

National Commission for Backward Classes

Orissa Bench

Findings

Case: Request for inclusion of the caste/community "**Mahisya**" 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 the caste/community "Mahisya" in the Central List of Other 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 Mahisya_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.

AUTHENTICATED

12/4/07

Member-Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

III. Facts

The relevant entries in different lists pertaining to "Mahisya" are given below: -

Mandal List

Nil

State List

123. Nagavasam, Mahisya, Saunties, Mahesh, Maheshya.

Central List

Nil

IV. Submission at the Public Hearing

Shri S.K. Samal, Retd. Superintending Engineer, Govt. of India, Village Kamargadia. P.S. Kutura, Distt. Balasore represented on behalf of Mahisya caste/community and informed the Commission that for admission in Engineering College he had taken a certificate from Balasore A.D.M. long back. At that time that he was an OBC. In due course of time it appears that many revisions were carried out and the caste has now got left out from the Central List of OBCs. People residing in some part of Balasore district are known as 'Mahisya' and they have been included in the state SEBC list in 2001. The literacy rate of this community is 70% in Orissa. This community is socially backward.

V. It was noted that in Report of Justice N.K.Das Commission pertaining to Orissa, it is stated that at Sl.No. 26, the following names may be added to the list; Nagavasam, Mahisya and Saunties.

VI. The Commission took note of the following ethnographic accounts in respect of the caste/community "Mahisya": -

AUTHENTICATED

22-11-13

K.S. Singh in his book "People of India- Communities, Segments, Synonyms, Surnames and Titles" (National Series Vol.V111, on Page 638)

- The distribution of Mahishya - Census Year 1931: Mahisya(Chasi, Kaibarta, Das Kaibarta), earlier distribution: Mayurbhanj State.

People of India series, Vol.V, India's Communities by K.S.Singh, Page 2095-2097

The Mahishya inhabit parts of West Bengal bordering Bihar and Orissa. In West Bengal and Bihar they are also known as Kaibarta. They derive their name from the Sanskrit words, Mahi meaning earth or soil and shya meaning for the interest. The Amoarkosh identifies the caste people as those who are born of a Kshatriya father and a Vaishya mother or vice versa, a view corroborated by Yajnavalkya, Parashuramgarud Purana and Vyas Sukta.

The Mahishya have a number of gotras, named after rishis such as sandilya, Parasara, kashyap and Bilas. These gotras are meant to regulate marriage alliances. They have different surnames like, Kar, Maiti, Giri, Jana, Patra, Bhowmick, Santra, manna, etc.

The Mahishya own land and are engaged in agriculture. The landless among them earn a living by working as agricultural labourer and daily wage labourers. Some of them serve as soldiers and many pursue white - collar jobs. The caste council in the village maintains social norms within the community. The Mahishya are Hindu and Brahman priests, acharyas or astrologers are their sacred specialists on some occasions. Vaishnavism has influenced many aspects of their lives. Traditionally they do not accept water from the lower castes and the Brahman accepts sidha or pucca food from the Mahishya. Their ritual or ceremonial

AUTHENTICATED

२२/११/१३

Member-Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

kinship ties cut across caste boundaries and reinforce social relations. The mahishya have a high rate of literacy and avail themselves of modern amenities.

VI. Findings

From the evidence and documents presented at the time of the Public Hearing and also on perusal of ethnographic literature by eminent authors and other available information, it is the finding of the Bench that the caste/community Mahishya inhabit parts of West Bengal bordering Bihar and Orissa. In Orissa they are mostly residing in some parts of Balasore district. They own land and are engaged in agriculture. The landless among them earn a living by working as agricultural labourer and daily wage labourers. Some of them serve as soldiers and many pursue white -collar jobs. Traditionally they do not accept water from the lower castes and the Brahman accepts sidha or pucca food from the Mahishya. Literacy rate of the caste/community is 70.0 percent in Orissa. This caste/community also avail themselves of modern amenities provided by the Government.

Keeping in view the above position, the Bench do not find adequate grounds for inclusion of the caste "Mahisya" in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa and therefore recommend that the request for inclusion of "**Mahisya**" in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa be rejected.


(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairperson


(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary


(Dr. Subbha Somu)
Member

AUTHENTICATED

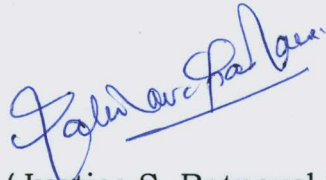
W 2 A 4 3

Member - Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

VII. 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 caste/community/sub-caste/synonym "**Mahishya**" is socially and educationally advanced. Therefore the request for inclusion in the Central list of backward classes for Orissa be rejected.



(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairperson



(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary



(Dr. Subbha Somu)
Member

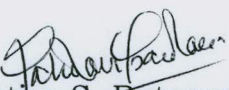
AUTHENTICATED

Member-Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

VII. 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 caste/community/sub-caste/synonym "**Mahishya**" is socially and educationally advanced. Therefore the request for inclusion in the Central list of backward classes for Orissa be rejected.


(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairperson


(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary


(Dr. Subbha Somu)
Member

AUTHENTICATED

८२४१५३

Member-Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes