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त्रिकूट-१, भीकाजी कामा प्लेस, नई दिल्ली - ११० ०६६

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

NCBC Advice No. Orissa 86/2001

19.9.2001

Dear Smt. Asha Das,

I am sending herewith the advice of the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, 1993, for the rejection of the request for inclusion of 'Ezhava' 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 Act.

Yours sincerely


(C. T. Benjamin)

Mrs. Asha Das
Secretary to Government of India
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
Shastri Bhavan
NEW DELHI 110 001

Encl: As stated

NCBC Advice No. Orissag/2001

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

ORISSA BENCH

FINDINGS

Case : Request for inclusion of "Ezhava" in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa.

I. Request

This case arises from the Request received in the NCBC from Shri M.B. Pyari Raj, At/P.O. Rengali, Distt. Sambalpur, Orissa, Shri K.B. Aravindan S/o K.V. Balakrishnan, At/P.O. Jhaarsuguda, Distt. Sundargarh & Others and others for inclusion of 'Ezhava' in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa.

II. Public Hearing

2. A Four-Member Bench of the Commission consisting of Justice B.L. Yadav, Hon'ble Chairman; Smt. Neera Shastri; Dr. B.M. Das and Shri M.S. Matharoo, Hon'ble Members held a Public Hearing on 19-4-2001 at Bhubaneswar. At the Public Hearing the State Government was represented by Shri P.C. Patnaik, Director (OBC)-cum-Joint Secretary and Shri M.K. Mallick, Under Secretary, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare Department. Dr. N. K. Behura, Dr. K.C. Jana and Dr. Srinivas Sahu, Hon'ble Members represented the State Commission for Backward Classes. Shri K.B. Arvindan appeared before the Bench on behalf of the 'Ezhava' community

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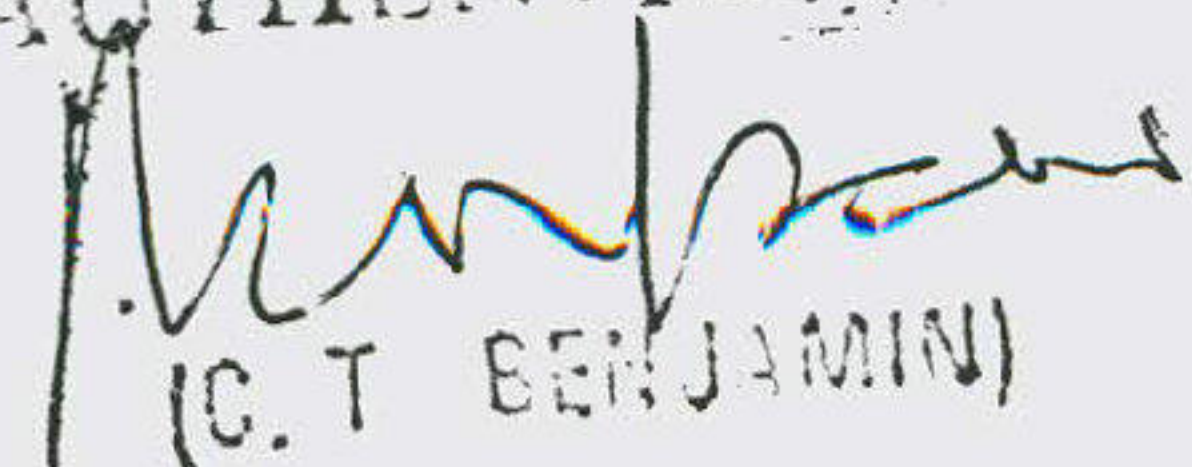
III. Facts

3. Shri Pyari Raj in his request for inclusion of Ezhava in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa, has stated that his parents were originally residents of Kerala and migrated to Orissa during 1954 and settled at Rengali Sambalpur district of Orissa and started there own business and acquired there own dwelling house and landed property at Rengali. He along with his brother and sister were born and brought up at Rengali and are residing as residents of Orissa. He completed his education at Rengali & Sambalpur and has become resident of Orissa politically and economically.

