



Centre for Promotion of
Arts and Sciences

Hum Sub

Quarterly Newsletter

ISSUE NO 6 | APRIL- JUNE 2026 | VOLUME 3



Maiterya, Patna Musuem

In This Issue

From Editor's Desk

B. P. Mandal

Special Article

'The Story of Tea'

Poem

Quotable Quotes

"God gave us memory that we might have roses in December."

James M. Barrie

From Editor's Desk

In this issue of the newsletter, we have the first article on B. P. Mandal. He is well known as the chairman of the Second Backward Classes Commission. It may not be known that he was also the Chief Minister of Bihar, although for a brief period. In the article, we present here a brief biography of B. P. Mandal.

The second article is an introduction to the Second Backward Classes Commission. It highlights the criteria adopted by the Commission for determining the backwardness of a community in the country. Besides other things, the article discusses the methodology adopted by the Commission for estimating the population of backward castes/classes in the country.

The next article titled 'The Story of Tea,' is by Mr. Rahul Srivastava. It begins with the chance discovery of tea leaf in China, around five thousand years ago. It then provides an account of its onward journey - giving rise to an immensely popular hot drink all over the world. The article is both informative and fascinating.

As the last item of our newsletter, we have a poem by Mrs. Leela Singh titled 'Body and Soul.' The poem is indeed very moving, and I am sure the readers would love going through it.

Finally, as before, I request you to send me short articles for the newsletter for wider readership and for sharing your article/poem with family and friends.

Sharat Kumar

Bindhyeshwari Prasad Mandal

(1918-1982)



B.P. Mandal presenting the Commission's report to the then Home Minister Giyani Zail Singh

The name of B. P. Mandal is associated closely with the **Second Backward Classes Commission**. The Commission today is more popularly known as the 'Mandal Commission' since he was its chairman. The report was submitted to the Government of India in a brief period of two years. There is no denying that the report is a scholarly work and exhibits the passion of its chairman and of its other members in the direction of social reengineering of the Indian society.

B. P. Mandal came from a landlord/zamindar family of Madhepura district in Bihar. In spite of his high lineage, he faced caste discrimination while staying in the hostel of Raj High School in Darbhanga. It is reported that he was served food only after the other students belonging to the higher caste had finished their food. He found this system degrading and therefore protested. The school later stopped this practice.

Much later in 1965, when he was a member of the Bihar Legislative assembly and he came to know of the atrocities committed by the members of the high castes as well as by the police upon the members of the backward castes of Pama village, he raised this issue in the Legislative Assembly despite being a member of the ruling Congress party. When no cognizance was taken of his demand to compensate the victims, he resigned from the Congress party and joined the opposition. Impressed by his persistence in taking up the cause of the backward castes, the then leading light of the socialist

movement in India namely Ram Manohar Lohia nominated him as the leader of the Sanyukta Socialist Party (SSP) in Bihar.

During the General Elections of 1967, he was elected to the Lok Sabha. He was also offered the post of Health Minister in the Coalition Government in Bihar, which he joined. This led to some controversy and he had to resign from membership of SSP. He subsequently formed a new political party. As a result of the then fluid political situation and the fall of the extant coalition government, he formed a new coalition of different parties in 1968 and became the Chief Minister of Bihar for fifty days.

He was elected to the Bihar Legislative assembly again in 1972. As a result of corruption in public life and high inflation in the economy, the Sarvodaya leader Jaya Prakash Narayan (JP) gave a call to the members of the legislative assembly to resign. Responding to his call, B. P. Mandal resigned his membership of the Bihar Legislative Assembly and joined the J. P. Movement. During the Lok Sabha elections of 1977, he was elected once again by the Madhepura Lok Sabha constituency. When the Janata Party came to power, it constituted the Second Backward Classes Commission under his chairmanship in 1978. The Commission submitted its report to the Government in December 1980 and reflects the painstaking efforts put in by its chairman.

The subsequent implementation of the Commission's recommendations have played an eminent role in the social reengineering of the Indian society, both politically and socially. B.P. Mandal did not, however, live to see the implementation of his recommendations as he passed away in 1982.

