



सत्यमेव जयते

सी. टी. बेंजामिन

C.T. BENJAMIN

Tel. : 6183190

Fax : 6183227

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सदस्य सचिव

राष्ट्रीय पिछड़ा वर्ग आयोग

भारत सरकार

त्रिकुट - १, भीकाजी कामा प्लेस, नई दिल्ली-११००६६

Member Secretary

National Commission for Backward Classes

Government of India

Trikoot-1, Bhikaiji Cama Place, New Delhi-110066

NCBC Advice Nos. AP 68, 69 / 2003

30.07.2003

Dear Shri Baswan,

I am sending herewith the advices of the National Commission for Backward Classes under Section 9(1) of the National Commission for Backward Classes Act (1993), for inclusion of

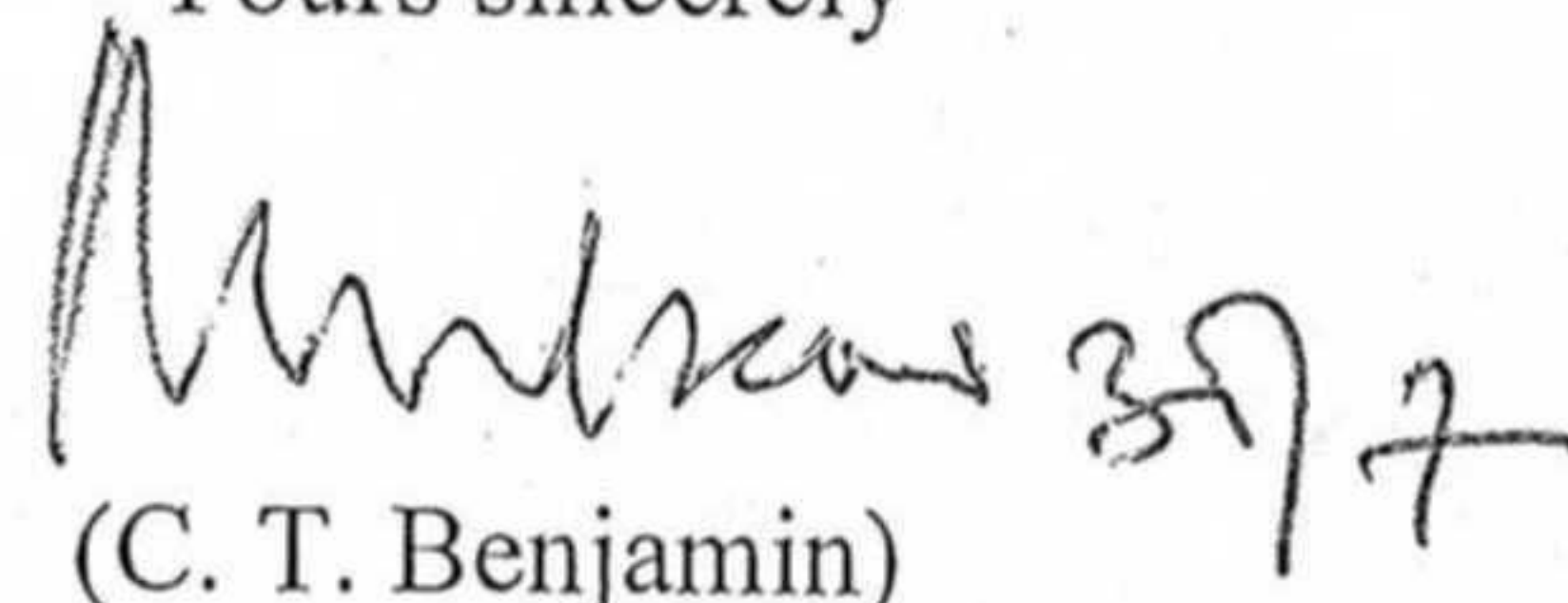
(1) Sikligar, and

(2) Siddula

castes/communities 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 Act.

