



पी.एस. कृष्णन्
P.S. KRISHNAN
TEL. : 6183190

सदस्य-सचिव
राष्ट्रीय पिछड़ा वर्ग आयोग
भारत सरकार
नई दिल्ली - 110 066
MEMBER-SECRETARY
NATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR BACKWARD CLASSES
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NEW DELHI - 110 066

DO NO.NCBC Advice No. 9-10 Tripura/98

30. 06. 1998

Dear Shri Manavalan,

I am sending herewith the Advice of the National Commission for Backward Classes under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, for inclusion of 'Bishnupriya Manipuri' and 'Pangal' castes/communities in the Central List of Backward Classes for Tripura, for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the Act.

2. With this, Advices on 264 castes/sub-castes/synonyms etc. have been tendered to the Government by the NCBC, after its reconstitution in 1997, of which 261 are still pending with the Government for Notification.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

(P.S. KRISHNAN)

Shri D.K.Manavalan
Secretary
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
Shastri Bhavan
NEW DELHI

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11/7/98

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NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

Tripura Bench

Findings

Per Shri Justice P.K. Shyamsundar, Chairperson

Case: Request for Inclusion of "Pangal (Manipuri Muslim) and Bishnupriya Manipuri castes/communities in the Central List of Backward Classes for Tripura.

I. Request

This case arises from the Request received in this Commission from the State Government of Tripura and OBC Federation State Committee, Agartala for inclusion of "Pangal (Manipuri Muslim) and Bishnupriya Manipuri" castes/communities in the Central List of Backward Classes for Tripura.

II. Public Hearing

2. The two-Member Tripura Bench of the Commission consisting of Justice P.K. Shyamsundar, Hon'ble Chairperson and Shri P.S. Krishnan, Hon'ble Member-Secretary, NCBC held a Public Hearing in respect of this Request at Agartala on 06.04.98. At the Public Hearing the State Government was represented by Shri S.C. Das, Secretary SC & ST Welfare Department and other officials. Shri K.R. Das, Chairperson, Shri S. Bhowmik, Member-Secretary and Shri Matilal Sarkar, Member of Tripura State Backward Classes Commission were also present at the Public Hearing who gave valuable information. Shri Sarabuddin Ahmed and Shri Nur Rahman of All Tripura Pangal (Manipuri Muslim) Social Development Organisation represented the "Pangal (Manipuri Muslim)" Community. Shri Sushanta Sinha, General Secretary and Shri Ashoke Singha, Member, Bishnupriya Manipuri Joint Action Committee represented the "Bishnupriya Manipuri" Community. Shri Rajkumar Kamjit Singha of Manipuri Sahidya Parishad; Shri M. Indramani Singha,

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Member Secretary
National Commission
for Backward Classes

