

National Commission For Backward Classes
Karnataka Bench

FINDINGS

Case: Request for inclusion of 'Gam Vokkal', 'Grama Vokkalu' as sub-castes/synonyms of 'Halawakki Wakkal' in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Karnataka

I. REQUEST

Request was received in the National Commission for Backward Classes from the Government of Karnataka for inclusion of 'Gam Vokkal', 'Grama Vokkalu', as sub-castes/synonyms of 'Halawakki Wakkal', in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Karnataka.

II. PUBLIC HEARING

2. The Karnataka Bench of the Commission consisting of Hon'ble Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian, Chairperson, Shri S.K. Purkayastha, Hon'ble Member Secretary and Dr. Subbha Somu, Hon'ble Member held a Public Hearing at Bangalore on 26th & 27th April 2007, in respect of the above sub-castes/synonyms for inclusion in the Central List of OBCs for the State of Karnataka. At the Public Hearing, the Government of Karnataka was represented by Shri R.B. Agavane, Principal

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Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Dr. N. Nagambika Devi, Member-Secretary, Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission and other officials. The sub-castes/synonyms were represented by the representative of the caste/community.

III. FACTS

3. The sub-castes / synonyms covered by the request had not been included in the first phase Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Karnataka, prepared and notified in 1993 on the basis of the principle of commonality (i.e. inclusion in the Central List of OBCs, those castes / communities which were found common to both the lists, the Mandal Commission's Lists for the State of Karnataka and the Karnataka State List of BCs).

4. In the Report of Second Backward Classes Commission, generally known as Mandal Commission Report, Para 12.10 under Chapter XII – "Identification of OBCs" reads as under:

"Whereas the Commission has tried to make the State-wise lists of OBCs as comprehensive as possible, it is quite likely that several synonyms of the castes listed as backward have been left out. Certain castes are known by a number of synonyms which vary from one region to the other and their complete coverage is almost impossible. In view of this, the Commission recommends that if a particular

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caste has been listed as backward then all its synonyms whether mentioned in the State Lists or not should also be treated as backward”.

The cases under consideration are covered under the NCBC's Guidelines for consideration of Requests for inclusion and Complaints of under-inclusion in the Central List of OBCs. Para-9 of Procedural Clarification on Guidelines reads as under:

“In case of synonyms/sub-castes/different names of the same caste or community/local variants of the same caste or community, if and after it is established that, they are, in fact, such synonyms/sub-castes/different names of the same caste/local variants, etc. and if there are no contrary views expressed and data furnished before or otherwise available to/in the notice of the bench/Commission and the bench/Commission does not find any ground to take a contrary view, such synonyms/sub-caste/different names of the same caste/local variants of the same caste, such cases may be included, and findings/advice formulated to that effect.”

5. The Central List of OBCs for Karnataka consists of 185 entries and the State list of OBCs consists of 205 entries.

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6. The State List of OBCs is based mainly on the recommendations of the past three Commissions namely:-

- a) Havanur Commission, 1975
- b) Venkata Swamy Commission, 1986
- c) Chinnappa Reddy Commission, 1990

7. The first State list of OBCs was based on the recommendations of Havanur Commission and later on additions were made to the list from time to time, based on the recommendations of Venkata Swamy Commission, Chinnappa Reddy Commission and Prof. Ravivarma Kumar Commission.

8. For the Public Hearing, Public Notice was issued in respect of the above case. 'Gam Vokkal', 'Grama Vokkalu', sub-castes/synonyms of 'Halawakki Wakkal', are included in the State List. The main castes/communities of the two sub-castes/synonyms are included in the Central List of OBCs and the State List of Backward Classes, but the sub-castes/synonyms requested for inclusion do not appear in the Central List.

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9. The relevant entries of the sub-castes/synonyms under consideration in the Mandal List, the State List and the Central list of OBCs are as under:-

(a) Gam Vokkal, Grama Vokkalu

Mandal List	114	Halawakki Wakkal, Vakkal, Gram Vakkal, Gam-Gowda, Gam-Gawada, Gavada, Karevakkal, Kunchavakkal, Attevakkal, Shilwakkal, Halakkivakkal
State List (Cat-I)	18	Halawakki Wakkal, Halawakki Vakkal, Atte Vokkalu, Gam Gawada, <u>Gam Vokkal</u> , <u>Grama Vokkalu</u> , Halakki Vokkalu, Kare Vokkalu, Kunchavakkal, Shilwakkal, Vakkal, Gavada, Gam Gawda, Gram Vakkal
Central List	54	Halawakki-Wakkal, Vakkal, Gram Vakkal, Gam Gowda, Gam Gawada, Gavada, Karevakkal, Kunchavakkal, Attevakkal, Shilwakkal, Halakkivakkal