With regards,

Yours sincerely


(C. T. Benjamin)

Shri B. S. Baswan
Secretary to Government of India
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
Shastri Bhavan
NEW DELHI

Encl: As stated.

Issued
30/7/2003

O/c

NCBC Advice No. AP 68/2003

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

ANDHRA PRADESH BENCH

FINDINGS

Case: Request for inclusion of "Sikligar" caste/community in the Central list of backward classes for Andhra Pradesh.

I. Request

This case arises from the request made to the Commission by the Sikh Graduates Association, 15-3-137, Gowliguda Chaman, Hyderabad – 500012, for inclusion of "Sikligar" caste/community in the Central list of backward classes for Andhra Pradesh.

II. Public Hearing

2. A bench of the Commission consisting of Hon'ble Justice Ram Surat Singh, Chairperson, Shri M. S. Matharoo and Smt. Neera Shastri, Hon'ble Members held a public hearing at Hyderabad on 28th January, 2003 to examine this request. At the public hearing the State Government was represented by Shri Simhadri, Jt. Director, Deptt. of Backward Classes Welfare, Shri R. Sreenivasulu, Dy. Director and other officers in the office of the Commissioner for Backward Classes Welfare. Shri N. Chandrasekhar Reddy, Asst. Secretary and Smt. V. Pratima, Dy. Director represented the office of the State Backward Classes Commission. A public hearing was also held earlier on 6th February, 2002 at Hyderabad by a bench of the Commission, consisting of Justice B.L. Yadav, the then Chairperson, Shri C.T. Benjamin, Member-Secretary, Shri M.S. Matharoo and Dr. B.M. Das, Hon'ble Members at which time the State Government was represented at the hearing by Shri P. Sundar Kumar, Commissioner for Backward Classes Welfare and other officers in the office of the Commissioner for Backward Classes Welfare. Shri Nanak Singh Nishter, President Sikh Graduates Association, appeared before the bench for and on behalf of the community at the hearings on 6th February. At

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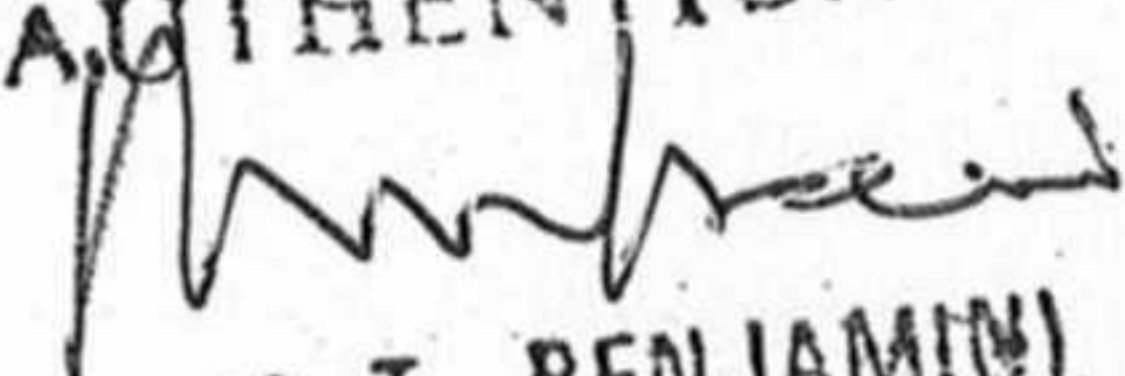
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the hearing on 28th January, 2003, Shri Nanak Singh Nishter and Shri Tagore Singh appeared before the bench for and on behalf of the community.

III. Facts

3. "Sikligar" caste/community is not included in the Central list of backward classes for Andhra Pradesh because at the time of the preparation of the Central list in 1993 on the basis of the principle of commonality, it was not included in both the Mandal Commission's list of backward classes for Andhra Pradesh and the Andhra Pradesh State Government's list of backward classes, and therefore did not satisfy the criterion of commonality.

