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राष्ट्रीय पिछड़ा वर्ग आयोग
भारत सरकार

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त्रिकूट-१, भीकाएजी कामा प्लेस, नई दिल्ली - ११० ०६६

Member Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
Government of India
Trikoot - 1, Bhikaiji Cama Place, New Delhi - 110 066

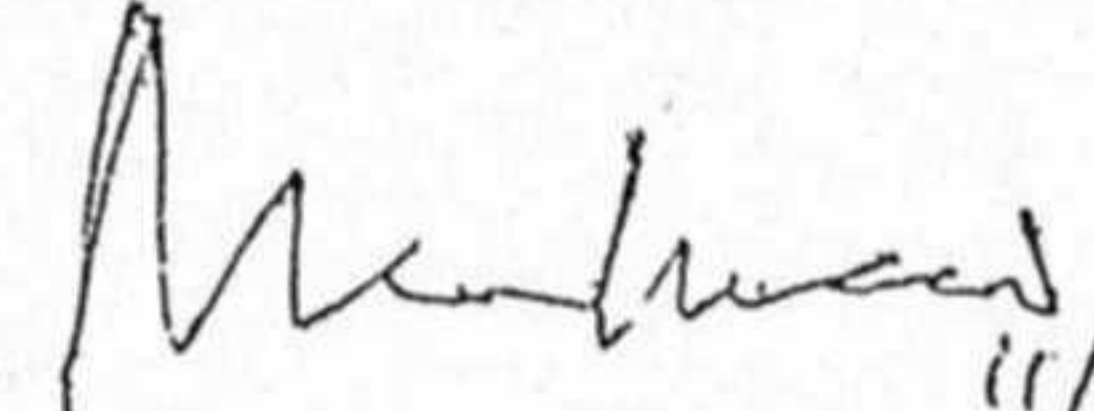
NCBC Advice No. Rajasthan/59/2001

11.06.2001

Dear Smt. Asha Das,

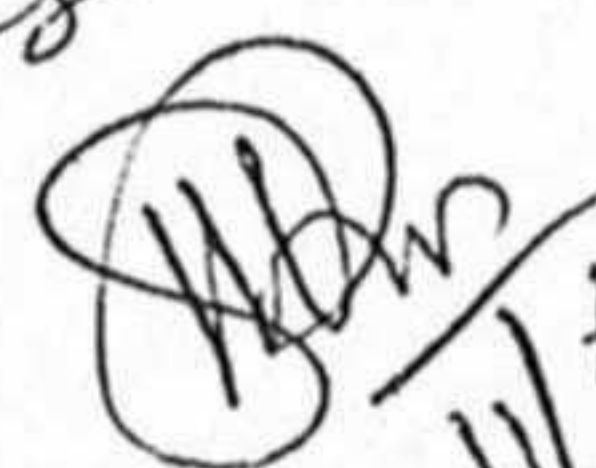
I am sending herewith the advice of the National Commission for Backward Classes under Section 9(1) of the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993, for inclusion of "Silawat (except Sompura Murtikar)" in the Central list of backward classes for Rajasthan, duly authenticated, for necessary action by the Central government under Section 9(2) of the Act.

Yours sincerely


(C.T. Benjamin) 11/6/01

Smt. Asha Das
Secretary to Govt. of India
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
Shastri Bhavan
NEW DELHI

a/c

Issued

11/6/01

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

RAJASTHAN BENCH

FINDINGS

Case: Request for inclusion of "Silawat" caste/community in the Central List of Backward Classes for Rajasthan.

I. REQUEST

This case arises from the requests made to this Commission by Dr. Abdul Hamid Khatai, President, Bhaichara Vikas Samiti, Hakim Colony, Behind Geeta Bhavan, Jodhpur-342001 and Shri Mohammad Yakub, Secretary, Panchayat Baees Kheda Medatia Silawat Samaj, Shahi Market, Merta city-341510, for inclusion of "Silawat" caste/community in the Central list of backward classes for Rajasthan.

II. PUBLIC HEARING

2. A four-Member Bench of the Commission consisting of Shri C.T. Benjamin, Hon'ble Member-Secretary, Shri M.S. Matharoo, Dr. B.M. Das and Smt. Neera Shastri, Hon'ble Members held a public hearing to examine this request at Jaipur on 22nd January 2001. At the public hearing, the State Government was represented by Smt. Rupa Gulwani, Addl. Director, Backward Classes Welfare, Shri H.M.Mishra, Shri B.P.Sharma, Deputy Directors, Deptt. of Social Welfare. Shri B.L. Sheesu, Member-Secretary, State Backward Classes Commission and Shri J.D. Garg, Joint Director, State Backward Classes Commission were also present. The caste/community was represented by S/Shri Md. Yaqub Silawat, Abdul Sattar Silawat, Abdul Rakib Silawat and Alam Ali Silawat.

