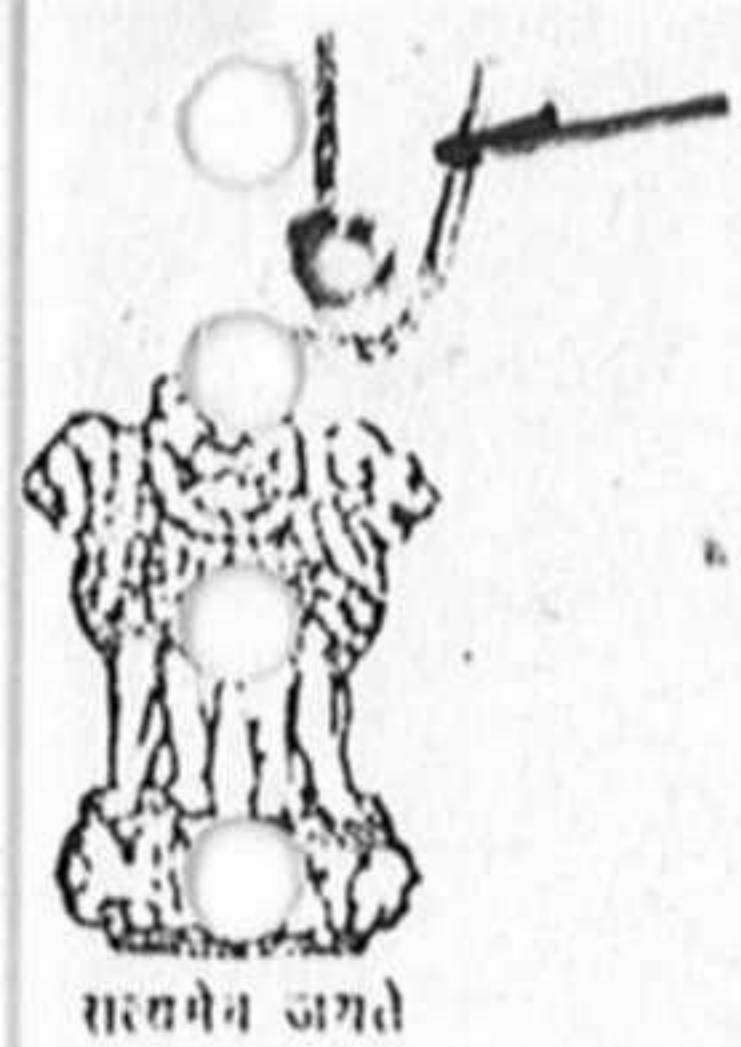




पी. एस. कृष्णन्  
P. S. KRISHNAN  
TEL. : 6183190

संदस्य-सचिव  
राष्ट्रीय पिछड़ा वर्ग आयोग 123

भारत सरकार  
त्रिकूट-१, भीकाजी 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. M.P. 52-53/99

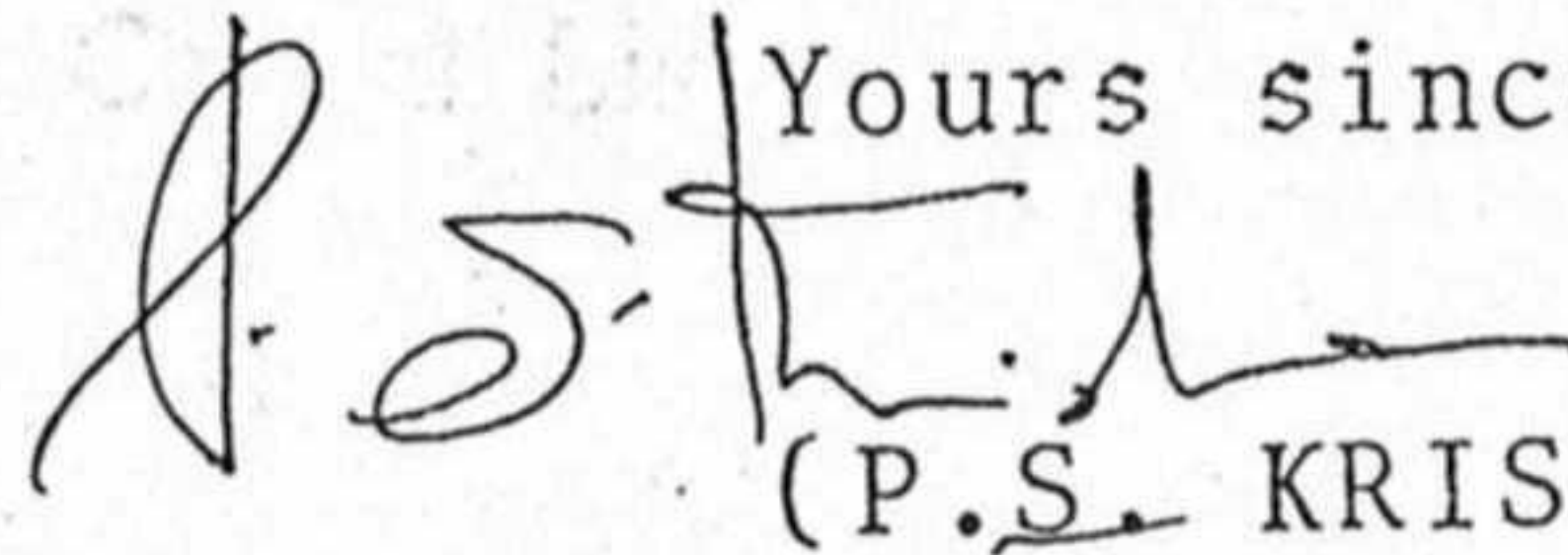
03. 08. 1999

Dear Smt. Das,

I am sending herewith the Advice of the National Commission for Backward Classes under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, 1993 for the Inclusion of "Sodhi, Sodi, Sundi, Sondi" and for the Rejection of the Request for Inclusion of "Sondik and Behra-Sondik" in the Central List of Backward Classes for Madhya Pradesh, duly authenticated, for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the Act.

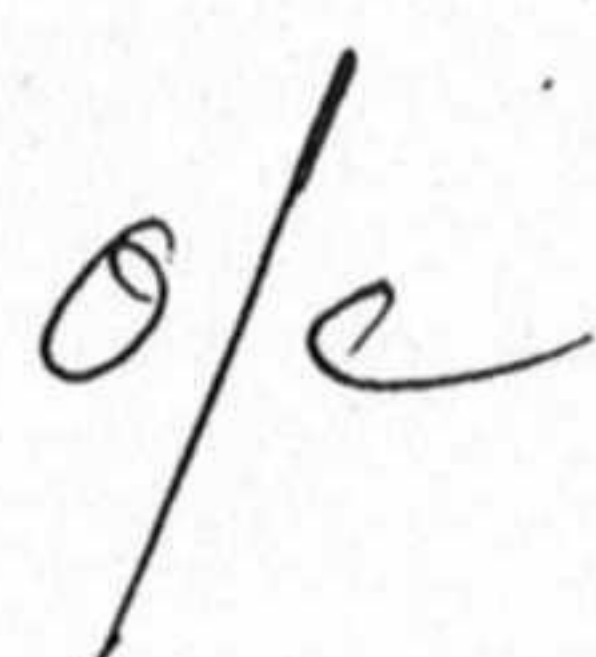
2. With this, Advices on 736 (367 for Inclusion + 369 for Rejection) castes, sub-castes, synonyms etc. have been tendered by the NCBC, after its reconstitution in February 1997, of which 730 (360 for Inclusion + 369 for Rejection) are still pending with the Government for Notification.

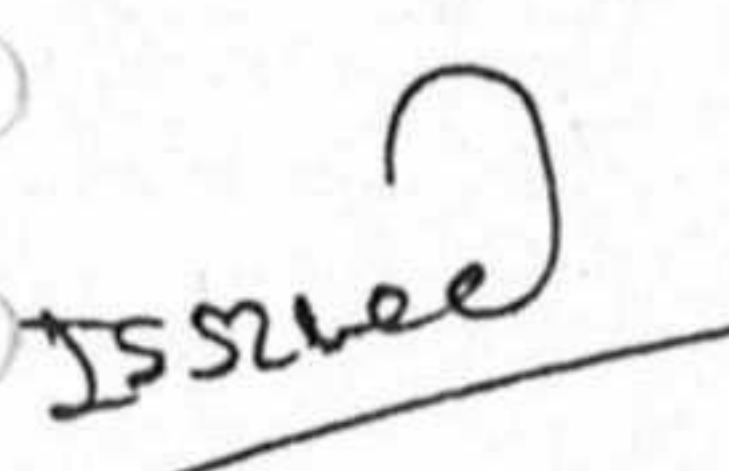
Yours sincerely

  
(P.S. KRISHNAN)

