



स. कृष्णन्
P. S. KRISHNAN
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सदस्य-सचिव
राष्ट्रीय पिछड़ा वर्ग आयोग
भारत सरकार
त्रिकूट-१, भीकाजी कामा प्लेस, नई दिल्ली - ११००६६

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

NCBC Advice No. A.P. 41-42/98

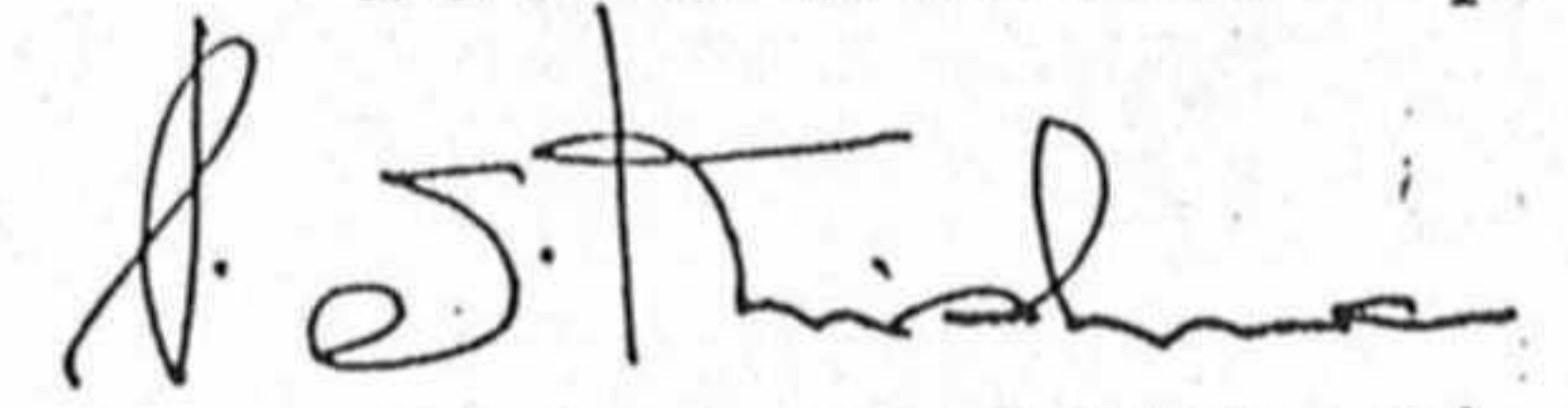
16.12.1998

Dear Shri Manavalan,

I am sending herewith the Advice of the National Commission for Backward Classes under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act for the Rejection of the Requests for Inclusion of "Velama" and "Adi-Velama" castes/communities in the Central List of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh, duly authenticated, for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the Act.