Special Article

The Second Backward Commission -An Introduction

Sharat Kumar

Article 340 of the **Constitution of India** briefly reads as follows, 'The President may by order appoint a Commission consisting of such persons as he thinks fit to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes within the territory of India and the difficulties under which they labour and to make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by the Union or any State to remove such difficulties and to improve their condition'. It is worth mentioning that the Constitution mentions the word 'class' in preference to 'caste' in Article 340.

The First Backward Classes Commission was constituted in 1953 under the chairmanship of **Kaka Kalelkar**. It submitted its report in 1955. The Second Backward Classes Commission was constituted in 1979 under B. P. Mandal's chairmanship. The Second Backward Classes Commission started its work in March 1979 and submitted its report in December 1980. The other members of the Commission were R.R. Bhole, Dewan Mohan Lal, K. Subramaniam and L.R. Naik. Mr. M.S. Gill was the Secretary of the Commission.

First Backward Classes Commission

The First Backward Classes Commission identified the backward classes as: (a) those who had low social position in the traditional Hindu society, (b) those who had lack of general education and (c) those who had inadequate or no representation in government service, trade, commerce, and industry. The Commission, thus, identified 2,399 castes as 'backward', out of which 837 constituted "most backward".

Amongst their recommendations for upliftment of the backward classes, they recommended measures such as extensive land reforms, Bhoodan Movement, development of rural economy besides 'reservation of jobs in government service. Significantly, many members of the Commission were opposed to the inclusion of 'caste' as the basis of backwardness.

Moreover, in his forwarding letter to the President (Dr Rajendra Prasad), Kaka Kalelkar stated:

'Being convinced that the upper caste among Hindus have to atone for the neglect of which they were guilty towards the "lower classes", I was prepared to recommend to Government that all social help should be given only to backward classes and even the poor and deserving amongst the upper classes may be safely kept out from the benefit of the special help'.

He furthermore observed:

'It is only when the report was being finalized that I started thinking anew and found that backwardness could be tackled on a basis or a few bases other than that of caste.

Regarding the recommendations of the Commission, he added to say:

'It drove me to the conclusion that the remedies we suggested were worse than the evil we were about to combat.

About the issue of reservation of jobs in the government, he argued:

'I am definitely against reservation in government services for any community for the simple reason that the services are not meant for the servants, but they are meant for the service of society as a whole.'

Although the Government informed Parliament about the submission of the Commission's Report, no discussion took place on its recommendations. Through a Memorandum placed in the Parliament, the Government highlighted the divergence of point of view amongst its members and observed:

'It cannot be denied that the caste system is the greatest hindrance in the way of our progress towards an egalitarian society. The recognition of the specified castes as "backward" may, however, serve to maintain an even perpetuate the existing distinctions on the basis of caste.'

The Government of India also stated that no reservation in Central Government service shall be made based on social backwardness other than for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. It, nevertheless, clarified that 'even if the central government were to specify under article 338 (3) certain groups of people as belonging to "other backward classes", **it will still be open to every State Government to draw up its own list for the purposes of article 15 and 16'**.

Article 16(4) of the Constitution, for instance, states, nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or post in favour of any backward class of citizens, which in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State'.

The above clarification given by the Central Government led to a spurt of enactments by the various State Governments providing reservations in jobs in government service to the deserving communities and in admissions to educational institutions, *although the recommendations of the First Backward Classes Commission remained unimplemented.*

Second Backward Classes Commission

Even though quite magnanimous in reproducing the predicament of **Kaka Kalelkar** in the final report of the Second Backward Classes Commission, its Chairman (B. P. Mandal) countered his arguments by observing, 'But, howsoever, laudable the objective may be, it is not in consonance with the spirit of Article 340 of the Constitution under which the Commission was set up. Both Articles 15 (4) and 340 (1) make pointed reference to "socially and educationally backward classes". He, further added to say that 'any reference to economic backwardness has been advisedly left out of these Articles.'

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Second Backward Classes Commission drew up the following three broad criteria for identifying a community as a 'Backward Caste/Class:

Social: (a) low caste, considered socially backward, (b) a caste or community of people mainly depended on manual labour, (c) a caste that has 25 per cent of its females in rural areas and has

10 per cent of its females in urban areas - getting married at the age of 17 years and below and (d) a caste that has participation of women in employment above the state average by 25 per cent.

