

**National Commission for Backward Classes**

**Orissa Bench**

**Findings**

Case: Request for inclusion of the caste/community "**Tailik Vaishya**" 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 caste/community "Tailik Vaishya" 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 17.04.2007 at Bhubaneshwar to examine the request for inclusion of Tailik Vaishya 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**

The relevant entries pertaining to "Tailik Vaishya" caste in different lists are as below: -

#### Mandal List

207. Teli, Telli, Kubara, Talakar, Sahu, Bahaldia.

#### State List

168. Teli, Telli, Kubara, Talakar, Bahaldia, Ekdas Teli, Tailik Baishya.

#### Central List

162. Teli, Telli, Kubara, Kubera, Talakar, Sahu/Sahoo, Bahaldia.

### **IV. Submission at the Public Hearing**

Shri Dinesh Kumar Sahoo, General Secretary Nikhila Utkal Tailik Vaishya Mahasabha appeared before the Commission and informed that a list of Teli Caste and its sub-caste has been approved by the Govt. of Orissa vide their notifications No.25455 dated 10.09.1993 (T.W.) No.18222 dated 29.7.1996(W) and No. 529 dt. 24.12.2004 (M&BC.W.) as per Sl.No. 168 of the State list.

He further stated that in the Central List of OBC for Orissa Tailik Baishya and Ekadas Teli (Sub-caste) Baladia, have not yet been included. He requested for their inclusion in the Central List of OBC for Orissa in the interest of the Teli Community, which is socially, economically and educationally backward even. The caste/community is already included in the SEBC list of the State and requested to do so in the Central OBC List.

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V. The Commission's Bench took note of the following ethnographic accounts in respect of the caste/community "Tailik Vaishya": -

**H.H.Risley in his work 'The Tribes and Castes of Bengal', Vol. II**  
**(Pages 305-310)**

**Teli.** Teili, Taili, Tailika, Tailakar, Tailpal, Kalu, a large oil-pressing and trading caste of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa. Their original profession was probably oil-pressing and the caste may be regarded as a functional group recruited from the respectable middle class of Hindu society. Oil is used by all Hindus for domestic and ceremonial purposes, and its manufacture could only be carried on by men whose social purity was beyond dispute.

Originally, it is said there were no divisions, and all oilmen belonged to one caste, but in course of time, as wealth accumulated in their hands, the richer families, ashamed of their ancestral occupation, have adopted a new name to conceal their parentage. Thus in the district of Central Bengal Telis who have grown rich call themselves Tilis, and affect to be of a higher lineage than the Telis, although they still retain the old family titles. Wealth and prosperity have made them give up the manufacture of oil and led them to become Amdawalah, or traders buying goods wholesale and selling them by retail.

The social standing of the Telis differs in different parts of the country and for different sub-castes in Bengal, for example, the higher sub-castes of Telis, who have abandoned the oil trade and become bankers, money-lenders, cloth-dealers, and shop-keepers, take rank among the Nava-Sakha, or nine castes (now in fact fourteen) from whose hands a Brahmen may take water, while the Kalus, or working oil men,

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are included in a lower group along with the Sutradhar, the Sundi, and the Kapali.

**“Origin & Growth of Caste in India”, Vol. 1 & 11, by Shri N.K.Dutt, page 290-292.**

**Teli( Tailika).** The term Teli is used in Bengal nowadays to denote two distinct classes of men, one whose profession is trade, and the other associated with oilpressing. The former class is regarded as belonging to the Navasakha group, whose touch does not pollute a Brahman’s drinking water and whose priests are “good” Brahmans, while the oil-men are treated as an unclean caste whom ordinary Brahmanas would not serve as priests. This distinction has been in existence for several centuries, as we find reference to two castes, Tailika and Tailakaraka, in the Brihaddharma Purana (Uttara, X, 38, 41), the Tailika being classed as a good mixed-caste who lived by selling betel-nut, and the Tailakaraka or oil-extractor being called an unclean caste. The Brahmavaivarta Purana (Brahma, X, 18), too, places the Tailakaraka in the group of unclean castes. It is not an uncommon phenomenon in Hindu society for a section of a caste, generally of a lower order, to abandon their traditional caste profession, and adopting one which is regarded as “nobler” by Brahmana law-writers, and gradually to form a caste of their own separate from the parent stock.

It may be that the Teli traders have originated by a similar process from the oil men caste ,though this seperation must have begun several centuries ago. The very name Teli as is used in Bengali or Tailika as written in the Brihaddharma Purana is suggestive of such an origin.

