

NCBC Advice No. 113/Karnataka/2001

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

KARNATAKA BENCH

FINDINGS

Case: Request for inclusion of "Namadhari 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 "Akila Namadhari Gowda Sangha", Saraswatipuram, Mysore, for inclusion of "Namadhari Gowda" caste/community in the Central list of backward classes for Karnataka. In his letter of request, the Presiddent of the Sangha has stated that "Namadhari Gowda" is a community occurring in the districts of Mysore, Kodagu, Hassan, Mandya, Bangalore and Tumkur. The community's main occupation has been mentioned as agriculture. According to them, the number of educated and employed people in the Government is meagre. Educated women are almost nil. There are no members of the community in the I.A.S., I.P.S., or K.A.S. The community is socially, economically, and politically backward. Though they have made a number of representations to the Backward Class Commissions of Karnataka Government, the Government has not so far recognised this community as backward.

2. During a public hearing held by the then Karnataka Bench of the Commission by our predecessor Members, the representatives of the community had stated that their community was not a part of Vokkaligas and, therefore, they were not covered by the entry "Namadhari Vokkaliga" included in the State list as a sub-caste or sub-group of Vokkaliga. They said that they were not getting caste-certificates in the name of Vokkaliga.

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II. PUBLIC HEARING

3. 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 this request at Bangalore on 18th 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 H.Thimmegowda, Shri D. Sundar Das, Shri D.Venkatesha, Shri R. Rangaraju, Shri R. Dasappa and others.

III. FACTS

4. "Namadhari Gowda" caste/community is not included in the first-phase of Central list of backward classes for Karanataka issued by the Government of India in 1993 based on the principle of commonality (i.e., inclusion in the Central list of castes/communities commonly found included in the respective State lists and the Mandal Commission's list for each State) because it was not included in both the Mandal Commission's list as well as the then existing State list and, therefore, did not satisfy the criterion of commonality.

5. "Namadhari Gowda" is not included even in the latest State list. The latest State list, however, includes "Namadhari Vokkaliga" as a sub-caste or sub-group of Vokkaliga under Category III(a). As noted earlier, according to the request-makers "Namadhari Vokkaliga" included in the State list is not their caste/community as they are not part of the Vokkaliga community.

6. In the NCBC's Questionnaire, they have furnished the following information:-

(i) The population of the caste/community is about 1,10,000.

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- (ii) The occupation on which the members of the community mainly depend for their livelihood is agriculture, which involves manual labour, rendered for wages as well as on their own land.
- (iii) Forty percent of their members are landless manual labourers.
- (iv) Number of literates in the caste/community was 20,000 in 1996-97 out of which 1015 were females, the number of matriculates are 2250 and there are 450 graduates.
- (v) Number of posts held by their members in the State Government services are as follows:-
- | | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Group A/Class I | 60 |
| Group B/Class II | 10 |
| Group C/Class III | 250 |
| Group D/Class IV | 15 |
- (vi) Representation in other areas of employment and professions are as follows:-
- | | |
|--|----|
| (a) State level public undertakings,
Autonomous/semi-autonomous
Establishments | 20 |
| (b) Teachers in colleges/universities | 15 |
| (c) Administrative personnel in colleges | 02 |
| (d) Doctors | 09 |
| (e) Lawyers | 12 |
| (f) Engineers and architects | 15 |

7. During the public hearing on 18th December, 2000, the representatives of the caste/community stated that they are a backward community. They do not have any relationship with other Gowdas of Karnataka. They also mentioned that earlier the Nagan Gowda Committee had included their caste/community in the list recommended by that Committee. On a query from the Bench as to what the name "Namdhari" indicates, they said that it indicates that they are Vaishnavites and are vegetarians. On a further query from the Bench as to whether they considered themselves to be having a lower position in society in terms of the traditional caste hierarchy, they said that being agriculturists they mostly live in villages and are economically and educationally backward and therefore,

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according to them, are also socially backward. They also stated that about 60% of them are small landholders and others are agricultural labourers. There are a few lecturers, village doctors and engineers belonging to their community. On being asked whether there is a separate caste/community called Namadhari Vokkaliga, they said that there is such a caste/community in the Shimoga district, but they are not part of that community. Traditionally, they do not interdine with Vokkaligas, though in terms of social position they are almost equal to Vokkaligas and their religious and ritual customs and practices are similar to Vokkaligas. They have also furnished the information that on the occasions of marriage, festivals, etc., 'pooja' is offered through Aradhya Brahmin only.

