

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

Uttarakhand Bench

FINDINGS

Case: Request for inclusion of 'Gada' caste/community in the Central List of Backward Classes for Uttarakhand.

1. **Request**

This case arises from the request received in this Commission from Shri Mohammad Amir, S/o Shri Moh. Khalid, Gram - Khelpur Nasrullapur, Post – Bhagwanpur, District - Haridwar, Uttarakhand for inclusion of 'Gada' caste/community in the Central List of Backward Classes for Uttarakhand.

2. **Public Hearing**

The Uttarakhand Bench of the Commission consisting of Justice S.Ratnavel Pandian, Hon'ble Chairman, Shri Subbha Somu and Shri Ram Awadesh Singh, Hon'ble Member and Shri S.K. Purkayastha, Hon'ble Member Secretary held a public hearing in respect of this request at Dehradun on 20th June, 2007. At the Public Hearing, the Government of Uttarakhand was represented by Shri R.C. Pathak, Director, Social Welfare, State Backward Classes Commission was represented by Shri Kunwar Praveen Singh "Champion", Chairman, Sardar Bhag Singh & Capt. J.B. Karki, Vice Chairman, Shri B.L. Arya, Secretary, Shri Roop Chandra Shastri, Smt. Geeta Kashyap and Smt. Madhu Thapa, Members.

AUTHENTICATED



(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member - Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

Facts

3. The position with regard to this caste/community as reflected in different lists is as follows:-

Mandal List	-	Entry No	Nil
State List	-	Entry No.	74. Gada
Central List	-	Entry No	Nil

4. Hakim Mohammad of Gada Community appeared before the Commission and stated that their community is backward and it is necessary to include them in the Central List as they have already been included in the State List. The Community is residing in Haridwar, Dehradun. Population of this community is around 2,00,000 and their main occupation is agriculture. Their community have already been included in the State List of backward classes. Some of the members of the community apart from agriculture also rear cattle. Majority of them are landless. None of them go for higher studies due to poor social condition. It was requested that their caste/community be included in the Central List so that their community can come in the society.

5. Ethnographic Literature

(i) **"The Tribes & Castes of North-Western India", William Crooke, Vol.-II, (pp391-392)** Gada is described as below:-

Gada - (garna, "to bury") - A tribe of industrious cultivators practically confined to the Saharanpur and Muzaffarnagar Districts. Of them Sir H.M. Elliot writes:- "They are Musalmans and are frequently considered to be, like the Jhojhas, converted slaves. They themselves assert that they were formerly sombansi Rajputs; that they came from Nagara Bambara, to the west of Delhi and that Akbar located them in desert tracts, which

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have now been cleared by their industry. There seems reason to believe that they have the sub-divisions of Bargujar, Chauhan etc., but there are also perhaps among them descendants of several inferior castes. All those on being converted to Muhammadanism, were called (perhaps contemptuously) Gara from the new practice they had adopted of burying instead of burning their dead. They now apply the term to themselves, but endeavour to disguise its origin by pretending to high birth. The Garas generally intermarry in their own clan; but there is a set of villages in Saharanpur, called Sayyid Gara, from the fact of the daughters of Garas marrying into Sayyid families." The complete census Returns name 51 sections. Some of them are local, such as Chaurasiya, Multani; others are those of well-known castes and septs, such as Bargujar, Bhal, Bhatti, Chandela, Chauhan, Julaha, Pundir, Rajput, Rathaur; others are purely Muhammadan as Ansari, Aziz, Bahlim, Ghori, Myghal, Mughal-Bharsawa, Muhammadi, Shaikh, Shaikh Haidar, and Yar Muhammad.

The Garas are good cultivators, but very quarrelsome and ligigious. This is recorded in the native proverb that a Gara is as great a nuisance in a village as thorns in a field - Ganw men Gara; Khel men Jhara.

(ii) "People of India", National Series, India's Communities, K.S. Singh, Vol.VI (pp.964) Gara/Garba (ST) is described as below:-

Gara/Garba (ST) - The Majority of the Gara/Garba live in the Leh and Kargil districts of Jammu and Kashmir. They speak the ladakhi language, which belongs to the Bhotia group of the Tibeto-Burman family of languages. They are non-vegetarian, and their staple cereal is wheat. The Gara have lineages. They are non-vegetarian, and their staple cereal is wheat. The Gara have lineage called gayuts or rigs; these are recognized up to four generations (phud) and avoided while seeking marriage alliances. They have their own brotherhood groups (phasphun) whose member families render reciprocal services to one another during life-cycle rituals. Bride-price is given in marriage. Women enjoy a

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high social status and are engaged in rearing children, cooking, collection of fuel, bringing drinking water, and spinning raw wool.

