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सदस्य-सचिव
राष्ट्रीय पिछड़ा वर्ग आयोग

भारत सरकार
बिल्डिंग-१, भीकानजी कामा प्लेस, नई दिल्ली - ११००६६

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

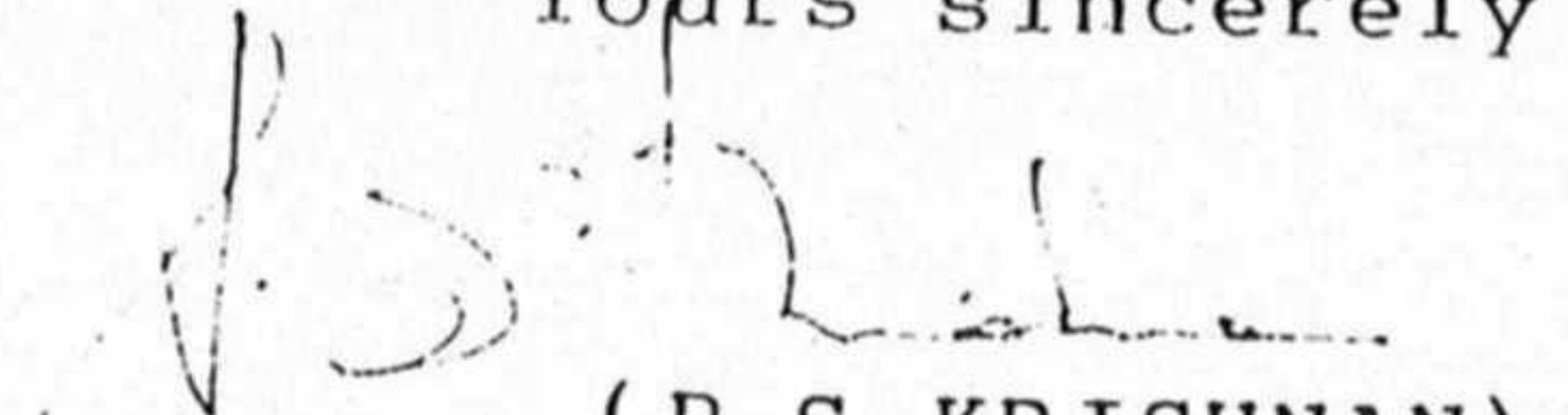
NCBC Advice No. A.P. 48/99

07.05.1999

Dear Smt. Das,

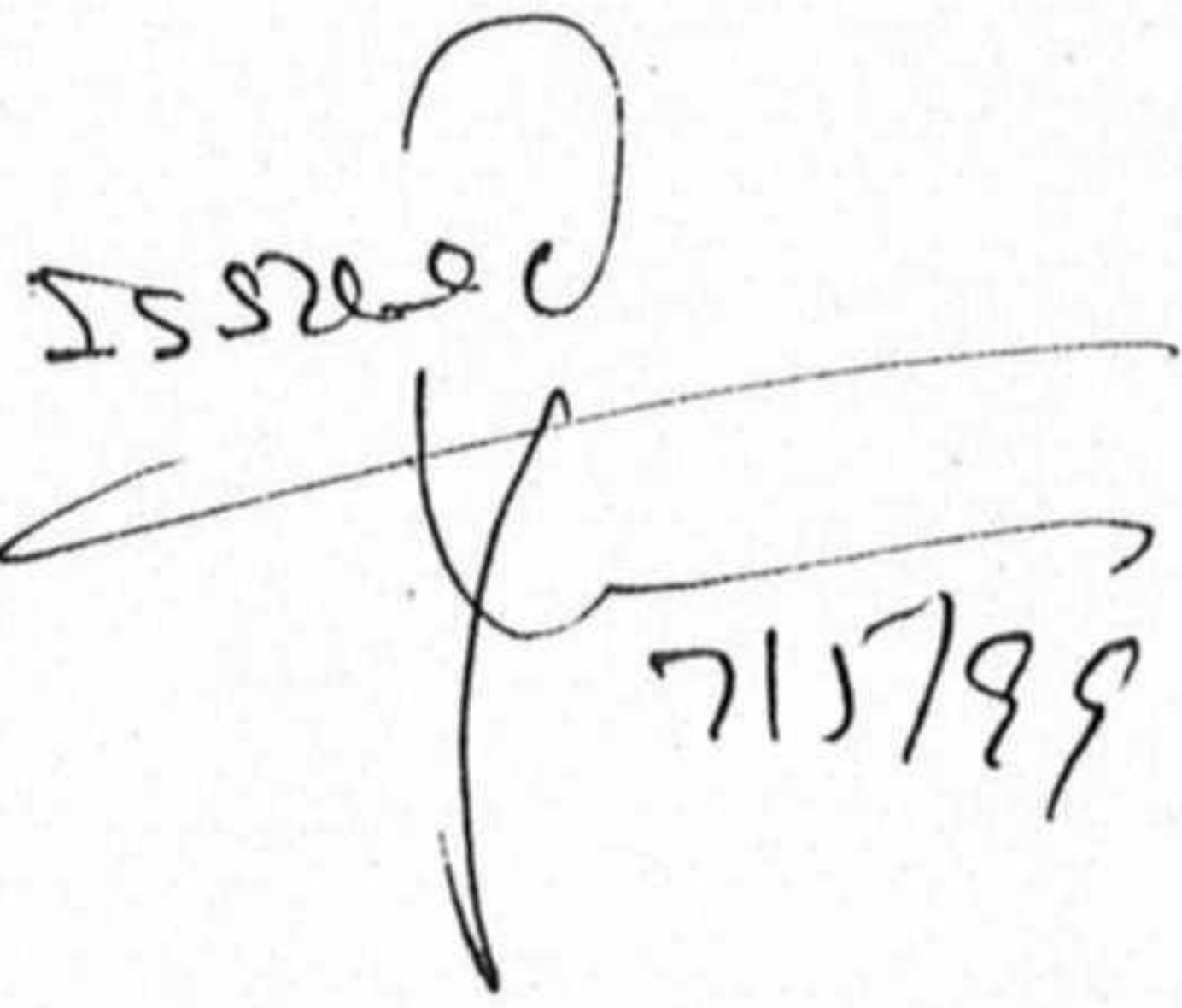
I am sending herewith the Advice of the National Commission for Backward Classes under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act for the Inclusion of "Vannia, Vanniar, Vannikula-Kshatriya" caste/community in the Central List of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh, duly authenticated, for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the NCBC Act.