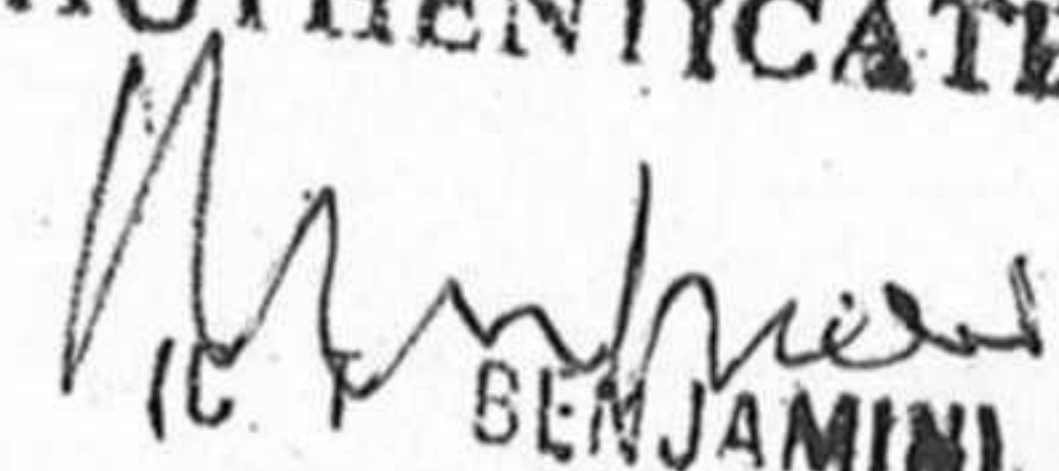
4. The President of the Sikh Graduates Association, Shri Nanak Singh Nishter, in his letter of request dated 8th December 1999 has stated the "Sikligar" is a socially, occupationally, educationally and economically backward community following Sikhism as their religion. In Andhra Pradesh, this community is spread over all parts of the State with a total population of about 5,000. The term 'Sikligar' came from the Persian word 'Saigalgar', meaning metal burnisher. Once the Sikligar used to be the best armourers. During the freedom struggle they made lots arms and ammunition for the revolutionaries. For this reason, the British hunted them in every nook and corner of the country and massacred them. This forced them to search for new hideouts every time, always shifting and moving. That is why they are also called wandering blacksmiths. These circumstances have made them to lead an unsecured life. At present the members of the community in Andhra Pradesh are engaged in making utensils and other household and general articles from iron scraps. Due to their poor economy, they could not adopt improved and modern methods, tools and raw materials for their work. Hence, they are not able to earn much and live a hand to mouth life. As they live in poverty, they are not properly dressed, they are unclean and they generally do not mix in the society. They rarely go to Gurudwara due to inferiority complex. Child labour is common among them. Their women also work for the livelihood of the family. In general their children do not go to school. They do not hold any agricultural land. They do not have even dwelling houses. They erect temporary huts on vacant lands to earn the livelihood in the

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neighbouring areas. When they do not get sufficient work at one place, they move to some other place in search of work. The number of students from the community in primary schools is only 150. In high schools, their number is only 10. There are only 3 matriculates in the community. The number of graduates is 'nil'. There is only one person who has got technical/professional qualification and he has a 'B.E.'. The representation of the community in government employment is also 'nil', except for one Associate Lecturer in Govt. Polytechnic, Nalgonda.

5. Shri Nanak Singh Nishter has further stated in his letter of request that the Sikligar community is recognised as a Scheduled Caste in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, and in Maharashtra; the community is recognised as a "Vimukta Jati Notified Tribe". In Karnataka, the Sikligar is included in the State list of backward classes in Category-1 (Most Backward). It is also included in the MP State list of BCs. In view of these facts, the request maker also states, it is unfortunate and strange that the Sikligar community of Andhra Pradesh is not yet included either in the list of Scheduled Castes or in the list of backward classes. The community may therefore be included in the Central list of backward classes "to give social justice and equal opportunity of progress at par with other communities".