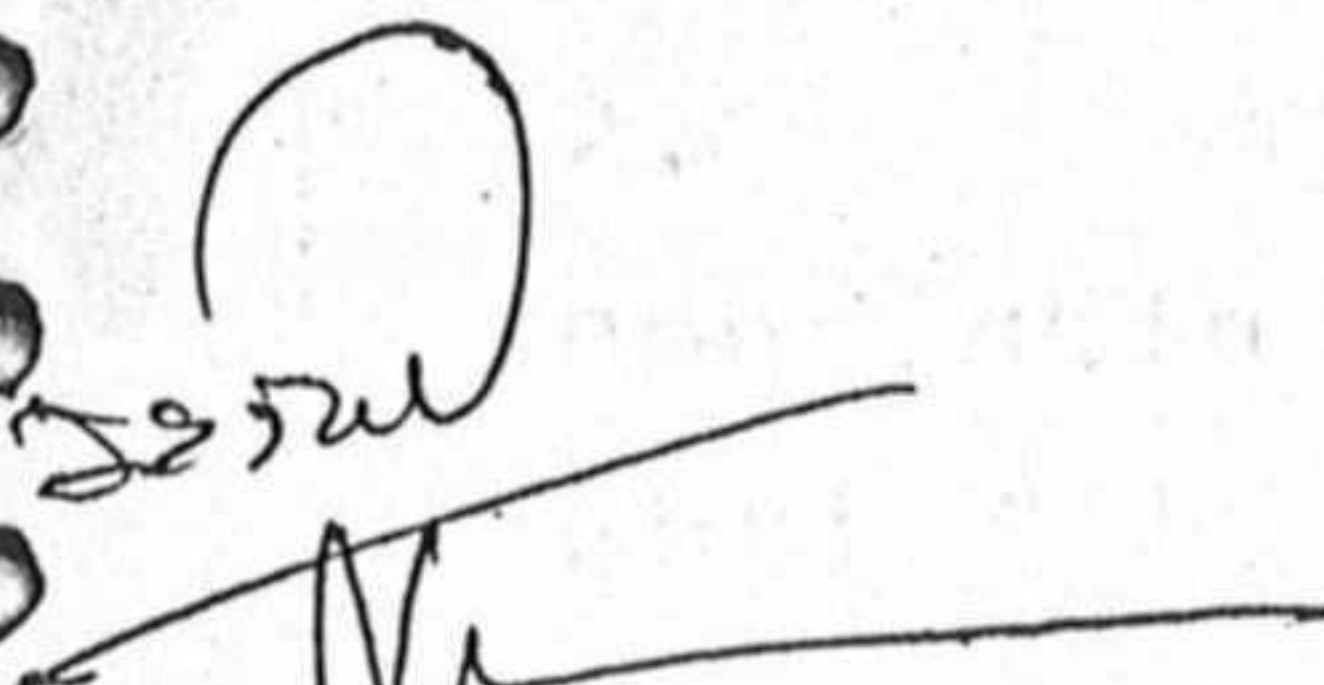
2. With this, Advices on 490(281 for Inclusion + 209 for Rejection) castes, sub-castes, synonyms etc. have been tendered to the Government by the Commission, after its reconstitution in 1997, of which 484 (275 for Inclusion + 209 for Rejection) are still pending with the Government for Notification.

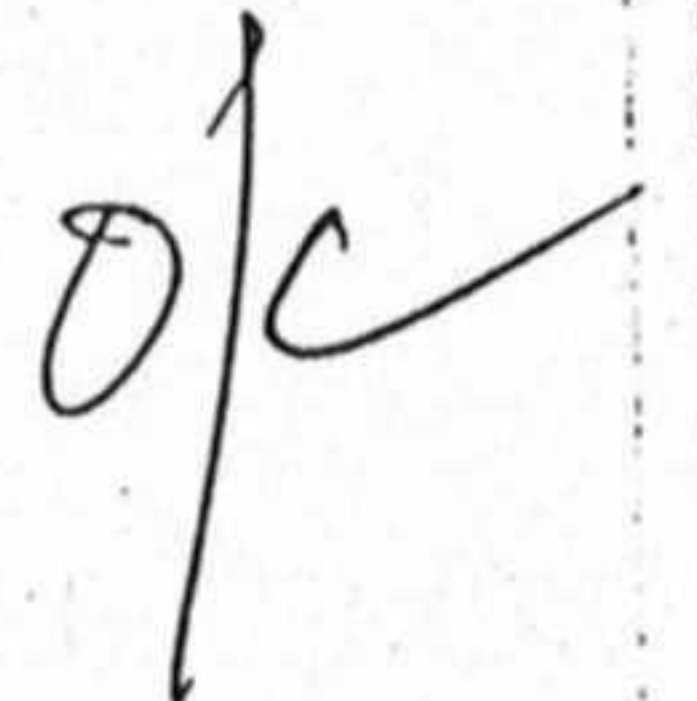
Yours sincerely


(P.S. KRISHNAN)

Encl: As stated.

Shri D.K. Manavalan
Secretary to Govt. of India
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
Shastri Bhavan
NEW DELHI


16/12/98



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

Andhra Pradesh Bench

FINDINGS

Per Shri P.S.Krishnan, Member-Secretary

Case: Requests for Inclusion of "Velama" and "Adi-Velama" castes/sub-castes/communities in the Central List of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh.

I. Request

These cases arise from the Requests received in this Commission from the Nellore Zilla Velama Sangham, 26, 1-118, Mother Thereesa Road, Gayathri Nagar, A.K.Nagar, Nellore-524004, A.P. for the inclusion of "Velama caste as a whole including the sub castes(Adi Velama, Padma Velama etc.)" and from the Secretary, Adivelama Sreyobhivardhani Sangham, 4-157, Maruthinagar, Malkajgiri, Hyderabad 500 047 for the inclusion of "Adi Velama" in the Central List of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh.

II. Public Hearing

2. The Two-Member Andhra Pradesh Bench of the NCBC consisting of Shri P.S.Krishnan, Hon'ble Member-Secretary and Shri Sahu Akshaya Bhai, Hon'ble Member held a Public Hearing inter alia in respect of "Adi Velama" caste/community at Hyderabad on 24.5.97. Another Public Hearing was held on 21.8.97 in respect of "Velama" caste/community. At the Public Hearing held on 24.5.97 the State Government was

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represented by L. Shafiquzzaman, Secretary in-charge of Backward Classes Welfare, Shri Kodanda Rama Reddy, Commissioner for Backward Classes Welfare and other officers in the office of the Commissioner for Backward Classes Welfare. The Adivelama Sreyobhivardhani Sangham was represented by its Secretary Shri Panduranga Rao and others. During the Hearing the Request for Inclusion of "Valama" was submitted to the Bench by Shri P.Sreenivasulu on behalf of the Nellore Zilla Velama Sangham" but no member or representative of the caste/community appeared before the Bench to give evidence in support of the Request for Inclusion of "Velama" during the Public Hearing held on 21.8.97 at which the the State Government was represented by Shri Kodanda Rama Reddy and other officers in the office of the Commissioner for Backward Classes Welfare.

III. Facts

3. "Velama" and "Adi-Velama" are not included in the Mandal Commission's List of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh and the State Government's List of Backward Classes as it existed at the time of the preparation of the first-phase Central List of BCs for Andhra Pradesh and therefore they are also not included in the first-phase Central List of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh prepared on the basis of the principle of commonality (i.e, inclusion in the Central List of castes/sub-castes/ communities which were found included in both the State Government's List as well as the Mandal Commission's List) in 1993. Even now, they are not included in the State List.

4. The Memorandum submitted by The Nellore Zilla Velama Sangham inter alia states as follows:-

"In the 14th century when the land was under the rule

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of Srikakulam Andhra Maha Vishnu, there were zamindars(Velamas) both in Telengana and Andhra araes.

.....
Under these Zamindars thousands of Velama families of poor people were dependent on Zamindars. It is unfortunate that the caste of Zamindars and these poor people is one and the same (Velama)

.....
There is a story that while Sri Andhra Maha Vishnu was ruling Srikakulam, there were two Army Stalwarts of Velama caste in his administration viz., (1) Padma Naidu and (2) Adinaidu. The term 'Naidu' is affixed to the Velamas of lower strata at the end of the their names and the term "Nayanim varu" was affixed to the rich cadre of Velamas and their relatives. While so there arose once a difference of opinion in certain war matters between Padmanaidu and Adinaidu resulting in division of two groups led by each of them.

Consequent of the invasion of foreigners in those days the groups led by Sri Padma Naidu and Adinaidu migrated to several parts of the state and settled. In that process most of so called Adivelamas were migrated to southern parts of the state. Since then those followed Padma Naidu were called Padma Velamas and those of Adinaidu became Adivelamas. Besides these two categories there existed a sub caste of 'Koppula Velama' also. But this was mostly confined to the Srikakulam district.....

As regards... Padma Velamas and Adivelamas..... these people were mostly employed by the Zamindars themselves in their Administration setups at a very meagre amount of salaries.

The posts given to them were mainly village Karnam, Headman, Clerk, forest guard, watchman, sepoy, chaprasi and attendant etc. In those days these families were not educated well, they did not cross the level of Elementary

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Education. 5th standard was the highest educational qualification held by the post of village officer and the salary paid ranged from Rs. 2/- to 6/- P.M.

..... Hereditary system of village officer was continued during the British regime.

But after the independence, the Supreme Court has struck down the hereditary system of village officers with the result the Velamas lost that much of guarantee of job also. Added to this estate abolition act was introduced in year 1949..... the velama families depending on the jobs in Zamin Estates were thrown out into streets.

Thus the living condition of Velamas became miserable and a continuous struggle for survival. The Velamas are so poor that they could not educate even their children beyond highschools due to their poverty and they could not get even small jobs. The plight of Velamas has become aggravated as they do not have any reservations like any other poor caste people.

.....

The concept for determination of Backwardness to be considered on the Basis of Economic Viability and living conditions of the people, we humbly submit that in the present financial circumstances and the living conditions of Velama people, it is but proper and rational to include the Velama caste in Backward Classes to meet the ends of social justice....."

