ANNEXURE-IV

NOTICE FOR PUBLIC HEARING IN THE STATE OF GUJARAT - JUSTICE BALAKRISHNAN COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

This is a public notice for the natives and residents of the State of Gujarat

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 the 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.

In view of the above, Government of India vide notification no. S.O 4742(E) dated 06.10.2022 as published in the Official Gazette of India by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India (available on https://socialjustice.gov.in) has appointed a Commission of Inquiry under Section 3 of the Commission of Inquiry Act, 1952 (60 of 1952) consisting of following eminent persons, namely:

I. Chairperson- Justice K. G. Balakrishnan, (Former Chief Justice of India)
II. Member- Dr. Ravinder Kumar Jain, IAS (Retd) (HP- 1981)
III. Member- Prof. (Dr.) Sushma Yadav, (Former Member, UGC)

Hereinafter referred to as the '**Justice Balakrishnan Commission of Inquiry' or 'Commission'**

2. **Terms of Reference of the Commission**:

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 Justice Balakrishnan Commission of Inquiry shall be visiting the State of Gujarat to conduct Public Hearing with respect to its scope of inquiry at the following place where any person may appear before the Commission to give evidence/submission regarding its terms of reference:

PLACE AND VENUE	DATE AND TIME
AHMEDABAD **at (to be filled by the State Government)**	**09.08.2024** **1000 HRS ONWARDS**

The powers conferred to the Commission under the Commission of Inquiry Act, 1952 (60 of 1952) shall apply to the conduct of its Public Hearing.

Written representations can be emailed at chairperson-jbc-sje@gov.in.

Justice Balakrishnan Commission of Inquiry
Dr. Ambedkar International Centre,
15th Janpath, New Delhi- 110001

Date: 31.07.2024
Place: New Delhi