3. "Silawat" caste/community is not included in the central list of backward classes for Rajasthan issued by the Central Government vide Ministry of Welfare's Resolution No. 12011/9/94-BCC dated 19.10.1994 as it was not included both in the Mandal Commission's list for Rajasthan and in the State Government's first list of backward classes issued by the State Government by its Notification No.

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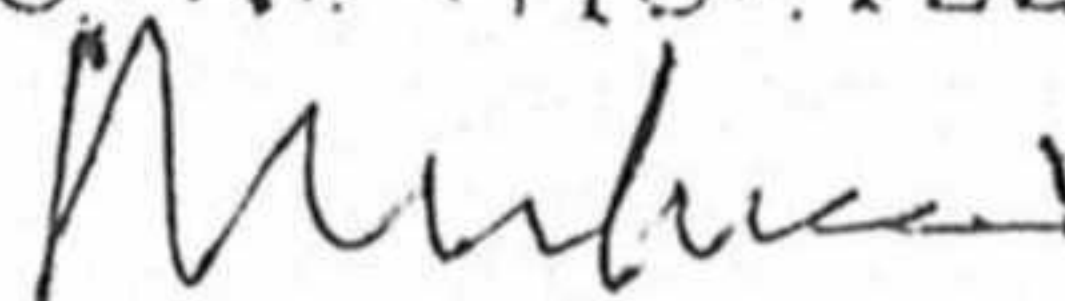
F.111(125)/R&P/SWD/52307 dated 6.8.1994 and, therefore, did not satisfy the criterion of commonality based on which the central list was prepared. The State Government of Rajasthan has since included "Silawat (except Sompura Murtikar)" in the State List of Backward Classes at entry No. 64 vide Notification No. F1(25)(6)R&P/SWD/1 dated 1.1.2000.

4. In their letters of request, the request makers have stated that the traditional occupation of their community is polishing of stones to be used in the construction of buildings. Members of their community follow Islam as their religion. In Islam, construction of temples and idols (murtis) is prohibited. Therefore, the members of the community do not engage in the construction of temples and making of images. Those who do such work are called Sompura or Moortikar and they belong to Hindu religion. The stone-cutting work of the Silawat community involves very hard labour. The nature of their work is such that they often become prey to lung diseases like *Asthma* and Tuberculosis. Because of poverty, they are not in a position to have proper treatment and nutritious food. As a result, their members often die before old age. There is child labour and bonded labour in the community. The educational level of the community is very low. The social and economic status of the community is very poor. Therefore, the community should be included in the Central list of backward classes for Rajasthan.

5. In the NCBC's questionnaire filled up by the President, Bhaichara Vikas Samiti, the population of the caste/community in the State is given as 20 lakhs. The main occupation on which the members of the community mainly depend for their livelihood is mentioned as "stone chiseling". The women and children of the community, are, as a general practice, engaged in chiseling, cutting and dressing of stones for their family's livelihood. Only 5% of the members of the community are literate. The representation of the community members in the Government services is negligible. There are only 15 doctors, 5 lawyers, 2 engineers/architects, 1 chartered accountant from the community.

6. During the public hearing, the representatives of the community submitted that the Silawat caste/community only includes Muslims. Those who do the work of making

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idols for temple are Hindus and they are called Sompuras. There are no Muslim Sompuras. Likewise, there are no Hindu Silawats. They also clarified that they are converts from low caste Hindus and not from Rajputs. The social position of Silawats is very low. The higher Muslims do not take food from Silawats and they do not call Silawats to their functions, even if they are called, they are served food in leaf plates. Sayyad, Pathan and Kayamkhani Muslims consider the Silawats as low and no social relationship is maintained with them. They confirmed the existence of bonded labour in their community and informed that many of their members take loan from the money lender to meet the expenses of treatment etc. and being unable to pay back, they are often forced into bonded labour. After the death of indebted person, his children work for the money lender as bonded labour.