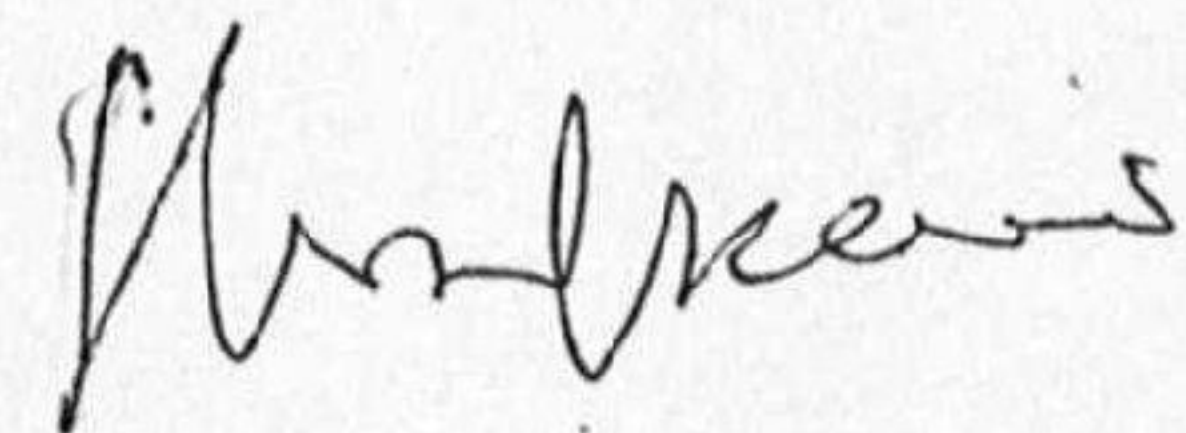
8. Available ethnographic accounts do not describe "Namadhari Gowda" as a caste/community separate from the Namadhari Vokkaligas. According to the Anthropological Survey of India's People of India series (Vol. VIII Communitis, Segments, Synonyms and Surnames), Namadhari Gowda is a synonym of Namadhari Vokkaliga. In the same series, in Volume VI titled 'India's Communities', it is mentioned under the head "Vokkaliga, Namadhari" that they are also known as Namadhari Gowda or Nadavaru. Heggade and Gowda are their titles, which they suffix to their names. As they bear ... the Vaishnava mark, on their foreheads, they were called Namadhari. They are distributed in the Hassan, Chikmagalore, Shimoga and Mysore districts of Karnataka. Land is the main natural resource for the Namadhari Vokkaliga. Traditionally, they are agriculturists. Some of them are engaged in Government and private service and business...." In the report of the Karnataka Backward Classes (Havanur) Commission, it is mentioned that the "Namadhari Gowdas are a section of Vokkaligas. Those who have given evidence before the Commission to the contrary seem to be misguided".

IV. FINDINGS

9. From the evidence adduced before the Bench, it is the finding of the Bench that "Namadhari Gowda" is mainly an agricultural caste/community. Irrespective of whether they are a part of Vokkaligas or not, there is no evidence to show that they have suffered from any serious social discrimination in the past. From the data and information furnished by them in the NCBC's questionnaire regarding their representation in

