

CHAPTER-IV

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILES OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE STUDY AREA

4.1 Introduction

The area of our research study is Cooch Behar district in West Bengal. The district of Cooch Behar is divided into 5 sub-divisions, viz., Cooch Behar Sadar, Tufanganj, Dinhata, Mathabhanga and Mekhliganj. There are only 7 towns in the district of which 6 are municipal. The district is comprised of 12 blocks, 128 Gram Panchayats, 12 Panchayat Samities and 10 police stations. There are 1168 mouzas of which 1139 are inhabited.

We have selected three blocks of the district and categorized them as developed, moderately developed and backward blocks on the basis of some socio-economic indicators like number of primary schools, number of branches of commercial banks and regional rural banks, agricultural productivity, cropping intensity, length of pucca/mettaled road, literacy of population etc. and from each block two villages have been taken. Thus, altogether six villages have been taken from three blocks. We made a survey of 300 households taking 25 households as migrant and 25 households as non-migrant from each of six villages of the district. Here, we discuss the demographic and socio-economic profile of 150 migrants' workers of the study area. Now, the name of the villages, blocks and district are given as under.

Table 4.1: District and Block wise Distribution of Survey Villages

District	Blocks	Villages
Cooch Behar (03)	1. Dinhata I (0009)	1. Chhotonatabari (279)
		2. Dakshin Kharija Gitaldaha (399)
	2. Cooch Behar II (0006)	3. Uttar Gopalpur (068)
		4. Sajer Par Ghoramara (055)
	3. Mathabhanga I (0003)	5. Asokbari I (765)
		6. Jorsimuli (714)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate Census 2001 Code Numbers.

The above Table shows that the district which has been chosen for the study is Cooch Behar of the state of West Bengal. From the district, three blocks which have been selected are

Dinhata I, Cooch Behar II and Mathabhanga I respectively and the survey villages are Chhotonatabari and Dakshin Kharija Gitaldaha under Dinhata I block, Uttar Gopalpur and Sajer Par Ghoramara under Cooch Behar II block and Asokbari I and Jorsimuli under Mathabhanga I block.

Now, before describing minutely the demographic and socio-economic profile of migrant workers of the villages surveyed we at first delineate the brief history, geographical location and boundary, demographic characteristics and economy of the district.

4.2: About Cooch Behar District (Study Area)

As we noted in Chapter I that Cooch Behar district is situated at the extreme north-east corner of the state of West Bengal. There are some glorious past in the district. Briefly we delineate below the geographical location, history, population growth and economy of the district.

Geographical Location and Boundary

Cooch Behar is a district under the Jalpaiguri Division of the state of West Bengal. It is located in the north eastern part of the state and bounded by the district of Jalpaiguri in the north, state of Assam in the east and by Bangladesh in the west as well as in the south. The district forms a part of the Himalayan Terrain of West Bengal. It lies between 25° 57' 56" and 26° 32' 46" North latitude and 88° 45' 02" and 89° 52' 00" East longitude. The district comprises the area of 3387.0 sq. kms. which contributes 3.82 percent of the total geographical area of West Bengal. The district has a flat alluvial land and the height ranges from 35 to 53 meters approximately above mean sea level and sloping towards south-east along which the rivers flow. The district is drained by the rivers Tista, Torsa, Jaldhaka, Kaljini, Dharia, Gandheswari, Gharghar, Sankosh and Roydak/Raidak generally flowing from north-east to south-east direction. Mostly, these rivers originate from the Himalaya and passing through the eastern Duars of the district Jalpaiguri then finally enters in Bangladesh. Considerably, the district is characterized by her low and inundated nature. There is no hill and greater areas under cultivation.

A unique geopolitical scenario with a total area of 47.7 km² is the existence of 92 Bangladeshi exclaves in Cooch-Bihar District. Similarly, there are 106 Indian exclaves inside Bangladesh, with a total area of 69.5 km². Twenty-one of the Bangladeshi exclaves are within Indian exclaves, and three of the Indian exclaves are within Bangladeshi exclaves. The

largest Indian exclave, Balapara Khagrabari, surrounds a Bangladeshi exclave, Upanchowki Bhajni, which itself surrounds an Indian exclave called Dahala Khagrabari, of less than one hectare.

Brief History of the District

The early history of Cooch Behar has to be hunted in the history of Assam. In early times the territory was known as **Pragjyotisha**. It appears that the western part of the original territory of Pragjyotisha came to be known as **Kamarupa** in later times. According to tradition Kamarupa was conquered by Muslim Army in A.D.1498, but they could not keep the kingdom for long. After the expulsion of the Muslim army the Kamta kingdom was engulfed in anarchy. In the beginning of the 16th century, the Koch Kings had come into power and the kingdom was called Cooch Behar by them.

The name Cooch Behar is of recent origin and is a compound of two words. The word ‘Cooch’ came from the word ‘Coch’ or ‘Koch’, the name of an ethnic group of people living in the north-eastern part of West Bengal. ‘Behar’ or more properly ‘Bihar’ on the other hand, denotes an abode or spot. Cooch Behar therefore means the land of the Koch.

In 1773 Cooch Behar became a feudatory State to the East India Company by virtue of a treaty. Thereafter a peace was concluded between Bhutan and East India Company on April 25, 1774. Until 1950 it used to be a feudatory State in political relations, first with the British Government and then with the Government of India. On the 28th of August 1949 an agreement was contracted between the Governor General of India and His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar, which came to be known as the Cooch Behar Merger Agreement, in which Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar ceded to the Dominion. After a series of talks between the Union Government, the West Bengal Government and the Government of Assam, in which the wishes of the people of Cooch Behar was taken into account, the Government of India reached the conclusion that the best interest of the people of Cooch Behar and of India as a whole be served by the merger of Cooch Behar in the provinces of West Bengal. This was done with effect from 1st January, 1950. So, Cooch Behar has been transformed from an earlier kingdom to a state and from a state to the present status of a district.

