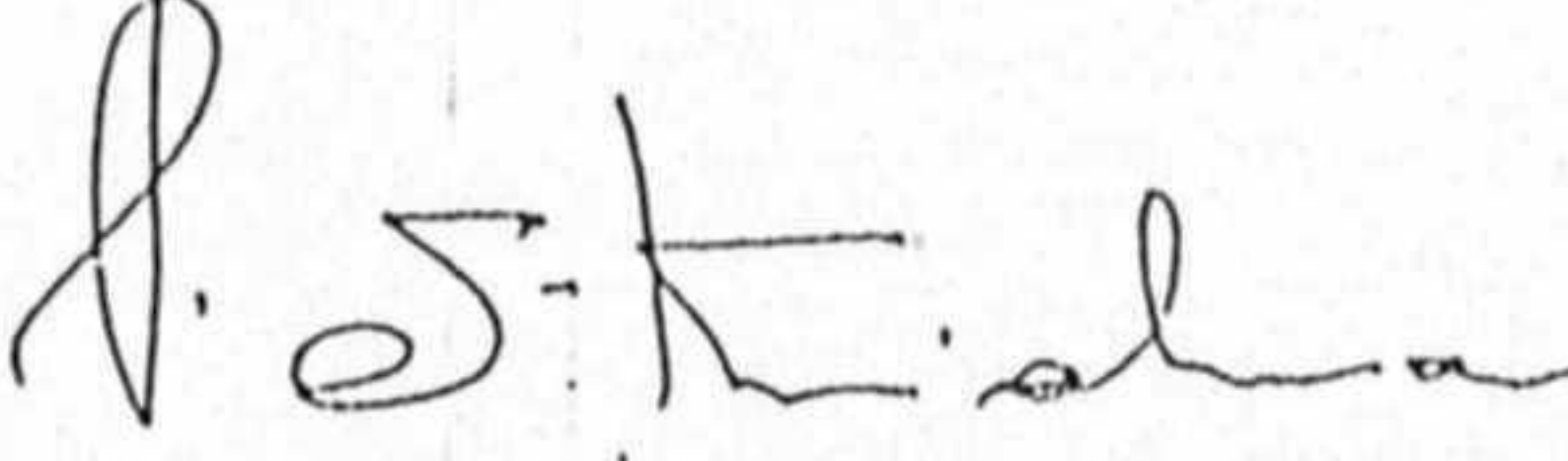
10. The Commission considered and agreed in full with the findings of the A.P. Bench and decided to render the following Advice to the Central Government as per section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, 1993:-

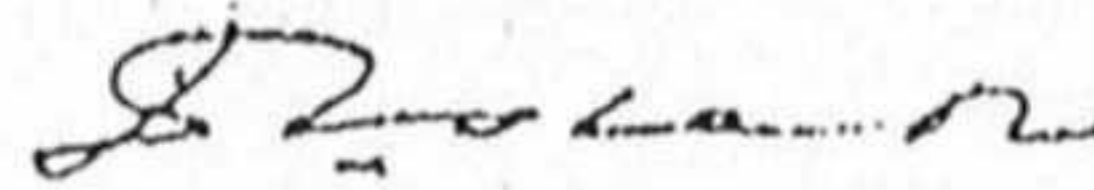
The name "Vamsha Raj" be entered at S.No. 17 of the Central List of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh in the place of the existing name "Pitchiguntala"


Justice R. Prashanna
Chairman
National Commission for
Backward Classes
New Delhi.

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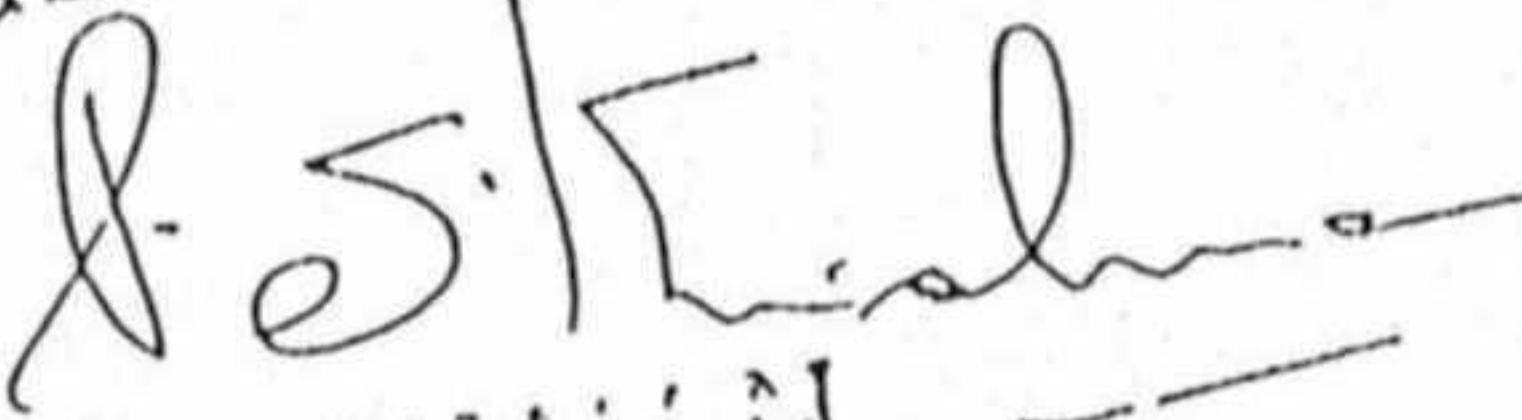
(DR. R. PRASHANNA)







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