Further to the 1st report made by the commission and submitted on the 14th of June, 1994 the commission has since considered further requests from different classes of citizens for inclusion of the said classes in the list of “Backward Classes” of the state. The Commission in this 2nd report is making its recommendation and tendering its advice to the State Government with regard to further matters considered and decided by the Commission.

In the 1st report submitted by the Commission, the Commission has held after careful consideration of all aspects and for detailed reasons stated in the report that any class of citizens must be socially and educationally backward to constitute a “Backward Class” within the meaning of the West Bengal Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993. The commission in the earlier report has also laid down the criteria and tests for determining the social and educational backwardness of any particular class of citizens. It does not, therefore, become necessary to repeat the same in this report.

Bearing in mind the principles enunciated and the criteria and tests laid down for deciding the social and educational backwardness of any particular class the Commission has proceeded to consider the requests for inclusion in the list of Backward Classes of the State made on behalf of a number of classes of citizens.

The commission now proceeds to examine the requests of each class on its merits to come to its conclusion as to whether the said class constitutes a backward class within the meaning of the West Bengal Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993.
MALAKAR

The “Malakar” is an artisan class of people belonging to “Nabasakh” i.e. middle ranked artisans of the traditional agrarian social system. The Malakars are distributed in almost all the districts of West Bengal. The total population of this class is approximately 2 lakhs. The educational level of the male folk, on an average is of primary standard; and the women are mostly illiterate. Owing to poverty, most of their children cannot avail of the free schooling facilities. Due to low earning of their parents about 80% of the boys and girls are compelled to leave school i.e. drop-out, at an age of below 15 years. They help their parents at work or serve as labourers from very early age.

The traditional occupation of the Malakar class is “Sola-work”. The occupation has lost its pride of place as the sola-products are used for decorative purposes only on some special festivals. So, the business is seasonal; there is no perennial demand for these products. The exorbitant price of the material inputs leaves poor margin of return. As a result, this artisan community finds it difficult to sustain in this occupation although their high skill is appreciated and many of the images of the Goddess Durga and other Gods and Goddesses made of “Sola” by them are carried abroad by air for performing pujas during the Puja seasons. The Malakars, therefore, engage themselves in numerous other occupations involving manual labour to eke out an existence. About 40% of the Malakar girls are married at tender age. This is their social practice.

The representations from the Malakar community indicate that they are in serious socio-economic crisis. The particulars of backwardness – social, educational and economic – have been furnished on behalf of this community by Shri Sudhanshu Sekhar Biswas, Acting Secretary, Malakar Samaj Unnayan
Samity, Bongaon, 24-Pargnas (N) and Sri Subimal Malakar, Malakar Samity, West Bengal who represented the community at the time of hearing. According to their representations, it is evident that the number of Malakars employed in Government Services, Public Sector Undertakings and in professions like medicines, law, engineering, teaching and business is too small. The type of work they do involve lot of technical skill. They are trying to diversify their products by creating beautiful designs of sola-work for normal use in the household for decorative purposes. But the required capital is not available. The banks and the other financial institutions do not want to lend to the illiterate Malakars.

Although the Malakars supply the decorative articles for the Puja Pandals including the images of God or Goddesses, they are not socially recognized with any kind of cordiality. They are kept away, as far as possible, from the main function.

The factors leading to the social and educational and also economic backwardness of the Malakar are clearly established by the representatives of the Malakar class at the time of hearing. The Commission, therefore, has no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that the Malakar class of people is socially and educationally a Backward Class in the State of West Bengal. The commission also noted that both Kalelkar Commission and the Mandal Commission have listed them as Backward Class in the state. Taking into consideration the materials on record and the submissions made, the Commission holds that the “Malakar” class constitutes a “Backward Class” in the state and should be included in the list of “Backward Classes” of the state and the commission, accordingly, advises the Government of West Bengal to do so.

The commission noted that no one had approached on behalf of the State Government though notice was served.
TANTI

The Tanti (Tantubaya) is an artisan class of people who are engaged in weaving occupation. They made the submission before the commission that they belong to “Nabasakh”. But upper castes, specially Brahmins, do not take water from them.

Sri Kumaresh Chandra Biswas, General Secretary, Paschim Banga Tantubay Samaj Unnayan Samiti placed materials before the commission, in respect of the request for inclusion of the “Tanti” class in the list of Backward Classes. He made the submission that this community occupies a low social and educational position with low economic achievements. Their population is about 40 lakhs distributed over almost all the districts of West Bengal. Their educational level is very low, about 8% of the females and 16% of the males are literate. Due to low earning of their parents 80% of the boys and girls are compelled to leave school i.e. drop-out at the age of 5 – 15 years. Most of the children either do not attend schools or discontinue in the midst of their study as they have to assist their parents in their daily activities. He made further submission that the educational standard of the Tanti Class is as given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class VIII</td>
<td>3 in 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. F.</td>
<td>5 in 10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>2 in 10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
<td>1 in 10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of Tantis in the Government Services and Public Sector Undertakings is rather insignificant and in professions like medicine, Engineering, Law, Teaching etc. their presence is negligible. There is no Minister / MP / MLA from amongst them. There is hardly any person with high offices – no IAS, no IPS and no one in Higher Judicial Services.
The position of the women folk is very pitiable as their participation in various spheres of life is rather negligible. Amongst the “Tantis” early marriage is the rule. About 80% of the girls are given in marriage at the age of about 17 years. The particulars of the backwardness – social and educational and also economic – have been furnished on behalf of the class by Shri Dipak Kumar Basak of the Tantubaya Kalyan Samity and Sri Gobinda Nath Sikdar, who represented the class at the time of hearing before the commission. They adduced oral and documentary evidence and made submissions before the commission.