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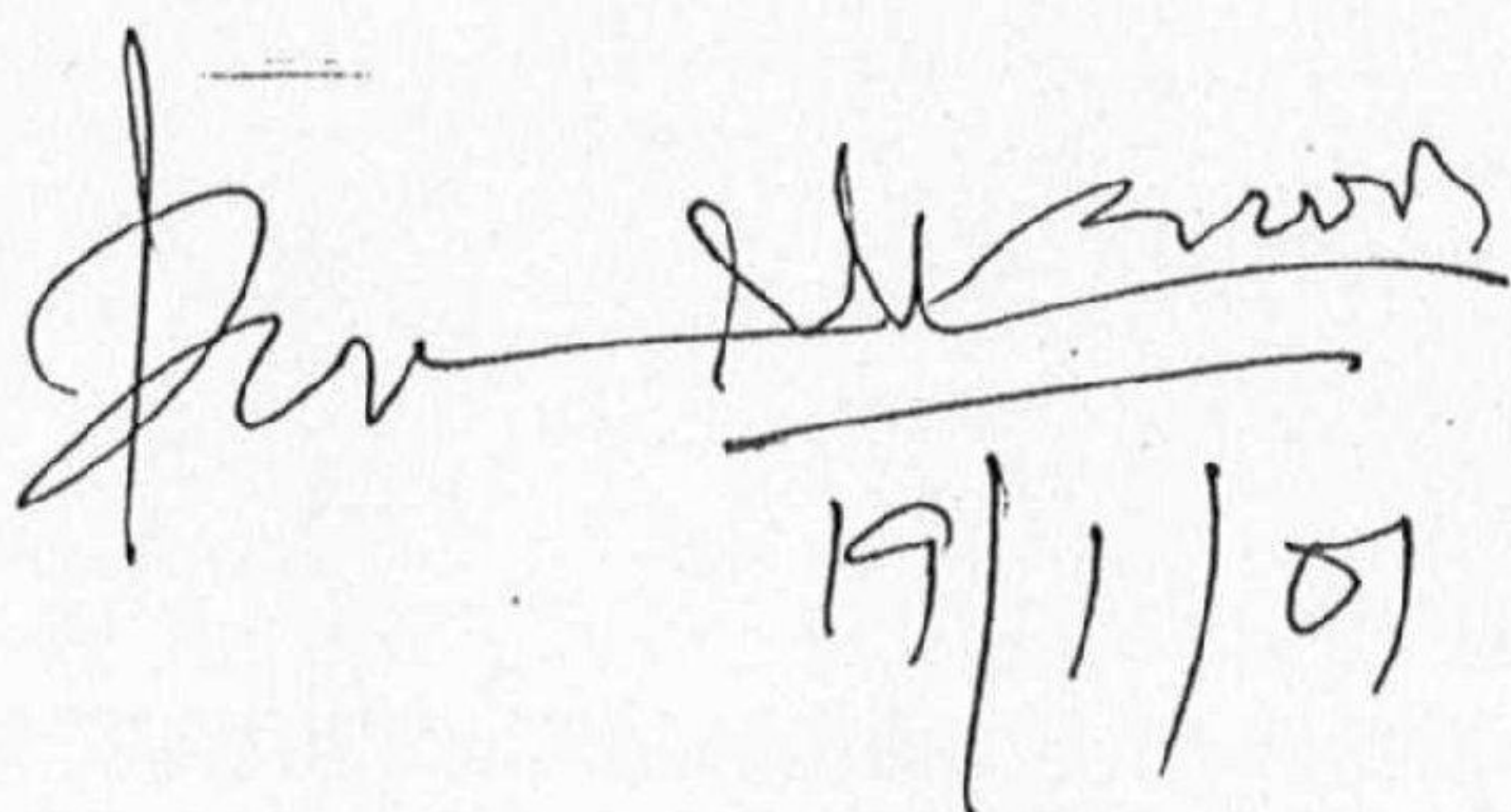
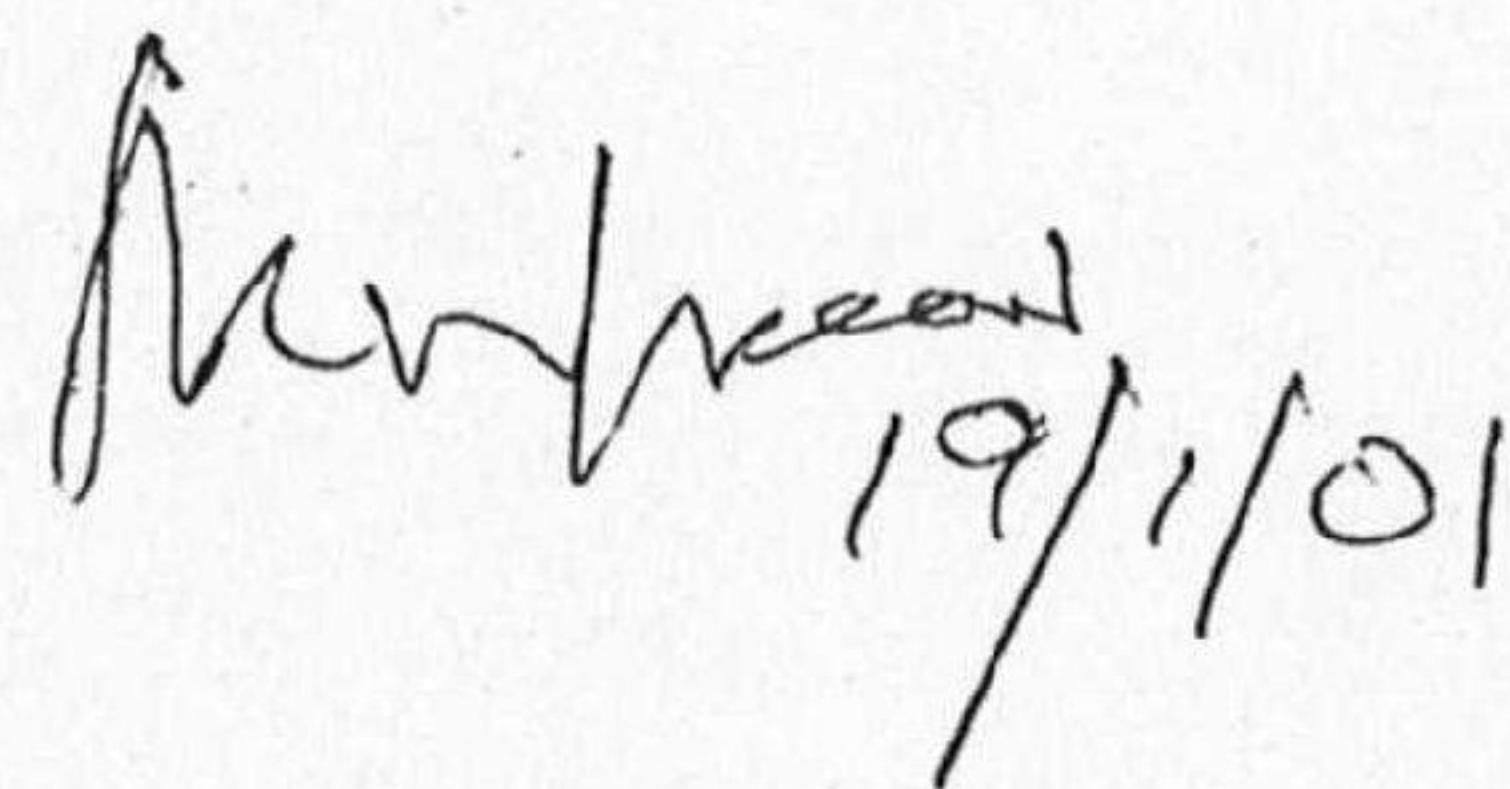
Government services and other areas occupation, it is apparent that they do not face much hardship in entering into modern occupations and professions. Their vegetarianism and their admitted practice of engaging only Aradhya Brahmins during religious and other ceremonies also indicate their high status in society. In view of these, it is the considered view of the Bench the "Namadhari Gowda" is not a socially backward caste/community and therefore the request for inclusion of "Namadhari Gowda" caste/community in the Central list of Backward Classes for Karnataka should be rejected.

