

National Commission for Backward Classes

Orissa Bench

Findings

Case: Request for inclusion of the caste/community "**Odra Khandayat Kalanji**" 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 of the caste/community "Odra Khandayat Kalanji" in the Central List of 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 17.04.2007 at Bhubaneshwar to examine the request for inclusion of Odra Khandayat Kalanji caste in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa.

The State Government was represented by Shri Taradatt, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, ST & SC Development Department, Shri Jyoti Prakash Das, Director & Addt. 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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III. Facts

This caste/community has only been included in the State List of Backward Classes for Orissa and the entry is as follows: -

Mandal List

Nil

State List

186. Kalanji, Khandayat Kalanji, Odra Khandayat, Kalanji, Kalingi, Kaliji, & Kalinga

Central List:

181 Kalanji/ Kalinji / Kalingi

IV. Submission at the Public Hearing.

Shri Haribandhu Bisoyi, Secretary of Nikhila Utkal Odra Khandayat Kalanji Samaj, Asika, Ganjam appeared before the Commission Bench and stated that their caste/community are spread in nearly 1200 of villages, 60 Mandals, 11 Anchal Parisada of Ganjam, undivided Koraput, Kalahandi, Sundergarh and Nayagarh districts of Orissa. They have been declared SEBC vide list No. 186 in the State List.

In his request for inclusion of Odra Khandayat Kalanji in the Central list of backward classes for Orissa, Shri Suresh Kumar Sahoo of Nayagarh Anchal ODRA Khandayat Kalanji Samajhas submitted through affidavit the following facts:

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- That the Kalangi & Oda Khandayat people of Nayagarh district had migrated from Ganjam district. In the District of Ganjam these people are known as Kalanji , Khandayat Kalannji and Odra Khandayat Kanaji and the said caste/community has been enlisted in the OBC list Vide Sl.No. 186.
- The total population of this caste/community is 12,380. Generally, people of this caste/community are uneducated and poor. Many of them work as daily labourers and their earning is 600/- per month. The literacy rate of this caste/community is 35.0 percent.
- The occupation of this caste is cultivation. In course of time due to division of families their land holdings have been fragmented, as a result of which some people have become agricultural labourers. As they could not get employment for the entire year they went out to other States, such as Surat in Gujarat, and coalmines in Bihar & West Bengal for employment.

V. During the Public Hearing the Orissa Backward Classes Commission submitted following facts to the NCBC:

This community is synonymous with the 'Kalanji' and finds place at Sl. No. 186 of the SEBC list of the State. The estimated population of this caste/community is around 1,23,000. The population is mainly concentrated in the districts of Ganjam, Nayagarh, Sundergarh, Koraput and Boudh. The traditional occupation of this caste/community is cultivation. However some of them are engaged as industrial and casual labourers. The employment of the people of this community under Govt./Govt; Undertaking is about 0.3 percent. Participation of this

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caste/community in politics is negligible. The average annual income of a family is around Rs. 4000/-. Generally the people of this community live in thatched houses.

VI. The Commission also took note of the following ethnographic accounts in respect of the caste/community "Odra Khandayat Kalanji": -

"Castes and Tribes of Southern India, written by Edgar Thurston & K. Rangachari (Vol. III. P.49)

".....In the foregoing account, the Oriya speaking kalinjis, and Telugu-speaking Kalingis, are both referred to. The confusion seems to have arisen from the fact that the Kalinjis are sometimes called Kalingis by other castes. The Kalingis are essentially Telugus, and are found mainly on the borderland between the districts of Ganjam and Vizagapatam. The Kalinjis are, on the other hand, Oriyas, and seem to be closely allied to the agricultural castes, Doluva, Alia, Bosantiya, etc., like which they are mainly agriculturists."

In Orissa, the Kalinji are believed to have migrated from Andhra Pradesh during the rein of Ashoka. They seem to be closely allied to the Doluva, Alia and Bosantiya of Orissa. The Kalingi and Kalinji are sometimes reported to be alike but the Kalingi wear the sacred thread. According to Thurston, 'A band of robbers staying in a fort near Bhattu Kunnarade was molesting the people, who invited the king of Puri to come and drive the robbers away. Among the warriors who were recruited for this purpose, was a member of the Khondaito caste, who, with the permission of the king succeeded in expelling the robbers. He was named by the people Bodo-Kalinja. He and his followers remained in the Ganjam country and the Kalinjis are their descendants'. The Oriya language is their lingua franca and they also use the Oriya script.