4. Shri K.B. Aravindan and others have stated that they originally belonged to the State of Kerala and migrated to Orissa during 50s in search of employment and business. Since they are staying here for such a long period, and mingled with the people of Orissa and educated in Oriya medium - socially, politically and economically they have become natives of Orissa. They have contributed in the development of Western parts of Orissa, such as in the construction of Hirakund dam, in the field of medical and health.

5. The NCBC's Questionnaire filled in by Mr. M.B. Pyari Raj contains the following information:-

- (i) Ezhava is the main caste and Thiyya is synonym/sub-caste.
- (ii) The population of the caste in the State is approximately 31000 spread all over the State.
- (iii) The caste is generally regarded as socially backward. The members of the caste/community mainly depend for livelihood on toddy tapping, agriculture and tyre repairing.
- (iv) Women of the caste/community, as a general practice, are housewives and engaged in agriculture in own land. And not engaged in any other manual labour for wages.

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- (v) Members of the caste/community are not involved in the traditional craft and not identified/linked with any other traditional or hereditary occupation.
- (vi) The literacy rate of the caste/community in the State is approximately 65%. Out of the total number of literates of the caste/community in the State 50% are women. Twenty-eight percent members of the caste are matriculates.
- (vii) The caste is considered as OBC in the State of Kerala. Due to castism and discrimination back in 1940s and 1950s people migrated from Kerala to other States for dignity and search of livelihood.

6. The caste has not been included in the Mandal List of Backward Classes for Orissa and also does not find place in the State List of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes.

7. Edgar Thurston and K. Rangachari in 'Castes and Tribes of Southern India' (Vol.II, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi-Madras, Reprint, 1993) have described the caste as below:-

"The Izhavans or Ilavans, and Tiyaans, are the Malayalam toddy-drawing castes of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. The etymology of the name Izhavan is dealt with in the article on Tiyaans....."

8. The caste is also described in 'People of India, National Series, India's Communities,' Vol V, K.S. Singh, Anthropological Survey of India, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 1318-1321, as : "Izhattupiliaimar – This community also called Izhuvan, Illattu Pillai and Ezhava, is distributed in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Pondicherry....."

9. At the Public Hearing Shri K.B. Arvindan stated that originally they were migrated from Kerala to Orissa after 1945. The caste is treated as occupational caste in Kerala where the traditional occupation of the members of the caste is

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toddy tapping. In Orissa only 50 to 60 thousands members of the caste are living. Economically their position is sound. Most of the members of the caste are engaged in business. In the social hierarchy they are kept in middle order and no social injustice/discrimination is done to them. They are satisfied with their social position in Orissa. There is no social stigma attached with the members of this caste in Orissa as they are not identified/linked with any traditional occupation here. The Bench asked him that, if they are not socially backward in Orissa, why they requested for inclusion of the caste in the Central List of OBCs, he stated that as the caste appears in the list of OBCs in Kerala, the same may also be included in the list for Orissa.

IV. Findings

10. From the foregoing it is clear that the members of this caste migrated to Orissa from Kerala approximately 50-60 years back. The Bench is of the view that it would not be appropriate to classify as backward, a caste/community which is socially backward in its native State automatically in a State of their migration unless there is evidence to show that they are socially and educationally backward. In Orissa they do not link themselves with their traditional occupation of toddy tapping as in Kerala. They are engaged in business and other occupations and according to their representative, they have acquired a respectable social position in Oriya society. The representative of the caste denied any kind of social discrimination or stigma attached with the members of the caste in Orissan society. The literacy rate of the caste/community in the state has been reported to be 65% in 1991 which is much more than the State average in 1991(49.09%). The Bench finds that 'Ezhava' caste is not socially and educationally backward in Orissa therefore recommends that the request for inclusion of 'Ezhava' caste in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa be rejected.

(Justice B.L. Yadav)

(M.S. Matharoo)

(Dr. B.M. Das)

(Neera Shastri)

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V. Advice of the Commission

11. 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: -

Request for inclusion of 'Ezhava' caste in the Central List of Orissa be rejected as the same is not socially and educationally backward

(Signature)
Prasad
(Signature)
(Signature)
(Signature)

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(Signature)

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Member Secretary

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Backward Classes