

National Commission for Backward Classes

Himachal Pradesh Bench

Case : **Request for inclusion of the caste/sub-caste/community/synonym "Nai" in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Himachal Pradesh**

I. Request

This case arises from the request received in the National Commission for Backward Classes from the State Government of Himachal Pradesh for inclusion of caste/sub-caste/community/synonym "Nai" in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Himachal Pradesh.

II. Public Hearing

2. The Himachal Pradesh Bench of the Commission consisting of Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian, Hon'ble Chairman, Shri S.K. Purkayastha, Hon'ble Member-Secretary, and Dr. Subbha Somu, Hon'ble Member held a Public Hearing at Shimla on 05th May, 2007 in respect of the requests received by the Commission from Himachal Pradesh.

3. At the Public Hearing, the State Government of Himachal Pradesh was represented by Shri Bhim Sen, Principal Secretary, Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, Smt. Anuradha Thakur, Director (SW), Shri Wahid Khan, Deputy Secretary (Welfare) and Shri Suresh Kumar Bhardwaj, Deputy Secretary, HP State Backward Classes Commission.

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III. Facts

4. The Position with regard to the "Nai" caste/community as reflected in different lists is as under:-

Mandal List

48. Nai, Bamneru, Hajam, Kuleen-Brahman, Patiyal

State List

22. Hajam, Nai

Central List

26. Hajam

IV. Submissions at the Public Hearing

On behalf of the caste/community 'Nai', its representative Shri Naseem Mohammad Diddan, House No.766/4, Nahan, Dist. Sirmour (HP) appeared before the Bench and stated that the "Nai" community includes persons from both Hindus, and Muslims communities. The occupation of the Muslim caste/community is the same that of Hindu Nai. They are very poor. Hence they need to be included in the Central List of OBCs for the State of Himachal Pradesh so that the caste/community can avail the benefits which are available to the OBCs. He further added that "Hajjam" and "Nai" are same caste/community, but they are identified by different names in different areas.

The Principal Secretary, Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of Himachal Pradesh stated that even though there is no difference between "Hajjam" and "Nai" because of the similarity in their profession but in the revenue records of the State they have been found mentioned separately at different places. He also stated that earlier no public hearing had been held for inclusion of this caste/community in the Central List of OBCs for HP.

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The commission took note of the following ethnographic account in respect of the caste/community "**Nai**":-

People of India : Himachal Pradesh (Vol.XXIV) by Shri K.S.Singh (Pages 405-410)

The Nai is a well-known community of barbers. They are also known as Hajam among Muslims and regard themselves as Kuleen Brahman among Hindus.....The community perceives a wider interregional distribution and is found all over the country. In the State they are distributed in almost all districts but their area wise population is not known.....The Nais have several got/gotra and clans. Among the gotra, the common ones are Kasab/Kashyap, Bhardwaj and Kaundal. Several Rajput clans are distinguished which are also used as surnames by younger, educated persons. ..The status of women remains low and they do not seek employment or do not contribute to family income except that they seek their ceremonial dues from their patrons at the time of marriage. They also lack powers of social control and participation in political activities. But they do all household chores and participate in agricultural and animal husbandry work, collect fuel and fodder and fetch potable water. They take part in social and religious ceremonies. They do not have decision-making powers in vital matters but regulate family expenditure.

The family / clan deities are different at different places and are usually the same as they are also village, local and regional deities. They traditionally share and exchange kachcha and pucca food and water with the savarna but not with the Chamar, Julaha, Dumna and Hesi.

India's communities by Shri K.S. Singh (Vol. VI) (Pages 2546-2554)

Nai. The Nai are also known as Nau-Thakur, Naua Khabas, Sen Raja, Lagi, Savita Samaj Nau, Banmeru, Kuleen Brahman, or Hajjam (Muslim). Crooke (1896) mentions that Nai is the corrupt form of shapitri (one who bathes). On the other hand, Rose (1919) mentions that Nai is either a corrupt form of the Sanskrit word

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napika, meaning one who cleans nails, or it is derived from the word nahna meaning a person who acts at will or does not refuse to act. However, it is claimed that the name could have been derived from the word nyai (justice) as the Nai are considered to be good judges. The Nai also believe that they originated from the navel of Lord Shiva to cut and clean the nails of Parvati. They are distributed in Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chandigarh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam and Tripura.