Demography

As per 2001 census, the district has 24,79,155 persons out of which 22,53,537 (90.9 percent) reside in the rural areas and 2,25,618 (9.1 percent) reside in the urban area. The total area of the district as supplied by the Surveyor General of India is 3387 km² which accounts for 3.82 percent of the total area of West Bengal (88,752.00 km²) and thus the density of population is worked out as 732 persons per km in 2001. There are 12 CD Blocks covering 1202 villages, 6 statutory towns and 4 non-statutory towns in the district.

The decadal growth rate of population during 1991-2001 has been recorded as 7.86 percent in the district.

Demographic structure of the district shows that out of total population there are 12,72,094 (51.31 percent) males and 12,07,061 (48.69 percent) females. In Cooch Behar district, 9% of the population is under 6 years of age. The sex ratio of the district is worked out as 949 females per 1000 males. Among children in age group 0-6, the sex ratio has been recorded as 964 females per 1000 males which are comparatively high from the total Sex Ratio.

The major religions in the district are Hinduism, followed by Islam; Christianity. The religious composition is closely linked with that of Bengal and Assam with 76.44% Hindus and 23.34% Muslims. Communities that inhabit Cooch Behar include the Bengalis, Rajbangsi, Marwari and Biharis. Commonly spoken languages include Bengali and Hindi. English and Assamese are understood by most of the people.

The literacy rate of population is (excluding those age-group 0-6) has been recorded as 68.3 percent while this proportion is 75.9 percent is for males and 56.1 percent for females in the district. Out of the total population of the district, the population of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is recorded as 50.1 percent and 0.58 percent respectively. The total number of workers in the district has been recorded as 9,66,705 (38.99 percent) of which 6,98,550 (72.26 percent) are males and 2,68,155 (27.74 percent) are females. Out of 9,66,705 (38.99 percent) workers, 7,54,311 (78.02 percent) are main workers and 2,12,394 (21.98 percent) are marginal workers. On the other hand, the strength of non-workers is stands out as 15,12,450 (61.01 percent).

Economy of the District

Cooch Behar is predominantly an agrarian economy. Nearly 93 percent of its population lives in rural areas. In the absence of any medium or large-scale industry in the district, a vast majority of its working population has to depend on agriculture for its livelihood. About 74 percent of the main workers in Cooch Behar belong to agricultural sector. Nearly 48 percent consists of cultivators and 24 percent comprise of agricultural labourers. Cooch Behar is however dominated by small and marginal farmers operating less than 2 hectares of land. About 78 percent of the operational holdings in Cooch Behar are less than 2 hectares of land. The average size of holdings is 0.87 hectares as against 0.95 hectare for whole of West Bengal. In the absence of a class of really 'large' cultivators the agrarian economy of the district can largely be described as a peasant economy.

Agriculture is the primary occupation in the backward 'no industry' district of Cooch Behar. Because of the high dependence of the regional economy and the population on agriculture and high intensity of cultivation, the agrarian features of the district are characterised by peasant economy, since both average size of holding as well as proportion of landless agricultural labourers are small.

Irrigation facilities are very limited in the district. The application of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and the use of HYV seeds are also very low compared to Burdwan which is agriculturally the most advanced district in West Bengal and the State average. Poor irrigation facilities along with low levels of consumption of fertilizer and other inputs are responsible, in part, for the low level of agricultural productivity in the district. Since a vast majority of cultivators are poor, their capacity to invest for agricultural development is quite limited. Lack of adequate institutional credit in the peasant economic system has also been responsible for the perpetuation of agricultural backwardness in the district.

The backwardness of the district is also exposed by the poor infrastructural facilities in the area. Transport and communication systems are inadequate; education facilities are not sufficiently advanced. Consumption of electricity for productive purposes is also very low. The lack of infrastructural facilities is responsible for the retardation of industrial growth in the area. The scope of employment outside agriculture is therefore very limited.

4.3: Demographic and Socio-economic Profiles of Migrant Workers of the Villages Surveyed in Cooch Behar District

Demographic and Socio-economic profiles of migrant workers are based on the field survey of six villages in Cooch Behar district. The villages that we surveyed are Chhotonatabari, Dakshin Kharija Gitaldaha, Uttar Gopalpur, Sajer Par Ghoramara, Asokbari I and Jorsimuli respectively. The total number of migrant households surveyed is 150. Now, we attempt to analyse the demographic characteristics and socio-economic status of migrant workers of surveyed villages.

4.3 (a) Demographic Profile of Migrant Workers of the Surveyed Villages

4.3 (a) (i) Demographic Profile of the Sample Villages

Demographic profile of the sample of six villages of Cooch Behar district surveyed is narrated below with the help of the following Table.

