



सत्यमेव जयते

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

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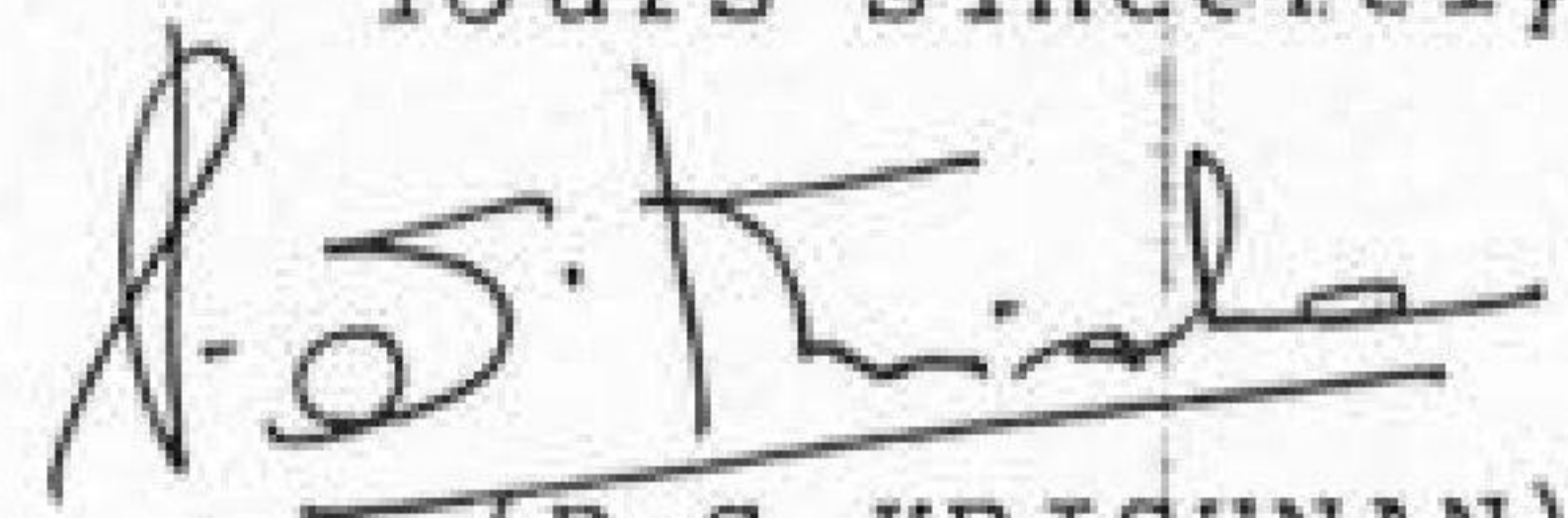
NCBC Advice No. Orissa 75/2000

02. 02. 2000

Dear Smt. Das,

I am sending herewith the Advice of the National Commission for Backward Classes under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, 1993 for the Inclusion of "Muni, Raula(Raula of Ganjam district only)" as sub-castes/synonyms "Mali" caste/community in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa, duly authenticated, for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the NCBC Act.

Yours sincerely


(P.S. KRISHNAN)

Encl: As stated

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

NCBC Advise Orissa 75/99

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

ORISSA BENCH

FINDINGS

Case:- Request for inclusion of 'Muni and Roula' caste/community in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa.

Per Shri U. P. Singh, Member

I. Request

1. This case arises from the request received in this Commission from Shri Prafulla Kumar Muni, Sahed Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Orissa for inclusion of 'Muni & Roula' in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa.

II. Public Hearing

2. The two-Member Orissa Bench of the Commission consisting of Hon'ble Members Shri U. P. Singh and Shri Sahu Akshaya Bhai held a Public Hearing in respect of these request on 08.01.99 at Bhubaneswar. At the Public Hearing the State Govt. was represented by Shri Gaurcharan Patanaik, Joint Secretary and Shri D. C. Pradhan, Under Secretary, Department of Welfare. Nobody appeared on behalf of the caste/community.

III. Facts

3. At the time when the Expert Committee on Backward Classes on the basis of the principle of commonality, i.e., by listing castes common to both the Mandal List for each State and the respective State Lists and when, on the basis of the Expert Committee's Report, the Government of India notified the first-phase Central List in 1993, Orissa was one of the States which did not have a List of its own. Therefore no Central List of

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P. S. KISHANAN
 Member Secretary
 National Commission
 for Backward Classes

