

National Commission for Backward Classes

Orissa Bench

Findings

Case: Request for inclusion of caste/community "**Chitrasilpi**" in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Orissa.

I. Request

The case arises from the request received in this Commission from State Government of Orissa for inclusion of caste/community Chitrasilpi in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa.

II. Public Hearing

The Bench of the Commission consisting of Hon'ble Chairman Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian, Hon'ble Member Dr. Subbha Somu and Member Secretary Shri S.K. Purkayastha held a public hearing on 17.04.2007 at Bhubaneshwar to examine the request for inclusion of Chitrasilpi caste in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa.

The State Government was represented by Shri Taradatt, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, ST & SC Development Department, Shri Jyoti Prakash Das, Director & Addt. Secretary OBC, Govt; of Orissa, Shri H. Behera, Member-Secretary, Orissa Backward Classes Commission, Shri G.N.Sethi, Deputy Secretary, ST/SC Development Department and other officials.

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New Delhi

III. Facts

The relevant entries in different lists pertaining to "Chitrasilpi" are as below :-

Mandal List

44. Chitra, Chitrakar

State List

32. Chitrasilpi, Chitrakar, Citra

Central List

30. Chitra, Chitrakar

IV. Submission at the Public Hearing

Shri Baikuntha Nath Mohapatra on behalf of the caste/community Chitrasilpi submitted before the Bench of the Commission that they belong to the painter class. Economically they are backward. They do not have representation in Government service. The level of literacy and education is also very low. So they should be included in the Central list of OBC for Orissa.

V. In the Report of Second Backward classes Commission, generally known as Mandal Commission Report, Para 12.10 under Chapter XII – "Identification of OBCs" reads as under;

"Whereas the Commission has tried to make the State-wise lists of OBCs as comprehensive as possible, it is quite likely that several synonyms of the castes listed as backward have been left out. Certain

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castes are known by a number of synonyms, which vary from one region to the other, and their complete coverage is almost impossible. In view of this, the Commission recommends that if a particulare caste has been listed as backward then all its synonyms whether mentioned in the State Lists or not should also be treated as backward”.

VI. The Commission’s Bench took note of the following ethnographic accounts in respect of the caste/community **“Chitrasilpi”**: -

“People of India- India’s Communities” by K.S.singh, National Series Vol.1V (Page 697-698)

Chitrakar: A community of West Bengal and Orissa, the Chitrakar derive their name from chitra, meaning picture. They are also known as Patua. According to the Brahmavaivarta Purana, the Chitrakar originated from the union of Vishwakarma and the celestial apsara, Shritachi.

In Orissa, the Chitrakar are believed to have painted the images of the gods and goddesses in the temple of Jagannath at Puri. The Chitrakar were engaged as sevaks in the temple of Jagannath to paint the deities after the snanyatra, and to paint the cars and idols and decorate them during the car festival. They inhabit the districts of Puri and Cuttak. They speak Oriya and use of Oriya script. Some of them are bilingual as they can also speak Bengali. Rice and wheat are their staple cereals. Three gotras, Nimishya, Nagaswa and Kashyapa, have been indentified among them. The Chitrakar women are expert in scroll painting (patachitra), clay modelling and sculpture.

The Chitrakar have retained their traditional occupations of painting and clay modelling. At present, some of them are also engaged as industrial workers and daily-wage labourers, while some work in

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various organizations, including government offices. A few of them are also engaged in stone carving, and ivory-bone-and horn engraving.

Castes And Tribes of Southern India, Vol.11, by E.Thurston & K.Rangachari (Page 9)

Chitrakaros: The Chitrakaros of Ganjam, who are a class of Oriya painters (chitra, painting), are returned in the Census Report, 1901, as a sub-caste of Muchi. They are painters, decorators and gilders, and make trunks, palanquins, 'lacquer' toys and wooden images for temples cars etc.

"People of India- Communities, Segments, Synonyms, Surnames and Titles"(National Series Vol.V11 (Page 309)

Chiktrakar census years: 1881, 1901, 1931; earlier distributions: Bengal, H.E.H. Nizam's Dominion, Mayurbhanj State

VII. 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 Chitrasilpi is a community of West Bengal and Orissa, and the main caste is Chitrakar, which derive its name from chitra, meaning picture. The Chitrakar have retained their traditional occupations of painting and clay modelling. The Chitrakar were engaged as sevaks in the temple of Jagannath to paint the deities after the snanyatra, and to paint the cars and idols and decorate them during the car festival. At present, some of them are also engaged as industrial workers and daily-wage labourers, while some work in various organizations, including government offices, where their numbers are negligible.

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They send their children to school, and a few males have received college education. Overall, the literacy level of this caste/community remains very low.

Keeping in view the evidence produced and statement given by the representative of the caste 'Chitrasilpi' the Bench come to the conclusion that this caste/community is socially, and educationally backward. Therefore the Bench recommend for inclusion of the caste/community "Chitrasilpi" as a synonym of Chitrakar, in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa at Sl.No.30.

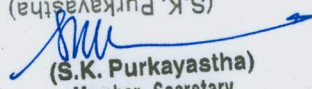
The amended entry will be as under:

30. Chitra, Chitrakar, Chitrasilpi


(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairperson


(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary


(Dr. Subbha Somu)
Member


(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary
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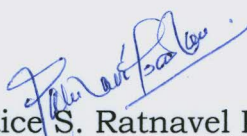
VIII. Advice of the Commission

The Commission considered and agreed in full with the above Finding of the Orissa 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 castes/communities/sub-castes/synonyms Chitrasilpi are socially and educationally backward and should be included in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Orissa at entry No. 30.

The entries after inclusion will read as under: -

30. Chitra, Chitrakar, Chitrasilpi


(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairperson


(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary


(Dr. Subbha Somu)
Member

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