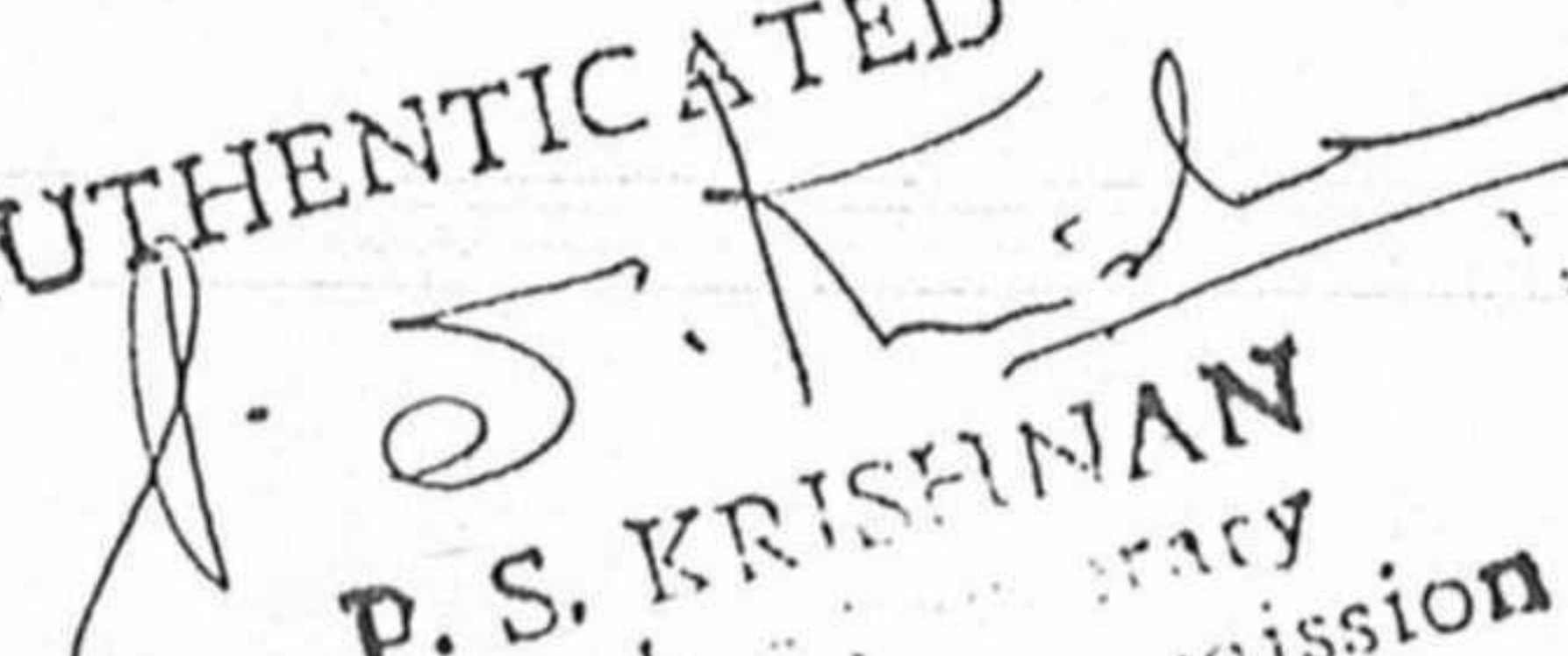
President, N. Niranjan Dutta, General Secretary of Manipuri OBC Shinglup; Shri Biju Singha and Shri P.K. Prasantajit Singha of All Tripura Manipur Student's Association and others represented the "Manipuri" community.

III. Facts

3. The representative of the Pangal (Manipuri Muslim) community told us that the number of Muslim Pangals in the State were only 4000 and were mainly landless, eking a living by agricultural labour. In the NCBC Questionnaire it is mentioned that 70% of the Pangal (Manipuri Muslim) are agricultural labourers and also 20% were engaged in other manual labour for wages. Reference is made to their representation of the community in Government services which reveals that one percent of the caste has found some placement in Government service. Their placement is catergorized as follows:

Teacher	-	21 nos.
Clerk	-	3 nos.
Police	-	2 nos.
Panchayat Secretary	-	2 nos.
Class IV	-	4 nos.
Para Medical Staff	-	1 no.
Para Military	-	6 nos.
Social Supervisor	-	1 no.

4. It is also mentioned interalia that the main occupation of the community is Rickshaw pulling. The figures pertaining to literacy appears to be clearly high being evaluated at 35% of the total population. But it is difficult to place any reliance on those figures if regard is had to the fact that in Government services not more than 50 are placed out of 4000 people. Significant is the fact that 80% of the people having remained as labourers, an avocation that is always at the mercy of others does not favour access to education. It therefore requires little persuasion to hold that this community of Pangals (Manipuri Muslims) are educationally backward and add to it the circumstance that they have always laboured for others while seeking their own living, it would therefore be quite appropriate to classify them as socially backward as well. Regard being had to all the