Encl: As stated

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



  
4/8/99

## NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

## MADHYA PRADESH BENCH

## Findings

Case : Request for inclusion of "Sodhi, Sundi, Sondik, Soni, Behra Sondik" in the Central List of Backward Classes for the State of Madhya Pradesh.

PER SHRI SAHU AKSHAYA BHAI, MEMBER

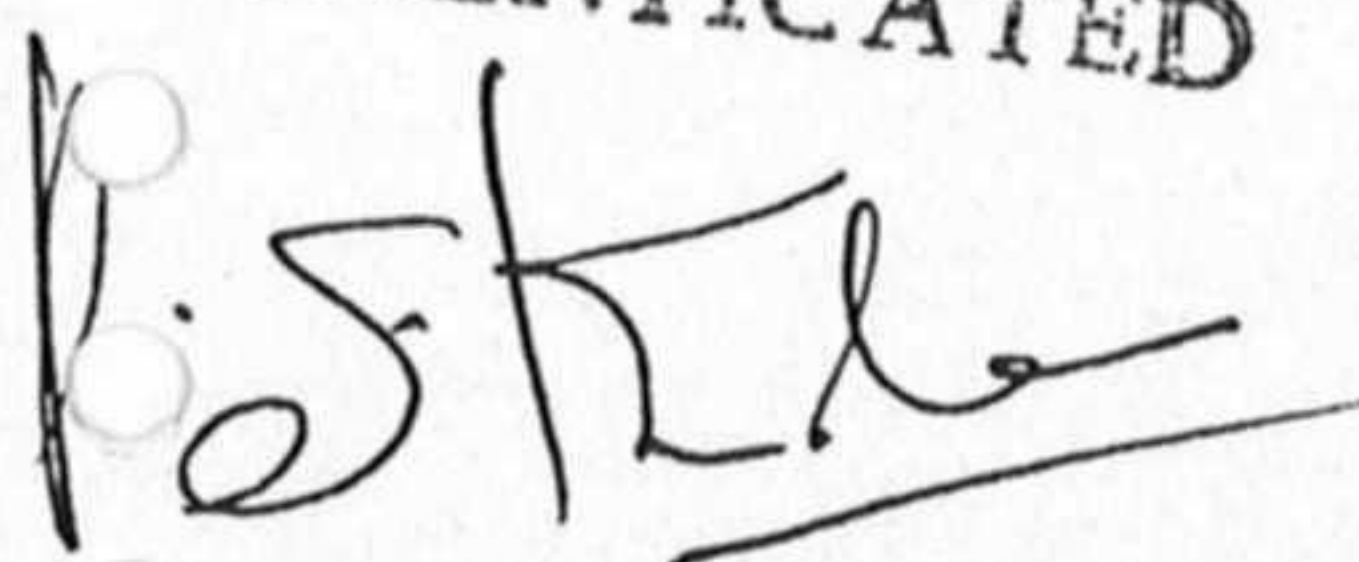
I. Request :

1. This case arises out of the Request received from Shri Radha Krishna Prasad Gupta, President and Shri Om Prakash Gupta, General Secretary, Madhya Pradesh Shondik Samaj Samiti, Bhopal for inclusion of "Sodhi, Sundi, Sondik, Soni, Behra Sondik" in the Central List of Backward Classes in the State of Madhya Pradesh.