Backward Classes for Orissa was prepared at that stage. It was only after the Supreme Court's Judgement in the Mandal case that the State List for Orissa came into existence in 1994 on the basis of one man (Justice N. K. Das) Commission Report. Thereafter the Central Government vide Ministry of welfare's Resolution No. 12011/9/94-BCC dated 19.10.94 issued a "Common (Central) list" of Backward Classes for Orissa. 'Muni and Roula' caste was not included in the Central List of Backward Classes as it was not included both in the Mandal Commission's List for Orissa and the State Government's List of Backward Classes existed at that time. The Government of Orissa, on advice of the State Commission for Backward Classes included 'Raula' in the State List at entry No. 184 as a new entry vide Resolution No. 15306-OBC-4/95-W dated 13-06-1995 as below :-

"184. Bhopa and Raula"

Further the State Govt. vide Resolution NO. 21863-OBC-4/95-W dated 25/08/95 included 'Muni' in the State List at entry No. 106 as synonym/sub-caste of Mali as below:-

"106. Mali, Phulia, Saghbaria, Bhajemali, Muni"

4. In his request for inclusion of 'Muni & Roula' in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa, Shri Prafulla Kumar Muni has stated that these two castes are of one community and synonyms to Mali caste. The works, traditions and social status of Mali, Muni and Roula are exactly the same. The NCBC's Questionnaire filled in and submitted by the request maker contains the following information :-

- i). The name of the main caste/community are Muni and Roula. Mali is the other sub-caste/synonym.
- ii). Population of the caste/community in the state is 10,000 concentrated only in Ganjam district.

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- iii). The caste/community is generally regarded as socially backward. The occupation, on which the members of the caste/community mainly depend for livelihood, are – Mahadeba and Thakurani Seba, Seba at other caste men's functions and daily labour. The occupations are agricultural and non-agricultural in nature, which involve manual labour.
- iv). As a general practice, all the women and 90% of the caste/community are engaged in agricultural labour for wage.
- v). The caste/community, in terms of the caste system, identified/linked with the traditional craft of crown making. Crowns are made of equatic creeper and fibrous bark of plantain tree. These crowns are supplied by Munis and Roulas for the marriage and thread ceremonies of other castemen. Ninety percent of adult male members of the caste are actually engaged in the traditional occupation for which they get remuneration. As per tradition they cannot demand wage for the service tendered.
- vi). Of the adult members of the caste/community who are actually not engaged in the traditional craft, are engaged in the following occupations:-
- | | | |
|------|-----------------------------------|-----|
| (a). | Agricultural labour | 90% |
| (b). | Cultivation of own land | 5% |
| (c). | Other occupations (like services) | 3% |
- vii). Besides the traditional craft of crown making the caste/community is, in terms of the caste system, identified/linked with traditional or hereditary occupation of Mahadev Seba, Thakurani Seba, Seba at other caste men's social functions and village functions. The occupation is, in terms of the caste system, regarded as undignified and stigmatised.
- viii). No members of the caste/community had been elected as a member of State Legislative Assembly or elective body at the district level.
- ix). The literacy rate of the caste/community in the district is 10% and about 200 members of the caste/community in the district are matriculates and 30 are graduates.
- x). Ninety-eight percent of the families of the caste/community in the state live in the kachha houses.

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xi). Number of posts in the services of the state Government held by the members of the caste/community is as below:-

Group A/Class I	:	Nil
Group B/Class II	:	03
Group C/Class III	:	100
Group D/Class IV	:	50

xii). They consider their traditional occupation as the main reason for their backwardness. They have stated that as per the previous practice and tradition a Muni or a Roula is to provide flowers, flower garlands, sandal and play counc at the day and night at marriage, thread ceremonies and other social functions of other caste men. The caste Muni and Roula are synonyms to Mali. Mali has already been included in OBC list. Further it is stated that the members of the caste are becoming poorer day by day because the lands given by the Kings and Jamindars for Seba of the deities before independence, have been divided and sub-divided among the descendants and there is no income from the traditional occupation as the work is done for remuneration only.

xiii). They consider 'Gudia' and 'Baisya Karan' castes at a level immediately higher than the 'Muni and Roula' caste because the food prepared by Gudias is taken by other castes but the food prepared by Muni is not taken by Gudias, Baisya Karans, Khandayats and so many other castes.

xiv). They consider Mali, Gouda and Barika castes more or less at the same level as Muni or Roula because the Munis or Roula are also called Mali in the society. A Muni or a Roula do the same work as a Mali does. When a Gouda provide water, a Muni provide flowers and chandan in the functions. When a Barika is present at the function, a Muni is present to play counc.

xv). As per the caste system in society they are regarded as Sudras, because they work for the other castes at the time of functions. They do work of Seba in the temples of Mahadev and Thakurani. It is said that Rudra (Shiva) is served by Sudras.