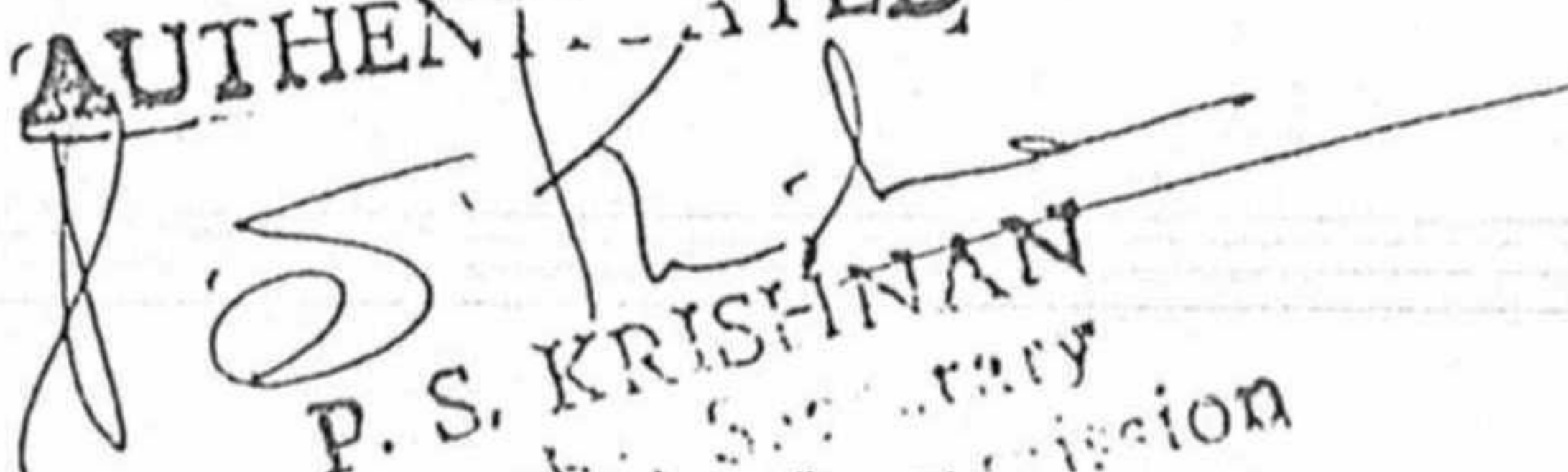
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Member, National Commission
for Backward Classes

foregoing circumstances adumbrated as aforesaid, the conclusion that emerges is that Pangal (Manipuri Muslim) is a caste that is socially and educationally backward.

5. Inter alia the question, whether 'Bishnupriya Manipuri' a caste Hindu is also socially backward falls for consideration. Their representatives vehemently disputed at the hearing for a long time the claim of the acceptance of this caste into the Central List of Backward Classes for Tripura. Again this is another case in which their entitlement for classification as a backward class on grounds of educational backwardness is not disputed by any one as mentioned earlier. Their request for inclusion in the Central List of Backward Classes under the nomenclature of 'Bishnupriya Manipuri' is what has invited a lot of ire. On behalf of the Bishnupriya Manipuris, Shri Samarajit Singha, Convenor, Bishnupriya Manipuris Joint Action Committee, submitted that 'Bishnupriya Manipuris' lived mostly in villages being agricultural labourers and by virtue thereof having always worked for others for wages had necessarily led to be looked down upon as a part of the social apartheid prevalent in Tripura.

6. The written representations submitted to us mention that they are engaged largely in agricultural work and that a few worked as goldsmiths and carpenters. It is said that the community suffered to a large extent for want of cultivable land, as availability of cultivable land failed to keep up with the ever expanding families. There is however substantial material indicating their low educational level. We were told by the State Government representatives who participated at the hearing that the community has not maintained strides in reaching out for an adequate literacy level. It may therefore be no wonder if the level of literacy of this community is treated only as minuscule. We therefore conclude the community in question is both socially and educationally backward. Now arises the more controversial question touching the issue of the appropriate nomenclature for designating the community for inclusion in the Central List of Backward Classes, i.e whether they should be notified simply as Bishnupriya Manipuri. The plain Manipuris maintained that every Manipuri in Tripura was a Manipuri and therefore found little justification in the claim for styling this community as Bishnupriya Manipuri in a

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Member, Secretary
National Commission
for Backward Classes

State where every Manipuri is bound to be known as Manipuri without claiming any special distinction.

