

National Commission for Backward Classes

Himachal Pradesh Bench

Case : **Request for inclusion of the caste/sub-caste/community/synonym "Kumbar, Ghumar, Ghumhar" in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Himachal Pradesh**

I. Request

This case arises from the request received in the National Commission for Backward Classes from the State Government of Himachal Pradesh for inclusion of caste/sub-caste/community/synonym "Kumbar, Ghumar, Ghumhar" in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Himachal Pradesh.

II. Public Hearing

2. The Himachal Pradesh Bench of the Commission consisting of Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian, Hon'ble Chairman, Shri S.K. Purkayastha, Hon'ble Member-Secretary, and Dr. Subbha Somu, Hon'ble Member held a Public Hearing at Shimla on 05th May, 2007 in respect of the requests received by the Commission from Himachal Pradesh.

3. At the Public Hearing, the State Government of Himachal Pradesh was represented by Shri Bhim Sen, Principal Secretary, Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, Smt. Anuradha Thakur, Director (SW), Shri Wahid Khan, Deputy Secretary (Welfare)

AUTHENTICATED



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

and Shri Suresh Kumar Bhardwaj, Deputy Secretary, HP State Backward Classes Commission.

III. Facts

4. The Position with regard to the castes/communities "Kumbar, Ghumar, Ghumhar" as reflected in different lists is as follows:-

Mandal List

41. Kumhar, Prajapati

State List

25. Kumbar, Ghumar, Ghumhar

Central List

30. Kumhar, Prajapati

IV. Submissions at the Public Hearing

Shri Nand Lal Rattan, S/o Shri Munshi Ram, Village Andruli, PO Chhat, Dist. Bilaspur (HP) appeared before the Bench on behalf of the caste/community 'Kumbar, Ghumar, Ghumhar', and stated that their caste/community is in the State List of OBCs at Sl.No.25. However the community has not been included in the Central List so far, even though Kumhar caste/community already find place in the Central List for other States. He stated that the 'Kumhar' and 'Kumbar' are one and the same with only spelling variation due to regional variations. In Himachal Pradesh, the caste/community name is also pronounced as 'Ghumar' and "Ghumhar". The traditional occupation of the Kumbar caste/community is making of earthen pots and pitchers. Further submitted that their traditional occupation is limited only to making earthen pots. Their women folk also participate in pottery work which involves bringing clay, making pots as well as selling the products from door to door in the villages. Besides this, women do all domestic household works. The castes/communities 'Kumbar, Ghumar, Ghumhar' are the one

AUTHENTICATED



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

and the same and are carrying out the same occupation/ profession. The occupation of all these castes/communities are same i.e. earthen pot making. It was requested that the caste/community 'Kumbar, Ghumar, Ghumhar' may be included in the Central List of OBCs for Himachal Pradesh so as to enable the caste/community to avail the benefits provided by the Central Government.

V. The Commission took note of the following Ethnographic Accounts regarding the caste/community **"Kumbar, Ghumar, Ghumhar"**:-

'People of India' Vol. XXIV 'Himachal Pradesh' By – K.S. Singh (Pages 348-352)

Kumhar. The Kumhar are the traditional potters of the country who make earthen pots. The name Kumhar is derived from the Sanskrit word Kumbhakar meaning earthen pot or pitcher maker. They are variously pronounced as Ghumhar Ghamiar, etc. and bear a common title. 'Prajapati' meaning the lord of the people of the world.....The kumhars mainly thrive on their traditional occupations of pottery. They also possess small landholdings and do agricultural work and animal husbandry. Many persons are in government jobs on various cadres including trading, engineering, medical profession, police and army services. The Kumhars share the dietary habits of the area.....The family pattern of the Kumhars was predominantly vertically extended type till the recent past. But now joint families normally break up after the marriage of all the sons or when the father dies. Avoidance relationships are strong in the joint families...the status of women in the Kumhar community is practically equal to that of men. They participate in economic activities i.e. pottery work, where the work involves bringing clay, making pots as well as selling the products door to door in the villages. Women do all domestic jobs, including fetching potable water, collecting fuel and fodder,

AUTHENTICATED



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

participating in animal husbandry and working in the agricultural fields. They also render various services to village zamindars and contribute to family income. They participate in social and religious ceremonies but have little role in the mechanisms of social control and political activities. But they contribute towards domestic decision-making and regulation of family expenditure.....

The Kumhars mainly thrive on their traditional occupation of pottery. They also possess small landholdings and do agricultural work and animal husbandry. Some persons seek casual labour as well as agricultural labour or till land on contract or sharecrop basis. Many persons are in government jobs on various cadres including teaching, engineering, medical profession, police and army services. Some are in private jobs also.-----Child labour exists.-----The kumhars are considered savarna or anderke- for having exchange of kachcha and pucca food and water with the certain Hindus. They traditionally have no exchange of kachcha and pucca food and water with the chamar, Julaha, Dunna, Hesi, etc. but sometimes accept a sachchi rasoi cooked by a Brahman or Rajput cook. They have this relationship with a Brahman, Priest, Nai, Lohar, and Chamar, besides others mostly in exchange basis.

The modern developmental programmes have made considerable impact on the community. Formal education is favoured for both the sexes up to the secondary school level. In the sphere of health and medicare, they favour both modern as well as indigenous methods as the case may be. The family planning method is adopted.....Facility of public distribution system is availed of like others.

V. Findings

From the evidence and documents presented at the time of the Public Hearing and also on perusal of ethnographic literatures by eminent authors and other available information, it is the finding of the Bench that that the 'Kumhar' and 'Kumbar' are one and the same and only there is spelling variation due to regional variations.

AUTHENTICATED



(S.K. Purkayastha)

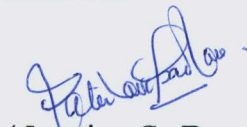
Member-Secretary

National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

In Himachal Pradesh, the caste/community name is also pronounced as 'Ghumar' and "Ghumhar". The traditional occupation of the Kumbar caste/community is making of earthen pots and pitchers. Their women folk participate in pottery work which involves bringing clay, making pots as well as selling the products from door to door in the villages. They also possess small landholdings and do agricultural work and animal husbandry. Some of the caste/community people are in government jobs. This caste/community already finds place in the Central OBCs List for other States. Kumbar, Ghumar, Ghumhar are synonyms of the main caste/community "Kumhar" which already finds place in the Central List of OBCs for the State of Himachal Pradesh at entry No.30.

"In view of the foregoing facts and evidence, the Bench is of the considered view that the castes/communities/sub-castes/synonyms "Kumbar, Ghumar, Ghumhar" are socially and educationally backward and may be included in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Himachal Pradesh as synonyms of main caste/community at entry No.30. The entries after inclusion will read as under:-

"30. Kumhar, Prajapati, Kumbar, Ghumar, Ghumhar"



(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairperson



(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary



(Dr. Subbha Somu)
Member

AUTHENTICATED



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

VI. Advice of the Commission

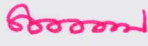
The Commission considered and agreed in full with the above Finding of the Himachal Pradesh Bench and decided to tender the following Advice to the Central Government under Section 9(1) of the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993, for necessary action by the Central Government under Section 9(2) of the Act:-

"The castes/communities/sub-castes/synonyms "Kumbar, Ghumar, Ghumhar" are socially and educationally backward and should be included in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Himachal Pradesh at entry No.30. The entries after inclusion will read as under:-

"30. Kumhar, Prajapati, Kumbar, Ghumar, Ghumhar"


(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairperson


(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary


(Dr. Subbha Somu)
Member

AUTHENTICATED


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