6. During public hearings Shri Nanak Singh Nishter stated that he himself does not belong to the 'Sikligar' community, but came to represent the community's case for inclusion in the list of backward classes on behalf of the Sikh Graduates Association. He said that the Sikligar community is socially, occupationally, educationally and economically so much backward that they are not in a position even to represent their case for inclusion in the list of backward classes by themselves. He further submitted that 'Sikligar' is an artisan community. 'Blacksmithy' is their traditional occupation. At present they make utensils and other household articles from iron scrap. In Andhra Pradesh, they are like a nomadic community. They do not hold any land. They erect temporary huts on vacant lands and when they do not get sufficient work from one locality, they migrate to another locality. Their economic condition is very poor. Due to the nomadic nature of their work, in general they are not able to send their children to

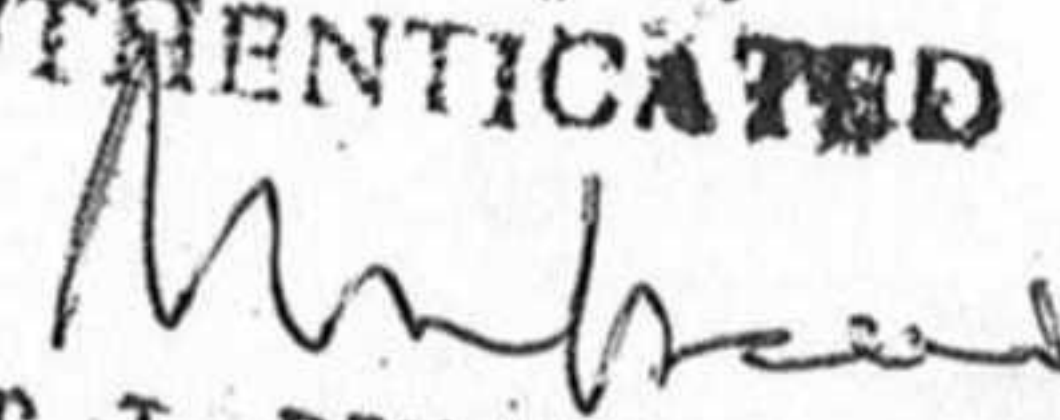
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schools. They are not in a position to dress properly and hence they always look unclean. Their women and children are also engaged in hard work. Because the community has had hardly any educated members, they could not even represent their case before the earlier Backward Classes Commissions in the State to get the community included in the State list. Shri Nanak Singh also apprised the bench that Shri Tagore Singh, who appeared before the bench along with him during the hearing on 28th January, 2002 and who is an Associate Lecturer in Govt. Polytechnic, Nalgonda, is the only person from the community who holds a government post under the State Government.

7. The Anantharaman Commission (1968-70), appointed by the State Government of Andhra Pradesh, did not recommend the inclusion of "Sikligar" caste/community in the State list and hence the 'Sikligar' is not included in the State list prepared in 1970 on the basis of report of the Anantharaman Commission. The same list is still being continued with only a few modifications. The 'Sikligar' caste/community is not discussed in the report of the Anantharaman Commission. The 'Sikligar' caste/community is also not discussed in the report of the Muralidhara Rao Commission, appointed by the State Government in 1982 to review the existing list of backward classes. The absence of any mention of this community in the reports of these two Commissions may be because the community did not approach these Commissions to get themselves included in the State list. There is also the possibility that since it is a very small community, that too not indigenous to the State, their existence might not have been noticed by these Commissions.

