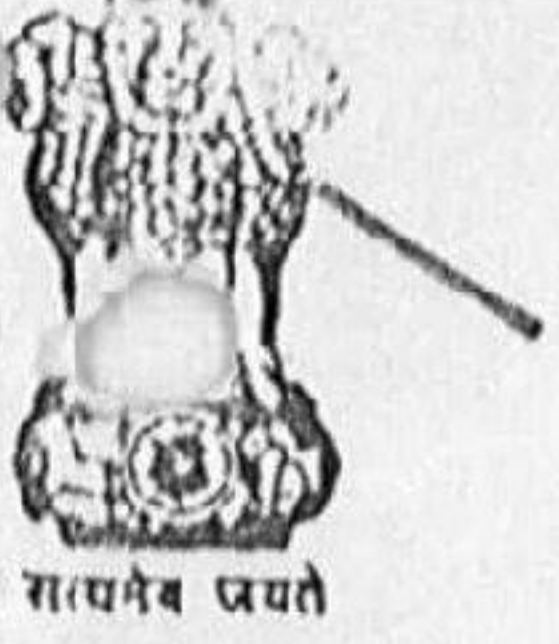




सी.टी. बेंजामिन
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सदस्य सचिव
राष्ट्रीय पिछड़ा वर्ग आयोग

1

भारत सरकार
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

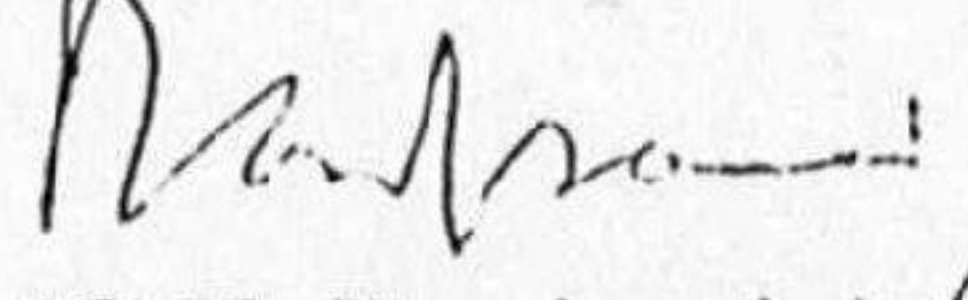
DO NCBC Advice No. 111/Karnataka/2001

19.01.2001

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 the inclusion of "Gouda/Gowda" as a sub-caste of Vokkaliga in the Central list of backward classes for Karnataka, duly authenticated, for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the NCBC Act.

Yours sincerely


(C.T. Benjamin) 19/1

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

Encl: As stated

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES
KARNATAKA BENCH
FINDINGS

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

I. REQUEST

This case arises from the request made to this Commission by the "Kodagu and Dakshina Kannada Gowda Samaj", Bangalore and "Kodagu Gowda Samaj", Bangalore for inclusion of "Gowda" caste/community in the Central list of backward classes for Karnataka. In their joint letter of request dated 26.07.1996, they have stated that their community, namely, "Gowda" mostly lives in the Kodagu (Coorg) and Dakshina Kannada (South Kanara) districts of Karnataka. The members of the community are mostly agriculturists engaged in the production of food crops, plantation produce, diary produce, etc., either in their own lands/farms or on the lands/farms belonging to others. According to them, their community is akin to "Vokkaligas" and their ways of life are similar. Nowadays, matrimonial relationships are taking place quite often between the Gowdas and Vokkaligas. Being agriculturists, about 90% of them live in rural areas. Since their habitat falls in the unirrigated areas of Malnad (forest area), they are poor and ignorant. For education and medical facilities, they have to walk miles together. The community has very little representation in the State and Central services, public sector undertakings, banks and other public institutions. They have further stated that their community has already been included in the State Government's list of backward classes as a sub-caste of "Vokkaliga", but it has been spelt as "Gouda". Though this spelling is correct as per the pronunciation in Kannada language, it is not as per the spelling written

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in the existing village and district level records or as per the spelling in vogue among them. The correct spelling, according to them, should be "Gowda".