They emphasized the point that due to low-social status and very poor educational standard, the “Tantis” have become the objects of exploitation. They have got skills and their products can stand in competition with any other manufacturers in the organized sector. But they do not posses the power to bargain. So they have to surrender to the big traders who give them not even half of their dues for manufacturing Sari and various kinds of wearing or other apparels. They have no capital and no managerial capacity because of illiteracy. If they could get finance, they would have shown their skills and demonstrated before the people. But the banks and the financial institutions do not agree to lend to this socially and educationally backward class of people. Sri Baidyanath Paramanick, Secretary, Shantipur Tantubaya Sangha and Sri Abdul Halem Molla of the Weavers’ Co-operative Society further emphasized the points that due to exploitation they earn practically a fraction of their dues as wages and cannot earn enough to feed their children and to give them education. The social and educational backwardness of this class is clearly established by the representatives of the Tanti class of people.

The Commission, therefore, has no hesitation in coming to the conclusions that the “Tanti” class constitutes a socially and educationally backward class in the state. The “Tanti” class has also been included in the Backward Classes List both by Kalelkar Commission and the Mandal Commission.
The Commission after considering all the materials submitted and the evidence adduced holds that the “Tanti” class of people constitutes a Backward Class in the state and recommends to the State Government that this “Tanti” class should be included in the list of “Backward Classes” of the State and the commission, accordingly, advises the Government of West Bengal to do so.

The commission noted that no one had appeared on behalf of the State Government though notice was served.

**KANSARI**

The materials placed before the commission in support of the request for inclusion of the “Kansari” class of people in the list of “Backward Classes” reveal that they are distributed throughout West Bengal. The total population of “Kansari” is about 7.2 lakhs. The percentage of education in the “Kansari” community is negligible. The educational level of male folk on an average, is of Class VIII standard. The women are mostly illiterate. Owing to poverty, most of the children could not get the opportunity of free schooling facilities. Due to meager earnings of their parents a large section of the boys and girls are compelled to leave school i.e. drop-out, at an age of below 16 years. The percentage of drop-outs is about 20% at the Primary level and about 50% at the Secondary level. The percentage of graduate is about 3% and Post-Graduate is less than 1%.

In West Bengal, Kansari is one of “Nabasakha” (a cluster of nine artisan castes) communities. Their traditional occupation is manufacturing and marketing of bell metal and brass wares. With the advent of plastic goods, enamel, stainless steel and aluminium utensils for domestic use the bell metal manufacturing industry has suffered a serious set back. The demand for bell metal and brass wares for day to day purpose, as well as for festive occasions
has dwindled substantially. The Kansari community has, therefore, been placed in a very disadvantageous economic condition and their age-old avocation has ceased to become remunerative.

The number of “Kansari” people in the Government Services and Public Sector Undertakings is rather insignificant and in profession like Medicine, Engineering, Law, Teaching etc. their presence is almost negligible. There is hardly any person with high education or any high office. There is no MLA, no MP, no Panchayat Pradhan, no Municipal Chairman and no Educationist. The position of the women folk is indeed very pitiable and there is not even a women folk is indeed.

The social status of the “Kansari” people is low. About 40% of the girls are married at their tender age. The social status of this community is still directly or indirectly one of neglect and hatred. Besides, particulars of backwardness – social, educational and economic have been furnished on behalf of Kansari class by Shri Dhananjay Kumar Nath, Member and Shri Sambhu Nath Nandan, Secretary, Bhabanipur Kansari Anchalik Samity at the time of hearing. Shri Swapan Kumar Das also gave evidence on oath on behalf of the “Kansari” class of people. There are four doctors and engineers, no advocate in High Court, hardly ten lawyers, five college teachers and no headmaster in any school and no MLA / MP or Zila Parishad members. The social and educational backwardness of this class of people are clearly established. There was no one to contradict the materials submitted before the Commission. The commission also noted that both Mandal Commission and Kaka Kalelkar Commission in their lists have recorded them as “Backward Class” in the State.

The commission, after considering the evidence, oral and documentary, came to the conclusion that the “Kansari” class of people constitute a “Backward Class” in the state and the commission recommends to the State Government that the “Kansari” class of people should be included in the lists of “Backward
Classes” in the state and the commission accordingly, advises the State Government to do so.

It was observed that no one on behalf of the State Government had appeared before the Commission though notice was served on the State Government.

**SHANKHAKAR**

The Shankhakar (Shankhari) is an artisan class belonging to “Nabasakh”, i.e. middle ranked artisan class of people of the traditional agrarian social system. The “Shankhari” class is distributed in almost all the districts of the state. The total population of this class of people is approximately 80,000 in West Bengal.

The educational level of the male folk on an average is of Class VIII standard and the women are mostly illiterate. Owing to poverty most of the children do not take the opportunity of free schooling facilities. Only 20% of the males and 10% of the females are illiterate. Due to ill earning of their parents about 70% of the boys and girls are compelled to leave school i.e. drop-out at an age of below 13 years.

The traditional occupation of the majority of this class is related with Shankha Silpa. In West Bengal, it is customary to wear bangles made of conch shells by the married Hindu women. At the time of observing the religious rites connected with the marriage ceremony, “Shankha” (bangle made of conch shell) are a must along with the vermillion for the Bengalee Hindu bride. Due to urbanisation and industrialization this type of shilpa is gradually losing ground. Moreover, the exorbitant price of materials inputs leaves a poor margin of return to the artisan.
Shri Sibu Nandy, General Secretary and Sri Satyaban Mondal, Secretary, Bankura Jela Sankha Silpa Samabay Samity Limited, Sri Ajoy Kumar Nandi, member Paschimbangha Shankha Silpa Samity represented the “Shankhakar” class of people at the time of hearing. They made the submission before the commission that the number of persons employed in Government Services and in professions like medicine, law, engineering and teaching is too small. The percentage of persons employed in Government services and Public Sector Undertakings is about 0.05% - all of them in lower posts. There is none in the higher levels.