7. The "Silawat" caste/community is described in the Anthropological Survey of India's People of India series (Vol. XXXVIII) on Rajasthan (Popular Prakashan, 1988, General Editor K.S.Singh) as follows:-

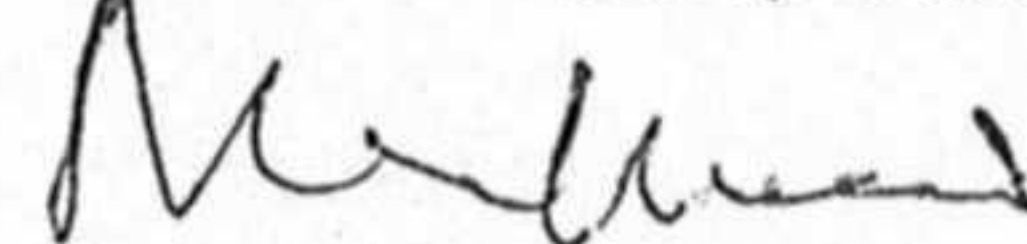
"The Silawat are also known as Sangtarashi, *Sila* is the local word for stone and thus Silwat is one who works with stone. Again *sang* means stone and *tarash* means to cut. Though the community traces its origin to the Rajputs, the dominant community of the State, they have derived their name from their traditional occupation of stone work. Their conversion to Islamic faith is said to have taken place some four hundred years back. They are distributed in the districts of Dungarpur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Jaisalmer, Ajmer, Jaipur, Nagaur, etc. Their spoken language is Urdu...

The Silawat traditionally live on masonry and stone carving. It is claimed that they are the architects of various royal palaces. They are a landless community. Some live on wage earning. Recent situation compelled them to take up various other jobs.

....."

8. Munshi Hardy Singh in his "The Castes of Mewar" (Book Treasure, Jodhpur, 1990, first published in 1894) describes "Silawat" as follows:-

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"The Silawats are stone-masons and builders. Those employing themselves as stone cutters are called Sangtrash. They also prepare hand mills for grinding corn. The word Silawat seems to be a corruption of Silpwat, literally signifying a follower of Shilp-shastar which deals with the art of architecture. The Silwat are also known by the name of *Sootradhar*, from the *soot* or thread they generally keep with them for measurement.... The Silawats are both Hindus and Musalmans.... The Hindu Silawats generally do not form a distinct caste, and are composed of Kumhars, Malis or Mehras, who work as builders, retaining their original caste. The Sompuras, however, form a separate community among the Hindu Silawats, and exclusively employ themselves in building temples. They consider themselves Brahmans and wear the sacred Jeneo...."

9. As mentioned earlier, the Rajasthan State Government has included "Silawat (except Sompura Murtikar)" in the State list of backward classes. In the 6th Report of the State Backward Classes Commission, it is mentioned that the people of the Silawat community do mason work and that they are not sculptors. They are an artisan class and their work cannot be called a respected one.

IV. FINDINGS

10. From the evidence adduced before the Bench, the Bench finds that the Silawat is an artisan caste/community traditionally associated with the occupation of stone-cutting and stone masonry. They eke out their living by hard labour. They are undoubtedly a socially backward caste/community and deserve to be included in the central list of backward classes for Rajasthan. Though the Silawats and Sompura Murtikars are apparently different castes/communities, in view of some similarities in the nature of their occupations, while including Silawats in the list, in order to preclude any possibility of misuse of the entry by any member of unintended castes/communities, it would be appropriate to specifically mention the exclusion of Sompura Murtikars from the

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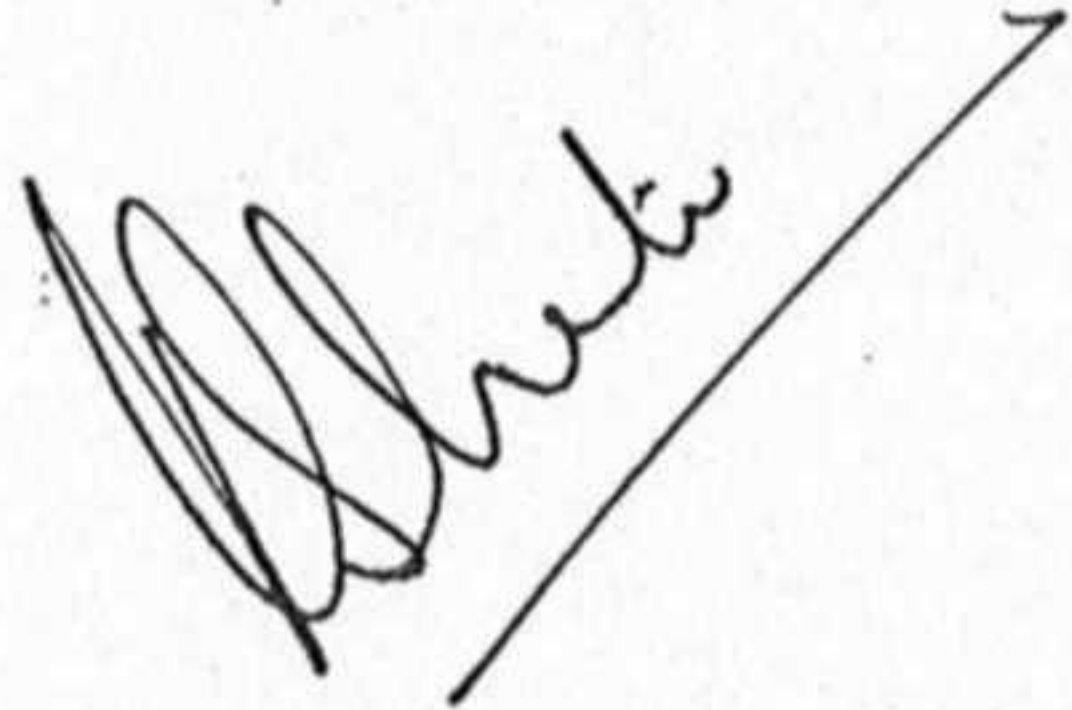
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National Commission For