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P. S. KRISHNAN
 Member Secretary
 National Commission
 for Backward Classes

5. The Orissa State Commission for Backward Classes while considering the request for inclusion of 'Muni' caste in the State List of Backward Classes observed as follows:-

"Although it is stated in the petition and in the answer to the questionnaire that this caste bears different names as 'Muni', 'Roula' and 'Mahapatra' and people generally call them as 'Mali' no record could be produced to show that 'Mohapatra' is one of the names of the caste. ----- The evidence adduced by the petitioner, both oral and documentary and our local enquiry reveals that the Munis are Sevakas of Lord Siva and goddess 'Durga'. Besides performing pooja, they blow 'Sankha' in temples at the religious and social functions, prepare and supply Makut in marriage functions and thread ceremonies, give phula chandan required for different such functions of the Hindus (excepting SC/STs) including Sradha ceremony. In marriage functions performed by Brahmin Priests, they assist the priests in blowing shankha and giving Phula Chandan for which they are paid a share from the 'Dakhina' given by Jajmans. They are treated as inferior to the Brahmins, who do not take their cooked food (including cooked Bhog offered to Lord Siva) and in community feasts while Brahmins take food first, they take later and wash the utensils used for taking food. In case of marriage and other functions performed by Brahmin purohits they are treated as 'Sudras', the last class of the traditional Hindu Caste system.....

It is understood that the boys are mostly prosecuting studies upto M.E. standard so that they could recite Mantras and perform Pooja in the Temples of Lord Siva and the girls studying upto primary standard, lower or upper Schools existing in their respective villages. While the boys assist their fathers in cleaning temple premises and performing Pooja, the girls are engaged in collecting flowers for Pooja and assisting their mothers in domestic work. Some of them, however, do manual labour in the lands of Lord Siva under cultivating possession of their fathers as 'Sevaka'. There are about 70% drop outs among school going children between the age of 7 to 15.

In every village inhabited by the Munis, there is a Siva temple and lands stand recorded in favour of Lord Siva and the 'Munis' as Sebayats. The average land holding in the cultivating possession of a Sebayat is 0.10 acre which is just one share among all the Seveyats in a village having a temple of Lord Siva in whose favour lands are recorded. Pooja is performed by the Sebakas in turn. The income derived from these

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S. KRISHNAN
Member Secretary
National Commission
for Backward Classes

lands is meagre. The Munis live upon the 'Bhoga' offered by the people at the time of 'Siva Pooja' and the products of deity's lands besides getting remuneration on festive and religious occasions, when they give 'Phul Chandan, Mukut and blow Shankha'. This is very insufficient. So some of the Munis including women and children do manual labour and get wages.

In Govt. service there are only 2 Specially declared gazetted officers, 30 to 40 non-gazetted officers, and 20 Class-IV employees....."

6. According to 'People of India' (National Series Volume-VIII Communities, Segments, Systems, Surnames and Titles, K. S. Singh, Anthropological Survey of India, Oxford University Press, Delhi-1996, Appendix B p1719) 'Raolo', 'Rowlo' are synonyms of 'Ravolo' in Andhra Pradesh and 'Raulo' in Andhra Pradesh and 'Raula' in Orissa are Titles/Surnames used by the members of 'Ravulo' caste.

7. Edgar Thurston & K. Rangachari ('Caste and Tribes of Southern India', Asian Educational Services, New-Delhi, Madras, Reprint 1993, First Published in 1909) have described the 'Ravolo' caste as follows:-

"It is recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, that "there are three castes of temple servants among the Oriyas, the Ravulos, the Malis and the Munis. The Ravulos blow conches (shells of Turbinella rapa) in the Saivite temples and at Brahmans' weddings, sell flowers, and regard themselves as superior to the other two. The Malis do service in Saivite or Vaishnavite temples and sell flowers, but the Munis are employed only in the temples of the village goddesses. Among the Ravulos, infant marriage is compulsory, but widow marriage is allowed, and also divorce in certain cases. A curious account is given of the punishment sometimes inflicted by the caste panchayat (council) on a man who ill-treats and deserts his wife..... Some Ravulos wear the sacred thread. They employ Brahmins as priests for religious and ceremonial purposes. They eat fish and meat, though not beef or fowls, but do not drink alcohol. Nowadays many of them are earth-workers, cart-drivers, bricklayers, carpenters and day labourers. It is further noted, in the Census Report, that Mali is "an Oriya caste of vegetable growers and sellers, and cultivators. Also a caste belonging to Bengal and Orissa, the people of

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 A. S. KRISHNAN
 Member Secretary
 National Commission
 Scheduled Castes

8. About 'Mali' caste E. Thurston & K. Rangachari *ibid.*, vol. IV pp. 440-443 has written as below:

9. In 'India's Communities', National Series, Volume VI, K. S. Singh, Anthropological Survey of India, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1998 pp. 2996-2997) Raula cast/community is described under the title 'Ravolo' as below:-