2. Similar requests have also been received subsequently from the Vokkaligara Yane Gowdara Seva Sangha, Mangalore; Shri K.R. Chamayya, former Law Secretary, Govt. of Karnataka; Kodagu Gouda Vidya Sangha, Madikeri; and Kodagu Mathu Dakshina Kannada Gowda Samaja, Bangalore. The Vokkaligara Yane Gowdara Seva Sangha in their letter of request has specifically stated that in fact "Vokkaliga" is a group of a number of castes/communities and "Gowda" is a part of this group. But, since "Gowda" is not specifically included in the Central Government's list of backward classes under "Vokkaliga", the members of their community face difficulty in getting caste certificates from the certificate-issuing authorities. Therefore, they are not able to avail themselves of the benefit of reservation and other facilities provided for backward classes. Shri K.R. Chamayya in his letter of request has stated that the Gowdas of Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu districts were being treated as belonging to Vokkaliga category ever since the State Government's G.O. dated 16.5.1979 wherein the State Government listed backward classes both in English and Kannada and they were being given backward class certificates and benefits on that basis. However, after the Government Order dated 17.9.1994 wherein the State Government listed backward classes only in English, the revenue officers of the said two districts are refusing to give them backward class certificates stating that they are "Gowdas" and not "Goudas" mentioned in the G.O. dated 17.9.1994. He has argued that since while issuing this order the State Government has not taken any policy decision to omit "Gowda" from the list of backward classes or from the category of Vokkaligas, the spelling "Gouda" included in the list should be taken as denoting their community of "Gowda" and the non-inclusion of spelling "Gowda" should be considered as an inadvertent mistake or spelling error which has resulted in great hardship to the Gowdas of Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu districts as many candidates for the recent recruitments have been denied the benefit of reservation.

3. During the public hearing held by the then Karnataka Bench of this Commission under our predecessor Members, Shri M.R. Balakrishna appearing before the Bench on

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behalf of the Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu Samaja Abhivruddi Sangha, Sullia, Dakshina Kannada had argued that the Gowdas of Dakshina Kannada and Coorg are actually not Vokkaligas but are a separate and distinct caste/community and pleaded that Gowdas of Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu districts should be included in the list of backward classes as a separate caste/community. He explained that when Coorg was part of Madras Presidency, Gowdas of Coorg were recognised as a backward class. The appellation of Vokkaliga began to be tagged on to their community name only after the re-organisation of the State. In support of the distinct identity of Gowdas, he and others supporting him stated that unlike the Vokkaligas, the Gowdas are divided into eight gotras (*balis*) and that they practise cremation while the Vokkaligas practise burial.

II. PUBLIC HEARING

4. A two-Member Bench of the Commission consisting of Shri C.T. Benjamin, Hon'ble Member-Secretary and Dr. B.M. Das, Hon'ble Member held another public hearing to examine these requests at Bangalore on 19th December, 2000. At the public hearing, the State Government was represented by the Director, Backward Classes Welfare and other officers in the Directorate of Backward Classes Welfare. The community was represented by Shri M.R. Balakrishna and others (Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu Gowda Samaja Abhivruddi Sangha); Shri Anantharaja Gowda (Vice-President Kodagu Mathu Dakshina Kannada Gowda Samaja); Shri P.A. Monnappa (Kodagu & Dakshina Kannada Gowda Samaja), Shri N. Ramachandra Gowda; Shri K.R. Chamayya; and others.

III. FACTS

5. In the first-phase of Central list of backward classes for Karanataka issued by the Government of India in 1993, the Vokkaligas of rural areas are included at entry no. 156 as follows:-

"156. Vokkaliga/
Vakkaliga/
Sarpavokkaliga

(Rural areas only)

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The corresponding entry in the State Government's list of backward classes that existed at the time of the preparation of the first-phase of central list based on the principle of commonality included all Vokkaligas including those of urban areas, but since the Mandal Commission's list included only the Vokkaligas of rural areas, the "common (Central) list" prepared by the Government of India included only the Vokkaligas of rural area. The then existing and the latest State list of backward classes specify a number sub-castes under Vokkaliga including "Gouda", but these sub-castes except "Sarpa Vokkaliga" and the spelling variation "Vakkaliga" were not specifically mentioned in the first-phase Central list as they were not mentioned in the Mandal List.

6. This Commission, after considering a request received for the inclusion of "Uppina Kolaga Vokkaliga", had advised the Central Government to include "Uppina Kolaga Vokkaliga" as a sub-caste of Vokkaliga and the Central Government, accepting the Commission's advice, has already included it in the Central List of BCs for Karnataka vide Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's Resolution No. 12011/36/99-BCC dated 4th April, 2000. After its inclusion, the amended entry no. 156 in the Central List of BCs for Karnataka reads as follows:-

"156. Vokkaliga,
Vakkaliga, (Rural areas only)
Sarpavokkaliga,
Uppina Kolaga Vokkaliga"