Yours sincerely


(P.S. KRISHNAN)

Encl: As stated.

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

Issued

7/5/99

o/c

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

Andhra Pradesh BenchFINDINGS

Per Shri P.S.Krishnan, Member-Secretary

Case: Request for Inclusion of "Vanniyakula Kshatriya" and its synonyms, specifically "Vanniar, Vannia, Gowndar, Vannia Gowndar, Nayagar, Naicker" in the Central List of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh, as a synonym of "Agnikulakshatriya" etc occurring in Group A of the State List of Backward Classes.

I. Request

This case arises from the Request received in this Commission from Chittoor Dt. Vanniyakula Kshatriya Sangam, 9-176, Doraswamy Ayyangar Road, Chittoor (A.P.) 517001 inter alia for the inclusion of "Vanniyakula Kshatriya" and its synonyms, specifically "Vanniar, Vannia, Gowndar, Nayagar, Naicker" in the Central List of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh, as a synonym of "Agnikulakshatriya" etc. occurring in Group A of the State List of Backward Classes.

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 Public Hearings inter alia in respect of this caste/community at Hyderabad on

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21.8.1997 and 5.5.98. At the Public Hearing held on 5.5.98 the State Government was represented by Shri L. Shafiquzzaman, Secretary in charge of Backward Classes Welfare, Shri Chandrasekhara Rao, Joint-Director, BC Welfare and other officers in the office of the Commissioner for Backward Classes Welfare. No member or representative of the caste/community was present during both the Public Hearings inspite of wide publicity about Public Hearings through media as well as separate intimation to the request-making party, i.e, Chittoor Dt. Vannivakula Kshatriya Sangam by the office of the NCBC each time.

III. Facts

3. Relevant entries in different lists of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh are as follows:-

(i) Mandal Commission's List

"204. Palli--Vada Balika, Gangavar, Goondla Valari, Vanyakulk-Shatriya (Vannokapu, Venneredd Nayyala and Pattapu)

(ii) State List

"Group A"

"1. Aonikulakshatriya, Palli, Vadabaliya, Bestha, Jalari, Gangavar, Gangaputra, Goondla, Vanyakulakshatriya(Vannekapu), Vennereddi, Pallikapu, Pallireddi, Nayyala and Pattapu"

(iii) Central List

"1. Aonikulakshatriya
Palli

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Vadabaliya
Bestha
Jalari
Gangavar
Gangaputra
Goondla
Vanyakulakshatriya
Vannekapu
Vannereddi
Pallikapu
Palliredi
Nayyala
Pattapu"