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P. S. KRISHNAN
Member Secretary
National Commission
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In Orissa, the Raula community members affix Raula as their surname. They speak Oriya and use the Oriya script. They are non-vegetarian and rice is the staple cereal. The Raula belong to Nageshara, Hatsyasa and Kashyapa gotras. Cross-cousin marriages, junior levirate and junior sororate are in practice. Divorce is permitted. Parental property is equally shared by the sons and authority rests on the eldest male member. Post-natal rituals, birth pollution for eleven days, naming and tonsure (mundan) are the birth rituals. The puberty rite for girls is observed. Death rituals follow the ancestor worship. Cremation is the mode of disposing of the dead. Priesthood, cultivation, selling of flower garlands are the traditional occupations of the Raula. Some among them have recently taken up business or service in government or private organization. The Raula have their own caste council which functions to preserve as well as reform the social customs. They are Hindu and worship Hindu deities. Their tradition restricts them to accept water and cooked food from communities other than the Brahman and Gouda....."

IV. Findings

13. From the foregoing, it is clear that Muni and Roula are same/similar castes/communities whose members are traditionally temple servants like Mali caste. They also sell flowers and garlands. Their work involves performing pooja and cleaning the temple premises. They also provide flowers, garlands, sandal, play Shankha and assist Brahmin priest at religious and other ceremonies of the other castes. They also cultivate the land recorded in favour of Lord Shiva or the village deities. The State Commission for Backward Classes (para 5 above) also found that besides performing pooja in village temples, they blow Shankha in temples, at the religious and social functions, prepare and supply Mukut in marriage functions and ceremonies. The ethnographic literature clearly indicates that the members of the caste are also engaged in selling of flower and blowing conches and they are not recognised as Brahmins. The representatives of the caste have stated that 'Mali' is a sub-caste of 'Muni' and 'Raula' castes and members of all the three castes are doing the same work and requested for inclusion of 'Muni' and 'Raula' on the contention that 'Mali' caste has already been included in the Central List of Backward Classes. The writings of E. Thurston & K

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Rangachari (para 7 above) also indicate that Mali, Muni and Roula are not different castes but one caste and recognised as Shudra. They also eat meat and fish. The Bench holds that 'Muni' and 'Roula' is a caste of temple servants whose traditional occupation and social status is same/similar to that of Mali caste. Though in absence of Brahminical priests they perform pooja in some village temples in a particular region (Ganjam district of Orissa), they are recognised as shudras and their traditional occupation is temple service which includes blowing Shankha, cleanliness of the temple premises, providing flowers and garlands, cultivating land devoted to the temple and providing Mukut, flowers, garlands, sandal wood besides blowing Shankha at the marriage, Janeu, and other ceremonies of the other castes. The caste is socially backward and merits inclusion in the Central List of Backward Classes of Orissa. As the representatives of the caste have claimed Muni & Raula as synonym/sub-caste of Mali and in the State List 'Muni' has been placed at entry No 106 alongwith 'Mali' caste and its synonyms/sub-castes, whereas 'Raula' has been given a new entry with Bhopa No. 184 which is apparently because of deciding the two cases separately by two different Benches of the State Commission, the Bench feels that 'Muni' and 'Roula' should be included in the Central List of Backward Classes alongwith Mali and its synonyms/sub-castes at entry No. 103. It is observed that there is some spelling variation in the name between 'Roula' as requested by the representatives of the caste and 'Raula' as appears in the State List of Backward Classes, the Bench feels that to maintain similarity the name should be entered as 'Raula' so that the members of the caste do not face any difficulty in getting the certificates. Therefore the Bench recommends for 'Muni and Raula' in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa at entry No. 103 so that the amended entry reads as :-

"103. Mali, Phulia, Sagbbaria, Bhajemali, Muni, Raula (Raula of Ganjam District only)."

U. P. Singh
20.1.2000
(U. P. SINGH)

Akshaya Bhai
28.01.2000
(SAHU AKSHAYA BHAI)

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P. S. Krishnan
P. S. KRISHNAN
Member Secretary
National Commission
Backward Classes

V. Advice of the Commission

14. The Commission considered and agreed in full with the findings of the Bench for Orissa 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:

'Muni' and 'Raula' should be included in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa at entry No. 103 alongwith 'Mali' and its sub-castes/synonyms as below :-

"103. Mali, Phulia, Saghbaria, Bhajemali, Muni, Raula (Raula of Ganjam District only)."

N. S. Krishna
28.1.2000

K. S. Krishna
28.01.2000

N. S. Krishna
30.1.2000

N. S. Krishna
1.2.2000

N. S. Krishna

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AUTHENTICATED
N. S. Krishna
P. S. KRISHNAN
Member Secretary
National Commission
for Backward Classes