7. That the term "Vokkaliga" denotes a group of castes/communities is a fact borne out by ethnographic accounts as well as in the reports of different backward classes Commissions in the State of Karnataka. L.K. Ananatha Krishna Iyer in his book 'The Mysore Tribes and Castes' (Mittal Publications, Delhi, reprinted 1988) mentions that "the term 'Okkaliga' means a cultivator, and is probably derived from the word 'Okku', which means to thresh the grain out of ear-stocks. In the report of the Karnataka Backward Classes (Havanur) Commission, it is stated that "Vokkaliga community originally consisted of Gangadikar, Marasu, Kunchitigar, Reddi, Namadhari, Hallikar, Dasa, Beralukodo Vokkaliga and Musuku Vokkaliga groups. They are a homogenous

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community now.” In the report of the Karnataka Third Backward Classes (Justice O. Chinnappa Reddy) Commission, it is stated that, “There are several sub-sects among the Vokkaligas but there is no appreciable difference between various sub-sects among the Vokkaligas in their social status or economic position. Other communities such as Reddy, Kapu, Kamma and Velama have also been treated as Vokkaligas because of the similarity of their customs, occupations and social status. There appear to be inter-marriages also among these communities.”

8. The Anthropological Survey of India's 'The People of India' series, Volume IV, 'India's Communities' (pp. 1095-98) describe Gowda caste/community as follows:-

“... The Gowdas mainly inhabit the hilly regions of the Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu districts of Karnataka. They speak a dialect of Kannada called Arebhase.... Although agriculture is the traditional occupation of the Gowda, at present they also engage themselves in white-collar jobs, trade and business, etc... Their sacred specialists are from their own community....”

9. According to Edgar Thurston and K. Rangachari (Castes and Tribes of Southern India), “The Gaudas or Gaudos are a large caste of Canarese cultivators and cattle breeders...” Quoting the authority of Mr. Stuart, they also write that “Gaudas... are very numerously represented in the South Canara district... Gauda or Gaudu further occurs as a title of Idiga, Kuruba, and Vakkaliga,”

10. In Mysore State Gazetteer – Coorg district, Gowda has been described as follows:-

“The Gowdas are quite a big community in Coorg. They are mainly cultivators. They are settlers from the regions below the ghats in South Kanara. During the time of the Rajas, the taluks in South Kanara below the Western Ghats upto Puttur and a little beyond belonged to them. At that time, the Gowdas from that part of South Kanara were brought and made to settle in Coorg by grant of lands on jamma tenure....”

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11. During the public hearing held on 19-12-2000, the representatives of the community stated that their community members are mainly agricultural labourers. Earlier, there were only very few landholders. Though after land reform many of the members got land, still only 2% of the families are really landowners. Over 65% are agricultural labourers. According to them, their total population is 4 lakhs. They also stated that they are the most exploited community in South Kanara. Because of their numerical strength, the forward communities in Coorg consider them as their number one enemy. To support their claim of social backwardness, they stated that they were often called derisively as "*Kotapallai*" because they used to wear arecanut palm sheaths on their head. They are addicted to drinking. They further stated that because they live in Malnad (mountainous terrain) where there are no irrigation facilities, they cannot be compared with agricultural communities in other areas.

12. At the public hearing, the representatives of the community were divided on the question of whether their community is a part of "Vokkaliga" or not. While Shri M.R. Balakrishna and others representing Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu Samaja Abbhivruddi Sangha reiterated their claim that the Gowdas are not part of Vokkaliga community, but are a separate and distinct community, those who appeared before the Bench representing other organisations or as individuals stated that they are in fact part of Vokkaligas even though their community has got certain distinct characteristics of their own. Those who advocated separate identity for their community stated that before the reorganisation of the State and when Coorg was a part of Madras Presidency they were included in the list of backward classes as a separate caste/community. They claimed that if they had been in Tamil Nadu they would have continued to be identified as Gowdas and not as Vokkaligas. They also mentioned that their community members in the adjoining parts of Kerala are still recognised as Gowdas and are included in the list of BCs of Kerala as Gowdas. They have also invited the attention of the Bench to the fact that the Mysore Backward Classes Committee under the Chairmanship of. Nagan Gowda in its report of 1961 also identified Gowdas and Vokkaligas as separate entities. In a written Memorandum presented during the public hearing, they have also listed the differences between the Vokkaligas and Gowdas.

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13. According to those who stated that the Gowdas are a sub-caste of Vokkaliga community argued that Vokkaliga is a word to denote the various communities engaged in the profession of *Vookulume* (agriculture) which has become popular after the reorganization of the State. Gowdas of this region, due to ignorance, are not aware that they belong to Vokkaliga group. Therefore, at the time of admitting their children to school, they simply indicate their caste as "Gowda". While confirming that they are part of the Vokkaliga community, they have also pleaded that since certificate-issuing authorities are refusing to issue backward class certificates to them, their community should be specifically included in the list of backward classes under Vokkaliga as "Gowda", in addition to "Gouda" which is already included in the State Government's list. At the end of the hearing, when the Bench asked the representatives of the community if inclusion of "Gowda" along with "Gouda" under Vokkaliga will cover their community and enable them to receive caste-certificates and thus benefits of reservation, they all including Shri M.R. Balakrishna and others with him agreed that that would solve the problem.