II. Public Hearing

2. The three Member Bench of the Commission for Madhya Pradesh consisting of Hon'ble Members S/Shri Sahu Akshaya Bhai and U.P. Singh and Navtej Puadhi held a Public Hearing at Bhopal on 3.6.98 to examine the request in respect of this case. The State Government Commission was represented by Shri A.L. Naharia, Secretary and Shri Neeti Raj Singh, Deputy Director of State Commission for Backward Classes and Shri M.L. Khanna, Asstt. Director and Shri S.P. Tewari, Research Officer of Directorate of Backward Classes Welfare. The caste/community was represented by Shri Om Prakash Gupta, General Secretary, Madhya Pradesh Shondik Samaj Samiti during the Public Hearing.

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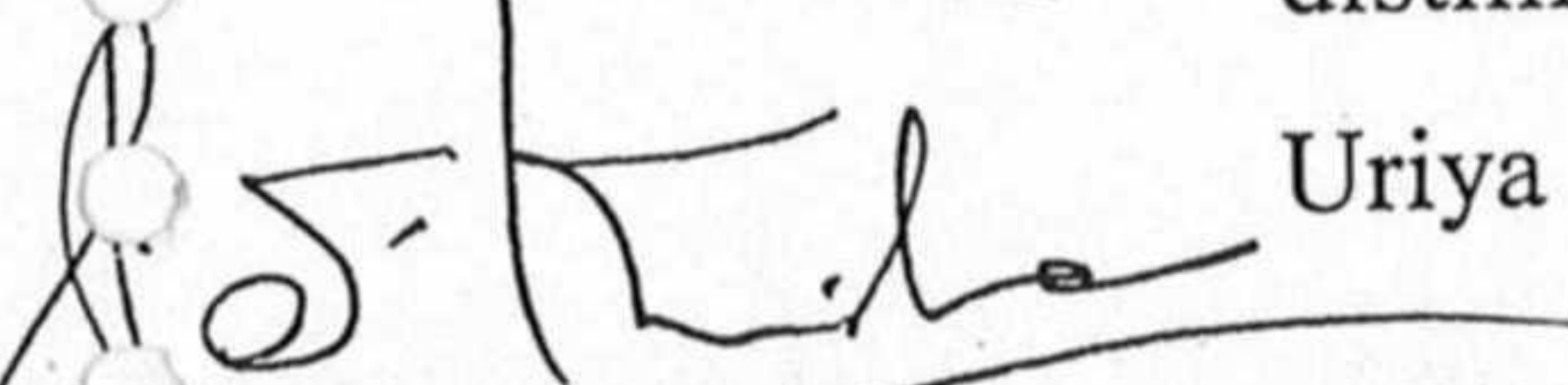


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Member Secretary  
National Commission  
for Backward Classes

**III. Facts**

3. The caste/community is listed in Mandal Commissions List at entry no. "256 Sodhi".
4. The caste/community was not earlier included in the Central List as it did not fulfill the criteria of Principle of Commonality (i.e. inclusion in the Central List of castes/communities which were found included in both the Mandal Commission's List as well as the State Government's List that existed at that time). Even now the caste/community is not included in the State List of Backward Classes for the State of Madhya Pradesh.
5. As indicated in the NCBC's Questionnaire, the main caste is 'Sodhi'. Sundi, Sondik, Behra Sodhi are sub-castes/sub-communities/synonyms of 'Sodhi'. The caste/community is mainly concentrated in the districts of Raigarh, Surguja and Bastar. It is stated that the caste/community is included in the State List of Bihar and Orissa. They have stated that the caste/community is socially backward. The occupation on which the members of the caste/community mainly depend for livelihood is stated as agriculture. Mostly caste/community people are small land holders and mainly involved in manual labour on their own land. The traditional occupation of the caste is mentioned as Liquor distilling. According to the Questionnaire 3% of the caste/community people are literates in the state. Total population live in Kachha Houses.
6. R.V. Russell and Hiralal in "The Tribes and Castes of Central Provinces of India," (Vol. IV, published by Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1993) described the caste as "Sundi, Sundhi, Sunri, Sodhi - The liquor-distilling caste of the Uriya country. The transfer of Sambalpur and the Uriya States to Bihar and Orissa has reduced their strength in the Central

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National Commission  
for Backward Classes

Provinces to about 5000, found in the Raipur District and the Bastar and Chota Nagpur, Feudatory States..... The word Sundi is derived from the Sanskrit Shaundik, spirit-seller. The caste has various genealogies of differing degrees of respectability tracing their origin to cross unions between other castes born of Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas..... Sir H. Risley relates the following stories current about the caste in Bengal, where its status is very low; According to Hindu ideas, distillers and sellers of strong drink rank among the most degraded castes, and a curious story in the Vaivarta Purana keeps alive the memory of their degradation.----- Large number of them have taken to cultivation.”