5. The Adivelama Sreyobhivardhani Sangham in its letter of Request inter alia states as follows:-

"Our Adi Velama community; was under B.C.category prior to 1940 in the former Madras Presidency and we are unable to understand why our community was deleted subsequently from B.C. category even though our subsects, like Kopula Velama and Polinati Velama etc. continue to be in the B.C.category.

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Member
Commission

The very name Adi denotes that we are primitive than the other Velama Sub-sects.

Originally the main occupation/living of our community people was colour dyeing to cloths and Kalankari work on handloom fabrics and manufacture of "Neeli Mundu" (Blue colour) from the leaves grown in dry fields. Our community was otherwise called as Guna Chakali or Vadupula Vallu due to this occuaption.....

After industrialisation and mechanisation of textile manufacture the dyeing and Kalamkari Industry has suffered slow death due to which our community people who were wholly dependent on this occupation had to seek alternative livelihood being poor and not having land of their own, they were forced to leave their habitats and migrate to various places extending from Berhampur to Madras in search of living.

Presently, most of our community people are leading a hand to mouth living (sub-standard) due to deprivation of their original craftsman skills and are now employed in agriculture and other similar fields under landlords as workers. Some have become vegetable vendors and fish vendors in karkets.

In the.....

Due to our community's occupation of dyeing the clothes and Kalamkari work, formerly they were looked down by other communities and they never dared to touch the food offered by our community people in marriages and other social functions. This stigma existed virtually in Srikakulam & West Godavari Districts. Even now in Srikakulam District, we better recognised as Gunichakali than Adi Velama. When Chakali (Dhobi) community members have been seeking for inclusion in the Scheduled Caste, it will be more justifying to include this (Gunichakali) Adivelama community backward class at least."

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does not, however, explain what the original name of the caste was, and the truth of the story is doubtful. Since this dispute, the Velamas have themselves had a split on the subject of gosha, those who have thrown it off being called Adi or original Velamas, and the others Padma Velamas. The Velamas seem to have come south with the Vijayanagara kings, and to have been made Menkavalgars, from which position some rose to be Poligars. Now they are chiefly the hangers-on of poligars or cultivators. To distinguish them from the Vellalas in the southern Taluks, they call themselves Telugu Vellalas, but it seems very improbable that the Velamas and Vellalas ever had any connection with one another. They are styled Naidus.' [The Velamas style themselves Telugu Vellalas, not because of any connection between the two castes, but because they are at the top of the Telugu castes as the Vellalas are of the Tamil castes. For the same reason, Vellalas are sometimes called Arava(Tamil) Velamalu.]"

Thurston and Rangachari further mentions "Guna Velamas" as a sub-division of Velamas and quotes Mr.Cain[Ind.Ant.VIII, 1879] as writing about them that "The Guna Velamas,... were regarded as quite an inferior caste, but, as many members of it have been educated in Anglo-Vernacular schools, they have found their way into almost every department and risen in the social scale. Their caste occupation is that of dyeing cloth, which they dip into large pots(gunas). The term Guna Tsakala is one of reproach, and they much prefer being called Velamulu to the great disgust of the Raca(Raja) Velamulu."

✓ Regarding Pedda or Padma sub-division of Vellalas, Thurston and Rangachari, quoting the authority of Mr.C.Hayavadana Rao, write as follows:-

"Pedda or Padma found chiefly in the Bobbili taluk. Those composing it are said to be the descendants of the military followers and dependents of Pedda Rajudu, the

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for the Telugu Division

Velama etc. comes out clearly in the Anantharaman Commission's description of Koppulavelama and Polinativelama as follows:-

Koppulavelama

"This community is found in Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari and Krishna districts. Their traditional occupation is agriculture. Most of them are working as agricultural labourers or coolies. The community as a whole is poor. They live in huts and thatched sheds. Women also work with them in fields. Education in the community is very low. The student population of this community in X and XI classes is low. Due to their poverty and unclean occupation, the community is looked down in society. In view of its low position in social hierarchy and educational backwardness, the Commission considers that this community is socially and educationally very backward."

Polinativelama

"This community is found mainly in Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam districts.... Most of them are landless labourers or coolies. Their average family income is Rs.1,000 per annum. Due to poverty they are unable to educate their children. The community as a whole is poor and educationally backward. On account of their poverty and unclean profession and due to their educational backwardness, the community is not treated with respect in society..... In view of its inferior position in the social hierarchy and educational backwardness, the Commission considers that this community is socially and educationally backward."

