

National Commission for Backward Classes

Orissa Bench

Findings

Case: Request for inclusion of caste/community "**Ellama**" in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Orissa.

I. Request

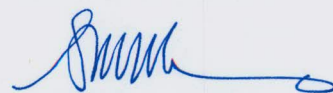
The case arises from the request received in this Commission from State Government of Orissa for inclusion caste/community "Ellama" in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for Orissa.

II. Public Hearing

The Bench of the Commission Consisting of Hon'ble Chairman Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian, Hon'ble Member Dr. Subbha Somu and Member Secretary Shri S.K. Purkayastha held a public hearing on 18.04.2007 at Bhubaneshwar to examine the request for inclusion of Ellama caste in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa.

Shri Taradatt, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, ST & SC Development Department, Shri Jyoti Prakash Das, and Director & Addt represented the State Government. Secretary OBC, Govt. of Orissa, Shri H. Behera, Member-Secretary, Orissa Backward Classes Commission, Shri G.N.Sethi, Deputy Secretary, ST/SC Development Department and other officials.

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Member-Secretary
National Commission for Backward Classes
New Delhi

III. Facts

The relevant entries in different lists relating to Ellamais given below:-

Mandal List

Nil

State List

188. Belama, Ellama

Central List

Nil

IV. Submissions at the Public Hearing

Sh.B.B.Biswanath, President, Ellama Maha-Sangha, Orissa who appeared on behalf of the Ellama caste/community requested to include the Ellama caste/Community of Orissa in the OBC List of the Central Government. He informed the Commission that Ellama is spread over 10 Blocks of Ganjam district, namely Hinjilikatu, Purusottampur, Chhatrapur, Rangeilunda, Digapanhandi, Chikiti, Patrapur, Seragada, and Sanakhemundi etc. The total population of this caste/community is about 40,000. At some places Ellama are also called as Belama and vice versa. They are socially, educationally and economically backward, and requested that the caste/community may be included as Ellama in the Central List of OBCs for the State of Orissa. The literacy rate of the caste/community is 2 to 3.0 percent. Most of the people are working as migrant labourers in Surat, Bombay, and other places. The caste/community has been included in the State OBCs list. Their traditional occupation is agriculture besides poultry farming, goat

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rearing, cattle farming etc., as 80.0 percent are marginal farmers having 2 to 3 acres of land. Others work as daily labourers. The caste/community people are not aware, whether they have migrated from Andhra Pradesh or not, it could be that their fore fathers had migrated 200 to 300 years back. But they inhabit the areas bordering on Andhra Pradesh and they speak both Telugu and Oriya. Belama and Ellama have marriage relations with each other.

V. During the Public Hearing, Orissa Backward Classes Commission submitted in writing to the NCBC, that the total population of this caste/community is 21,500. Whilst only 30.0 percent of the workforce owns land, 50.0 percent work as agriculture labour, 15.0 percent as casual labour. The literacy rate is also low with just 8.7 percent of the population are matriculate or above. Three persons from this community have been elected as Sarpanchs and less than 2.0 percent of populations are only in the Govt. jobs. The average annual income of the families of this community is around Rs. 5000. Also most members of the community live in thatched houses. The places of their habitation are connected by village road and are easily accessible.

VI. The Commission took note of the following ethnographic accounts in respect of the caste/community "**Ellama**":-

India's Communities, Vol.IV, Sh. K.S. Singh (Page3618-3619)

Velama. In Orissa, the Velama or Ellema, concentrated mainly in Ganjam district, claim that they migrated from Andhra Pradesh long ago. Their mother tongue is Telugu and they speak Oriya too. Both the Telugu and Oriya scripts are used. They are non-vegetarian. Men consume alcoholic drinks occasionally and smoke indigenous cheroot. The community has only one gotra, namely Nagasa, but has number

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lineages or surnames. Previously, their lineage names were used as surnames but nowadays Rao is added after the lineage name. They have two social subdivisions, Palnati and Kapulu which are based on the differentiation at economic level. They follow the community and gotra endogamy and lineage exogamy. Divorce and remarriage are permitted. Both husband and wife can seek divorce. All sons equally share the property but the eldest son gets a little bigger share than the others.

The Velama are a landowning community. Besides cultivation, they are also engaged in business and in private or government service. Their products are sold in the daily and weekly markets. Both barter and cash systems exist in the village. Due to landlessness, some of them work as casual or agricultural labourers. Their women take part in agricultural operations, animal husbandry, collection of firewood, bringing of potable water and in religious activities. They have a traditional community council for settling disputes. Traditionally they exchange warty and pucca food with the Brahman, Gouda and Gudia. They maintain patron-client, landlord-tenant and cultivator-labour relationships with the other communities of the village. They avail themselves of self-employment programmes connected to merchandise and animal husbandry through to IRDP. They also make use of the facilities pertaining to education, media and communication, modern medicare system, electricity, nutritional programmes, ICDS and fair-price shop.

VII. Findings

From the evidence and documents presented at the time of Public Hearing and the Bench noted that at some places Ellama are also known as Belama and vice versa. The traditional occupation of the caste/community is agriculture, as 80.0 percent are marginal farmers

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having 2 to 3 acres of land. A good section of people of this caste/community also migrate to other places for work as labourers. Besides farming, they are also engaged in poultry, goat & cattle rearing, etc. From all these sources the families of this community earn an average annual income of around Rs. 5000, which is low for decent living. The literacy rate of the caste/community is extremely low, being 2.0 to 3.0 percent. Belama and Ellama have marriage relation with each other. The Bench also finds that so far only three persons from this community have been elected as Sarpanchs. The Bench is of the view that Ellama suffer from the same disadvantages as Belama and therefore like the Belama, should be treated as a socially and educationally backward. Therefore, the Bench recommend for inclusion of Ellama alongwith Belema in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa at Sl.No.195.

The entry after inclusion will be as under:

195. Belama, Ellama.



(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairperson



(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary



(Dr. Subbha Somu)
Member

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VIII. Advice of the Commission

The Commission considered and agreed in full with the above Finding of the Orissa 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 synonym of the caste/community Belama, i.e. **Ellama** is socially and educationally backward and should be included in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for the State of Orissa at entry No.195.

The entry after inclusion will read as under:-

195. ~~Belema~~, Ellama


(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairperson


(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary


(Dr. Subbha Somu)
Member

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