7. Those who appeared before the Bench on behalf of the "Manipuri" or Meitei community, i.e., other than the two communities under consideration now, stated that they are basically against the separate inclusion of both Bishnupriya and Pangal communities since both these communities are covered by the term 'Manipuri', which as a community has got a distinct and separate ethnic and linguistic identity as recognised by the inclusion of 'Manipuri' in the Central and State Lists of Backward Classes for Tripura. They agreed that the people concerned are backward and they have no objection to their inclusion, but they should be included by being treated as part of the entry "Manipuri", which is already included in the Central List of BCs for Tripura at item no. 22. If, however, the representatives of these two communities want the names of their communities to be separately included in the list, then they should be included only as 'Bishnupriya' and 'Pangal' without tagging on the word 'Manipuri' with these names.
8. The representatives of the 'Bishnupriya Manipuri' and 'Pangal(Manipuri Muslim)' communities expressed their desire that the separate identities of their respective communities within the total Manipuri community should be reflected in the List of BCs by including the names of their communities in the Central List of Backward Classes for Tripura as has already been done by the State Government in respect of the State List. They further stated that if the names of their communities are not separately included in the Central List, the members of their communities will face problems in getting certificates.
9. When the Bench suggestively asked whether Manipuri, Bishnupriya Manipuri and Pangal(Manipuri Muslim) be listed against the same serial number or as sub-entries in the same serial number in the Central List of Backward Classes, the representatives of Bishnupriya Manipuri and Pangal(Manipuri Muslim) appeared amenable to the suggestion of the Bench while the representatives of the Manipuri or Meitei demurred against the suggestion. The Bench thereupon advised the representatives of the 3 sections to try to come to a consensual agreement and gave them some time for consultation among

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Member
National Commission
for Backward Classes

themselves. Unfortunately, they could not come to an understanding or agreement. The representatives of the 'Manipuri' community however stated that if the Bishnupriya and Pangal communities insist upon their separate inclusion, they do not have any objection provided that they are not included along with 'Manipuri' at the same entry, but may be included at separate entries without 'Manipuri' being added to them.

IV FINDINGS

10. The dispute among the three groups has a long background and ramifications beyond Tripura, covering many States of the North East, and is rooted in the history of Manipur. The Commission in the present context did not consider it relevant to go into the details of this dispute as it has to be considered at/by a different Forum. So far as the present case is concerned the relevant point is that Bishnupriya Manipuri and Pangal(Manipuri Muslim) communities have been found to be Socially Backward by the State Commission and the State Government and there is no dispute about it. The evidence before this Bench also leads to the same conclusion. While 'Manipuri' has been included in the Central List ab initio through the process of common-listing, ie., by including castes/communities common to both the State Government's and Mandal Commission's Lists of BCs, 'Bishnupriya Manipuri' and 'Pangal(Manipuri Muslim)' have subsequently been included in the State List on the Advice of the State Commission. As at present, the Bench considers it appropriate to enlist each community according to the name by which it desires to be known. So far as 'Pangal(Manipuri Muslim)' is considered, the Bench suggested to the representatives of this community that it is not normal for the name of the religion of a caste/community to be mentioned in the list of BCs since religion is not a criterion for identifying whether a community is Socially Backward or not, unless in unusual cases it becomes inevitable to mention the name of the religion as the only available mark of identification. In this case, the representatives of the 'Pangal(Manipuri Muslim)' community agreed that both 'Pangal' and 'Manipuri Muslim' mean the same and the term 'Pangal' will denote only 'Manipuri Muslim' and none others in the State of Tripura and therefore they have no objection to the inclusion of 'Pangal' in the List of BCs without adding the name of the religion within the brackets. Accordingly, it is the Finding

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P. S. KRISHNAN
 Member Secretary
 National Commission
 for Backward Classes

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HEALTH, EDUCATION &
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OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT
SECRETARY FOR
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

V. ADVICE OF THE COMMISSION

11. The Commission considered and agreed in full with the above Findings of the Tripura Bench 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:-

'Bishnupriya Manipuri' and 'Pangal' communities be included in the Central List of Backward Classes for Tripura at entry No. 37, as follows :-

- "37. (a) Bishnupriya Manipuri
(b) Pangal"

P. S. Krishna

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R. Shayan
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P. S. KRISHNAN
Member Secretary
National Commission
for Backward Classes