

## ***Kudmis Or Kurmis Group Demands For Scheduled Tribe Status Kurmis Group is Planning To Intensify The Programme After Discussion***

*Following guarantees from the West Bengal administration, the Kudmi group, which is calling for Scheduled Tribe (ST) designation and the inclusion of their language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, ended their agitation after nearly a week of rallies. The agitated Kurmi community has received support from a number of political and social organisations, including the Purbanchal Adibasi Kudmi Samaj, Kudmi Samannay Samiti, United Kudumi Sama, Kudmi Sena, Abga Kudmi Sena, Kudmi Unnayan Samiti, and j Kudmi Bikash Morcha.*

### ***Who are Kudmis?***

*The Kudmis or Kurmis were a peasant population that primarily lived on the Junglemahal or Chota Nagpur plateau in West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha. Additionally, kudmis have been spotted in some areas of Assam and northern West Bengal. It was thought that those who lived in these areas were descended from settlers who came from the Chotanagpur region. They lived in the lower Gangetic Plain and belonged to the non-elite tiller class. In Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Odisha, they are categorised as Other Backward Classes. Kurmali, a language that was once spoken by four crore people, is the language of the Kurmi people.*

### ***Does the ST List include the Kudmis?***

*They were considered a primitive tribe, along with the Munda, Oraon, Bhumij, Kharia, Santhal, and others, while they were on the Scheduled Tribe or Aboriginal community list under British administration. However, the Kurmis were not included in the 1950 List of Scheduled Tribes. The community has been fighting to get the ST status that they were given under colonial rule reinstated.*

### ***Why were the Kudmis Excluded?***

*Community members assert that during the British era, some wealthy Kudmis tried to elevate their social status by becoming "kshatriya" in the Hindu caste system, but others opposed this "sanskritization." But the vast majority of Kudmis continue to live a traditional religious and cultural life. Sadly, after gaining independence, they were taken from the list of Scheduled Tribes. They are now claiming to be someone else. It's also true that their socioeconomic situation has remained the same, like that of other adivasi tribes. Another group of Kudmis asserts that their exclusion from the ST list was done so as to show a growth in the Hindu population.*

## **What are Kudmis' demands?**

*Since their socioeconomic situation had not changed, the community created the Kurmi movement to demand the return of their ST status and original identity. Over the past year, the Adibasi Kudmi Samaj-led movement has become more active in the states of West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha. The Adibasi Kudmi Samaj staged a Durku Mahajuruahi (Great Gathering) that drew over a thousand thousand people. The neighbourhood has demanded*

*Inclusion on the ST list even if they have stated that their effort was not intended to obtain reservation benefits.*

*Kurmali's inclusion in the eighth schedule.*

*Recognition of Sarna as their religion*

## **Criterion for a ST's Recognition?**

**The following requirements must be met for a community to be listed on the List of STs, according to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs:**

- *signs of primitive behaviour*
- *peculiar culture*
- *geographical isolation*
- *shyness of engagement with the population at large backwardness.*
- *However, the Constitution makes no mention of any particular requirements for designating a locality as a scheduled tribe.*

## **What is the Position of the Government on Kudmis?**

*Following guarantees from the West Bengali government, the Kurmalis removed their blockade of the railway lines and their partial blockade of National Highway 6, which connects Kolkata and Mumbai. The central government was required to make a decision, according to the state government. The Jharkhand government suggested the Kurmis be put to the ST list in 2004. In order to investigate the position of linguistic minorities and their constitutional rights, the Union Government appointed a committee in 2004 under the direction of Justice Ranganath Mishra. The committee recommended that Kurmali and 37 other languages be added to the Constitution's Eighth Schedule in its 2010 report. The report's recommendations, however, were not carried out by the administration. The Kurmis, according to the Central Tribal Research Institute, are a caste within the Kunbi, not a separate tribe. The Union Government disregarded*

*the advice in light of this report. The Kurmi people, according to the CTRI, did not possess the archaic traits required for ST classification, were strong from an economic, social, educational, and political standpoint, and did not bear the stigma of untouchability. The Revenue and Land Reform department has explained that Kurmis were identified as a backward class under the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908, notwithstanding the Tribal Welfare Research Institute's claim that they were not mentioned as tribes or wood tribes in the 1872 Census.*

## ***The Way Forward for Kudmis Community***

*The Kudmi community is one of several in India that wants justice and acknowledgment for their rights and identity. Their movement embodies both their present issues and possibilities as well as their past resentments and dreams. They assert that they are an indigenous, independent ethnic group with unique customs and history, and that they therefore deserve ST status and linguistic rights. This need, meanwhile, comes with a number of challenges and complexities, including how to define tribal identity, how to accommodate linguistic diversity, how to balance conflicting interests of diverse groups, how to provide equitable representation and growth for all segments of society, and so forth. All interested parties, including the government, civil society, academia, the media, etc., need to seriously consider and discuss these concerns. A more responsive and inclusive structure of government is required in order to solve the issues and problems faced by various communities.*