8. During the Public Hearing held on 24.5.97, the representatives of the Adi-Velama community stated that most of their members are presently coolies and agricultural labourers. They clarified that they do not practice gosha(seclusion of women) now. They could not furnish any evidence to establish that the caste/community is socially backward except to state that originally the members of their community were engaged in dyeing of clothes and Kalankari

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work which were regarded as lowly. The State Government representatives informed that the Request for Inclusion of "Adi-Velama" is under the consideration of the State Commission. But, as the Bench learnt, under the procedure adopted by the State Commission its enquiry is not expected to be complete before 1999 end. Therefore, the Bench is of the view that this case need not be delayed any more as adequate evidence is available to come the Findings.

IV. Findings

9. From the above material and evidence, the Bench has come to the Finding that except for "Koppulavelama" and "Polinativelamas of Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam districts" whose members are mostly agricultural labourers and coolies and who are already included in the State and Central Lists on the basis of their attributes of social and educational backwardness noticed and recorded by the Anantharaman Commission, other sections of "Velama" community of Andhra Pradesh including "Adi-Velama" are not socially backward. From the account of Thurston and Rangachari it appears that their social position is comparable to that of the prestigious agriculturist community of Vellalas of Tamil Nadu. The Nellore Zilla Velama Sangham has not only not furnished any evidence of social backwardness in support of their claim for inclusion but the ground mentioned in their Memorandum in support of their Request is only economic backwardness. A caste/community cannot be included in the List of BCs on the ground of their "economic backwardness" but it should, first of all, be socially backward and also educationally backward. The comparison of the observations of Thurston and Rangachari on Koppula Velamas and other Velamas indicates the wide qualitative difference between the two. This also comes out in the Report of the Anantharaman Commission distinctly demarcating Koppulavelamas and Polinativelamas from other Velamas. In view of this, it is rather disingenuous on the part of one of the


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representationists, viz., the Adivelama Sreyobhivardhani Sangham to wonder why they have not been continued in the Lists of BCs inspite of the fact that they were included in the pre-1940 List of BCs of the former Madras Presidency while the Koppulavelamas and Polinativelamas are continued. Equally disingenuous is the pretence of the same Sangham that the very name "Adi" denotes primitiveness and therefore the Ad-Velamas are more primitive than the other sections of Velamas. While "Adi" is often used as a prefix indicating a tribal community or a community of original residence, "Adi" does not always have a connotation of primitiveness. "Adi" can also mean "first" or "foremost" as in the case of "Adi Sankaracharya". In the case of Adi-Velama, "Adi" has nothing to do with primitiveness but, as seen from Thurston and Rangachari it could mean only "original", in the sense of genuine, the name "Adi-Velama" thus indicating their reverting back to their original position after having taken to the practice of gosha(seclusion of women) or, as suggested in the Memorandum of the Nellore Zilla Velama Sangham, the word "Adi" could be indicative of the fact that they are followers of Adinaidu. The fact that they have taken to the gosha system for their women is eloquent. The gosha system, though contrary to the modern enlightened gender-equitous practices, in the topsy-turvy world of the Caste System reinforced by medieval Indian feudalism, has been looked upon as a hallmark of social prestige and a trait of socially prestigious communities. Having got into the gosha system, the capability to abjure it on the part of Adi-Velamas is an indication of a relatively modern attitude and the capacity for flexibility that goes with it. This gells with the fact mentioned by Thurston and Rangachari that the Guna Velamas, which is perhaps the same as Adi-Velamas, have got the benefit of education in Anglo-Vernacular schools and have found their way into almost every department and risen in the social scale. Velamas in the old Hyderabad State

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FOR THE SECRETARY

V. Advice of the Commission

10. The Commission considered and agreed in full with the above Finding of the Andhra Pradesh 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 Requests for Inclusion of "Velama" and "Adi-Velama" in the Central List of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh should be rejected as they are socially advanced and one of the most prestigious communities of Andhra Pradesh.

11. On account of the unfortunate demise of one of the Members Shri Navtej Puadhi on 16.8.1998, 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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9.12.98

Kshayan
11.11.98

Madan Singh
14/12/98

P. C. Suresh
16/12/98

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Member
for