About 90% of the Shankhakars are engaged in their hereditary occupation of making “Shankha” goods, viz. bangles, ear rings, chains and other ornaments. They used to collect conch shells from Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu and Jafna in Sri Lanka. But supplies from Jafna are not available for different reasons. The supplies from Tuticorin has also become irregular due to the fact that the divers have to go deeper and deeper into the sea in search of the shells risking their lives.

This class of people are deeply entrenched in their orthodox social system and carry on with their traditional occupation on hereditary basis. The Shankha Silpa is comprised of six departments like cutting, polishing etc. and in all the departments the Shankhakars do the work by themselves without employing any labour from outside.

It is the social practice with the Shankhakars to give their daughters in marriage at a very early age. About 30% of the girls are given in marriage at an age of below 18 years. The girls are not given higher education. Because it would be difficult to get suitable groom for them. Besides, their society does not approve of the idea of adult unmarried girls going in for higher education. The boys are not educationally bright enough to compete for good jobs. The social position of the “Shankhakars” is one of neglect. Generally, they are not invited for social gatherings. In the marriage pandals, they do their job of fixing the
Shankha (bangles) in the hands of the bride and silently leave the place on account of social indifference.

The factors of social, educational and economic backwardness are clearly established. The commission, therefore, has no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that the Shankhakar Community is a Backward Class in the state. The commission also noted that the Shankhakar class was listed as “Backward” class both in Kaka Kalelkar Commission and Mandal Commission reports.

The Commission, after considering the evidence, oral and documentary came to the conclusion that the “Shankhakar” class of people constitute a “Backward Class” in the State and recommends to the State Government that the “Shankhakar” class should be included in the lists of “Backward classes” in the State, and the Commission, accordingly, advises the Government of West Bengal to do so.

Nobody had appeared on behalf of the State Government although notice was served.

KOERI

Requests on behalf of the class of citizens belonging to Koeri Community have come from Manbhum Kushbahi Koeri Sangathan, Purulia Branch and also from individuals belonging to the community. Particulars as to the approximate population and relevant facts to indicate social and educational backwardness of the class have been furnished and oral evidence has been adduced by Shri Srish Kumar Mahato, a member of the Sangathan, who has proved the particulars which have been furnished on behalf of the Sangathan. Oral evidence has also been tendered by one Shri Sushil Ranjan Sarkar and also by Shri Saraj Mahato representing the Confederation of the Backward Classes.

The facts established by evidence – oral and documentary – go to indicate that the standard of education in this class is extremely poor and a very
insignificant percentage of the population in this class has passed Higher Secondary Examination. The number of graduates amongst them is less than 100. There is only one female graduate and 8 matriculates. The average standard of education is Class VIII. About 20% of the male children go to school in spite of free schooling facilities. Amongst the females, 10% go to schools, 2% read unto class IV. The girls are given in marriage at the age of 11 and the boys at the age of 14 – 18 years.

The employment status of the persons in view of their very poor educational standard is indeed lamentable and it does not appear from the materials supplied that apart from a few teachers in primary schools and a very few in higher secondary schools there is anybody occupying any position in office of any importance whatsoever. They have got only one lawyer, one professor and one woman in office in their community. There is no male or female member in the Panchayats. There is no MLA / MP / Member in Zila Parishad. There is no IAS / IPS / WBCS or in Medical or Engineering services.

Regarding the social status of the citizens of this class it has been alleged that though untouchability has now been abolished, they are still considered to be untouchables in society and the members of this class have no place in the society because of low-caste to which it belongs and because of lack of education and very poor economic condition. The main occupation of the persons in this class is said to be manual labour; and even the women of this class have to work as day labourers to earn their livelihood. They sell vegetables in the market – this is done mostly by women. The children and the women work in others’ households. The total strength of this class in West Bengal is said to be approximately 50,000 and the majority of them reside in the Purulia and the Bankura districts.

The materials on record clearly go to establish that the citizens in this class constitute a socially and educationally backward class. This class has been found to be backward by the Kalelkar Commission, the Mandal
The Commission is, therefore, of the opinion that the Koeri class of people constitutes a Backward Class within the meaning of the West Bengal Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993. It may be noted that Koeri is also spelt as Koiri and Kuiry, though each of them represents the same class. The Commission recommends that the Koeri / Koiri class people should be included in the list of Backward Classes of the State and the Commission, accordingly, advises the Government of West Bengal to do so.

No one appeared on behalf of the State Government although notice was served on the Government of West Bengal.

**RAJU**

The representatives of Raju Community, Shri Gour Hari Sasmal, Secretary, and Sri Bhajan Kumar Maity, President of the Raju Sampraday Unnayan Samity and others placed materials and made submissions before the Commission on the date of hearing for inclusion of Raju Class in the list of “Backward Classes” of the state. They are a small community confined mainly to Southern parts of Midnapore district and some pockets of South 24-Parganas, North and South Dinajpore and Nadia District. The majority of them live in Dantan, Mohanpur, Keshiary, Nayagram, Ramnagar, Kanthi, Egra, Khejuri, Bhagaban Police Stations of Midnapore district. They are also found in the State of Tripura. The stated population of the Rajus in this State is about 1.70 lakhs.

They are mainly cultivators, majority of whom eke out their existence as agricultural labourers, share croppers etc. Side by side, many of them are also engaged in fishing. Most of them do not possess land of their own. Some of
them are carpenters. The females have to work in the fields and the children assist their parents in agricultural and fishing activities. Many of them work as domestic servants in others’ houses. About 25 per cent of the male Rajus of Ramnagar (Digha area) are literate as against 5 per cent of the females. The children are compelled to leave schools in the midst of their study (Class III / IV) for assisting their parents in economic and household activities.