7. H.H. Risley in his book “The Tribes and Castes of Bengal” (Vol-2 PP. 275-280, published by Firma Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1981) describes the caste as “Sunri, Saundika, Sundaka, Shaha, a large and widely-diffused caste, found in most districts of Bengal and Bihar, whose original profession is believed to be the manufacture and sale of spirituous liquors.....The Sunries of Bengal marry their daughters as infants, and strictly prohibit widow-marriage and divorce.....Dr. Wise gives the following account of the social status of Sunries in Eastern Bengal:- “The Sunri is a very degraded individual, indulging freely in intoxicating liquors. A Brahman may not utter his name before noon. The majority of the workmen in the Government Abkari or Excise Department and Sunris and most of the ganja shops are owned by them. The Hindustani distiller (Kalar, Kalwar) has nothing in common with the Sunri as he only manufactures spirit and will not vend it – an occupation carried on by Kurmis, or Baniyas..... The entire caste, however, occupies a low position in the Hindu social system, and Telis are the highest caste which will take water from their hands”.

During the Public Hearing the Members of the caste/community told the Bench that they have come from the neighbouring states of Bihar, Orissa

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8.  
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Member Secretary  
National Commission  
for Backward Classes

and West Bengal. Their traditional occupation was liquor manufacture. Their caste/community is akin to the Kalal, Jaiaswal caste/community. The main caste is Sodhi and some people write Sundi, Sundhi, also. They told the Bench that they have requested the State Commission for inclusion of their caste in the State List. People of Kharia caste/community don't take food from their hand, which is also a lower caste.

9. The request of the caste/community for inclusion in the State List of Backward Classes for the State of Madhya Pradesh is under consideration.

10. The caste/community is included in the Central List of Backward Classes for the following States :

| <u>S.No.</u> | <u>State</u> | <u>Entry No.</u> | <u>Name of the caste/community</u> |
|--------------|--------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1.           | Bihar        | 83               | Sudi, .....                        |
| 2.           | Orissa       | 160              | Sunari, Sundi/Sundhi               |

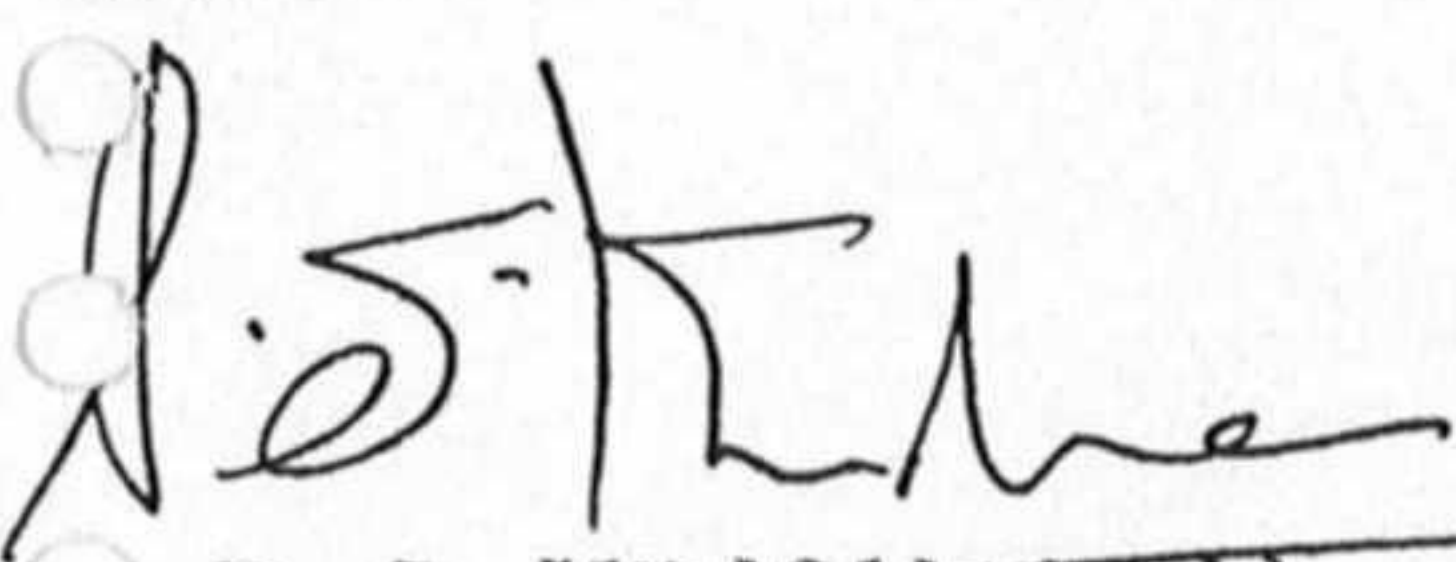
11. The caste/community is included in SC List for the State of West Bengal at entry No."57 Sunri(excluding Saha)".

