



Kuruba Community: Karnataka

Why in News

A massive rally was organised by the **Kuruba community** to urge the state government of **Karnataka** to **recommend the Centre inclusion of the community in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) list.**

Key Points

▪ Background:

- From Independence, the **community enjoyed the ST status.** In **1977**, Justice **LG Havanur**, who headed the backward class commission, **moved the Kurubas to the 'most backward classes' category** from ST list.
- However, the Commission brought in an **area restriction** stating that those living in **Bidar, Yadgir, Kalaburagi and Madikeri** with Kuruba synonyms can continue to avail the ST benefits.

▪ About Kurubas:

- The Kurubas of Karnataka are a **traditional sheep rearing community.**
- Presently, the Kurubas constitute **9.3% of the state's population** and come under the **backward classes category.**
- Kurubas are the **fourth largest caste** in Karnataka after the **Lingayats, Vokkaligas and Muslims.**
- Kurubas in other states are known by different names - as **Dhangars in Maharashtra, Rabaris or Raikas in Gujarat, Dewasis in Rajasthan and Gadarias in Haryana.**

▪ Related Developments:

- **Demands by Lingayat Community:** Three years earlier, the [Lingayat community](#) **demanding a separate minority religion tag** in Karnataka.
 - The **Lingayat sub-sect Panchamasali** has also **demanding its inclusion in the 2A category of backward classes** - which currently provides 15% reservations to backward castes.
- **Justice HN Nagamohan Das Commission:**
 - The **Justice HN Nagamohan Das Commission** was constituted to look into **increasing the existing reservation for SCs from 15% to 17% and for the STs from 3% to 7%** by not exceeding the overall **50% reservation quota** as mandated by the **Supreme Court's order of 1992.**
 - **If Kurubas** are to be **declared ST** as per their demand, the **quota for STs will have to be proportionally increased.**
- **Challenge:**
 - The larger issue is that **the State has already hit the apex court set 50% cap on reservation** and any hike poses a challenge.

▪ Present Reservation Quota in Karnataka:

- Adhering to the Supreme Court's 1992 order, Karnataka has capped the reservation to 50% **where 32% has been earmarked for backward classes**, including Muslims, Christians and Jains, **15% for SCs and 3% for STs**.
- This reservation quota has been **further pared into categories**: Category 1 (4%), Category 2A (15%), Category 2B (4%), Category 3A (4%), Category 3B (5%), SC (15%) and ST (3%).

CURRENT MATRIX IN KARNATAKA



Scheduled Tribe

▪ About

- **Article 366 (25) of the Constitution** refers to **Scheduled Tribes** as those communities, who are **scheduled in accordance with Article 342 of the Constitution**.
- **Article 342** says that only those communities who have been declared as such by the President through an initial public notification or through a subsequent amending Act of Parliament will be considered to be Scheduled Tribes.
- The **list of Scheduled Tribes is State/UT specific** and a community declared as a Scheduled Tribe in a State need not be so in another State.

▪ Essential Characteristics:

- The **Constitution is silent about the criteria for specification of a community as a Scheduled Tribe**. However, following are the traits that distinguish Scheduled Tribe communities from other communities.
 - Primitiveness,
 - Geographical isolation,
 - Shyness, and
 - Social, educational and economic backwardness.

▪ Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups:

- There are certain Scheduled Tribes, 75 in number known as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), who are characterised by;
 - Pre-agriculture level of technology,
 - Stagnant or declining population,
 - Extremely low literacy, and

- Subsistence level of economy.

Source:TH

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