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The traditional and main occupation of the Kalinji is agriculture. Besides they are also engaged in business and service in private and government organizations. The traditional caste council adjudicates their disputes and regulates their social norms.

'The Tribes and Castes of Bengal' (Vol. I) by H.H. Risley(Pages 461-464).

Khandayat. "Khandait, Khandayat, a swordsman, from Uriya Khanda, 'a sword', The generic title of the feudal militia of Orissa, the leading members of which claim to be descended from a band of pure Kshatriyas who came in as conquerors from Northern India.

The ancient Rajas of Orissa kept up large armies and portioned the lands on strictly military tenures. These armies consisted of various castes and races, the upper ranks being officered by men of good Aryan descent, while the lower ones were recruited from the low castes alike of the hills and the plains. On the establishment of a well-defined caste system such troops took their caste from their occupation and correspond to the military class in the fourfold division in Northern India: but with this difference, that in Northern India the Military class consists of an ethnical entity, whereas in Orissa the Khandaits exhibit every variety of type from the high Aryan of good social position to the semi-aboriginal mongrel taken from the dregs of the people." In this passage, taken from the Statistical Account of Balasore District, Mr. Beames appears to regard Khandaits as a heterogeneous group, made up at the one end of Aryan immigrants from Upper India and at the other of recruits from a number indigenous non-Aryan tribes."

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VII. Findings

From the evidence and documents presented at the time of the Public Hearing and also on perusal of ethnographic literature by eminent authors and other available information, it is the finding of the Bench that the Khandaits is a heterogeneous group, consisting Aryan immigrants from Upper India and recruits from a number of indigenous non-Aryan tribes." In the District of Ganjam these people are known as Kalanji, Khandayat Kalannji and Odra Khandayat Kalanji. This fact has been substantiated by Thurston in his book "Castes and Tribes of Southern India" where reference has been made of Bodo-Kalinja who were recruited from the Khondaito, a warriors caste by the king of Puri to drive the robbers away from his region.

The representative of the community, viz., Shri Suresh Kumar Sahoo of Nayagarh Anchal ODRA Khandayat Kalanji Samaj had admitted the fact that the Kalangi & Oda Khandayat people of Nayagarh district had migrated from Ganjam district. Orissa State in the past was also known as "ODRA". The traditional and main occupation of the Kalinji is agriculture. Besides they are also engaged in business and service in private and government organizations. People of this caste/community have also migrated to other States, such as Surat in Gujarat, and coalmines in Bihar & West Bengal in search of employment. The literacy rate of this caste/community is 35.0 percent.

In fact this Commission in its Advice No. Orissa 76-77/2000 dated 22.02.2000 has examined Khandayat, the main caste/sub-caste and their status and rejected the main Khandayat and their sub-caste as not eligible to be under OBC List.

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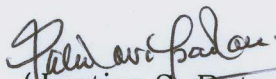


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From the evidence produced before the Bench, it came to the conclusion that in Orissa Khandaits is a heterogeneous group consisting of different castes/sub-castes/communities/synonyms with its regional variants and caste/community "Odra Khandayat Kalanji" is one of them which is not socially backward but on the contrary socially advanced and prestigious castes/sub-castes/communities, and therefore the Request for their Inclusion in the Central List of Backward Classes for Orissa should be rejected.


(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairperson


(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary


(Dr. Subbha Somu)
Member

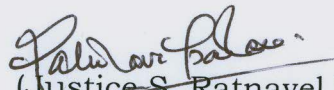
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VIII. Advice of the Commission

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 caste/community/sub-caste/synonym "Odra Khandayat Kalanji" is socially advanced. Therefore the request for inclusion in the Central list of backward classes for Orissa be rejected.


(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)
Chairperson


(S.K. Purkayastha)
Member-Secretary


(Dr. Subbha Somu)
Member

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