8. The 'Sikligar' caste/community is included in the list of Scheduled Castes in respect of the north Indian States of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi, as follows:

Punjab	"36. Sikligar"
Haryana	"36. Sikligar"
Himachal Pradesh	"52. Sikligar"
Delhi	"34. Sikligar"

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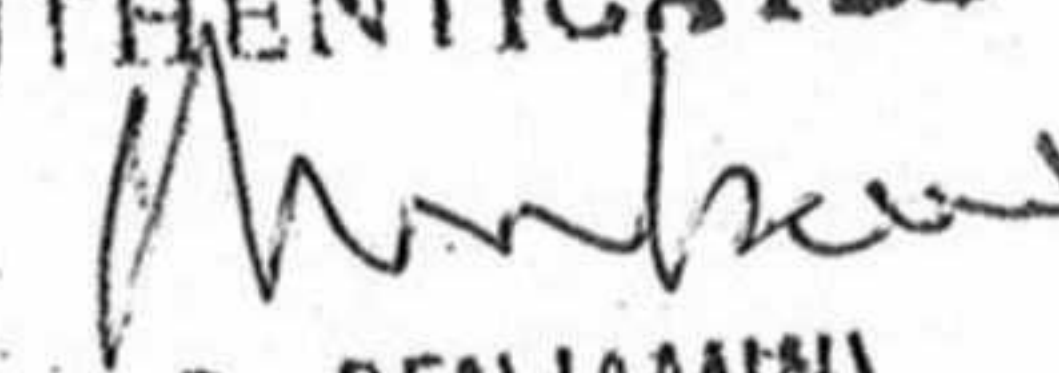
9. The Sikligar is included in the Mandal, State and Central lists of backward classes in respect of the States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka. The relevant Central list entries are as follows:-

Rajasthan	"47. Sikligar"
Madhya Pradesh	"45. Sikligar"
Maharashtra	"207. Sikkalgar, Katari"
Karnataka	"47. Shikkaligar, Shikalgar, Sikkaligar"

10. Anthropological Survey of India's 'People of India' national series volume titled 'India's Communities', writes about the 'Sikligar' community of Andhra Pradesh, as follows:

"In Andhra Pradesh, the Sikligar are popularly known as Sigligar Sikh. The community migrated to the present habitat during the Nizam rule. ... At present, they are distributed in all the Telengana districts of the State. They speak a dialect of the Punjabi language.

The traditional occupation of the Sikligar community was making weapons. After independence, they lost their traditional occupation and started to pursue metal work to earn a living. They purchase iron from the market and prepare kitchen utensils and iron implements, like buckets, dadai, tavva and jhara Traditionally they accept water from other Sikh communities and Hindu castes but not from the Muslim. At present, they partially favour modern education."