Table 4.2: Demographic Profile of Migrant Households of the Sample Villages

Village	Adult Male	Adult Female	Male Children	Female Children	Total
Vill 1	51(37.23)	38(27.73)	25(18.25)	23(16.79)	137(100.00)
Vill 2	41(33.07)	35(28.22)	29(23.39)	19(15.32)	124(100.00)
Vill 3	47(41.96)	32(28.57)	23(20.54)	10(8.93)	112(100.00)
Vill 4	47(35.34)	33(25.56)	27(20.30)	26(19.55)	133(100.00)
Vill 5	46(38.66)	34(28.57)	22(18.49)	17(14.28)	119(100.00)
Vill 6	45(36.00)	35(28.00)	24(19.20)	21(16.80)	125(100.00)
District Total	277(36.93)	207(27.60)	150(20.00)	116(15.47)	750(100.00)

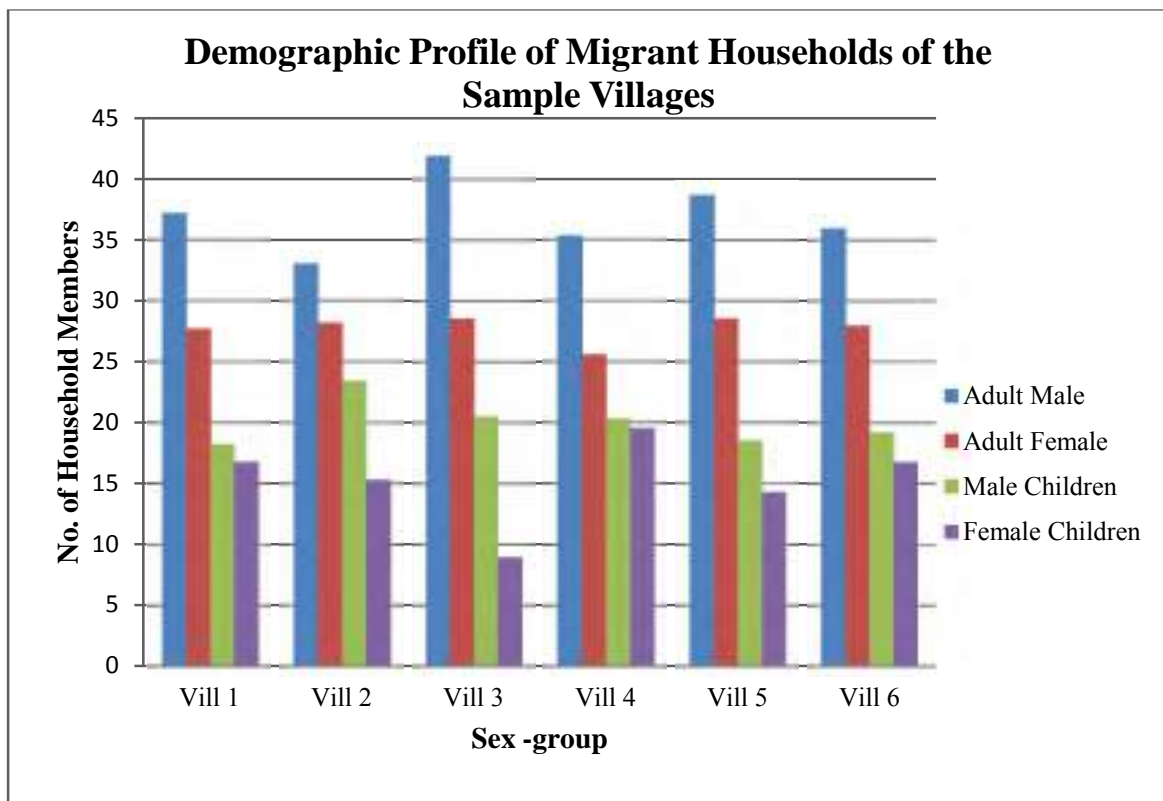
Note: Figures in brackets indicate row percentages.

Source: Field Survey.

The Table 4.2 represents the demographic profile of the sample villages of the selected district which is graphically presented with the help of bar diagram in Fig. 4.1. It can be noticed that there is almost symmetrical distribution among population of the sample villages

with respect to its division among adult male, adult female, male child and female child. The adult male members constitute the highest proportion of population followed by adult female members. As far as villages are concerned, in all the villages except village 3, nearly the same distribution of population is observed. It is observed that the percentages of male children (about 23 and 21 percentages) are quite higher than the percentages of female children (about 15 and 9 percentages) in villages V2 and V3. It reveals an idea about the general relative distribution pattern of population in the state as well as in the whole country also. It appears that although there are little bit variations in the population distribution pattern among villages as well as among adult male and females as well as among male and female children, the variations are therefore insignificant.