10. The following are the gist of the submissions made by the representatives, who appeared before the Bench:

(1) Synonyms of Halawakki Wakkal : Gam Vokkal, Grama Vokkalu

Shri J.Srinivasan, President, Karnataka State Backward Classes Federation, who submitted on behalf of the above sub-castes/synonyms stated that the members of their community are the inhabitants of the forest. They are so backward that even in the year 1960 and 1976 many had not seen any urban area and not even seen trains. The Members of their community are landless and do not possess land. They do some cultivation unauthorisedly in the forest land and do

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hunting. Even today the women members of the community do not wear blouse or upper cloth. Women members of the community work as agricultural labourers and also collect wood to be used as fuel. They are illiterate and are very poor, and have the stigma of tribals. It was requested that Gam Vokkal & Gramma Vokkalu might also be included along with Halawakki Wakkal which is already included in the Central List of OBCs for the State of Karnataka, so that the community can get the benefit of OBCs and come to the main stream of the society.

The State Government officials in the written information submitted to the Commission during the Public Hearing stated that the First State Backward Classes Commission recommended the case "Halawakki Wakkal" for its inclusion in the Backward Classes under the group classified as Backward Castes. In the Second Backward Classes Commission report "Halawakki Wakkal" is described as agricultural class who are relatively poor. Gam Vokkalu, Kare Vokkalu and Atte Vokkalu are grouped under this. They mainly live in North Kanara District and are distinct from Vokkaligas. This Commission included them under Group'B'(Most Backward). According to Second Backward Classes Commission Report, the synonyms of 'Halawakki-Wakkal are Gam Vokklu/ Grama Vokkalu, Kare-Vokkalu/Kari Vokkalu and Atte-Vokkalu. The Third Backward Classes Commission Report also has reiterated that this community is not to be confused with the Vokkaligas. They are an agricultural caste concentrated mostly in North Kanara

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District living in small huts, and appear to occupy a very low social status in that district and are very poor, and are socially and educationally backward. On the recommendation of Havanur Commission, this community was classified as backward and included under the group "Backward Castes" along with its synonyms by State Government Order dated 22nd Feb, 1977 and 4th March, 1977 as "Halwakkiwakkal, Vakkal, Gram Vakkal, Gam Gowda, Gam Gawada, Gavada, Karevakkal, Kunchavakkal, Attevakkal, Shilwakkal". The entry was amended from time to time vide State Government Notifications in the year 1979, 1986, 1994 and 2002 and at present the entry is "Halawakki Wakkal, Halawakki Vakkal, Attevakkalu, Gam Gawada, Gam Vokkal, Grama Gokkalu, Halakki Vokkalu, Kare Vokkalu, Kuncha Vakkal, Vakkal, Halakki Vokkalu, Shilwakkal, Vakkal, Gavada, Gam Gowda and Gram Vakkal".

Ethnographic Accounts:

(a) People of India, by Shri K.S. Singh

(i) **Halvakki Vakkal** - This community is concentrated in the Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka and has synonyms like Gavda, Gavada and Vakkal Gowda. Halvakki is derived from the words halu meaning milk and akki meaning rice, as they were the chief growers of the better kind of rice. The community name is also spelt as Halwakki Wakkal. Animal husbandry, settled cultivation and horticulture are the traditional occupations of the Halvakki Vakkal. Some of them

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earn a living by working as wage labourers and as sharecroppers. Recently, some of these people have taken up government and private service. Their attitude towards formal education is favourable for boys and partly favourable for girls. They use both the traditional and modern systems of medicine, and family planning programmes are utilized.

(ii) **Gram Vakkal** - Also known as Gam Vakkal, Patgar and Gam Gouda, the Gram Vakkal live in the Uttar Kannad district of Karnataka. According to R.E. Enthoven (1920), they are one of the Vakkal or cultivating castes of the Kanara next in rank to the Halvakki Vakkal in the social order.

(iii) Women contribute to the family income by working as wage labourers. Horticulture, settled cultivation, animal husbandry, wage labour and mat-weaving are the traditional as well as present day occupations of the Gram Vakkal. The community has businessmen, administrators, teachers and persons holding white-collar jobs. There is Gram Vakkal member in the state legislative assembly as well as representatives in village panchayats.

(iv) Nowadays, they intermarry with the Halvakki Vakkal as a consequence of a movement currently gaining momentum in the area to integrate the Vokkaliga. They avail themselves of the services of the barber, goldsmith, etc. in their rituals. The facilities of education, health, media and communication,

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banking, co-operative societies, etc. have been extended to them.

(b) Chinnappa Reddy Commission Report, 1990

(i) **Halawakki-Wakkal** – This community was classified by the Havanur Commission as a backward caste and included in Group-B(more backward) by the Venkata Swamy Commission. This community is not to be confused with the Vokkaliga. They are an agricultural caste concentrated mostly in the Uttara Kannada district living in small huts. They appear to occupy a very low social status in that district and are very poor. The students appeared & passed were less than the State average. Only one person of this community was able to secure admission into postgraduate institution and none into any professional college. No one from the community secured admission into a Medical college in the last 15 years. There is a high concentration of agricultural labourers in this community. There can be no doubt that Halwakki-Wakkal is a Socially and Educationally Backward Class.