Being largely engaged as blacksmiths, the Gara make iron implements and supply them throughout the year to clients for which they receive a fixed quantum of grain from each family at harvest time. The Gara inhabit multiethnic villages and have village councils. They are Buddhist by religion. Secular attitudes have brought neighbouring communities closer to one another socially. A number of Gara boys and girls have received formal education upto the secondary level.

The Gara/Domba or Zoba/Zo live in Lahaul-Spiti in Himachal Pradesh. They are known by different names in different places, e.g. in the Khoksar valley, the blacksmiths are called Gara, in the Pattan valley they are known as Domba. Though they prefer Lohar as the name, in the upper Chandra valley, their name is Gara, which in the Spiti valley they are known as Zo. In the Gahar and Chandra valleys, besides blacksmiths, there are also musicians and jewellers. In Lahaul, their language is akin to that of the Chanas/Sipi of the Indo-Aryan family in Spiti, but they also speak Bhoti (Tibeto-Burman). The Lohar of gumrang belong to the rus of Merupa and those of Khangsar and Tino to Yeshe-ras-pa. They are non-vegetarian. They consume home-made or locally made liquor frequently. Their staple food is rice, maize and wheat and a variety of pulses.

The Gara do not have any social divisions. The community norms and taboos that earlier governed commensal and connubial relations among different communities have now become less rigid. The Gara are at present considered almost on a par with Sipi; they now give their daughters in marriage to the Sipi. The Gara live in joint families and are polyandrous. Bride-price is given, and adult marriages are practised. Divorce is permitted for both sexes. The Gara women are a great economic asset and also have the right to share in the husband's property. The life-cycle rituals are performed by lamas(monk) in accordance with the Buddhist tenets.

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The Gara/Lohar are primarily blacksmiths, in assertion to which occupation they graze sheep and goats. Agriculture is a secondary occupation as they have small landholdings. Phagul, Losar (new year function), Halds, etc. are their major festivals. Their socio-economic ties (patron-client and landlord-tenant) and putative kinship relations strengthen intercommunity bonds. They have responded favorably to modern development programmes.

The Commission observed that the caste/community "Gada" is mainly spread out in Dehradun and Haridwar areas, with a population of 2 lakhs. Traditionally they are good cultivators. Majority of them are landless. At present they also work as labourer, agricultural labourer. Literacy is very low. Most of the females are illiterates. Hardly anybody make it to higher studies due to dropout at school level. The caste/community is included in the State List of Backward Classes for Uttarakhand. They seem to be not represented in Government service and other profession like doctors, engineers, management etc.

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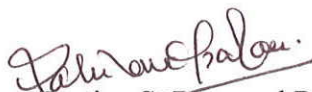


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6. **Findings**

From the evidence and documents presented at the time of public hearing and also on a perusal of ethnographic literature by eminent authors, the Bench finds that the "Gada" caste/community of Uttarakhand is a socially backward class in Uttarakhand who are landless and rear cattle. None of them go for higher studies due to poor social condition. From the ethnographic accounts it has also been gathered that the Gara do not have any social divisions. The community norms and taboos that earlier governed commensal and connubial relations among different communities have now become less rigid. Therefore, the "Gada" be included in the Central List of Backward Classes for Uttarakhand and the entry will be as follows:-

3. Gada


(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairman


(Subbha Somu)
Member


(Ram Awadesh Singh)
Member


(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member Secretary

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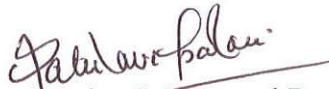
(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member - Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

7. Advice of the Commission

The Commission considered and agreed in full with the above findings of the Uttarakhand Bench and decided to tender the following advice to the Central Government under section 9(i) of the NCBC Act, for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the Act :-

“Gada” be included at entry No.3 in the Central List of Backward Classes for Uttarakhand and the entry will be as follows:-

3. “Gada ”


(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairman


(Subbha Somu)
Member


(Ram Awadesh Singh)
Member


(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member Secretary

AUTHENTICATED


(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member - Secretary
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