Fig.4.1



4.3 (a) (ii) Age Distribution

Table 4.3: Distribution of Out-migrants on the Basis of Age

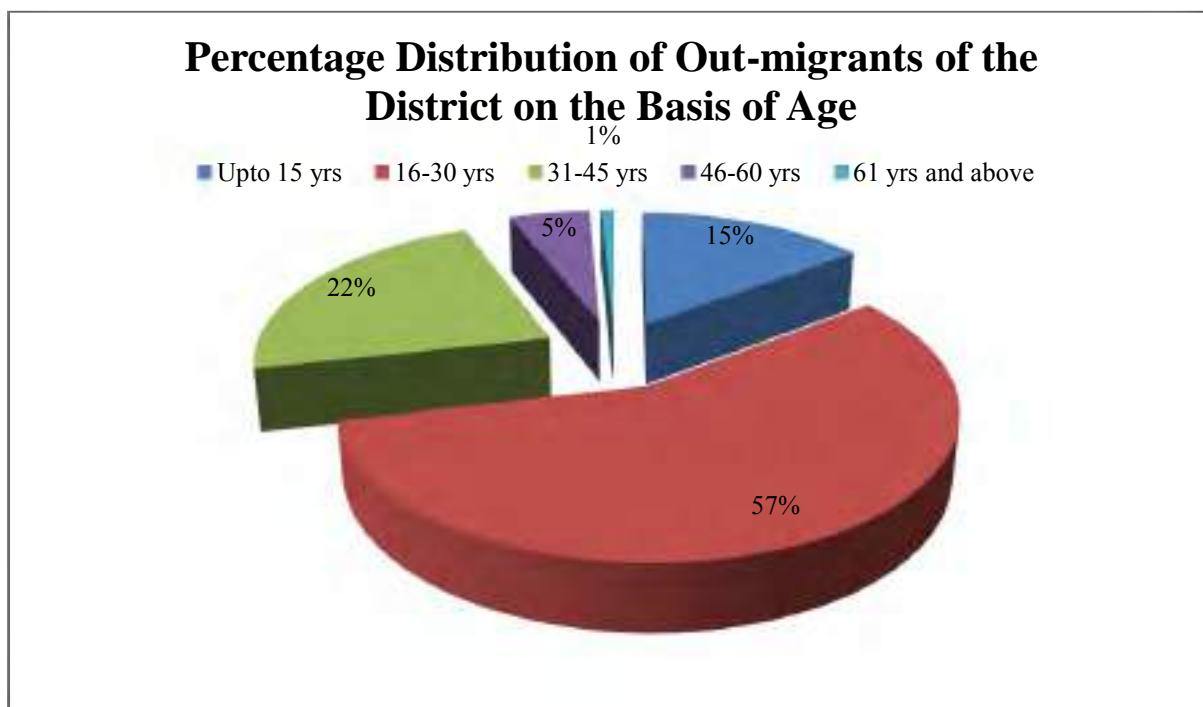
District	Age- group	Migrants	Migrants (in %)
Cooch Behar	Upto 15	37	14.68
	16 - 30	143	56.75
	31 - 45	57	22.62
	46 - 60	13	5.16
	61 & Above	2	0.79
	Total		252

Source: Field Survey

The distribution of out-migrants on the basis of age is presented in Table 4.3 and in Fig. 4.2. Age plays a crucial factor in migration. It is revealed from the above Table that 14.68 percent of the migrants were the age of upto 15 years while 56.75 percent (that is the highest percentage of migrants among the age-group) of the migrants were in the age group of 16-30 years. The percentage of migrants in the age group of 31-45 years were 22.62 while 5.16 percent were in the age group of 46-60 years and only 0.79 percent was in the age group of more than 60 years of age. The table further reveals that the percentage of migrants in their most productive period (that is age group of 16-45) were 79.37.

The presence of a substantial proportion of relatively young migrant labour force (20-30 years of age) among the respondents is also indicated in the above table. There is a long period for young migrants during which they can recoup the costs of investing in migration and this results in a greater present value of returns which in turn increase the probability of migration.

Fig. 4.2



4.3 (a) (iii) Size of the Family

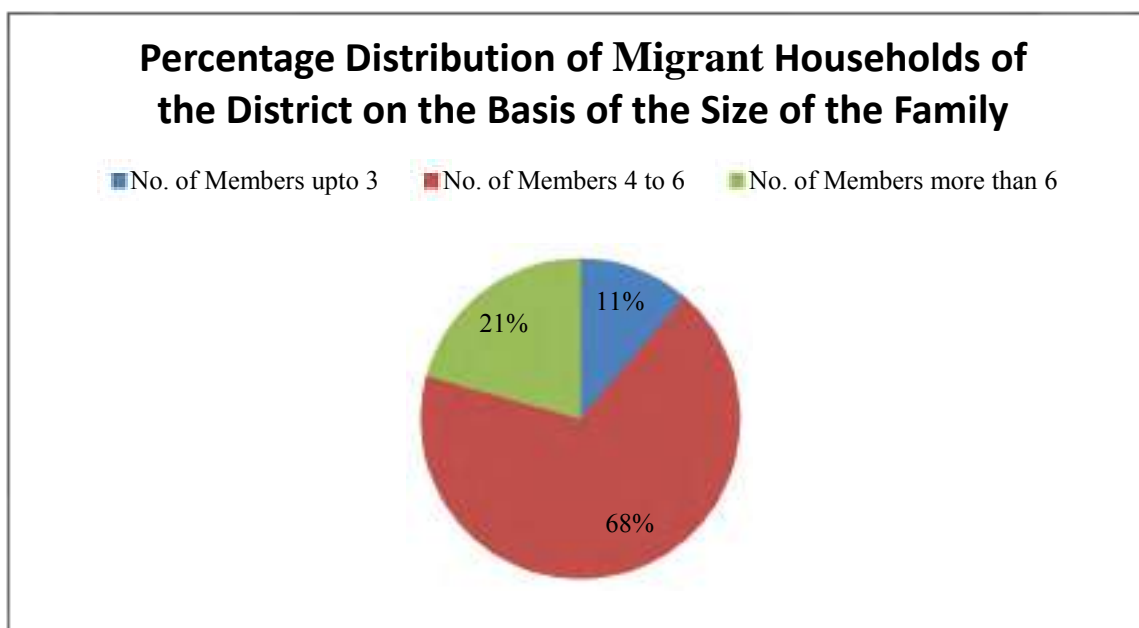
Table 4.4: Distribution of Migrant Households on the Basis of the Size of the Family

District	Household Size (No. of Members)	Migrant Household	Migrant Household (in percentage)
Cooch Behar	Upto 3	17	11.33
	4 to 6	102	68.00
	More than 6	31	20.67
	Total	150	100.00

Source: Field Survey.

The distribution of migrant households on the basis of the size of the family is presented in Table 4.4 which is illustrated in Fig. 4.3. It is revealed from the above Table that most of the migrant families of surveyed villages are medium sized (68.00 percent) consisting of 4 to 6 members. These medium-sized migrant families are followed by large families (20.67 percent) comprising of more than 6 members. The small sized migrant families (11.33 percent) consisting of upto 3 members are usually nuclear in nature. It is observed in the sample that few migrant large families are joint family structure in the sense that they are traditionally inherited in nature.