In Danton area, about 10 to 20 per cent of the children go to primary schools, of whom majority leave schools at the age of seven / eight for augmenting the family income. The spread of education is negligible among the females. About 5 per cent of the girls attend primary schools. But they have to leave schools for working in others’ houses or they are given in marriage.

About 5 per cent of the boys reach middle standard. But a good number of them is also compelled to leave schools for assisting their parents in household and other economic activities. So the percentage of drop-outs in education is quite high amongst them. They cannot afford to take higher education on account of poverty.

Their percentage in the Government Services and Public Sector Undertakings is insignificant (there is none in higher services, not to speak of IAS / IPS etc.) and in independent professions like medicines, engineering, law and teaching it is extremely low. The number of doctors and engineers can be counted on the fingers. However, there are a few lawyers and a handful in teaching profession (majority being Primary School Teachers).

There is no MLA, MP or officials in Anchal Panchayat level. Their representation in socio-political institutions is also negligible.

The materials go to indicate that their educational standard is very poor and among the women folk educational standard is still lower. There is hardly
any person in any important profession or in public office. The materials also indicate that the community is very poor.

According to their submission they rank below Mahisya and Karani communities and are slightly above Jalia Kaibarta. They were classified as clean Sudras. The Rajus of Orissa enjoy better socio-economic position and do not maintain any social relation with the Rajus of West Bengal, whom they consider below their status.

Child marriage is still prevalent among the Rajus of West Bengal. Previously bride price was the norm still now few such cases occur here and there.

They get the services of Utkal Brahmins. But the Brahmins of West Bengal do not serve them during their socio-religious activities. They are the victims of various kinds of social evils. They were included in the list of depressed classes in 1921 and in 1931. But due to objections from a few, they were not considered for inclusion in the list of Schedule Castes, notified in 1936. The Mandal Commission has listed them as one of the “Backward Classes” in West Bengal. They are also included in the list of Backward Classes in Tripura. The social backwardness of the community due to poor educational standard, impoverished economic condition and the nature of occupation they pursue is beyond question.

The commission, on a consideration of the materials is satisfied that the citizens in this Class of Raju constitute a backward class in the State. The Commission accordingly recommends that this class, namely Raju, should be included in the list of Backward Classes in the state and the commission, accordingly advises the Government of West Bengal to do so.
The commission noted that no one on behalf of the state Government appeared on the date of hearing although notice was served on the Government of West Bengal.

**TAMBOLI / TAMALI**

The materials placed before the commission in support of the request for inclusion of Tamboli / Tamali class of people in the list of “Backward Classes”, by Shri Sambhu Nath Kundu, General Secretary, Tambuli Maha Sammelan, Sri Chitta Ranjan Dutta, Secretary, Purulia Tambuli Samity, Shri Prahlad Chandra Sen and others reveal that they are spread over in large numbers in almost all the districts of the state of West Bengal. The population of Tamboli class in the state is about 8.27 lakhs, of whom about 6 lakhs reside in Bankura and Purulia districts. The representatives of their community made submissions before the commission for their inclusion in the list of Backward Classes mainly because of their low social and educational position; and also low economic standard.

The original occupation of the community was to prepare and sell betel-leaf, which they used to buy from the cultivators. But at present this traditional occupation is retained by a very few in this state, in as much as, it is not at all remunerative enough to maintain a family. So, some of them have taken to business in grains and petty shop keeping along with betel leaf selling wherever feasible. At present, majority of them eke out their existence as marginal farmers, share croppers and agricultural labourers. A few of them are engaged as retail rice seller, puffed rice seller, vegetable vendors, cattle attendants, rickshaw puller, domestic servants, assistants in shops and establishments. A very few of them are also engaged in small business like grocery, restaurant, tea stall, betel leaf / nut bidi shops etc.
Their number in the Government Services and Public Sector Undertakings is rather negligible. At the higher level of services, there are two W.B.C.S. Officers and one Judge (Retd.) amongst them. But there is no one from IAS / IPS / IFS cadre. No one appeared in the competitive examination.

The General Secretary of the Tambuli Maha Sammelan, Shri Sambhu Nath Kundu, made the submission before the commission that the educational standard of the Tambuli Class is very low. Only 2 to 3% of their population have passed the Madhyamik Examination in different districts. The percentage of the male population who read unto Madhyamik is about 5%. The percentage of the Madhyamik Passed population in Calcutta, Howrah, Hooghly and Midnapore is, However, about 5 to 6%.

Generally about 60% of the rural children are covered by Primary education. But there are large drop-outs. In the district of Bankura the average educational standard in the case of the males is 25% unto Class V and 15% above Class V. In the case of the females, about 20% read unto Class V and thereafter there are large drop-outs. Now-a-days, about 45% of the children attend schools. But they have to help their parents at works in the grocery shops, Restaurants, Betel leaf shops and also work as labourers. In the Bankura district there are 7 doctors, 7 lawyers and only 2% in teaching profession and 01% in medicines.

In the district of Purulia 30% of the males read unto Class V and 20% of the females read unto Class III. Now-a-days 50% of the children attend schools. There are only 2 doctors, 3 engineers, 5 lawyers and 10 high school teachers and 15 primary school teachers in the district.

There is no MLA / MP from their community. In Panchayat also their representation is negligible. As per social standing they are grouped as “Clean Sudras” along with Karmakar, Napit, Tanti etc.
There was none to contradict the materials submitted before the commission at the time of hearing.

Therefore, taking into consideration all the facts stated; materials on record and submissions made, the commission has no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that “Tambolies” constitute socially and educationally backward class with poor economic conditions. Both Kaka Kalelkar Commission and the Mandal Commission in their lists have recorded them as a Backward Class in Bihar state. The Commission, therefore, holds that the “Tamboli” class of people constitute a Backward Class in the state and recommends to the State Government that Tamboli / Tamali class should be included in the list of “Backward Classes” in the state and the commission, accordingly advises the Government of West Bengal to do so.

None appeared on behalf of the State Government although notice was served on the Government of West Bengal.

**NAGAR**

The materials placed before the commission in support of the request for inclusion of Nagar Class of people in the list of “Backward Classes” reveal that they mainly reside in 107 villages in the district of Malda and in about 20 villages in the District of Murshidabad in West Bengal. The stated population of Nagars is about 65,000. The Nagar villages are far away from the district towns and generally they live with other low caste people who are classified as Schedule Castes.

The percentage of education in the Nagar class is very negligible. About 2% male Nagars are educated unto Class IV, 1% unto Class X, about 1% above School Final, .01% Graduate level and above Graduate level is insignificant. As
because the Nagars are very poor, their children unto the age group of 12 years are engaged in the work of grazing. The girls graze the goats called “Charuacha”. These goats are the favourites of the female Nagars. The children carry food which is called “Lahari” to their parents at their work sites. The children are generally engaged in different works of agriculture. The Nagar lads are also engaged as servants in the houses of rich men and upper castes. Most of them do not get opportunity to continue their studies as a result of poverty. As such, the standard of education of Nagar community is very poor. The percentage of drop out at various stages of School education are also extremely high. Most of the children either do not attend schools or discontinue their study as they have to assist their parents in daily activities. The females are mostly illiterate. Their literacy percentage calculation is not possible, because, the number is too low; only a few villages have got Primary School. Recently, one female from Malda district and another from Murshidabad district have become graduates.

The majority of the Nagars are landless. The males are engaged as agricultural labour, day labour, mango plucking labourers and other works related in mango trade. The traditional occupation of the females is to prepare “dal”, “Chhatu” and other products from grain. The Nagars sell the products in the local and urban markets for which they are known as “Lagrain” to the purchasers. The “Lagrain” word has come from the words – “Nagar” – “Lagar” – “Lagrain”. The “Lagrains” also go to market to sell vegetables. Nowadays the Lagrains go to work with mason as labour.

The number of persons of the Nagar community in the Government services and Public Sector Undertakings is rather insignificant and in professions like Medicines, Engineering, Law, Teaching etc. their presence is negligible.

There is hardly any person with any high education or any high office. A few of them are engaged as Constables, Home Guards and about 10 of them are
appointed as Class IV staff in some offices. There are 7 Diploma Engineers from Polytechnics, two in Malda and five in Murshidabad. There is no MLA, no MP, no Panchayat Pradhan, no Municipal Chairman and no Educationist. The position of the women folk is indeed very pitiable and there is not even a woman Panchayat Member. The Nagar cannot enter into business because they are not recognized by the Financial Institution.

The social status of Nagars is very low. The incidence of child marriage among them is not rare. Polygamy is recognized. Widow remarriage is also prevalent among the Nagar community. The social status of this community is still directly or indirectly one of neglect and hatred. The details of the backwardness – social, educational and economic – have been furnished on behalf of the Nagar class by Shri Dharani Dhar Mandal, Secretary, Nagar Samaj Kalyan Samity, Malda who represented the community at the time of hearing. The social and educational backwardness of this class of people are clearly established. There was no one to contradict the materials submitted before the commission. The commission also noted that the Mandal Commission included “Nagar” in the list of “Backward Classes” of West Bengal.

After considering all the relevant facts and the evidence adduced at the time of hearing, the commission has no hesitation, in coming to the conclusion that Nagar class of people constitutes a Backward Class in the state. The Commission, therefore, recommends to the State Government that the class of “Nagar” should be included in the list of “Backward Classes” in the state and the commission, accordingly, advises the Government of West Bengal to do so.

No one on behalf of the State Government had appeared before the Commission although notice was served on the State Government.
A request has been made for inclusion of the class known as Karan (Karani) in the list of backward classes of the State. The request has been made on behalf of Karan Unnayan Samaj, Midnapore, Karan Sundarban Unnayan Samaj and also by individual members of the class.

The requests have been made on the ground that this “Karani” class which is colloquially called in certain localities of the State of West Bengal as “Karan” also is socially, educationally and economically backward and is one of the weakest classes in the state. Particulars to establish their social and educational backwardness have been furnished.

At the hearing of the request Shri Sanatan Patra, a member of the Sundarban Unnayan Samaj and Shri Subhas Chandra Mahapatra, Secretary, Karan Unnayan Samaj and Shri Manindra Nath Maity gave evidence to prove the particulars furnished to establish their social and educational backwardness. The evidence tendered by them substantially establishes the particulars furnished. The particulars furnished and the oral evidence of the deponents go to establish:

(1) that the total population of “Karan” class in the state is about 2 lakh 50 thousand and this figures has been arrived at one the basis of the census done in 1921 which indicated that the population of this class was then about 50 thousand and that figure has been multiplied by 5 times to arrive at the figure of about 2 lakh and 50 thousand. This class is distributed mainly in the districts of Midnapore and 24-Parganas, particularly in the Sundarban areas, and is also scattered in the district of Nadia and parts of Howrah and Calcutta.

(2) The educational standard of the persons in this class is indeed very poor. The majority in the class cannot complete the primary standard and the number of persons who are graduates or received higher education is indeed
insignificant. There is hardly any education amongst the female members of the class. Even amongst the students in the primary schools there is large number of drop-outs which appear to be on the increase.

(3) There is hardly any one in this class working in any high office in the Government, Semi Government or Private Organisation. The kind of employment that the members of this class has, is teaching in Primary Schools, a very significant number in the High Schools and a very few in the Police Department as Constables and Homeguards. This is due to lack of proper education and educational backwardness. The percentage of white collar employment is very meager.