Educational : (a) caste/community that has children, in the age group of 5 -15 years, not going to school above the state average by 25 per cent , (b) caste/community that has number of dropouts, in the age group of 5 -15 years, above the state average by 25 per cent and (c) caste/community that has proportion of matriculates, 25 per cent below the state average.

Economic : (a) caste/community, where the average value of assets is below the state average by 25 per cent, (b) caste/ community, where the number of families living in kutcha houses is more than the state average by 25 per cent, (c) caste/community residing in a hamlet that has the source of drinking water half-a-kilometer away, (d) caste/community having number of households that have taken consumption loan above the state average by 25 per cent.

The Commission, moreover, attached a weightage of three (3) points to each of the criteria included under the 'social' criteria, a weightage of two (2) points to each of the points included under the 'educational' criteria and a weightage of one (1) point to each of the 'economic' criteria. This made the **composite score** equal to 22 (12+6+4) comprising all three criteria. According to the Commission, whichever caste/community scored 50 per cent of this composite score (22), that is, eleven (11) points or more was to be declared as '**backward caste/community**'.

The First Backward Classes Commission had, earlier, requested to include enumeration of castes during the **Population Census of 1961**, but it was not accepted by the Government. The Second Backward Classes Commission also made a similar request to enumerate castes during the **1981 Population Census**, but it was once again rejected by the Government. In the absence of any recent data, the Second Backward Classes Commission made use of the historical data available on caste enumeration made first in 1891 and subsequently in 1931. They then extrapolated the trend growth in population of different caste groups to arrive at the most likely scenario of caste distribution in the country during 1979/1980.

Accordingly, they provided the following estimates on caste distribution in the country during 1979/1980: (1) the SCs and STs [**22.56%**], (2) the Forward Hindu Castes [**17.58%**], (3) the Non-Hindu Communities [**16.06%**]. The remaining population of (4) the Backward Hindu Castes thus worked out to [**43.7%**] or [**100% - 56.30%**]. Furthermore, as per their calculation, (5) the Backward Non-Hindu Castes constituted [**8.4%**] of the total population. Based on this distribution, **the Commission concluded that the Backward castes constituted 52% (43.7 + 8.4 = 52.1) of the total population in the country.**

The Commission, therefore, observed that the Backward Class/Castes deserved 52 per cent reservation in government services, public sector undertakings, and public funded educational institutions. Similar quota should be fixed regarding admissions in colleges and universities for the Backward Caste/Class. However, in the light of the Supreme Court ruling that the maximum limit regarding reservation in jobs cannot exceed 50 per cent and there already existed a reservation of 22.6 per cent for SCs and STs, **the Commission ended up recommending a 27 per cent reservation for the Backward Castes/Class.**

Concluding Remarks

The recommendations of the Second Backward Classes Commission were implemented a decade later, after the demise of its chairman. The various Government Notifications in this respect were challenged in the Courts and necessary Amendments to the Constitution had to be introduced to give effect to it. There was skepticism regarding making 'reservation in jobs as a tool, for upliftment of the backward classes. This was stated in clear terms by the chairman of the First Backward Classes Commission. Reading between the lines of the Second Backward Classes Commission shows that this skepticism was shared in no less measure by the chairman of the Second Backward Classes Commission. But he still supported it for its limited value. In the final analysis, it is the overall development of the country that holds the key to everyone's upliftment.

The Second Backward Classes Commission had pointed out that reservation of jobs cannot be there in perpetuity. There is nothing sacrosanct about it. If the conditions improve, a particular caste/community will no longer be on the list of 'backwards.' it would, therefore, not need the support of reservation. The Commission mandates the Government to periodically review the actual condition on the ground based on the laid down objective criteria. As such, if there are rapid economic progress and there is modernity of outlook in the society, then we can hope that 'backwardness' as we recognize it today will cease to exist by 2047!

The country, moreover, faces two immediate issues in relation to social and educational backwardness. One of these relates to enumeration **of the various castes in the country**, along with the Population Census in February 2027. In this context, proper design of the "questionnaire" - to elicit the necessary information - acquires utmost importance. The second related issue concerns the criteria of determining the social and educational backwardness of any community. We may, therefore, either live with the criteria developed by the Second Backward Classes Commission or develop altogether a new set of criteria. There are already apprehensions that the Population Census (2027) may throw up unexpected results regarding the actual caste distribution in the country.