proposed entry, as has been done by the State Government. Therefore, it is the conclusion of the Bench that the "Silawat (except Sompura Murtikars) should be included in the Central list of backward classes for Rajasthan at entry no. 65, as follows:-

"65. Silawat (except Sompura Murtikar)"



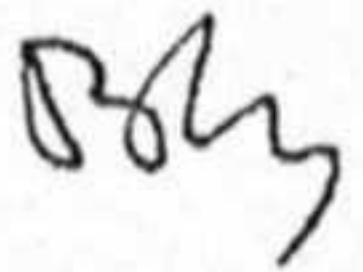
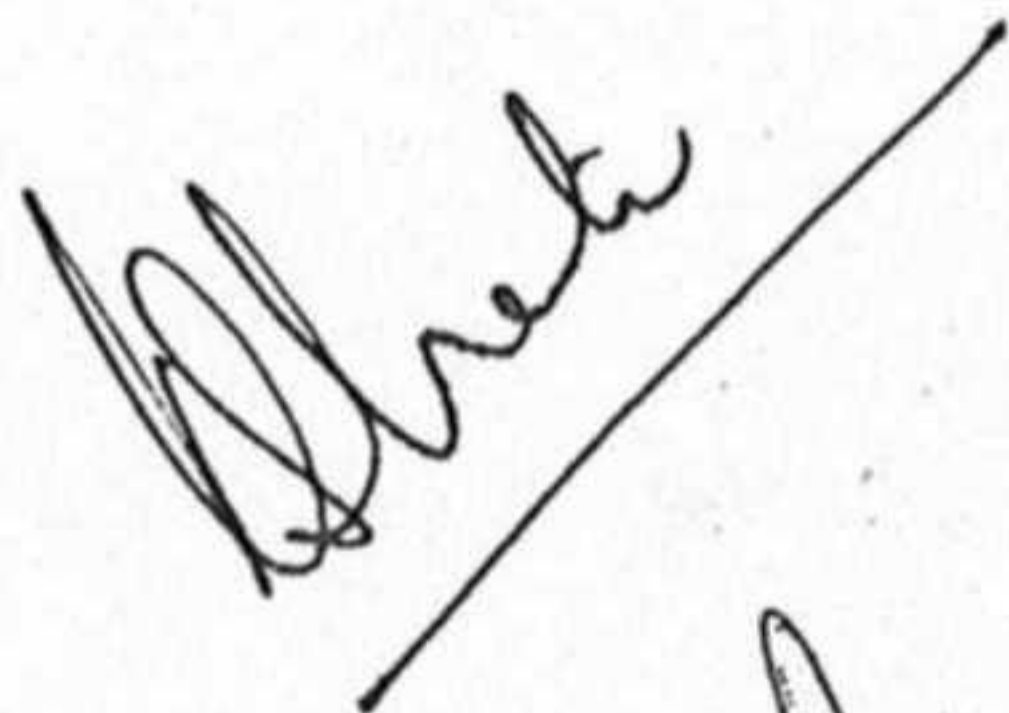


