

# WEST BENGAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

## REPORT ON MUSLIM BARUJIBI/BARUI CLASS OF PEOPLE

Three filled-in proformae from Barhampur and Raghunathgang-II Blocks in Murshidabad district and Bagnan-II Block in Howrah district supported by mass petition praying for inclusion of the Muslim Barujibi/Barui class of people in the list of Backward Classes for the State of West Bengal were received by the Commission. The contents of the proformae and the statements contained in the petitions made abundantly evident the social, educational and economic backwardness of the applicants.

The Commission then embarked on two other procedural courses for proper appreciation of the merit of the prayer for such inclusion viz. conducting a study of its own and to give the representatives of the Community a hearing.

### Prologue

As a part of this exercise Syed Masudal Hossain and Dr. P.Karmakar undertook an on-the-spot study in different blocks of the districts of Murshidabad, Nadia and Purba Medinipur having habitational concentration of Muslim Barujibi/Barui class of people. They submitted that report before the commission and shared their ideas with other members of the Commission gathered from their interaction with about 200 families in course of the study.

Subsequently the representatives of the community were given a hearing on 24.6.2010 of the Meeting Hall of the Commission.

After long deliberation and threadbare discussion over the data / materials as could be obtained from the contents of the proformae, the statements made by the representatives of the community in course of the hearing and the study report submitted by Hon'ble Members, the Commission made a close examination of the three and developed its evaluation and assessment on some relevant indicators as follows :

The Muslim Barujibi (Barui) class of people mainly reside in the districts

Geographical  
Distribution

of Murshidabad, Midnapur, Nadia and Howrah. They have habitational presentation in other districts of the State though not in substantial number.

They live as a distinct identifiable social unit mostly in rural areas. They have no commingling with any other community. People of different S.C. & S.T. communities and Muslim communities of lower categories live as their neighbours. Though the educational status and social standing of the neighbours are not satisfactory by average standard they look upon the people belonging to Muslim Barujibi / Barui community as socially inferior.

Marital alliance

Theirs is an endogamous society i.e. marriage outside their own community is not on the whole in practice. However, now matrimonial negotiations have started with other communities of equal social standings.

Educational  
Status

The educational status of the Muslim Barujibi class of people is not at all up to the mark. Though the literacy rate is tolerably high for the males at about 45% and that of females is about 25% a downward slide starts thereafter. The number of boys and girls belonging to the age group of 5 – 15 and not ever attending school is very high and among the few who attend school the drop out rate in various stages of education is quite remarkable. The scenario of enrolment vis-à-vis drop out gets bleaker as the level of education goes higher. Therefore, even the number of Madhyamik or equivalent qualifier drop low to non-significance in the community. In the backdrop of what has been stated it is hardly mentionable that there is no enrolment from the community in the disciplines of Medicine, Engineering and Law. This sorry state of affair is attributable to the socio-economic condition and the resultant mindset of the people of the community. The poor parents willynilly get their wards engaged for earning in preference to their learning. In this context it is gratifying to note that the girls of the society are of late showing an interest in education and learning to unshackle themselves from the bondage of illiteracy and ignorance..

The traditional occupation or now the occupation of Muslim Barujibi / Barui class of people is cultivation and plantation of different types of Betel leaves. They share this tradition with their Hindu counterparts known as Pan

Chasi. Most of the people of the community have no land of their own for the plantation. They have to take on lease others' land at the rate of Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 5000/- for a five years contract/ The Hindu Barujibi class of people have an edge over them in this respect. Some of them possess their own land for the plantation. The occupation of cultivation of betel leaves does not always guarantee a sustained income throughout the year for proper subsistence. Therefore, womenfolk of the community play a role to add to the family income by bidi binding and jori work.

#### Economic Condition

The people of Muslim Barujibi/Barui community lead an existence of perpetual, pecuniary paucity. Most of them have no arable land. A few have only homesteads that too inherited and not acquired in nature. None of them have any family wealth worth the name. They are financially hit hard in terms of monthly family income. For as high as 85% of the people of the community it is only between Rs. 500/- and Rs. 1000/-. To meet any commitment related to their occupation or domestic contingency they have to borrow money from local money lender at an exorbitant rate of interest. They have to pay through their nose the principal together with the interest accrued thereon. This inexorably leads to their impoverishment

#### Dwelling Status

The standard of living of the Muslim Barujibi class is low. Most of them live in thatched hutments or mudwall kuchcha houses. The number of pukka houses in the whole community is too few to deserve any mention. Not to speak of any sanitary latrine or lavatory most of the people of this community have no service latrine. Though the people of the community collect drinking water from tube wells provided by Gram Panchayats they use untreated pond water for other purposes.

#### Recommendation

Therefore, taking into consideration all the facts stated, materials on record and submissions made and applying all the factors and parameters for determination of social and educational backwardness of a community in the State of West Bengal the Commission decided to recommend to the State

Government that the Muslim Barujibi/Barui class of people be included in the list of Backward Classes for the State of West Bengal.

Sd/-

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Subir Kumar Bhadra  
Member Secretary

Sd/-

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Justice Malay Sengupta  
Chairman

Sd/-

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Dr. Parimal Karmakar  
Member

Sd/-

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Dr. Debjani Sengupta  
Member