

# WEST BENGAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES

## REPORT ON CHURIHAR CLASS OF PEOPLE

### Prologue

The West Bengal Commission for Backward Classes received one application in prescribed proformae from Harishchandrapur Block in the district of Malda from Churihar class of people praying for their inclusion in the list of Backward Classes for the State of West Bengal in view of their social, educational and economic backwardness. Being more or less convinced of the prima-facie grounds which merit consideration of their prayer as evident from the contents of the proformae, the Commission decided to undertake usual exercises for such consideration with a hearing to be given to the representatives of the communities.

The hearing as scheduled was held on 20.01.2011..

Thereafter the Commission made a summative appraisal of the two premises i.e. the proformae, and the hearing.

Taking into account all these the Commission proceeded to record its recommendation on some salient determinants as follows:

### Social Status

The Churihar classes of people live as a social distinct unit with their typical occupation to deal in bangles. In course of the hearing some of the representatives stated that they speak in the languages varying from place to place in Vojpuri, Hindi, Urdu and Bengali. People belonging to Hindu and Shershabadia communities live as their neighbours. The representatives of the community claimed that following an agitation in UP about 20 years ago they have taken 'Siddique' as their surname. They now use various surnames. They belong to a Muslim class of people. '

### Geographical Distribution

The Churihar class of people mostly reside in Harishchandrapur II Block in the district of Malda and Gangarampur P.S. in the district of Dakshin Dinajpur, the area commonly known as 'Churihar Para'.

The educational status of Churihar class of people is dismal. The literacy rate among the people of the community is very low. The literacy rate is as low

### Educational Status

as 10%. The number of school going boys and girls within the age group of 5 – 15 is not very encouraging either. The academic reach of the Churihar class of people is not even Madhyamik level barring few exceptions. The drop out level at Primary and Secondary Schools is quite high. The number of graduates are too few to merit any mention and bring about any qualitative change in the overall dismal picture of the academic spectrum of the people of the community. The condition of female education is worse still. There is a backward and conservative society. So there remains a social barrier on the academic pursuit of women. Only 1% - 5% girls go to school. Their medium of instruction is Bengali.

### Matrimonial Alliances

Matrimonial alliances are made mostly within the same community as a rule. Now a days, however, marital alliances are being negotiated with the people of other communities on the basis of social affinity and financial equation.

### Occupation

The traditional occupation of Churihar class of people was to manufacture Churi (bangles) etc. They are now not in the trade of making Churi, har etc. the trade which they used to practise long back. They now deal in Churi, har etc. in the district of Dakshin Dinajpur by making bulk purchase from the wholesalers. They have no representation in any Government or Semi-Government job because of their lower academic standard. In this field also the women of the society suffers a setback in the form of the social stigma. They are not allowed to go outside beyond the confinement of the four walls of their houses for joining any service of any nature even when on rare occasions such opportunities come their way.

### Economic Status

The economic condition of Churihar class of people is not satisfactory. Some of them have their houses. Others have acquired their paternal property through inheritance. They have acquired nothing worth mentioning on their own. More than half of the people of the community have their monthly family income within Rs.1000/-. Some of the members of the community who come from

Gangarampur Panchayat Samity of Dakhin Dinajpur, informed at the time of hearing that they formed Self-help Groups of their own.

Dwelling  
Status

The living condition of the Churihar class of people is quite sub-standard. Most of them live in thatched hutments or mud wall kuchcha houses. Only a few houses, about 10% are pucca houses. Most of them have Kuchcha latrines or lavatories (about 60%). Some other about 20% use makeshift thatched latrines. The rest 20% of them though quite a few in number have to respond to nature's call in the open air. They have regular supply of drinking water family-wise from tube wells of Panchayat Bodies in their houses/adjoining areas.

Recommendation

Thus, on a consideration of materials made available to the Commission including the oral and documentary evidence adduced and the submissions made and applying all factors and parameters for determination of social and educational backwardness of a Community in the State of West Bengal, the Commission is clearly of the opinion that the Churihar class of people constitutes a Backward Class in the State and accordingly the Commission recommends to the State Government to include the Churihar class 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

Sd/-

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**Mursalin Molla**  
Member