12. The Kalar, Kalal caste/community of distillers and sellers of fermented liquor is already included in the Central List of Backward Classes for the State of Madhya Pradesh.

#### IV. Findings

13. From the above facts and ethnographic literature it is evident that the Sodhi, Sundi, Sondi caste/community is traditionally a caste of liquor distillers indeed a socially, educationally backward class. It is equivalent to the caste of Kalar, Kalal and Kalwar, but not a sub-caste/synonym thereof. The caste is also covered under the "Fast-Track" category in terms of item A Social -2 (e) of the "Guidelines for Consideration of

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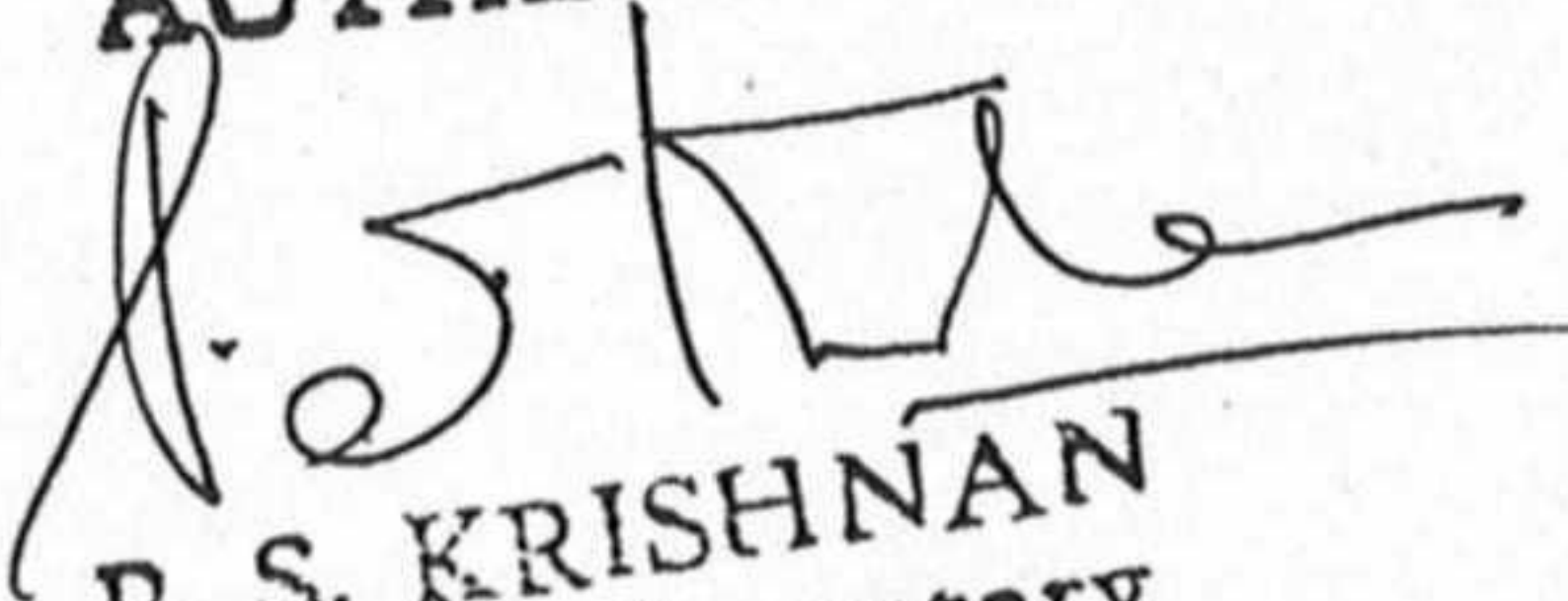
  