4. Chittoor Dt. Vanniyakula Kshatriya Sangam in their Memorandum dated 10.10.1994 has stated that "Vanniakula Kshatriya" community is "the single largest community in Tamil Nadu and they are the linguistic minorities in Andhra Pradesh. They are tillers and toilers of the soil....." The Sangam has stated that the Vanniakula Kshatriya has the following synonyms:- (1) Vanniar, (2) Vannia, (3) Gownder, (4) Vannia Gowndar, (5) Nayagar, (6) Naicker, (7) Padayachi, (8) Palli, (9) Palli Reddy, (10) Palli Kapu, (11) Vannia Kapu, (12) Vannia Reddy, (13) Vannia Reddiar, (14) Agnikula Kshatriya. The Sangam further states that out of the above, all the names are not listed in the State List entry no. 1 under Group A and therefore has specifically requested for inclusion of the first six synonyms mentioned above. The Sangam has also stated that "Our community with the several titles and names should be considered and noted in the list of Backward Classes maintained by the State and Central Governments and in the Report of the NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES".

5. The Sangam has not furnished detailed data/information

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regarding the caste/community by filling up the Questionnaire though the office of the NCBC has specifically asked them to do so, vide letter dated 10.10.94 and the reminder letter dated 6.1.97.

6. From the report of Anantharaman Commission on the basis of which the existing State List was originally prepared and notified in 1970, it is seen that the Vanyakulakshatriya, Agnikulakshatriya and other names in the State List denote a group of castes whose principal occupation is fishing. About them, the following description is given in the report of that Commission:-

"The principal occupation of this numerous castes is fishing. Hunting and carrying of palanquins are two subsidiary occupations..... They are known by different names in different localities namely, Agnikula Kshatriya, Vada-Baliya, Bestha, Jalari, Gangawar, Goondla, Gangaputra, Palli, Vanyakula Kshatriya, Vanne-Kapu, Vanne Reddi, Palli Kapu, Palle Reddi and Neyyala etc. They are scattered in all districts. They live mostly on seashore or in slum areas in sea side towns and in isolated places near these towns. The places of their habitation are often not easily accessible and do not have even basic amenities. In some places even drinking water is not available. There are no latrines or arrangements for removal of the refuse. There are no roads. They live in unhygienic surroundings, constantly in the grip of hunger and disease..... The fishermen going out on the sea lead a very arduous life....."

7. The Vanniyakula Kshatriya caste/community which has been described by the Sangam in its letter of Request as "tillers and toilers of the soil" is patently different from the groups of fishing castes described in the foregoing paragraph. The former is the caste/community which is

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referred to by Edgar Thurston and Rangachari (Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, Madras, 1993, first published 1909) as "Vanni Kula Kshatriya.--- A synonym of the Pallis who claim to belong to the fire race of Kshatriyas". Under the head "Palli or Vanniyan", Thurston and Rangachari describes them further as under:-

" 'The Vanniyan,' Mr. Nelson states [Manual of the Madura district] 'are at the present time a small and obscure agricultural caste, but there is reason to believe that they are descendents of ancestors who, in former times, held a good position among the tribes of South India.....

'The name Vanniyan,' Mr. H.A.Stuart writes,[Madras Census Report, 1891] 'seems to have been introduced by the Brahmans, possibly to gratify the desire of the Pallis for genealogical distinction. Padaiyachi means a soldier, and is also of late origin. That the Pallis were once an influential and independent community may be admitted, and in their present desire to be classed as Kshatriyas they are merely giving expression to this belief, but, unless an entirely new meaning is to be given to the term Kshatriya, their claim must be dismissed as absurd. After the fall of the Pallava dynasty, the Pallis became agricultural servants under the Vellalas, and it is only since the advent of British rule that they have begun to assert their claim to a higher position.' Further, Mr. W.Francis writes[Madras Census Report, 1901] that 'this caste has been referred to as being one of those which are claiming for themselves a position higher than that which Hindu society is inclined to accord them. Their ancestors are socially superior to themselves, but they do not content themselves with stating this, but in places are taking to wearing the sacred thread of the twice-born, and claim to be Kshatriyas. They have published pamphlets to prove their descent from that caste, and they

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Merchant	Fitter
Cultivator	Sawyer
Bullock and pony cart driver	Oil-presser
Printer	Gardener
Lascar	Polisher
Sweetmeat vendor	Bricklayer
Flower vendor.	Mason

....."