Fig. 4.3



4.3 (a) (iv) Religious Profile of Migrant Households

Table 4.5: Distribution of Migrant Households on the Basis of Religion

District	Village	Hinduism (1)	Islam (2)	Christianity(3)	Total
Cooch Behar	Vill 1	3(12.00)	22(88.00)	0(0.00)	25(100.00)
	Vill 2	11(44.00)	14(56.00)	0(0.00)	25(100.00)
	Vill 3	25(100.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	25(100.00)
	Vill 4	13(52.00)	12(48.00)	0(0.00)	25(100.00)
	Vill 5	25(100.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	25(100.00)
	Vill 6	25(100.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	25(100.00)
	Total		102(68.00)	48(32.00)	0(0.00)

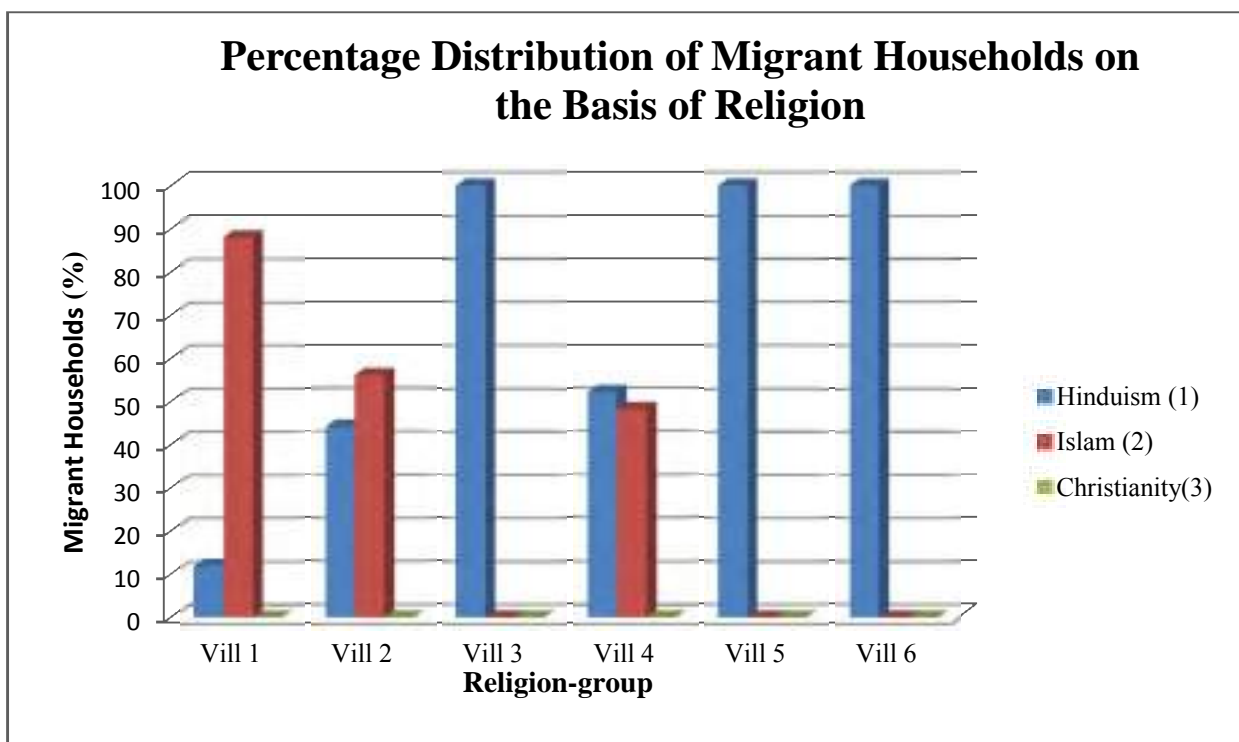
Note: Figures in brackets indicate row-wise percentages.

Source: Field Survey.

The Table 4.5 shows the distribution of migrant households on the basis of religion in the selected villages of Cooch Behar district which is also depicted in bar diagram in Fig. 4.4. It can be seen from the above table that out of 100 percent migrant households of surveyed villages, 68 percent migrant households belong to Hinduism whereas 32 percent belong to Muslims. There are no Christian migrant households in any of the sample villages of Cooch Behar district. Now, in village 1 it is seen that the majority of the surveyed migrant

households belong to Muslims. Interestingly, it is noticed from the above table that among six surveyed sample villages three villages (that is vill 3, vill 5 and vill 6) have all Hindu migrant households. There are no Muslim and Christian migrant households in these three villages. In village 2, the major part of migrant households occupies as religion of Muslim and in village 4 there are almost fifty-fifty migrant households belong to Hinduism and Muslim. Thus, it is observed from the above table that there is supremacy of Hindu migrant households in total sample villages of the district.

Fig. 4.4



4.3 (a) (v) Caste Distribution

Table 4.6: Distribution of Migrant Households on the Basis of Social Group

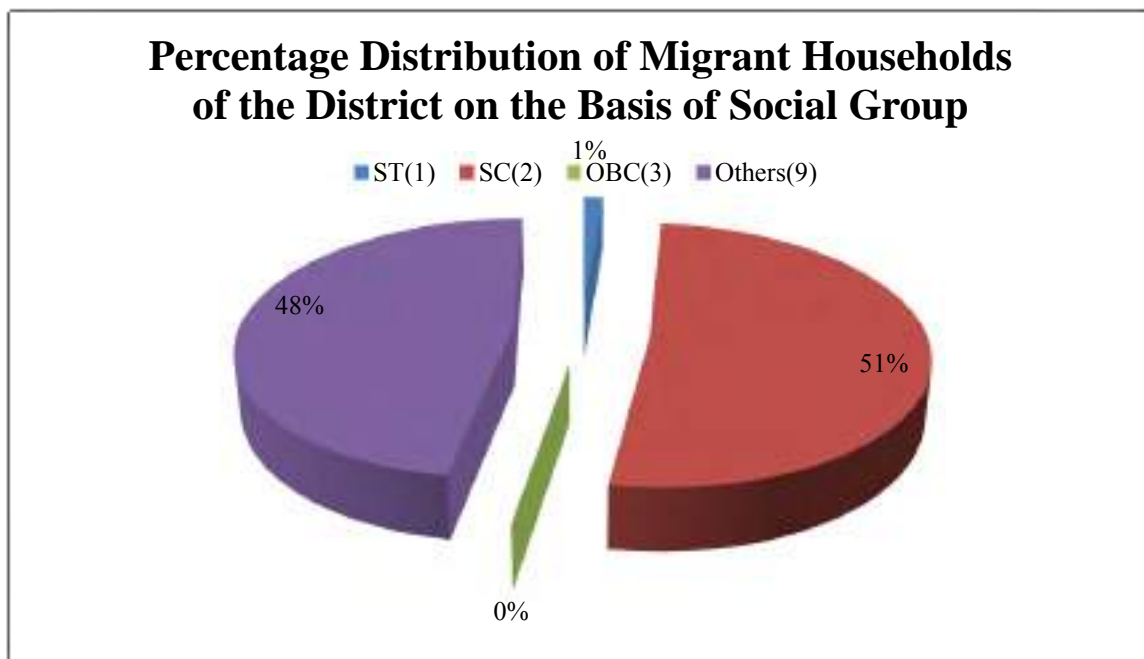
District	Village	ST(1)	SC(2)	OBC(3)	Others(9)	Total
Cooch Behar	Vill 1	0(0.00)	6(24.00)	0(0.00)	19(76.00)	25(100.00)
	Vill 2	0(0.00)	10(40.00)	0(0.00)	15(60.00)	25(100.00)
	Vill 3	0(0.00)	7(28.00)	0(0.00)	18(72.00)	25(100.00)
	Vill 4	2(8.00)	11(44.00)	0(0.00)	12(48.00)	25(100.00)
	Vill 5	0(0.00)	18(72.00)	0(0.00)	7(18.00)	25(100.00)
	Vill 6	0(0.00)	25(100.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	25(100.00)
	Total		2(1.33)	77(51.33)	0(0.00)	71(47.34)

Note: (i) Figures in brackets indicate row-wise percentages. (ii) ST - Scheduled Tribe, SC – Scheduled Caste, OBC – Other Backward Class.

Source: Field Survey.

The distribution of migrant households on the basis of social group is presented in Table 4.6 and in Fig. 4.5. Here, it is seen that about 51 percent migrant households belong to SC category and about 47 percent belong to others that is General category whereas only 1 percent of migrant households belong to ST category in all six surveyed villages. There are no OBC category migrant households in any of the six surveyed villages. It is noticed from the above table that among the total number of six surveyed villages, in the first four villages the majority of the migrant households belong to Others that is General category compared to those other categories whereas in village 5 the majority of migrant households belong to SC category. Interestingly, we have found that all migrant households belong to SC category in village 6. Thus, it is observed from the above table that there is a dominance of SC category migrant households in total sample villages of the district.

Fig. 4.5



4.3 (a) (vi) Poverty Status

Table 4.7: Distribution of Migrant Households on the Basis of Poverty Status

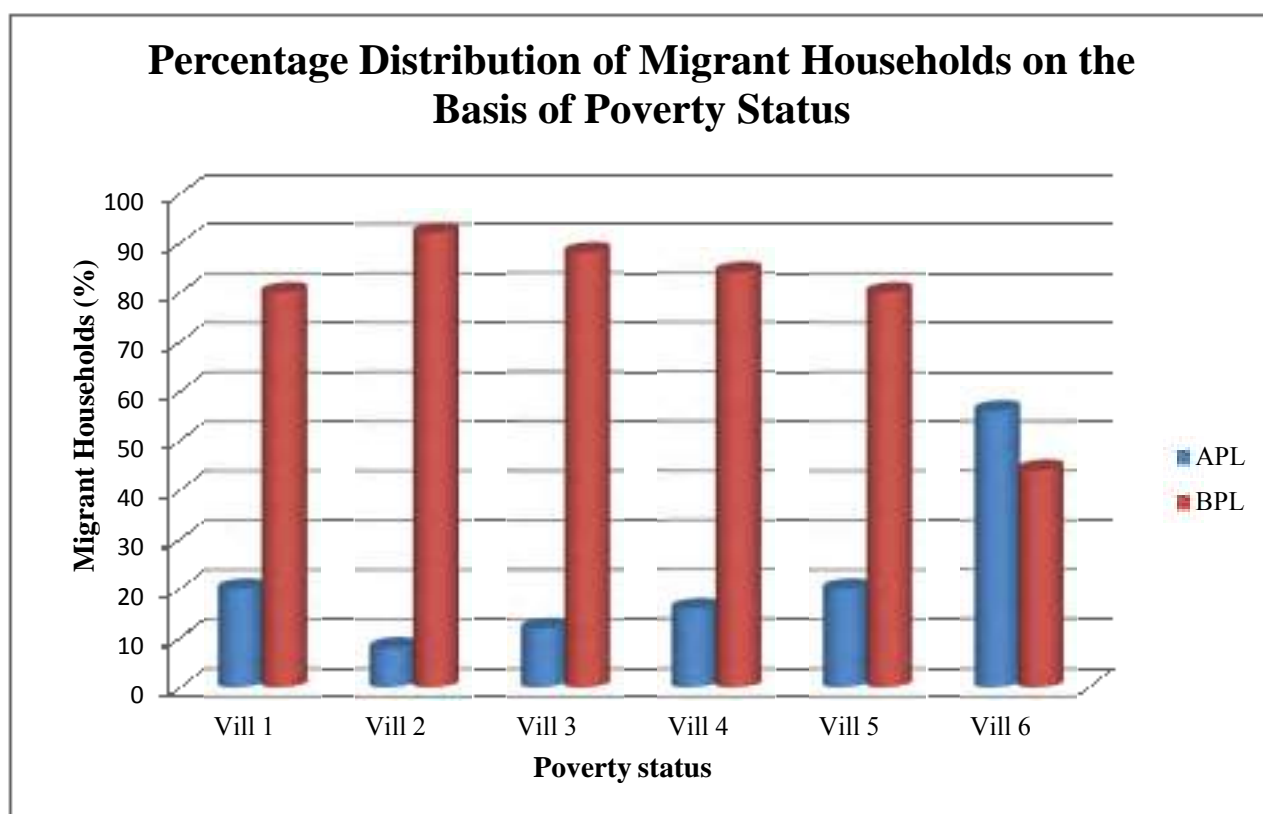
District	Village	Poverty Status		Total
		APL	BPL	
Cooch Behar	Vill 1	5(20.00)	20(80.00)	25(100.00)
	Vill 2	2(8.00)	23(92.00)	25(100.00)
	Vill 3	3(12.00)	22(88.00)	25(100.00)
	Vill 4	4(16.00)	21(84.00)	25(100.00)
	Vill 5	5(20.00)	20(80.00)	25(100.00)
	Vill 6	14(56.00)	11(44.00)	25(100.00)
	Total	33(22.00)	117(78.00)	150(100.00)