IV. FINDINGS

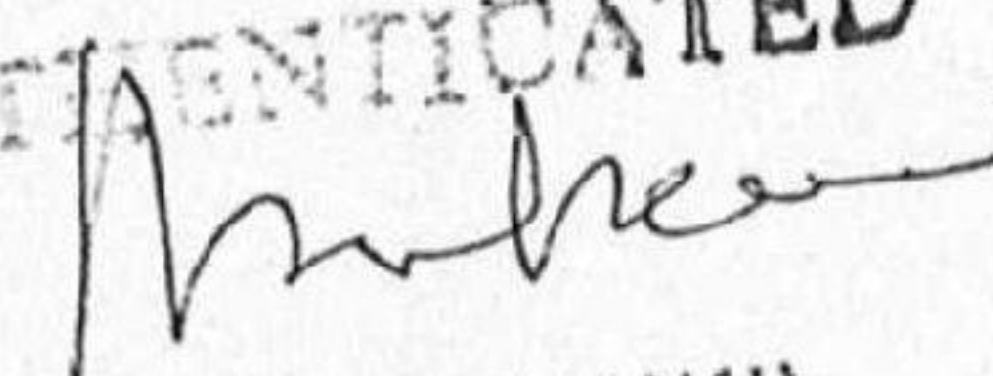
14. From the material available to the Bench and the evidence adduced before the Bench, the Bench finds that Vokkaligas included in the State and Central lists of backward classes for Karnataka include the caste/community of Gowdas of Dakshina Kannada and Kodgau districts of Karnataka. This is clear from the fact that "Vokkaliga" is a term that denotes a number of agricultural castes/communities, some of which have been listed in the State list and one of the castes thus listed under Vokkaliga in the State list is "Gouda". Therefore, there is no reason to believe that the Vokkaligas included in the Central list do not include the caste/community of Gouda or Gowda. Though Gouda or Gowda is also a title used by a number of castes/communities, as the name of a specific caste/community it denotes only the members of the caste/community by that name who are mostly resident in the districts of Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu. The Bench therefore feels that there is no justification for denying caste-certificates to the

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members of this community. The difficulty in getting caste-certificates for the members of this caste/community seems to have arisen due to the fact that "Gouda" or "Gowda" has not been specifically included in the Central list and in the case of the State list the spelling included (viz., "Gouda") is not the spelling which is in vogue among the members of the community or which is used in the existing records. Regarding the claim of a certain section of the community that they are not Vokkaligas and therefore should be included separately, the Bench feels that this is partly due to the refusal of the concerned authorities to issue caste-certificates to those who write their caste-name as "Gowda" instead of "Gouda" as in the State list. In the light of available evidence, the Bench is of the considered view that the "Gouda/Gowda" caste/community of Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu districts is in fact covered by the generic term Vokkaliga and that to avoid any confusion on the part of the certificate-issuing authorities and also to obviate any difficulty for the members of the caste/community in getting caste-certificates, the names "Gouda" and "Gowda", these being two different spelling variants in English of the original Kannada equivalent, should specifically be included in the Central List of Backward Classes for Karnataka as a sub-caste/sub-group of Vokkaliga at entry no. 156 and after its inclusion the amended entry should read as follows:-

"156. Vokkaliga,
Vakkaliga,
Sarpavokkaliga, (Rural areas only)
Uppina Kolaga Vokkaliga
Gouda/Gowda"

15. It is pertinent to note here that the Commission is in receipt of a request for the deletion of the entry "Vokkaliga" from the Central List of Backward Classes. The Bench feels that since a comprehensive revision of the lists of backward classes is due by 2003 under Section 11 of the NCBC Act, this specific request can be taken up at the time of the comprehensive revision. For the present, since "Gouda/Gowda" is undoubtedly a

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caste/community already covered by an existing entry both in the State and Central Lists, it should be included without any prejudice for the reasons mentioned above.

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V. ADVICE OF THE COMMISSION

16. The Commission considered and agreed in full with the above findings of the Karnataka Bench and decided to tender the following advice to the Central Government under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, 1993 for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the Act:

“Gouda/Gowda” be included in the Central list of backward classes for Karnataka as a sub-caste of Vokkaliga at entry no. 156 and after its inclusion the amended entry No. 156 be read as follows:

“156. Vokkaliga,
Vakkaliga,
Sarpa Vokkaliga,
Uppina Kolaga Vokkaliga
Gouda/Gowda”

(Rural areas only)

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