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<https://www.adivasilivesmatter.com/post/as-state-demands-to-include-narikuravars-in-the-st-list-the-kuravars-call-it-a-historical-blunder>



As State Demands To Include Narikuravars In The ST List, The Kuravars Call It A 'Historical Blunder'

The difference between Kuravas and the Narikuravars have become a part of the discourse now, yet misrepresentations exist. Adivasi Awaaz creator Kavipriya opines that misrepresentation of history equals suppression and throws light upon the implications of this misrepresentation.

Narikarars or the Fox Hunters and Kuravars:

Akkipikki, also known as Narikuravar, is a nomadic Vanderi community of Tamil Nadu. They are known as *Akkipikki* in Karnataka and as *Nakkala* in Andhra Pradesh. Their traditional occupations include hunting sparrows and foxes and selling beads. They belong to the Most Backward Class (MBC). The Akkipikki people, who speak the Indo-Aryan language, Vaakkiri Puli and are unrelated to the Kuravars who are natives of ancient Tamil.

Narikuravars were known by many names such as *Vaakriwalas*, *Kuruvikkarans*, *Nakkales* or *Akkipikkis*. But in 1957 during the rule of Kamarasar in Tamil Nadu, *Nakkala* became *Nari*. Narikarar implied 'fox hunters'; but somewhere down the line it got replaced by Narikuravar.

While the Kuravars belong to the Kurinji hills and are mentioned in the Tamil Sanga literature, the Narikarars are nomads, the natives of Gujarat. They hunt with guns. Hunting with bow and arrow, collecting honey and weaving bamboo baskets are the traditional occupations of the Tamil Kuravars.



One of the major traditional occupations of the Kuravars has been the extraction and selling of honey; Source: <https://beekeepingbasic.com/>:

The Kuravan History:

The Kuravar tribe, which inhabited the land of Kurinji, is also commonly known as the hill tribe. We have been taught in schools that Kurinji land is the mainland of Tamils and is inhabited by the Kuravars. It is clearly explained that Kuravan is a tribe in Sangha literature taught as subjects in high schools and colleges like Akananoor, Purananoor, Nanneri, Malaipadukadam, Meenakshiyammai Kuram, Thirumurugatrupadai, Kurinchippattu, Kuravanji and so on. Statues of Kuravan Kurathi can be found in Perur temple in Coimbatore dating back to 2000 years; in the Auudaiyar temple said to have been built by Manikkavasaka; in Krishnapuram temple near Tirunelveli built by the Nayaks and many more. These are also proofs that the word Kuravan has been used for a long time. Iyer and Bhaskar, in the Census of India 1901, discuss about the customs and traditional practices of the Kuravars. They have pointed out that the Kuravars lived in the mountains and hilly areas of South India, following their own culture. They were divided into main clans and subclans such as Sattappadi, Manipadi, Kavadiyar, Meluthan, etc. Meena Radhakrishna's *Dishonored by History*, describes in detail the injustices inflicted on the Kuravars by the British government, who drove them out of their habitats and stifled with their livelihoods.



Kuravan Kurathi; Source: <https://what-toshare.blogspot.com/2011/08/what-to-see-in-ramakkalmedu-munnar-main.html>

Is the Inclusion of Narikuravars in the List of Scheduled Tribes (ST) a Historical Blunder?

19-03-2022: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Mr. M.K. Stalin wrote a letter to the Union Government asking them to "include the Narikuravar (Fox hunters) in the tribal list." (Include Narikuravars in ST list, Stalin urges Modi - The Federal). Many have been opposed to this move. The Kuravars argue that they have a separate distinct identity and including 'Narikuravars' in the ST list would lead to the dissolution of this identity. This in my opinion would be a historical blunder.

The Kuravan tribe has been listed under various aliases. Adding 'Narikkuravar' to the list would lead to further confusion. Both the above mentioned tribes are different in culture, habitat, image systems, occupations, and traditions. As such statements by the CM of Tamil Nadu and some other ministers to include the latter in the ST list will only further the confusions. Also welfare schemes by the government are not very clear in terms of identifying the target groups, leaving Kuravars deprived of such schemes. So, introducing more schemes is mandatory and non dependent on the inclusion or exclusion of the Narikuravars from the ST list.



Narikuravas, after the centre's favourable decision regarding their inclusion in the ST list, 2013; Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/Narikuravas-granted-Scheduled-Tribes-status/article11888523.ece>

The following is a press release, detailing the demands of the Tamil Nadu CM with regards to the Narikuravar question:

Press Release No: 434

Date: 19.03.2022.

"Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Mr. M.K Stalin wrote the letter to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to take immediate action to include the Narikuravan/ Kuruvikaran community in Tamil Nadu in the tribal list.

Regarding the delay in the inclusion of the nomadic tribe known as Narikkuravan/ Kuruvikaran community in the tribal list of Tamil Nadu to attract the attention of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi by Hon'ble Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Mr. M.K Stalin has written a letter today (19-03-2022).

In a letter written by the Hon'ble Chief minister of Tamilnadu, based on the recommendations of the Government of Tamil Nadu, the Director of Union Tribal Affairs has mentioned in the central government's letters that the Chief Registrar of India has agreed to the proposal to include the "Kuruvikaran group

joined Narikuravan" community in the list of Scheduled Tribals, (No 12016/S/2011-C&LM-1, dated (30-4-2013), Chief minister of Tamil Nadu would like to bring to the attention of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

Further, the expert committees Lokur Committee in 1965 and the parliamentary Joint Committee in 1967 recommended the inclusion of this community in the Scheduled of Tribes and the hon'ble Chief minister has also indicated in his letter that Narikaran is one of the most backward and vulnerable communities and by including them in the Scheduled of Tribes, they are eligible of all constitutional protection and welfare schemes. He mentioned that the inclusion of this community in the tribal list has been pending for a long time despite many requests in this regard.

Therefore, he requested immediate intervention in this matter and urgent action to include Narikuravan/ Kuruvikaran community in the list of tribals in Tamil Nadu.

(Copy of the request written by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister A.M.K.Stalin to the Union Government).

As the mainstream politics of Tamil Nadu is focusing on how the inclusion of Narikuravars in the ST list would bring several opportunities for the community, we also need to discuss how the Kuravars are being adversely affected by this move. Identity is an uncompromisable aspect of human existence. Not only would the Kuravan identity start dissolving, the existence of the entire community runs the risk of being wiped out from history. *Are we ready for this historical blunder?*

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