

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

Justice M. N. Rao, Chairperson

Shri. S. K. Kharventhan, Member

Shri. Deepak Katole, Member

Smt. Chitra Chopra, Member Secretary

Case: Request for Inclusion of "PANCHAMA" in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for State of Maharashtra.

I. Request:

1. The Government of Maharashtra has requested the NCBC for inclusion of "PANCHAMA" caste/community in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Maharashtra. The same was considered by the NCBC during the Public Hearing held at Mumbai on the 30th May & 1st June 2011.

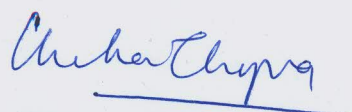
II. Findings:

2. The State Government of Maharashtra has requested the NCBC to include PANCHAMA community in the Central List of OBCs for the State of Maharashtra.

3. There is any amount of controversy as regards this caste Panchama. The advice of the Maharashtra State Commission for Backward Classes is not available on record. It is doubtful whether there is any advice containing reasons for inclusion of this community

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in the State List of Backward Classes although it figures in the State List at Sl.No. 281. In the People of India All Communities at pages 2739-2740 it is mentioned that-

4. "The term Panchama means the fifth one, alluding to a non-existent fifth varna. All these groups were called Harijan, scheduled castes or dalits. It is often pointed out that the Panchama include many groups in the same line as the Sudra who are a composite of very many different groups. The same opinion is held by Thurston (1909) and Ghurye (1969)". (emphasis added)

5. At the public hearing, some persons claiming themselves to be representatives of Jain religion have pleaded that "Jain Pancham" and "Panchama" are one and the same. We cannot accept the plea raised by these persons. People belonging to Jain religion never suffered the degradation of untouchability. We do not think that the State Commission really intended to include in the list of backward classes jain Panchams at all. In the People of India All Communities at page 1621, it is mentioned that Pancham Jain are "Mainly traders". It is therefore difficult to believe that pancham jain suffered any social backwardness. It is impossible to conceive of any similarity or closeness between pancham jain and panchamas, who are Dalits.

6. Going by the test of social backwardness and the aforementioned Ethnographic Account of Panchama, we recommend the inclusion "PANCHAMA" in the Central List of Backward Classes for the State of Maharashtra.

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National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

III. Advice of the Commission

7. The Commission considered all the aspects 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 NCBC Act:-

"PANCHAMA" be included in the Central List of Backward Classes for the State of Maharashtra at entry No. 259 as follows:-

" 259. PANCHAMA "


19.7.11

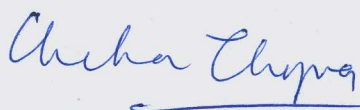
(Justice M. N. Rao)
Chairperson


(S. K. Kharventhan)
Member


(Deepak Katole)
Member


(Smt. Chitra Chopra)
Member-Secretary

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