9. The caste/community in question is included in the

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IV. Findings

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similarities in names and get included as synonyms of the Telugu-speaking fishermen caste of A.P. By the Request for Inclusion as synonyms of Agnikulakshatriya etc. which is item no. 1 of the Central List and item no. 1 of Group A of the State List, obviously the representatives of the community are trying to overreach themselves by seeking to achieve two goals ---- not merely to get entry into the lists of BCs but also to get entry as a synonym of a caste in Group A of the State List with which the community of the Request-making party has nothing to do except for the coincidental similarity of some names. Therefore, the Request for inclusion of "Vanniyakula Kshatriya, Vanniar, Vannia, Gowndar, Vannia Gowndar, Nayagar, Naicker" as synonyms of Agnikulakshatriya etc. at item no. 1 of the Central List should be rejected. Of the seven names mentioned, three, viz., Gowndar, Nayagar, Naicker are clearly titles or surnames and not caste names. Gowndar, Nayagar, Naicker are also used by some other caste/communities of Tamil Nadu. "Vannia Gowndar" is the combination of the basic caste name and a title. Out of the above 7 names the only true caste names are Vannia or Vanniar. While the former is the stem of the caste name the latter is its plural form or respectful form. It is only these names and the new name adopted by them as part of psychological amelioration of status, viz. "Vannikula Kshatriya" that may be considered for separate inclusion provided that the community is established to be actually existing in Chittoor district which is on the border of the Vanniya heartland of Tamil Nadu as a peasant caste. Though neither the Request-making party nor any other member or representative of the Vannia or Vanniar caste/community appeared before the Bench during the Public Hearing, the Bench on enquiry from Collector & District Magistrate, Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh has learnt that the community of Vannia or Vanniar does really exist in that district. According to the information received from

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Chittoor district Collector, most of the Vannia families "are located in the villages and mandals close to Tamilnadu in the erstwhile North Arcot District. The principal occupation of these families is agricultural cooly and occasionally fishing activities are taken up as a subsidiary occupation. Most of them speak Tamil more fluently. They are also being called Vannikula Kshatriya and Vannireddis." Their fishing activities as a subsidiary occupation has nothing in common with the marine fishing, which is the main occupation of the Telugu-speaking community referred to earlier. In fact, it is clarified in the statement enclosed by the District Collector, Chittoor that in the two villages where they do fishing they do so exclusively for self consumption, their principal occupation in these two villages also being "coolly", that is, wage labour. The Bench is of the view that the social position of the Vannia caste/community of the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh cannot be different from that of the same community in the adjoining parts of the neighbouring Tamil Nadu where they are recognised as a Backward Class (In fact the adjoining districts of Tamil Nadu and the portions of Chittoor district where they live form one continuum and Chittoor district was carved out of the larger North Arcot district of the old Madras Presidency). This conclusion is also in conformity with the fact that the Vannia caste/community is included in the list of BCs in Pondicherry and Karnataka. Of the various names mentioned by the Request-making party all except three, viz., Vannia, Vanniar and Vannikula Kshatriya, have been ruled out. According to the Chittoor District Collector, the names by which they are known are Vanniar, Vannikula Kshatriya and Vannireddy. Apparently, the community had not mentioned Vannireddy because they were trying, with misguided but futile cleverness, to tag themselves on to a fishermen caste in the Central List, which is at Group A in the State List, one of the synonyms of which is Vannereddy. Vannereddy and Vannireddy are not the same though they are deceptively similar except for one vowel sound. In a situation where

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false-certificates are not too common, one could have taken the risk of allowing the synonym "Vannireddy", but in the present situation where such scope is ab initio evident considering that they are trying to secure entry into Group A of the State List, it is risky to allow this synonym and only the names Vannia, Vanniar and Vannikula Kshatriya can be allowed, but the last name should have a hyphen between the two parts of the name. In view of these, it is the Finding of the Bench that "Vannia, Vanniar, Vannikula-Kshatriya" should be included in the Central list of Backward Classes for Andhra Pradesh at entry no. 102, as follows:-

"102. Vannia, Vanniar, Vannikula-Kshatriya"

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V. Advice of the Commission

11. The Commission considered and agreed in full with the above Findings 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:-

"Vannia, Vanniar, Vannikula-Kshatriya" be included in the Central List of Backward Classes at entry no. 102, as follows:-

"102. Vannia, Vanniar, Vannikula-Kshatriya"

12. On account of the unfortunate demise of one of the Members

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Member, Commission
National Backward Classes

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.

K. Shyam
23.05.99

A. S. Krishnan
3.5.99

P. S. Krishnan
6/5/99

Madhav
7.5.99

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