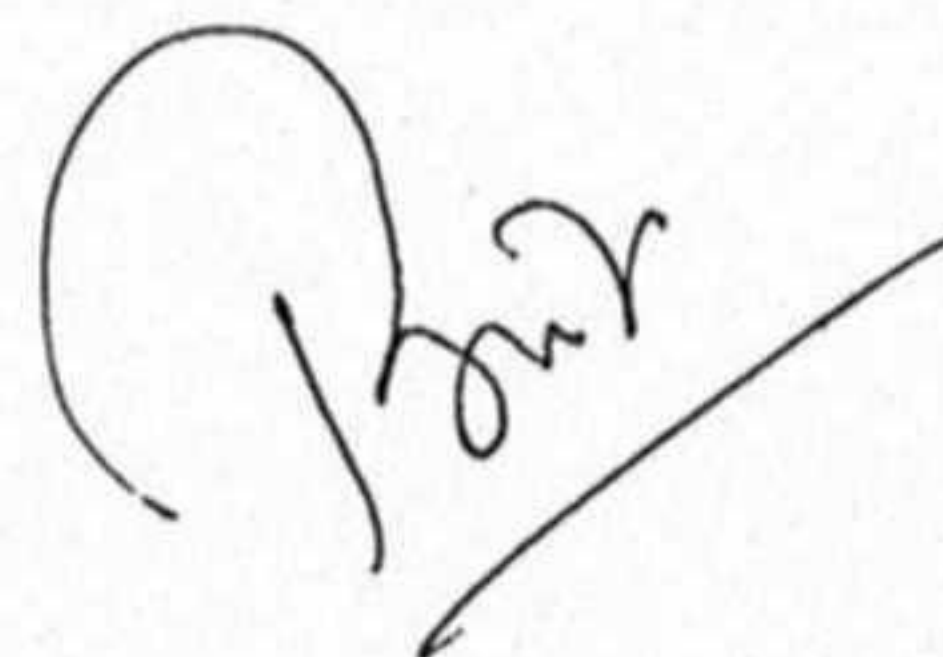
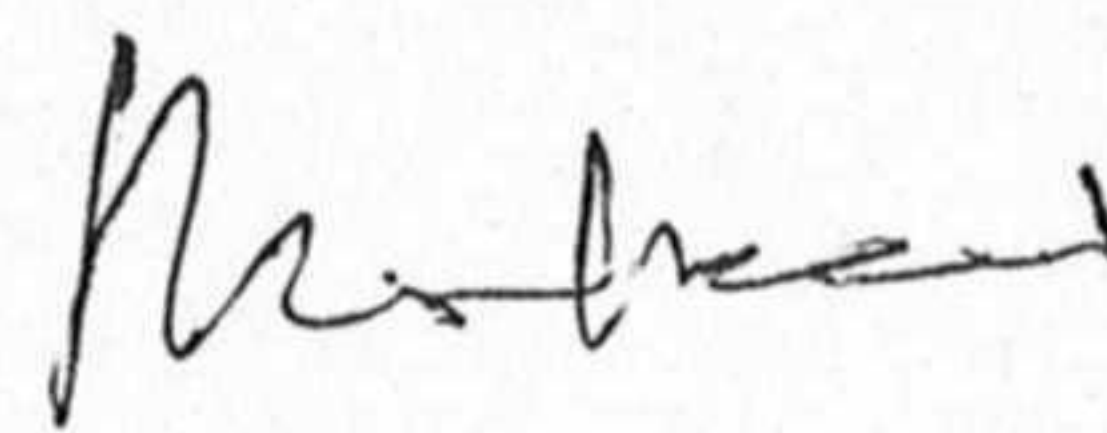
V. ADVICE OF THE COMMISSION

11. The Commission considered and agreed in full with the above findings of the Rajasthan Bench and decided to tender the following advice to the Central Government under Section 9(1) of the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, for necessary action by the Central Government under Section ((2) of the Act:-

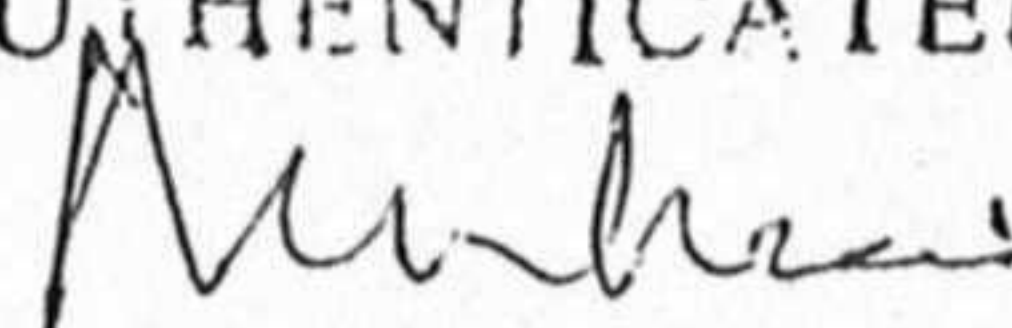
"Silawat (except Sompura Murtikar)" be included in the Central list of backward classes for Rajasthan at entry no. 65, as follows:-

"65. Silawat (except Sompura Murtikar)"

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