Note: (i) Figures in brackets indicate row-wise percentages. (ii) APL – Above Poverty Line, BPL – Below Poverty Line.

Source: Field Survey.

Table 4.7 shows the distribution of migrant households on the basis of poverty status which is graphically presented with the help of bar diagram in Fig. 4.6. It is seen from the above Table that only 22 percent migrant households belong to APL category whereas 78 percent migrant households belong to BPL category in total six surveyed villages of the district. The Table reveals that most of the migrant households of surveyed villages are under BPL category although there is a little exception in village 6 whereas 14 migrant households are under APL category and 11 migrant households entitled BPL category. It is observed that most of the migrant households who are under BPL category are landless whereas APL category migrant households have little agricultural land. The highest amount of migrant households of BPL category among six surveyed villages lie in village 2 and the lowest amount lie in village 6. On the other hand, the highest amount migrant households under APL category lie in village 6 and the lowest amount lie in village 2. Thus, it is revealed from the Table that there is a dominance of BPL category migrant households in total surveyed villages of the district.

Fig.4.6



4.3 (b) Socio-economic Profile of Migrant Workers of the Surveyed households

4.3 (b) (i) Educational Status / Educational Attainment of the Migrants

Table 4.8: Distribution of Educational Status of Member of Migrant Households (Gender-wise) in the District (Percentages)

District	Gender	No. of M/F	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	11	12	13	14	15
Cooc h Beha r	Male	100. 00	31. 15	00. 00	00. 00	00. 00	00. 00	35. 83	13. 82	12. 18	5. 39	1. 40	0.2 3	00. 00	00. 00	00. 00
	Female	100. 00	42. 72	0.3 1	00. 00	00. 00	00. 00	29. 72	13. 00	10. 53	3. 41	0. 31	00. 00	00. 00	00. 00	00. 00
	Total	100. 00	36. 13	0.1 3	00. 00	00. 00	00. 00	33. 20	13. 47	11. 47	4. 53	0. 94	0.1 3	00. 00	00. 00	00. 00

Notes: (i) Figures indicate the row-wise percentage of total sample of villages/ district.

(ii) 1=Not literate; 2=Literate without any schooling; 3= Literate without formal schooling: literate through NFEC/AIEP; 4= Literate through TLC/AEC; 5= Others ; 6= Literate with formal schooling including EGS: below primary; 7= primary; 8= Upper primary/middle; 10=Secondary; 11= Higher secondary; 12=Diploma / Certificate course; 13=Graduate; 14=Post Graduate and above; 15= Technically educated.

Source: Field Survey.

The above table stands for the percentage distribution of educational status of member of migrant households in the survey district. It is expressed from the table that a majority percentage of household members in the district are illiterate. As many as 31 percent male members and almost 43 percent female members are illiterate. Among the literacy of male and female, the highest (35 percentage of male) and the highest (29 percent of female) belong to the below primary category, that is, who are just literate. The second largest category is comprised of the members who are educated upto primary level. This is followed by members in the levels of upper primary/middle school, secondary and higher secondary level. Members of the levels of graduate, post-graduate, certificate/diploma and technical education are insignificant. Thus, literacy and education levels of members of surveyed households reveal a deplorable condition. Indeed, it is a reflection of very low social and economic status of the migrant households.

Then the literate population comes in numerical strength in the category of upper primary or middle school level. The total literacy in this group is 11.47 percent of which share of males is 12.18 percent and that of females is 10.53 percent. Members with secondary education level form only 4.53 percent of total population of the household surveyed and gender wise it is 5.39 percent for males and 3.41 percent for females. Members with higher secondary level

form less than one percent that is only 0.94 percent of total population of the household surveyed and gender wise it is 1.40 percent for males and 0.31 percent for females.