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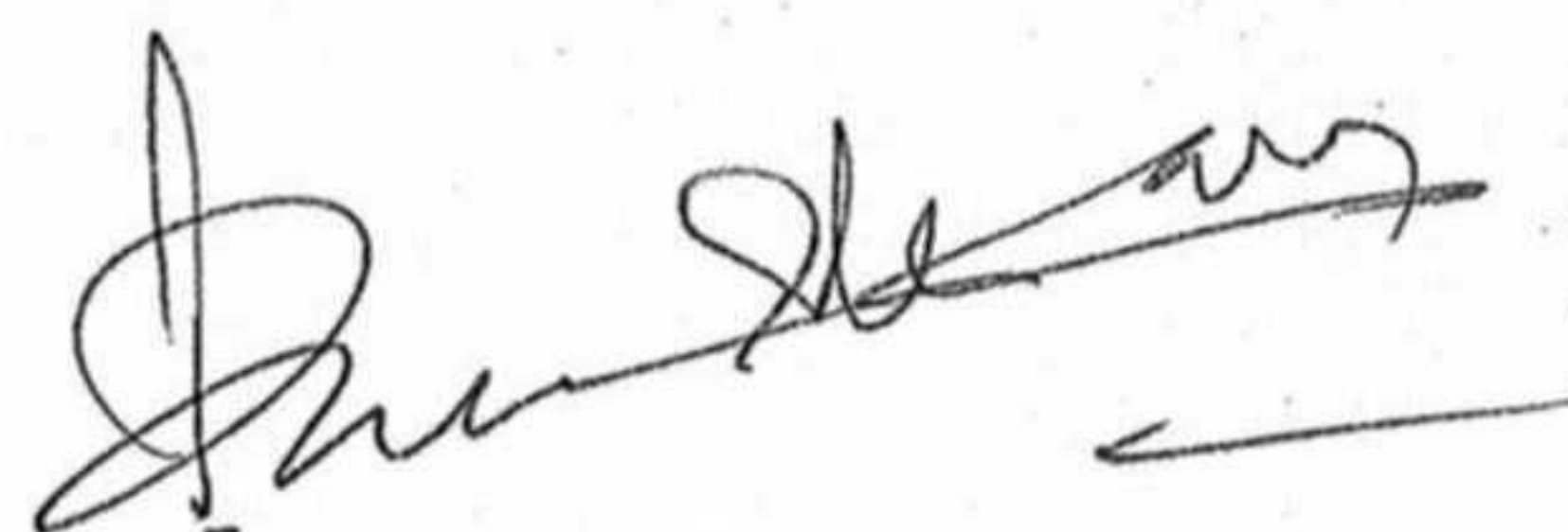
IV. Findings

11. On the basis of the available evidence, the bench finds the 'Sikligar' caste/community of Andhra Pradesh is an artisan community, eking out their livelihood by hard labour. They are a backward community socially, educationally, economically and in many other respects. The bench there is of the view that the 'Sikligar' be included in the Central list of backward classes for Andhra Pradesh at a new entry No. 106, as follows:

"106. Sikligar"



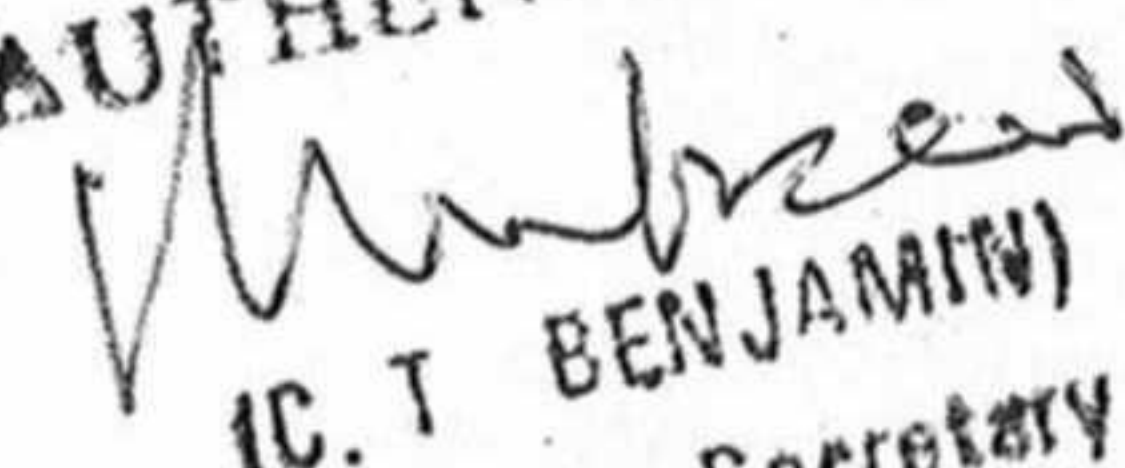
(Justice Ram Surat Singh)



(Shri M. S. Matharoo)



(Smt. Neera Shastri)

