

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(Department of Social Justice and Empowerment)

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 6th October, 2022

S.O. 4742(E).—Whereas certain groups of persons who have historically suffered social inequality, discrimination and the consequent backwardness resulting therefrom, have been declared to be Scheduled Castes by Presidential Orders issued from time to time under article 341 of the Constitution of India;

And whereas, certain groups have raised the question of revisiting the existing definition of Scheduled Castes by according the status to new persons who belong to other religions beyond those permitted through Presidential Orders, and in contrast, many other groups have also opposed the same; And whereas, certain representatives of the existing Scheduled Castes have objected to such granting of Scheduled Caste status to new persons; And whereas, this is a seminal and historically complex sociological and constitutional question, and a definite matter of public importance;

And whereas, given its importance, sensitivity and potential impact, any change in definition in this regard should be on the basis of a detailed and definitive study and extensive consultation with all stakeholders and no Commission under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952 (60 of 1952) has so far inquired into the matter,

Now, therefore, in exercise of powers conferred by section 3 of the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952 (60 of 1952), the Central Government hereby appoints a Commission of Inquiry consisting of following persons, namely:-

Chairperson

Justice K. G. Balakrishnan, (Ex-Chief Justice of India)

Members

- i) Dr. Ravinder Kumar Jain, IAS (Retd) (HP- 1981)
- ii) Prof. (Dr.) Sushma Yadav, (Member, UGC)

2. The terms of reference of the Commission shall be as follows:-

- (i) to examine the matter of according Scheduled Caste status to new persons, who claim to historically have belonged to the Scheduled Castes, but have converted to religion other than those mentioned in the Presidential Orders issued from time to time under article 341 of the Constitution;
- (ii) to examine the implications on the existing Scheduled Castes, of adding such new persons as part of the existing list of Scheduled Castes;
- (iii) to examine the changes Scheduled Caste persons go through on converting to other religions in terms of their customs, traditions, social and other status discrimination and deprivation, and the implication of the same on the question of giving them Scheduled Caste status; and
- (iv) to examine any other related questions that the Commission deems appropriate, in consultation with and with the consent of the Central Government.

3. The Headquarters of the Commission shall be at New Delhi.

4. The Commission shall submit its report within a period of two years from the date of taking over of the charge by the Chairperson.

[F. No. RL-12016/9/2021-RL Cell]

SURENDRA SINGH, Addl. Secy.