The Story of Tea

*Rahul Srivastava**



Emperor Shen Nung of China was a philosopher and interested in herbal medicine. According to legend, once when Shen Nung was sitting in his garden and was sipping a bowl of hot water, a gust of breeze blew and a few leaves from a nearby plant fell into his imperial bowl. The emperor sniffed the fragrance, nodded his royal head with pleasure at this new aroma and drank the hot water flavored by the fallen leaf. The date of this discovery of tea leaf is believed to be 2737 BC.

Tea was at first considered a medicinal herb and was infused from green untreated leaves. This must have tasted foul enough for most people to believe that it was doing them a great deal of good because of its medicinal value. Later, the Chinese found that a far better drink was possible if the leaves were allowed to wither and then dried by exposure to controlled heat before being infused. Once this was done, tea was set on the path of popularity.

Tea as a Global Beverage

Until a few decades ago Britain was the greatest tea drinking country in the world. The East India Company is said to have placed its first order for Chinese tea in 1664. Driven by British aristocrats, its demand skyrocketed. For the British, the hot 'cuppa' is much more than a drink. In 1760, tea sold in British market was just under a million pounds. By 1770, a decade later, it had gone up to nine million pounds. The government, therefore, imposed 100 per cent import duty to stem demand.

By this time, the British colonists in America had also developed a taste for tea. The famous Boston Tea Party (1773) changed the course of history. It was a protest over the re-export of tea from Britain to America by the East India Company. As such, by the time, tea arrived at the ports of Boston the price of tea just doubled. In protest, 342 chests of tea belonging to the East India Company were thrown from the ship into the sea. This triggered the war that led to the independence of America (1776) from Great Britain!

In recent years, however, Britain has been replaced by India, which started drinking more tea than any other nation. The other important tea drinking nations are Russia, USA, Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Egypt, Germany, Canada, and Australia. Today tea is consumed by about one-half of the world's population.

The Europeans earlier believed that Chinese **black tea** such as Bohea and **green tea** such as Singlo and Hyson came from different plants. It was only when they were exploring the possibility of growing tea in India that they realized that there is only one species of the tea plant, **Camellia Sinensis**. They also came to know that the difference is in *cultivation* and *treatment*. Black tea is first fermented and then fired or dried out by heat while green tea is unfermented.

Tea in India

Tea gradually spread to other parts of India with plantations being established in Darjeeling (West Bengal), in the foothills of the Himalayas, and further eastwards in what is known as the Dooars, the Nilgiris in South India, and Chittagong and Sylhet in what is now Bangladesh. Small gardens also came up in the Kangra Valley and Dehra Doon in the North-West of India.

Darjeeling, a hill station in the Himalayas, is situated at an altitude of 7000 feet. It produces the world's finest tea which has often been called the '**Champagne of Tea.**' Tea is grown at various altitudes up to 6500 feet, although the average altitude is between 3000 and 4000 feet. Tea is also grown in North-West India in the Kangra Valley in the beautiful mountain state of Himachal Pradesh, which lies adjacent to Kashmir. Tea is also grown on the southern slopes of the Western Ghats, the Nilgiri hills, the higher range of Kannan Devans, Wynad and Southern Kerala.



It was with great difficulty that tea gardens were opened adjacent to dense forests full of elephants and other wild animals. The auctioning of tea started in Calcutta in 1861. Since the independence of India in 1947, most of the British companies have been sold out to Indians. Production in the last several decades has been increasing at a fast pace, and India is today the largest tea producer in the world.

India's tea production was small in 1900, It rose to 177 million kilograms in 1930, to 577 million kilograms in 1980, to 750 million kilograms in 1995. The production of tea in the country went up to 1100–1200 million kilograms in 2025. It has been a

major foreign exchange earner for the country for long. Despite higher output, exports have not increased in recent years in the same proportion because of higher tea consumption within the country. It only reflects the higher prosperity amongst the middle-class Indians. The expanding network of the leading packaged tea companies like **Brook Bond India**, **Lipton India**, and **Tata Tea** have extended their network from urban areas into the burgeoning rural markets.