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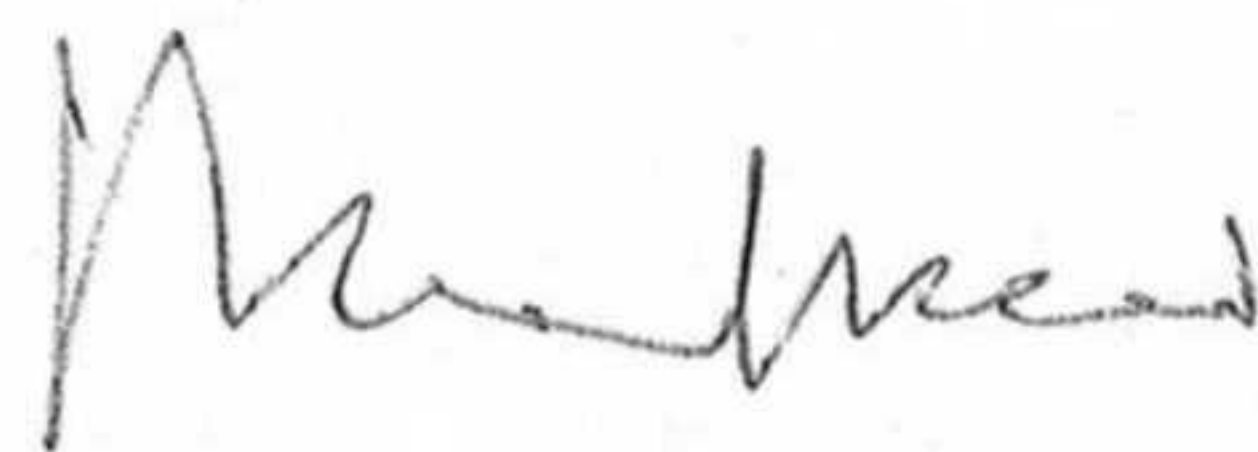
VI. Advice of the Commission

12. Based on the above findings, the Commission tenders the following advice to the Central Government under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, 1993 for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the Act:-

The "Sikligar" community be included in the Central list of backward classes for Andhra Pradesh at a new entry No. 106, as follows:-

"106. Sikligar"

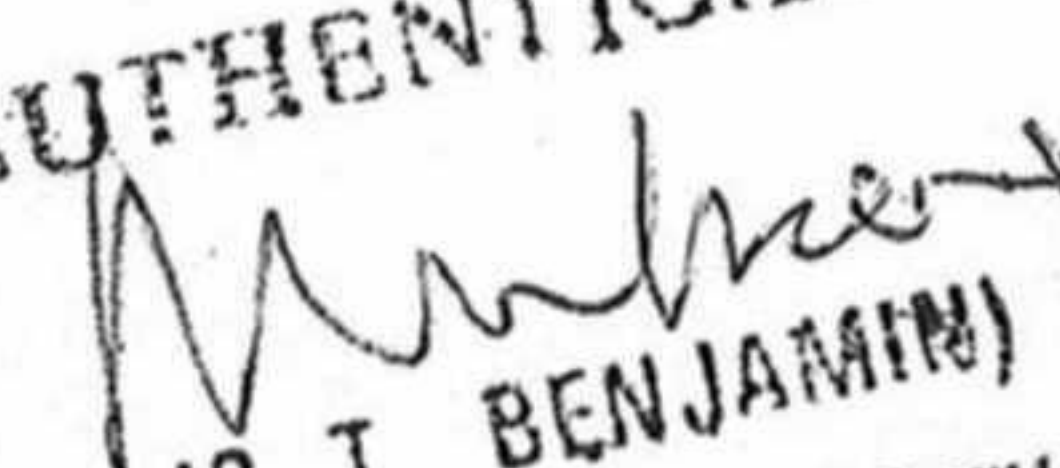

(Justice Ram Surat Singh)


(Shri C. T. Benjamin)


(M. S. Matharoo)


(Smt. Neera Shastri)


(Dr. B. M. Das)

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