(4) There is hardly any member belonging to this class in any independent profession. There are no Doctors, Engineers and Lawyers and there are also no Educationists and Journalists. The traditional occupation of the people in the class is mainly Agriculture and manual labour. They work mainly as labourers in the cultivation of betel leafs and other agricultural produce at low wages and some of them also do the work of making “Bidis” and ferrying boats. A number of them including children and women work in house-holds as domestic servant or domestic labour. The number of women labourers in this class is very large.

(5) This class is looked down in society and does not enjoy any social status. The common belief is that this class has sprung as a result of improper union of men and women belonging to Baishya and Sudra castes. The members of the class reside mostly in thatched huts without proper foundation and without any kind of toilet facilities and they do not even have proper garments to wear. The impoverished economic condition, very poor education, and low caste of members of this class along with the other concomitant factors contribute to the social backwardness of this class and make this class socially backward.

From the aforesaid facts established on the basis of materials supplied and oral evidence adduced and submissions made at the time of hearing, there is hardly any room for doubt that the educational standard of this class is
extremely low and this class is educationally backward. Social backwardness of this class – because of their poor educational standard, the kind of occupation they peruse, the living condition and the low caste – is also clearly established. It may also be noted that this class has been placed in the list of Backward Classes in the state by the Mandal Commission as “Karani”.

It has been submitted by the persons appearing at the bearing that the inclusion of the class “Karan” in the list of Backward Classes will be sufficient and proper and it will not be necessary to mention “Karan” though the request has been made on behalf of Karan. All the persons belonging to the “Karani” class will be entitled to the benefit by whatever colloquial name they may be known in any locality if “Karani” is included in the list of backward classes of the state.

The commission, therefore, holds that the citizens in the class of “Karani” constitutes a backward class in the state and the mention of “Karani” in the list may lead to confusion as there may be persons in the “Karan” class not belonging to the “Karani” class. The Commission recommends that the citizens in the List of “Backward Classes” of the state and the commission, accordingly, advises the Government of West Bengal to do so.

The commission noted that no one on behalf of the State Government had appeared although notice was served.

**DHANUK**

The materials placed before the commission in support of the request for inclusion of “Dhanuk” in the list of “Backward Classes:” by the representatives of the “Malda Dhanuk Sampraday Samiti” and others reveal that they are mainly concentrated in about one hundred villages in the district of Malda, Murshidabad and Uttar Dinajpur in West Bengal. The stated population of this class of people
in West Bengal is about 31 thousand (Malda – 16,000, Murshidabad – 13,000, Uttar Dinajpur – 1,000 and other districts – 1000). In the district of Malda, the Dhanuks live in all the police stations – the highest concentrating being in the Harischandrapur police station. In the Uttar Dinajpur district, they mainly reside in Raiganj, Hemtabad and Itahar police station. In the Murshidabad district, they are found in 20 villages of Suti, Farakka, Samserganj and Berhampore police station. The Dhanuks migrated from Bihar and settled in Malda and Murshidabad districts quite a long time back. The representatives of their community pleaded for their inclusion in the list of Backward Classes because of their social and educational position; and also low economic standard.

Shri Swadesh Bhusan Bhuniya, Advocate, appeared before the commission on behalf of the Dhanuks. Shri Narayan Mondal, C.A. student from Malda district, Shri Joydeb Mondal, Primary Teacher from Murshidabad districts, Shri Dilip Roy from Uttar Dinajpur district and Shri Satyendra Nath Mondal, a statistician under the Government of West Bengal gave evidence on oath and made submissions before the commission on the date of hearing.

The submissions made by them was that majority of the “Dhanuks” are day labourers. Most of them have no land of their own; they work on others’ land as labourers. The Dhanuks are engaged in mango plucking and other related work during the mango season in the Malda and the Murshidabad districts.

The Dhanuk males are recruited by contractors for earth cutting and other manual work in Nepal, Assam and other states. They have to stay away from their houses for long period of time without their families. The male Dhanuks, at times do the job of palanquin bearers; and in some parts of the state they are engaged for the cultivation of hemp and manufacture of strings.

The females cut and collect grasses and sell the same for their sustenance. Many of them process varieties of corms and sell the stuff in the
local markets. A large number of them sell vegetables in the weekly markets (Hat). Due to poverty, the children of the community are compelled to work as shepherds and domestic servants of the rich families of other castes.

The representatives made the submission before the commission that the attainment of the Dhanuks in the field of education is extremely low. About 5% of them are literate; hardly 1% of the female population and 4% of the male population are educated. They cannot afford to take the benefit of free education in the state on account of poverty. A very few of them are educated unto graduate level. There is only one MA, LLB in the whole community; and amongst the females there is only one graduate. The percentage of drop-outs in the primary level of education is extremely high. Some reach unto secondary level; but their number is limited. The children try to augment the family income from a very early age.

There is no Dhanuk in the higher Government services (State Government / Central Government) or engaged in Public Sector Undertakings at any level. A very few amongst them are employed as Constables in Police Department; five / six persons are in clerical service of whom only one is in “B” category; and 15 / 16 Class IV staff are engaged in different offices. Their percentage of representation in independent professions like medicines, engineering is “nil”. Recently, one Advocate with M.A., L.L.B. degree has enrolled himself in the Malda District Bar. There are only two Assistant Teachers in High School (one in Uttart Dinajpur and the other in Malda); only one Assistant Teacher in Junior High School (Harishchandrapur of Malda District) and 14 Primary School Teachers.

There is no MLA / MP from their community or in any position in the Panchayat levels. They speak a dialect known as “Khotta”.