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Member Secretary  
National Commission  
for Backward Classes

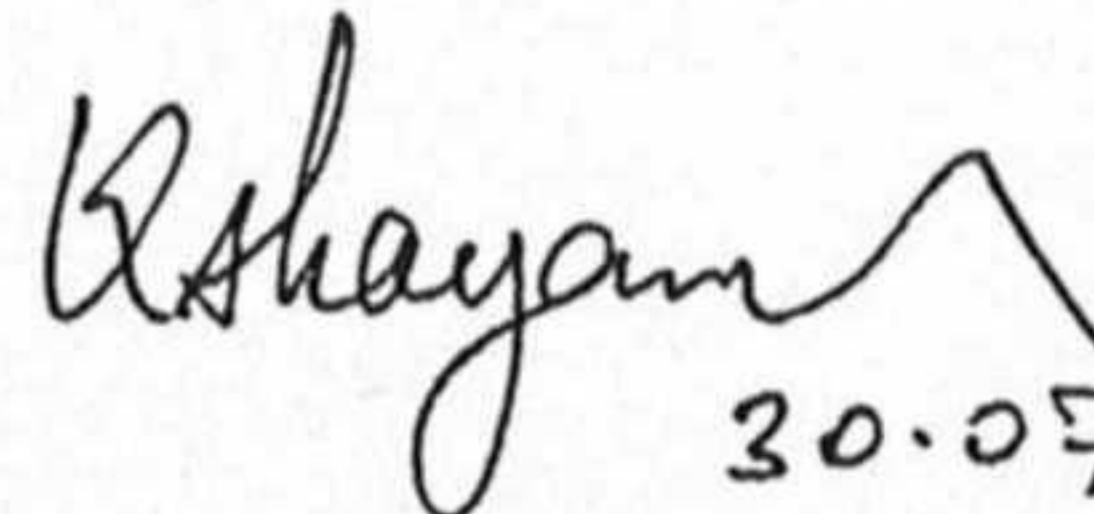
Request for Inclusion and Complaints of under Inclusion in the Central List of other Backward Classes" and para 7 of Procedural Clarification on Guidelines as an artisanal caste. The information regarding literacy percentage (3% as quoted in the questionnaire) and the further statement that their entire population live in Kachha house cannot be correct, but all the same time there is no doubt that it is a socially and educationally backward caste/community and therefore deserve, to be included in the Central List of Backward Classes for Madhya Pradesh. The request for inclusion of 'Sondik and Behra Sondik' is liable to be rejected as it is not a synonym/sub-caste of 'Sodhi, Sodi, Sundi, Sondi' and their inclusion as synonyms will result in misuse by pseudo backward classes. The Bench opines that "Sodhi, Sodi, Sundi, Sondi" should be included in the Central List of Backward Classes for Madhya Pradesh at SL. No. 65 as follows:

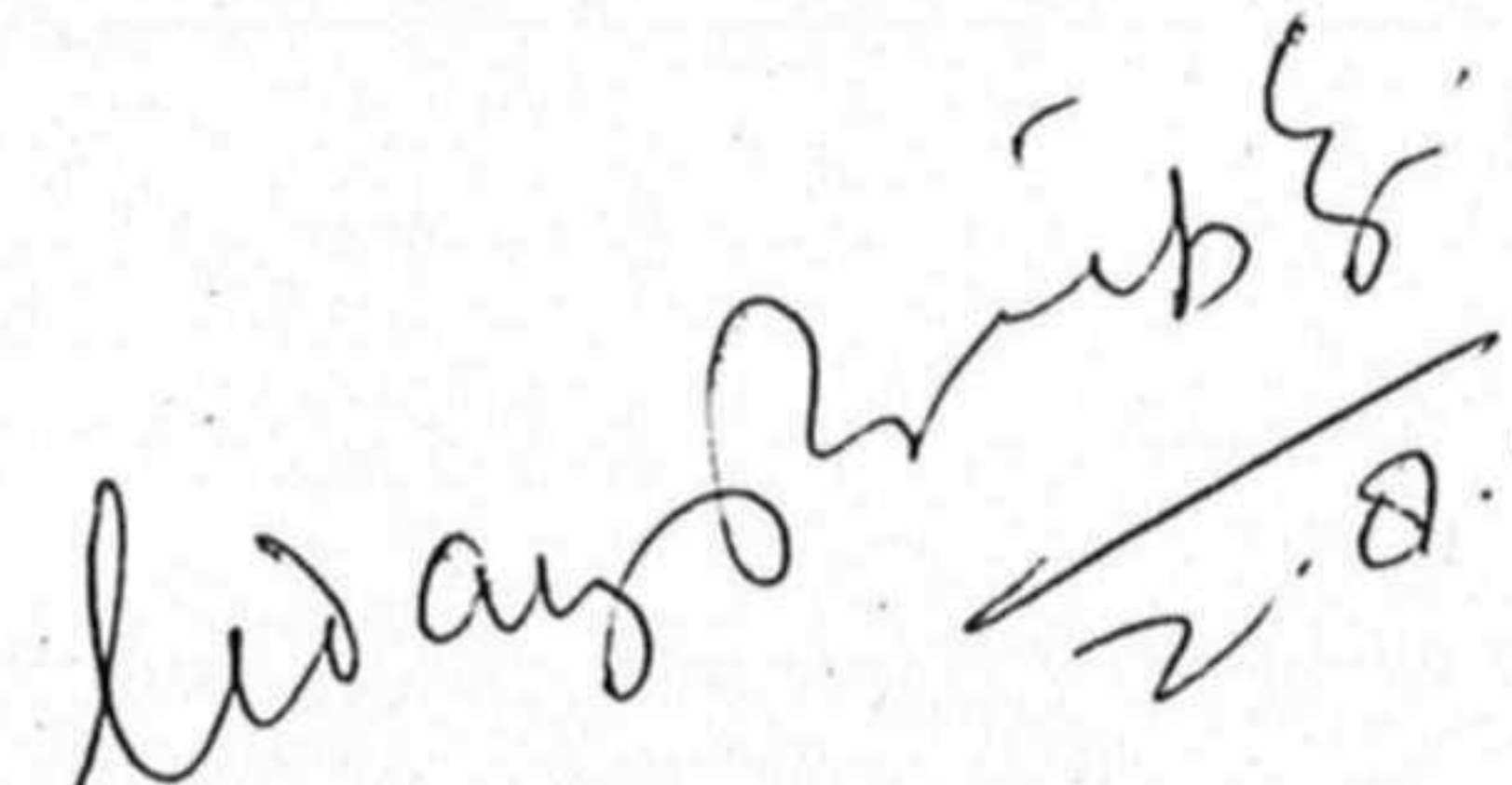
"65 Sodhi, Sodi, Sundi, Sondi".

As one of the Members of the Bench Shri Navtej Puadhi unfortunately passed away on 16.08.1998, the Findings are formulated and signed only by two Members, including the coordinating Member of the Bench.

**AUTHENTICATED**

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

  
30.07.99  
(SAHU AKSHAYA BHAI)

  
2.8.99  
(UDAY PRATAP SINGH)

V. Advice of the Commission

15. The Commission considered and agreed in full with the Findings of the Madhya Pradesh 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.

"Sodhi, Sodi, Sundi, Soni" should be included in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for Madhya Pradesh at SL. No. 65 as follows:-

"65 Sodhi, Sodi, Sundi, Soni"

The request for inclusion of "Sondik and Behra-Sondik" as a synonyms/sub-caste of "Sodhi, Sodi, Sundi, Soni" should be rejected.

*Ashayam*  
30.07.99

*Madhya Pradesh*  
2.8.99

*P. S. Krishnan*  
2.8.99

*Dr. M. S. S. S.*  
2/8/99

AUTHENTICATED

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

*P. U. S. S. S.*  
3.8.99