

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 2955
TO BE ANSWERED ON- 08/08/2024

KORAGA COMMUNITY ISSUES

2955 SHRI RAJMOHAN UNNITHAN:

Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of the fact that the Koraga tribal group in North Kerala and Karnataka are facing discrimination not only due to their tribal identity but also linguistic and occupational identities and are also forbidden from entering non-Koraga houses and temples;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the action taken by the Government in this regard;
- (c) whether the Union Government has proposed any special packages, schemes/plans to address their issues and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Union Government has received any proposal from the State Government of Kerala in this regard; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRIBAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI DURGADAS UIKEY)

(a) to (c): The Government of Karnataka has stated that the Koraga Tribal community is primarily found in the urban areas of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts. Traditionally, they have been basket makers and labourers, with some members also employed as scavengers. Over the years, majority of the community has moved out of the forests and now resides in urban areas. They are no longer dependent on the forests for their livelihood.

Koraga is primarily a spoken language and is generally not written form. When it is written, the Kannada language script is used. The Koraga people are generally conversant in Tulu and Kannada and therefore use these languages as mediums for producing literature.

The Koraga people have been subjected to a practice known as ajalu, which the Government of Karnataka defined as "differentiating Koraga people from persons belonging to other communities, treating them as inferior human beings, mixing hair, nails, and other inedible obnoxious substances in their food. They were also made to run like buffaloes before the beginning of Kambala event" Ajalu has been considered inhuman and was prohibited in 2000 by the Karnataka Koragas (Prohibition of Ajalu Practice) Act, 2000. Violations of the Act are punishable by imprisonment for a term between six months and five years, as well as a cash penalty.

The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, address issues of untouchability and discrimination, providing legal recourse for ST individuals facing such practices. The act aims to protect Koraga (ST) individuals from social injustices and ensure their dignity and equality.

The Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (Muzrai) Department has warned temples Management to take severe action in cases of any discrimination against Scheduled Tribes (ST).

Government has taken several initiatives and programmes for promoting the socio-economic development of ST communities. Additionally, schemes aimed at healthcare, housing, and livelihood support have contributed to the overall upliftment of these communities.

Currently, such instances have not been reported. However, District level officers and Taluk level officers of Tribal Welfare Department regularly visit colonies to provide basic facilities and also creating awareness among other committees towards tribals.

The Government of Kerala has stated that the people of Koraga community reside in Kasargod district in Kerala. In Manjeshwaram and Kasargod Taluks of Kasargod District, 583 Koraga families are residing in 62 Colonies. This PVTG group has a population of 1668 . They collect raw materials from forest for making Baskets and other articles. There are no issues/ complaints reported about discrimination due to tribal identity or linguistic or occupational identity etc. and also there are no reports regarding them being forbidden from entering any temples and non Koraga houses.

No Special package formulated particularly for Koraga community in Kerala state. As part of PMJANMAN scheme, Koraga settlements in Kasargod are being saturated by providing roads, House construction, internet connectivity, drinking water facilities , Digitalized documentation of basic records, electriciy etc. A Multi Purpose Centre (60 lakh rupees) is sanctioned at Thimmangurane hamlet in Kasargod district in this scheme. 30 new houses approved under PMAY-G scheme for Koraga families in convergence with PMJANMAN Scheme. Apart from this, a new community study centre of 25 lakhs rupees is under construction at Badiyadukka, Kasargod district during 2020- 21 which is 100 % centrally sponsored scheme for Development of PVTG communities. Inorder to improve livelihood, training programme was conducted in Enmakage gramapanchayth in Kasargod district by ST department through CMD(agency) during 2015-16. This programme was financially supported by development of PVTG(CCD) scheme.

(d) & (e): No proposal has been received from the State Government of Kerala.