There was no one to contradict the materials submitted before the Commission.
The Dhanuks are recognized as Schedule Caste in many states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh etc. The Dhanuks in West Bengal maintain relationship only with the “Dhanuks” of Bihar where they have been listed as “Backward Class” by the Mandal Commission. The Government of Bihar has also included them in the list of Backward Classes of the State.

Taking into consideration all the facts stated, materials on record and submissions made, the commission has no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that the “Dhanuk” constitutes socially and educationally backward class in the state of West Bengal and the Commission recommends to the State Government that the “Dhanuk” class of people should be included in the list of “Backward Classes” in the state and the commission, accordingly, advises the Government of West Bengal to do so.

No one appeared on behalf of the State Government although notice was served on the Government of West Bengal.

SARAK

The representatives of the “Sarak” class of people, Shri Chaturbhuj Maji, Secretary, and Shri Purna Chandra Mondal, Member of the Sarak Sampradai, Purulia, the representative and Secretary of the Sister Nivedita Kalyan Samity, Bankura and Shri Shantimoy Majhi of Bankura Zilla Sarak Samaj Unnayan Sanstha and others placed materials and made submissions before the commission for inclusion of the “Sarak” class of people in the list of Backward Classes of the state. They are numerically a small and little known class confined to some pockets in the districts of Purulia, Bankura and Burdwan in West Bengal. They are at present sufficiently Hinduised; some of them however, still retain the tradition of Jainism. They are vegetarian and follow a simple lifestyle and adhere to their traditional ways of living. In that respect they may be
termed as an orthodox tradition bound class of people. But they are very hard working and do manual labour.

The “Saraks” of the Purulia district live in 90 villages spread over in 5 Police Stations (Raghunathpur, Para, Kashipur, Santuri and Neturia). There are 2433 families with a population of about 30,000. In the Bankura District they reside in 19 villages of 3 Police Stations namely Gangajalghati, Saltora and Chatna. Their population in this district is about four thousand and three hundred.

In the Purulia district, their main occupation is agriculture, majority of them being marginal and small farmers (about 80 per cent). A very few possess large holdings. The Sarak females work in the field along with the males. According to their submission at the time of hearing before the commission about 80 per cent of them are small and marginal farmers in the Bankura district. About 292 persons hold land below 3 acres, 234 persons between 3 – 6 acres, 55 persons between 6 – 10 acres and above 10 acres by only 11 persons. The area being a monocrop one, the yield is limited. Some of them sell milk to supplement the family income; and a few are engaged in small business. Only 1.37 per cent are in service (but none in Gr. “A” or “B”). Majority of them (about 95%) live in mud houses; and only a few posses pucca building.

The spread of education among the females is not at all satisfactory. In the Purulia district, about 15 per cent of the females are literate. About 50 per cent of the children are compelled to leave studies after the primary stage of education on grounds of economic hardship. Only 30 females of Purulia district reached / crossed the standard of Secondary / Higher Secondary stages of whom 16 are Graduates. But none could go in for Post-Graduate levels.

In the Bankura district, about 44 per cent of the males and about 28 per cent of the females are literate. Out of the 260 persons who received secondary
education, there are 241 males and 19 females; in the Higher Secondary level the figures are 96 males and 5 females; there are 50 Graduates among the males and against 3 females; above the Graduates among the males as against 3 females; above the Graduate level there are three males but none amongst the females. There is no doctor, no engineer, no lawyer etc. from their community.

Their representation in Government services and Public Sector Undertakings is also negligible. There is none in IAS / IPS / WBCS Cadre or in high posts in Government Services. In the Purulia district, however, some of them are engaged in educational Institutions; in colleges (5 persons), High schools (50 persons), Primary school (150 persons), Purulia Poly-technic (one lecturer). There are two Saraks with M.B.B.S. Degree and four Lawyers.

In the Bankura district, there are 8 Primary School Teachers, 3 Madhyamik Teachers. There are, however, a few in other professions (Government services etc.) There is none in Medicine / Engineering professions. Their representations in social, political institutions are also negligible; there is no MLA / MP / Panchayat Officials from their community.

Being a tradition bound small community, interacting mainly amongst themselves, the Saraks suffer from inferiority complex. They are socially lower than clean castes whose water is not taken by upper castes. They give marriage to their daughters at an early age. Ninetyfive per cent of them live in villages and are guided by various types of superstitious beliefs and practices. Their social position being low they live in isolation from the other social groups in their localities.

There was no one to contradict or challenge the materials submitted before the Commission.
Taking into consideration all the facts stated, materials on record and submissions made, the Commission has no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that the “Sarak” class of people constitute a socially and educationally backward class in the State and the Commission recommends to the State Government that the “Sarak” class should be included in the list of Backward classes of the State and the Commission, accordingly, advises the Government of West Bengal to do so.

No one appeared before the commission on behalf of the State Government although notice was issued to the Government of West Bengal.

**JOLA’H (ANSARI-MOMIN)**

Request on behalf of the Ansari Community has been placed before the Commission by Mr. Abdur Rauf Ansari, President, All India Momin Conference, Mr. Abdur Rajjak Ansari, President, Purulia Backward Muslim Community Federation and Mr. Abdul Khaled Molla, on behalf of Ansari Community Congress. Many other individuals also have jointly and collectively made their representations to the Commission.

Detailed particulars as to the kind of occupation of the citizens of the class of Ansari which is commonly known as Jola’h in the State and is also known as Momin, the strength of their population, their educational standard, their employment and the social status have been furnished. Oral evidence supported by documents has been adduced and submissions have been made on oath to establish the correctness of the particulars furnished as also the social and educational backwardness of the class. Materials on record indicate that the traditional occupation of the people in this class is weaving, though many at present are also engaged as manual labourers in various spheres. The materials further go to indicate that their educational standard is very low. There are few
graduates and post-graduates in that community and 20% of children have read unto Class – V and 5% unto Class – X. Amongst the women-folk in the community the educational standard is still lower. There are hardly any person amongst them in any important profession or holding any high post in public office. The materials also establish that the community is very poor and is in dire economic distress.