11. The Commission while considering the case took note of the following in regard to the socio-economic and educational conditions of the sub-castes / synonyms under reference:

- a) The sub-castes /synonyms under consideration belong to the lower rungs of society. These sub-castes / synonyms along with main caste/community are already included in the State

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List of Backward Classes on the recommendations of different State Backward Classes Commissions.

- b) The main caste/community of the sub-castes / synonyms under consideration has already been included in the Central List of OBCs for the State of Karnataka but the sub-castes/synonyms do not appear in the Central List.
- c) These sub-castes/synonyms were included in the State List of Backward Classes before or in 1990, and seems to be time tested.
- d) The sub-castes / synonyms under reference are from the lower strata of the society and represent to traditionally disadvantaged sections of the society. The members of these sub-castes / synonyms apart from their traditional occupation earn their livelihood mainly by hard manual labour / petty business and all kinds of manual / labour work.
- e) As per the information given by the State Government and the submissions made by the representatives of the communities, the Bench observed that the representation of these communities in Government service seems to be poor. None among these communities were found to be holding higher posts in the Government service. Similarly, a vast majority of the members of these

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castes / communities seems to have been engaged in hard manual work or pursuing such occupations which fall in the lower rungs of the occupational hierarchy. Their living conditions are also indicative of the poorer conditions of socio-economic life.

- f) The annual income of most of members of these castes and communities are meagre.
- g) The Bench observed that the castes / communities mostly belong to the lower strata of society, with traditional disadvantages, who are dependent on manual labour, some being forced to leave the traditional occupations due to tough market competition and others because of the modernization. Even though a fewer number of the members of the community have succeeded in entering Government jobs at the lower level, majority of them are still to gain entrance. Majority of them are still to catch the ladder of education and from the mainstream of the society.
- h) During the Public Hearing, members of the different caste/community and State Government officials who were present, did not oppose the submission made by the representatives of the above caste/community nor the inclusion of the sub-castes/synonyms in the Central List of OBCs for the State of Karnataka.

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IV. FINDINGS

12. From the submissions made by the representatives of the caste/community and the representatives of the State Government, evidence & documents presented at the time of public hearing and also on a perusal of ethnographic literature by eminent authors, reports of the State Backward Classes Commissions and other available informations, the following are the finding of the Bench:

They are an agricultural labour caste concentrated mostly in North Kanara District living in small huts, and appear to occupy a very low social status in that district and seems to be very poor. Many of the members of their community are landless and do not possess land. They do some cultivation unauthorisedly in the forest land and do hunting. Even today it is said that in the interior regions women members of the community do not wear blouse or upper cloth. Women members of the community also work as agricultural labourers and also collect wood for fuel. They are socially and educationally backward. This case is covered under A.Social,2(a)(para.7&9) of the Guidelines for consideration of Requests for inclusion and Complaints of under inclusion in the Central List of Other backward Classes.

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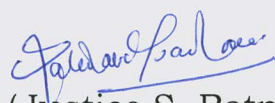
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After inclusion of the above sub-castes/synonyms, the entry would be as under:

Entry No.54 Halawakki-Wakkal, Vakkal, *Gram Vakkal*, Gam Gowda, Gam Gawada, Gam Vokkal, Grama Vokkalu, Gavada, Karevakkal, Kunchavakkal, Attevakkal, Shilwakkal, Halakkivakkal

13. In view of the foregoing facts and evidence, the submissions made by the representatives of the caste/community and the representatives of the State Government, evidence & documents presented at the time of public hearing and also on a perusal of ethnographic literature by eminent authors, reports of State Backward Classes Commissions and other available informations, the Bench is of the considered view that 'Gam Vokkal', 'Grama Vokkalu', sub-castes/synonyms of 'Halawakki Wakkal', are socially & educationally backward and should be included in the Central List of OBCs for the State of Karanataka as mentioned in the above paragraph.



(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairman



(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary



(Dr. Subbha Somu)
Member

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V. ADVICE OF THE COMMISSION

14. The Commission considered and agreed in full with the above findings 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:-

‘Gam Vokkal’, ‘Grama Vokkalu’, sub-castes/synonyms of ‘Halawakki Wakkal’, under reference are socially & educationally backward and be included in the Central list of OBCs for the State of Karnataka. The relevant entries after inclusion will read as under:

Entry No.54 Halawakki-Wakkal, Vakkal, *Gram Vakkal*, Gam Gowda, Gam Gawada, Gam Vokkal, Grama Vokkalu, Gavada, Karevakkal, Kunchavakkal, Attevakal, Shilwakkal, Halakkivakkal


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