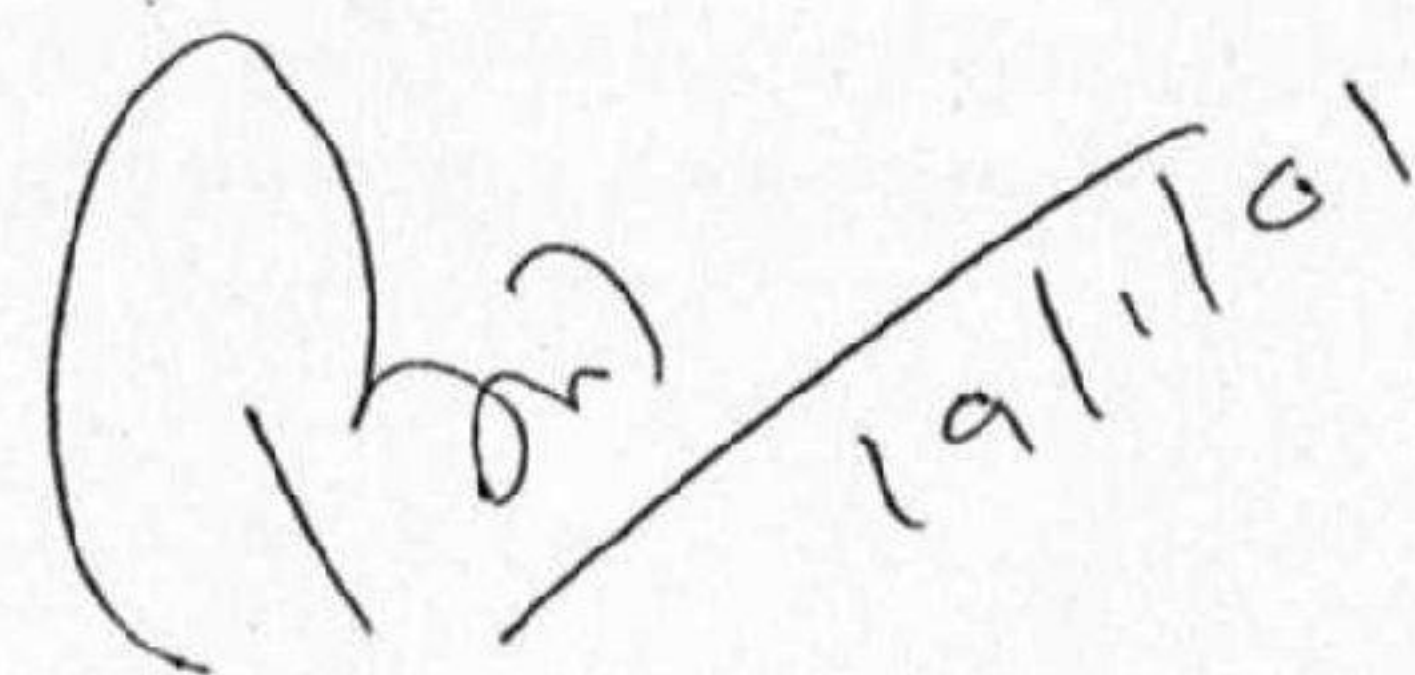
V. ADVICE OF THE COMMISSION

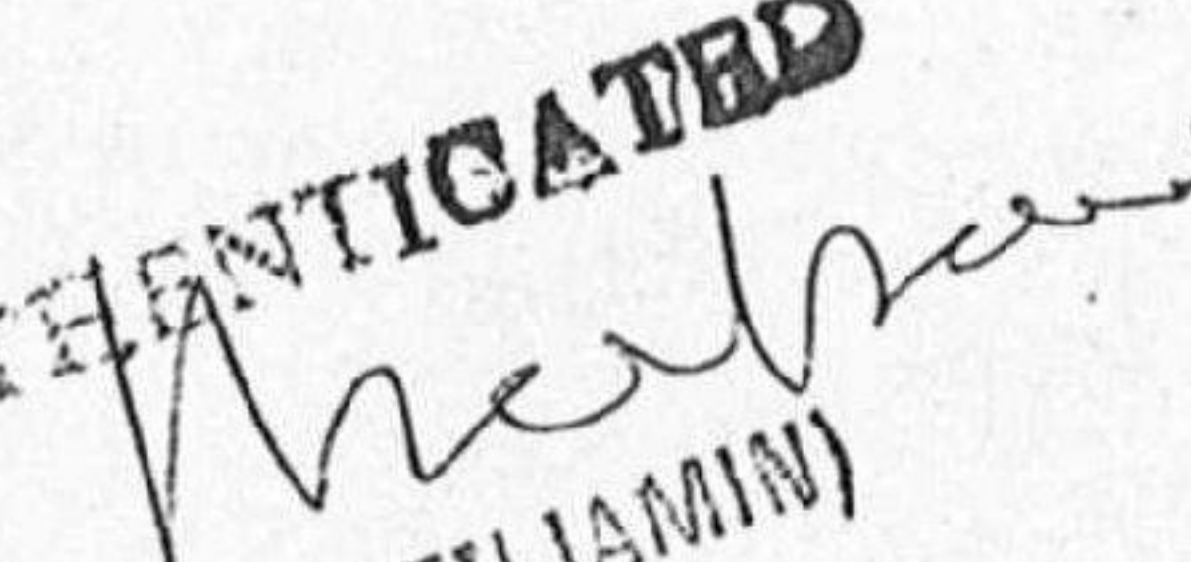
10. The Commission considered and agreed in full with the above findings of the Karnataka Bench and decided to tender the following advice to the Central Government under Section 9(1) of the NCBC Act, 1993 for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the Act:

Request for inclusion of "Namadhari Gowda" caste/community in the Central list of backward classes for Karnataka be rejected as it is not a socially backward caste/community.

19.1.2001.




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