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Title: Need to include Kudumi tribes in the Schedule Tribe category.

SHRI RABINDRA KUMAR JENA (BALASORE): Madam Speaker, thank you so much for giving me an opportunity.

The tribal population of our country has been suffering endlessly right after Independence. I am bringing this issue because no justice has been made to them for the last 60-70 years. Madam Speaker, in my constituency there is a large population of Kudumi community and the Constitution of India categorizes them as a Backward Class community whereas they have been demanding the status of tribal class. The Census record very clearly demonstrates and shows that in 1931 they were classified as 'primitive tribe' and in 1941, they were classified as 'tribal Hindus'. Madam Speaker, when the Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas, formed in 1946, excluded this Kudumi community while submitting their report, which resulted in the non-inclusion of Kudumi community when the Constitution finalized the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order in 1950.

Why were they excluded? I will just say one line which will make things abundantly clear to this august House. The Advisory Committee's scope was limited to India excluding the Princely States, as they existed in 1946 when this Committee was formed. However, over the years, many of the States had integrated into the neighbouring provinces and they should have been included in the Scheduled Tribe population. The Orissa Princely States is a classic example of such inclusion and integration into the neighbouring provinces.

In Odisha alone, there are 25 lakh primitive tribes of the Kudumi community. In my constituency alone, there are 75,000-76,000 Kudumi are living. Madam Speaker, though they belong to the Scheduled Tribe community, they have long been deprived of this facility, and this august House had debated this issue in 1949 that yes there is a demand to include them.

So, I would sincerely urge upon the Government of India to take cognizance of this serious problem of Kudumi tribes and include them in the Schedule Tribe category so that the long pending and long suffering of this tribe can be taken care of. Thank you so much.