Domestic consumption, in fact, has proved a valuable support to the Indian Tea producers. During periods of oversupply in the world market, international prices drop sharply and it leads to general depression. The large internal market provides a cushion to the Indian producers against such international depressions. Without this steady support of the internal market, the Indian production could not have achieved their present status.

Cultivation and Types of Tea

Tea or 'Camellia Sinensis' is a hardy flowering, evergreen plant grown in several countries. It can be grown over a wide range of climates. One essential requirement of healthy growth is, however, plenty of rainfall. It flourishes best in a jungle atmosphere of heat and humidity. But to get superior quality tea from it is extremely difficult. Soil, aspect, rainfall, elevation, and manufacture are all factors which affect tea in a subtle way.

There are three main types of tea, but they all come from the same plant, and their difference is one of manufacture and not of cultivation. The bulk of tea is what is known as **Black Tea**. This goes through a full fermentation process. **Green Tea** is unfermented; the leaves do not undergo any oxidation. **Oolong Tea** is semi-fermented or semi-oxidised. It is a specialty of Taiwan and has some characteristics of both black and green tea. All the tea is plucked by hand as it is a delicate and skilled operation. Machine plucking is popular wherever workers are in short supply.

Marketing and Trade

From the gardens, tea is packed in chests/bags and sent to auction centers in Kolkata, Guwahati, Cochin in Kerala, and Coonoor in the Nilgiris Mountains. Tea is an internationally traded commodity. The price paid by the packet tea companies (and by the consumer) is basically determined by the world demand and supply, both of tea as a whole and of teas of distinct types and qualities. Tea is a perishable commodity and cannot be stored overlong. For corporate buyers who buy tea in bulk at the auctions, the next stage is the blending of different teas to maintain the consistent quality and flavors of each blend.

Marketing tea, in turn, could mean two things. First, there is disposal of tea from the Tea Estates in bulk through auctions or through private sale. Subsequently, the marketing of tea in its branded packaged form to the consumer through wholesale and retail networks.

Tea in our daily Life

Tea has become today an integral part of our lifestyle. We begin our day with morning tea and look forward to an evening tea after a long day's work. We enjoy tea in the company of family and friends. It is our constant companion on our journeys; who would not remember the tea vendor - at every railway station - welcoming and alluring us all to his 'chai garam, garam chai' (hot tea, tea hot)!



In the picture:

Rahul Srivastava, Ambassador Ron Malka former Israeli ambassador to India, his wife and Prativa Srivastava, author's wife

- *Rahul Srivastava is an M.Sc. (Agriculture). He was formerly Director of Jardine Henderson Ltd. and later worked as Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Gopal-Krishna Tea Company. Both these companies have their Tea Gardens in Assam.*

‘BODY & SOUL – A DISCOURSE’



**Stop, Stop O Soul!
Why Are You Running Away,
Leaving Me Alone-
Helpless, Lifeless Miserable?**

**Fo So Many Years,
We Have Lived Together,
I Kept You Inside Me,
As A Deity in a Temple.**

**What Not Did I Do for You?
Simple or Difficult
Whatever You Asked Me to Do.**

**Why Are You Deserting Me Now,
In this Helpless Condition?
What Did You Say?
I Am Mortal and You Are Immortal!**

**So, You Are Going to Throw Me,
Like an Old Rag,
And You Are Going to Adorn,
A New Dress! What Conceit!**

**What A Cheat You Are!
How Selfish!
But ... well Hear Me!
What Is Your Importance without Me?**

**Can You Cook Food for These Children?
Can You Nurse the Ailing Man,
Lying in a corner, only Watching!
Can You Wipe the Tears from the Eyes?**

**No Soul! No!
You Are of no Use to Anyone,
You are meaningless!
That may make U Happy Unlimited,
That may make U Happy Unlimited!**

**You Are of No Use to Anyone,
And yet...
Everyone Is Praying for You
You go and get into a New Body!**

**The body You stayed in is discarded,
Like a rotten Potato,
To Be Burnt or Buried.**

**But
Are You more Significant
than me?
Then Look at these Walls,
All The Photos there!
It Is Me, O Soul!
It is me, the Body!!**

Leela Singh