Though in comparatively recent times Tailika has come to mean a dfferent caste from tailakaraka, it was not so in earlier times. About two

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thousand years ago Tailia ( Vishunsmriti LI; Manu, III,158) was one of the degraded communities like the wine-sellers, washermen, etc., whose food could not be taken by a Brahmana and there is no indication that it denoted anything else than the oilman. Kulluka commenting on the above passage of Manu gives the meaning of Tailika as an oil-presser and evidently was not aware of any secondary meaning. The later difference between Tailika and Tailakaraka was an artificial one devised to mark the distinction in profession between the two sections of the same caste. A plausible theory is that one-section became dealers in Tila or sesame seed from which oil was extracted and the other section remained as the extractors of oil. Now as industries fell into lower estimation than trade the trading Tailikas rose higher in social status than the oil-pressing Tailikas or Tailakarakas. This was a development, which occurred only in Bengal where owing to the absence of the intermediate Kshatriya and Vaisya varnas various classifications had to be devised to meet the claims of many functional groups. But how the betel-nut trade fell to the portion of the Tailikas in the time of the Brihaddharma Purana is not known. At any rate it was a later acquisition, as otherwise some more appropriate word than Tailikas would have been chosen to denote the sellers of Gubaka or betel-nut. The Tailikas afterwards gradually extended their field of business and nowadays are to be found trading in various articles other than sesame-seed and betel-nut.

**India's Communities, Vol.V1, by K.S.Singh (Pages 3467-3469)**

In Orissa the Teli(Ghana) are a large community called by different names, such as Ghana, ghani,Gachhua and Jharia Teli. Sahu is used as a surname. They are Oriya speaking and use the Oriya script. They are non-vegetarians who take fish, eggs and mutton. Rice is their staple cereal. Drinking of alcohol is socially prohibited. The teli(Ghana) has only one clan(gotra).. Nageswar. But they are divided in to a number of

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exogamous units called bans, such as Sahal, Chadan, Rakhi and Turmi. They are categorized under the Vaishya Varna.


The traditional occupation of the Teli(Ghana) was oil pressing. At present the majority of them are agriculturists. They have taken up oil pressing and business as their secondary occupations. Some of them are engaged in service too. They have traditional caste council of their own. They profess Hinduism and observe main Hindu festival. They also visit Jagannath temple at Puri on pilgrimage. The teli are a Jal-chal community in the locality. Traditionally they do not accept water and cooked food from communities such as the Dom, Majhi, Chamar, and Pana. The Brahman and Barika render their services to teli. Presently they show keen interest in educating their children.

## **VI. 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 Tailika is a oil-pressing and trading caste of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa. The original profession was oil-pressing and the caste may be regarded as a functional group recruited from the respectable middle class of Hindu society. As oil is used by all Hindus for domestic and ceremonial purposes, and its manufacture could only be carried on by men whose social purity was beyond dispute.

It is not an uncommon phenomenon in Hindu society for a section of caste, generally of a lower order, to abandon their traditional caste profession, and adopt one, which is regarded as "nobler". Though in comparatively recent times Tailika has come to mean a different caste from tailakaraka, it was not so in earlier times. The former class is

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regarded as belonging to the Navasakha group, whose touch does not pollute a Brahmana's drinking water and whose priests are "good" Brahmanas, while the oil-men are treated as an unclean caste whom ordinary Brahmanas would not serve as priests. The Tailika belong to the first category, and the Tailakaraka or oil-extractor being called an unclean caste. Now as industries fell into lower estimation than trade the trading Tailikas rose higher in social status than the oil-pressing Tailakarakas. Tailika Vaishya is one of the examples of such caste/community.

Traditionally they do not accept water and cooked food from communities such as the Dom, Majhi, Chamar, and Pana. The Brahman and Barika render their services. They are taking up jobs in government and private organizations.

Keeping in view the above fact and evidence, the Bench is of the considered view that "Tailik Vaishya", who deals in oil trade and whose social purity is beyond dispute cannot claim to be socially backward caste but on contrary it is an advanced caste and therefore the Bench recommend that the request for inclusion of "**Tailik Vaishya**" in the Central List of Other Backward Classes for Orissa be rejected.

  
(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)  
Chairperson

  
(S.K. Purkayastha)  
Member-Secretary

  
(Dr. Subbha Somu)  
Member

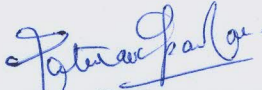
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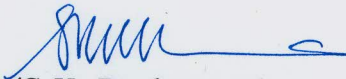
  
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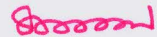
## VI. Advice of the Commission

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 **"Tailik Vaishya"** is socially and educationally 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

  
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**Vit. Advice of the Commission**

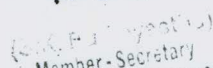
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(Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian)  
Chairperson

  
(S.K. Purkayastha)  
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(Dr. Subbha Somu)  
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