

News

petition the Supreme Court to overturn the Lambada, Sugali, and Banjara populations' designation as Scheduled Tribes.



In response to a plea submitted by four people, including a Congress MLA, the Court sent notice to the Central and Telangana governments.

On Friday, the Supreme Court requested the Central and Telangana governments' responses to a petition contesting the **Lambada, Sugali**, and Banjara groups' inclusion on Telangana's list of Scheduled Tribes (STs).

On a plea submitted by four people, including former Adilabad **MP Soyam Bapu Rao** and Congress MLA **Dr. Tellam** Venkata Rao from the Bhadrachalam seat, a

bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and Vijay Bishnoi sent notice to the Central and Telangana governments (petitioners).

The petitioners filed a lawsuit against the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Acts of 1976 and 2002, arguing that the **Lambadas, Sugalis**, and Banjaras were unconstitutionally included as Scheduled Tribes in Telangana because the process required by Article 342 of the Constitution—which calls for a Presidential notification after consulting with the State—was not followed.

It was contended that their abrupt admission as STs had unlawfully benefited them at the expense of Telangana's long-recognized tribal communities, significantly impacting reservations in public jobs, education, and political representation.

"The Lambadas, Sugalis, and Banjaras do not fit the criteria of a "tribe" and are not Scheduled Tribes. The Lambadas, Sugalis, and Banjaras are originally Kshatriyas and businesspeople, as anthropological research unequivocally shows. However, in the Telangana region of the former State of Andhra Pradesh, they were treated as Scheduled Tribes without any investigation or explanation. It was argued that the Banjaras, **Lambadas, and Sugalis** have experienced an unprecedented exodus from neighboring Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and other northern states into the Telangana Districts as a result of their recognition as Scheduled Tribes in the State of Andhra Pradesh. This is presumably due to the fact that they are able to take advantage of the benefits that the Scheduled Tribes are entitled to, such as the ability to purchase land that belonged to the original tribal people of Telangana, get admission to schools and colleges, work in the public sector, and run for elective offices in the State legislature and the Parliament.

According to the appeal, these communities were historically categorized as Backward Classes in the former Hyderabad State (later Telangana area), and they remained so till 1976.

The petitioners claimed that these groups outperformed the native Scheduled Tribes in terms of socioeconomic standing and educational attainment.

Therefore, it was arbitrary and unconstitutional for them to be added to the list of Scheduled Tribes by the 1976 Amendment to the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, seriously impairing the rights and possibilities of legitimate indigenous communities.

"During the past 50 years – right from 1976 to 2018 - most of the benefits meant for the indigenous/original tribal people like the petitioners have been utilized by the **Lambadas and Sugalis**, the communities who have been illegally come to become Scheduled Tribes without any socio-economic survey and without any assessment of the strata of their civilization vis-à-vis non-Sugali and non-Lambada communities and by ignoring the fact about their relative advancement to the original tribals which was the main reason for their non-inclusion from the beginning in the list of Scheduled Tribes and they were subsequently included in the list of Scheduled Tribes Order, 1950 by virtue of the 1976 Amendment," the plea stated.

Advocates Ramesh **Allanki and Alahya Dhamiji**, along with Senior Advocate **Dama Seshadri Naidu**, represented the petitioners.

The petition was submitted **via Aruna Gupta**, an advocate.