The traditional occupation of the Nai is cutting hair, beard and nails, cleaning ears, extracting teeth and lancing boils. Besides these, they perform some rituals and other important duties related to marriage and other festive occasions. They act as matchmakers and invitation distributors, and carry presents from one house to another. And in lieu of their services, they are remunerated in kind and cash annually. Presently, a large-scale occupational mobility is reported among them.

In Himachal Pradesh, the Nai are also known as Hajjam, Bammeru or Kuleen-Brahman. Some of their clans are Jaswal, Jammual, Kapoor, Patial, Chandel, Gangotiye, Katoch, Kashyap, Bhardwaj, and Kaundal. The Nai of HP practice endogamy at the community level and exogamy at clan and village levels. They thrive on their traditional occupation, though many of them work in parlours in towns and suburbs. They also practice agriculture and animal husbandry. Many people have joined government services as teachers, clerks, junior engineers, military personnel, etc.....Political leadership among the Nai of Himachal has emerged at the village Panchayat level. There has been considerable increase in their literacy rate. They are affected by the development programmes related to health and medical care, family welfare, mass media, communication, electricity, public distribution, banking etc. However, many are still socio-economically backward.

A glossary of the Tribes and Castes of Punjab and North-West Frontier Province – HA Rose (Vol.III) (Pages 140-150)

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Nai. The Nais form a very highly organized occupational caste, which performs several distinct functions, and which as a rule, jealously protects itself against the admission of strangers in blood into its fold.

The word Nai is unquestionably derived from the Sanskrit word napika which means one who cleans nails. Folk-etymology, however derives nai from nahna, means one who never refuses.....Socially the Nais have a complex and interesting system of social groups, which vary in different parts of the Province and the clue to their intricacies is to be looked for in the social organizations of their dominant patron caste in the locality. The Hindu Nais are mainly divided into Bhanbheru and the Gola. The Mohammadan Nais in Hissar are divided into Bhallam, Chauhan and Kharal. In Gurgaon they form two classes (i) the Shaikh or Turkman; and (ii) the Hindu Nais who were converted to Islam. The later comprise Bhattis, Chauhans, Nirbans, Tanurs and Ghorias.

.....The Nais do not serve the low castes such as the Chuhars and Chamars.

V. Findings

From the evidence and documents presented at the time of the Public Hearing and also on perusal of ethnographic literatures by eminent authors and other available information, it is the finding of the Bench that traditionally the "Nai" serve as barber to most of the communities. Besides these, they perform some rituals and other important duties related to marriage and on other festive occasions. They act as matchmakers and invitation distributors, and carry presents from one house to another. In rural areas, they serve the dominant patron caste activities. The boys study up to college level and the girls up to school level. They also have low representation in Government services. The caste/community "Nai" is already included in the Central list of OBCs in many States, which are as follows: -

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<u>States</u>	<u>Castes/Communities</u>	<u>Entry No.</u>
Bihar	Nai	62
NCT of Delhi	Nai, Hajjam, Nai (Sabita)	43
Haryana	Hajjam, Nai, Sain, Salmani	29
Madhya Pradesh	Hajjam (Barber), Nai (Barber), Salmani	59(14)
Rajasthan	Nai, Sain, Baid Nai	39
Maharashtra	Navi, Nhavi / Nai / Nabhik,	94
Daman & Diu	Nhavi, Nai	17

In view of the foregoing facts and evidence, the Bench is of the considered view that the caste/community "**Nai**" is socially and educationally backward and may be included in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Himachal Pradesh as synonyms of main caste/community at entry No.26. The entry after inclusion will read as under:-

"26. Hajam, Nai"



(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairperson



(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary



(Dr. Subbha Somu)
Member

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VI. Advice of the Commission

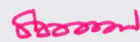
The Commission considered and agreed in full with the above Finding of the Himachal Pradesh Bench and decided to tender the following Advice to the Central Government under Section 9(1) of the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993, for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the Act:-

"The caste/community/sub-castes/synonym **"Nai"** is socially and educationally backward and should be included in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Himachal Pradesh at entry No.26 The entry after inclusion will read as under:-

"26. Hajam, Nai"


(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairperson


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Member-Secretary


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