The total strength of this community which consists of Muslims is said to be about 30 lakhs in the State and the persons in this class are distributed in the Metropolitan City of Calcutta and also in almost all the districts of West Bengal.

The social backwardness of this community due to poor educational standard, impoverished economic condition and the nature of their occupation, is indeed beyond question. The persons in the “Ansari” community belong to the class of Jola’h and the class of Jola’hs is so looked down upon that many members of this class, though really Jola’h, have assumed the nomenclator of Ansari. The facts established, go to show that the Jola’h community in West Bengal which may within its fold bring Ansari and Momin in the State, as submitted by the various representatives pleading the case of Ansari, constitutes a backward class in the State. The Commission is, therefore, of the view that the Jola’h class of Muslims in the State constitutes a backward class being socially and educationally backward and Ansari which falls within the Jola’h class naturally becomes a backward class, being a part of the Jola’h class. The Momins who form part of Jola’h class also constitute backward class, as belonging to the class of Jola’h. The Ansari and Momins have been placed in the List of Backward Classes by the Mandal Commission. The Momins have also been included in the list of backward classes by Kalelkar Commission. They are also in the List of Backward Classes in the State of Bihar.

The commission on a consideration of the materials is satisfied that the citizens in the class of Jola’h (Ansari-Momin) constitute a backward class in the
state. The commission, therefore, recommends that this class Jola’h (Ansari-Momin) should be included in the List of Backward Classes in the state and the Commission advises the Government of West Bengal accordingly.

It may be recorded that this decision also disposes of the representation made separately on behalf of the Momin class. It may be noted that at the hearing of the request made on behalf of the Momin class, Md. Zakaria, Secretary, Midnapore District Momin Association, referred to Hedayat to establish the very low status of the Ansari-Momin. He made the submission that the social position of the Jola’h class of people has been outlined in their sacred book “Hedayat” in Arabic language. It has been clearly stated at page 321 of “Hedayat” that the “Hayek” (weaver), the “Hajjam” (Napit) and the “Dabbar” (Chamar) – all of them are of the same social status. Shri Abdur Rauf Ansari made the submission that the Ansaries are traditional Jola’hs, who belong to the weaver class. Since the term Jola’h carried with it a hereditary low social status, they had decided quite a few years back to substitute the despised name ”Jola’h’ by a new name called “Ansari” in order to derive some sort of social respectability. According to him the Ansari-Momins are all traditional Jola’hs.

The Commission considered the evidence – oral and documentary – and also the papers submitted before the commission and came to the conclusion that the traditional Jola’hs who had assumed the nomenclator to Ansari or Momin in order to secure social respectability have furnished sufficient documentary and oral evidence at the time of hearing to fulfil the criteria for being eligible to be included in the list of backward classes. Mr. Abdur Rauf Ansari made the submission that recognition of Muslim Jola’hs as a backward class will be sufficient for recognition of Ansari-Momin Muslims also. It was clearly stated that if there be any Muslim in the Momin class not belonging to the Jola’h class, such momin Muslim may not come within the backward class and this position should be accepted as very clear.
Mr. A.K. Hasan Uzzaman submitted that Islam does not recognize any classification and there could be no classification of Muslims as Ansaries or Jola’hs and there should be no recognition as backward class to any such class. The entire Muslim community should be recognized as a backward class in the State of West Bengal. The submissions of Mr. A.K. M. Hasan Uzzaman on the question whether the entire Muslim community should be considered to be a backward class in the State were not concluded, and as such, the consideration as to whether the entire Muslims community constitutes a backward class in the state solely on the basis of belonging to the Muslim community has been postponed.

The Commission is, however, of the opinion that the postponement of consideration of the question whether the Muslim community as such should be considered to be a backward class in the state or not should not stand in the way of considering the case of Jola’h class (Ansari-Momin) on whose behalf requests have been made, as in the event of the entire Muslim community being held to constitute a backward class the Jola’h (Ansari-Momin) will get the benefit as they also belong to the Muslim community. In the event, however, the entire Muslim community not being held to constitute a backward class in the State, there is no reason why the Jola’hs, whether called Ansari or Momin, should be denied the benefit as in the opinion of the Commission the Muslims in the class of Jola’h, though known as Ansari or Momin, yet belonging to Jola’h class, constitute a backward class in the State. It is, however, made clear that the decision of the commission to recommend a Muslim in the Jola’h class (Ansari-Momin) will not in any way prejudice the consideration of the question sought to be raised by Mr. A. K. M. Hassan Uzzaman as to whether the Muslim community as a whole should constitute a backward class in West Bengal.

The Commission on being satisfied that the Muslim in the Jola’h class (Ansari-Momin also included in the said class) constitutes a backward class in the state has decided to recommend to the State Government that the Jola’h
Ansari-Momin class of Muslim in the state constitutes a backward class and should be included in the list of Backward Classes in the State. The Commission has, accordingly, recommended and advised the State Government to include Muslim in the Jola'h (Ansari-Momin) class to be included in the list of Backward Classes pending consideration of the commission whether the entire Muslim community constitutes a backward class in the State of West Bengal.

No one appeared on behalf of the State Government although notice was served on the Government of West Bengal.

Sd/-
(Amal Kr. Das)  Sd/-
(Dr. Bela Bhattacharya)  Sd/-
(Dr. Ramen Poddar)
Member  Member  Member

Sd/-
(J. Misra)  Sd/-
(A.N. Sen)
Member-Secretary  Chairman