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Tamil Nadu

## Tamil Nadu: Kuravars seek inclusion under ST category

*They claim that the tag 'Kuravar' is exclusive to them and opposed Nari Kuravars identifying themselves as 'Kuravar'.*

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2022/Oct/02/tamil-nadu-kuravars-seek-inclusion-under-st-category-2504368.html>



Narikuravars. Image for representational purposes only | Express

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**TIRUPPUR:** The Union government recently included the Narikuravars in the list of Scheduled Tribes. But members of the Kurunjiyar community, which is mentioned as Kuravar in the SC category, have objected to this.

They claim that the tag 'Kuravar' is exclusive to them and opposed Nari Kuravars identifying themselves as 'Kuravar'.

Explaining the difference between Kuravar and Narikuravar tribes, MN Chandran, vice president of Kurunjiyar Makkal Kootamalaippu (KMK) said "Kuravars are native of Tamil Nadu, and are mentioned in ancient Tamil literature such as Tholkappiyam, Silapathikaram, Manimegalai, and Periya

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The primary occupation is farming and sheep rearing in the hilly areas. Women members knit clothes and make household items like brooms, winnowing pans etc. They descend from the hills, sell their products on the plains and move to their places in the evening.

“We are the original Kuravar community. Narikuravar shouldn't use the title Kuravar. They are also called Nakkale or Akkibikki. They are nomads, but we live in the hills. Further, Narikuravar is named Kuruvikarar, and they are native of Maharashtra and Gujarat and speak the Vaagri Booli language.

They hunt foxes, birds and other small animals. They sell beads and other items related to forests. But, over a period of time, people thought they are from hills and forest areas. Tamil movies, in the early 1960s, started misrepresenting Kurvars as Narikuravars which is continuing to date. This has created a perception in the general public that Narikkuravar (Kuruvikkarar) and Kuravar are the same. But in reality, it Our community should be included under ST category.”

P Chandrasekar, president of the association, said, “We are part of the hill tribes who are known as Kuravar. We are listed as SC-Hindu Kuravan in SC/ST categorisation. Besides, there are 26 Sub sects under DNC categories. Most importantly, another hill tribe known as Malai Kuravar, had a marriage alliance with these tribes for several generations even before the 1900s. But, they are categorised under the ST category. But, we aren't declared as SC category.”

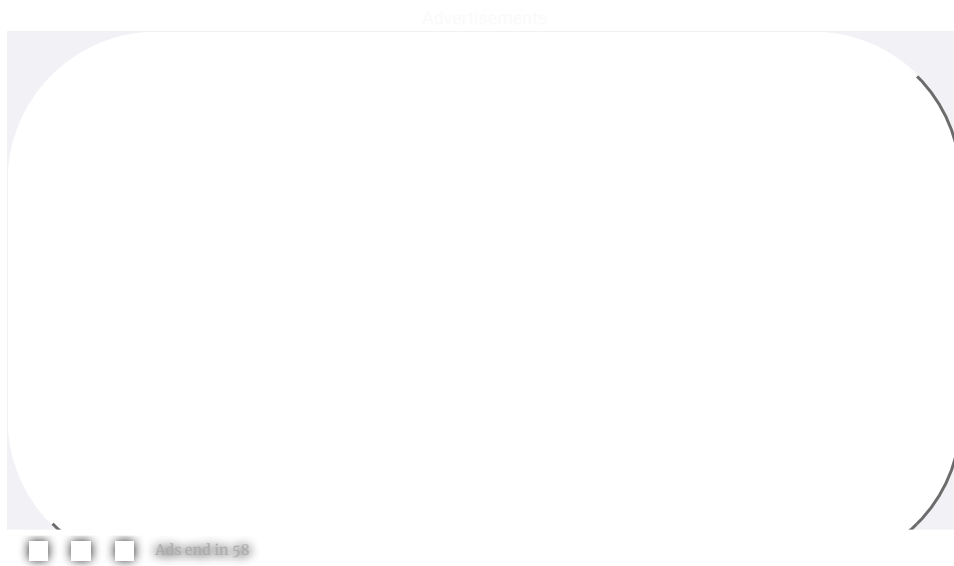
“We were original inhabitants of the hills and mountain ranges in Tamil Nadu. But, the British government in order to establish their dominance, created various Forest Protection rules and crushed our livelihood. In order to survive, we moved to the plains and carried out odd jobs. Currently, the majority of us have become daily wage earners.”

Speaking to TNIE, Narikuravar Community Welfare Association president S Sathyakumar, “We are happy to receive such good news from the government but sad to find Kuravar community raising an objection in our name. They claim that we are nomads from Maharashtra, but my father and I are born and brought up in Tamil Nadu. Not just me, most of us know to read, write and speak in Tamil and have grown up in Tamil culture.”

S Annadurai, Director, Department of Tribal Welfare, Tamil Nadu, said, “We sent the representation of ‘Narikoravar’ community to the Central government. After a period of study, the Cabinet approved it to be included under ST Category. So, we are waiting for the gazette notification for the transfer from MBC to the ST category for the Narikoravar community. The claims made by the Kuravar community are different. They can submit their views and representation to us. We will conduct a study and take appropriate action.”

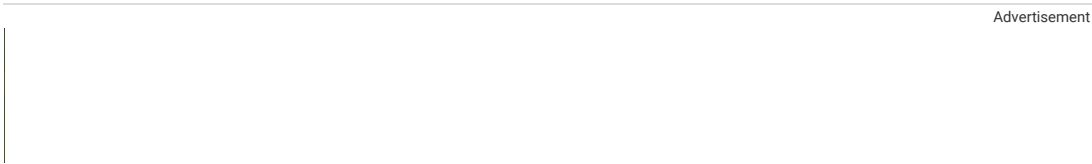
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