Considering the education upto the level of diploma/ certificate course that forms less than one percent i.e., 0.13 percent of the total population of the households is investigated in the district. There is no any member of migrant who takes either the degree of graduation or post-graduation or technical level of education. Thus, the literacy levels of members of surveyed households expose a outrageous condition in which poverty is the root cause.

4.3 (b) (ii) Land Possession of the Migrant Households

Table 4.9: Distribution of Migrant Households on the Basis of Land Possession

District	Land Possessed (in Bighas)	Migrant Household	Migrant Household(in percentage)
Cooch Behar	Less than 1	93	62.00
	1.0 – 3.0	30	20.00
	3.1 – 7.5	19	12.67
	7.6 – 15.0	6	4.00
	15.1- 30.0	2	1.33
	Greater than 30.0	0	0.00
	Total	150	100.00

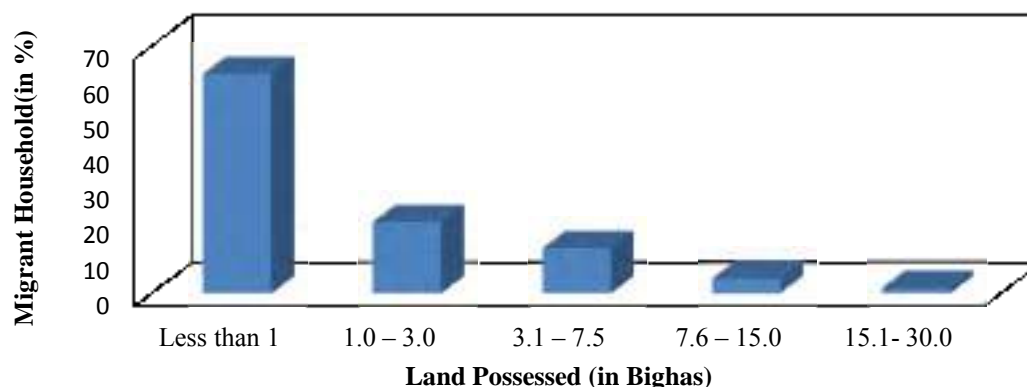
Source: Field Survey.

Table 4.9 and Fig. 4.7 present the distribution of migrant households on the basis of land possession. It is seen from the above table that out of 150 migrants' households of sample villages 93(62.00 percent) migrant households have land less than one bigha, that is, they are landless or near landless families. These migrant families are followed by 30 migrant families who have land between one bigha to three bighas. The migrant families who have land between three bighas to seven and half bighas are 19 (12.67 percent) families and 6 (4.00 percent) migrant families have land between more than seven and half bighas to fifteen bighas. Only 2 (1.33 percent) migrant families have land between more than fifteen bighas to thirty bighas. There are no any migrant families who have greater that thirty bighas of land. It is thus observed in the sample that the agricultural sector does not provide employment for

most of the migrant families throughout the year. There is also a huge deficiency of non-farm employment opportunities either in village or in local areas. Therefore, they do not have any other alternative but to migrate to various districts and states in India in search of employment to earn their livelihood.

Fig.4.7

Distribution of Migrant Households on the Basis of Land Possession



4.3 (b) (iii) Land Possession and Socio-economic Status of the Migrant Households

Table 4.10: Distribution of Migrant Households on the Basis of Land Possession and Socio-economic Category in the District

District	Land Possessed (in Bighas)	No. of Migrant Household	Social Status				Poverty Status	
			ST	SC	OBC	Others	APL	BPL
Cooch Behar	Less than 1	93(62.00)	2(100.00)	55(71.44)	0(0.00)	36(50.71)	30(90.91)	63(53.85)
	1.0 – 3.0	30(20.00)	0(0.00)	15(19.49)	0(0.00)	15(21.13)	3(9.09)	27(23.08)
	3.1 – 7.5	19(12.67)	0(0.00)	5(6.49)	0(0.00)	14(19.72)	0(0.00)	19(16.24)
	7.6 – 15.0	6(4.00)	0(0.00)	1(1.29)	0(0.00)	5(7.04)	0(0.00)	6(5.13)
	15.1- 30.0	2(1.33)	0(0.00)	1(1.29)	0(0.00)	1(1.40)	0(0.00)	2(1.70)
	Greater than 30.0	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)
	Total	150(100.00)	2(100.00)	77(100.00)	0(0.00)	71(100.00)	33(100.00)	117(100.00)

Note: (i) Figures in brackets indicate column-wise percentages. (ii) ST – Scheduled Tribe, SC – Scheduled Caste, OBC – Other Backward Class, APL – Above Poverty Line, BPL – Below Poverty Line.

Source: Field Survey.

The Table 4.10 shows the distribution of surveyed migrant households on the basis of land possession and socio-economic category in the district. It expresses in the table that there are six categories of land holding of migrant households. Among of these, most of the migrant households i.e. 62 percentages possessed land less than 1 bigha followed by 20 percentages that hold cultivable land between 1.0 bigha to 3.0 bighas. Only 1.33 percent migrant households possessed cultivable land between 15.1- 30.0 bighas.

Now, considering social status of the migrant households on the table, 100 percent of Scheduled Tribe (ST) migrant households possessed less than 1 bigha of arable land. Among Scheduled Caste (SC) community of migrant households, the highest 71.44 percent households possessed less than 1 bigha of cultivable land followed by 19.49 percent households who hold arable land between 1.0 bigha to 3.0 bighas. Just 1.29 percent of SC migrant households occupied between 15.1- 30.0 bighas of cultivable land. Surprisingly, there was no any percentage of Other Backward Class (OBC) migrant households who possessed land among six categories. In Others category of social status of migrant households, the highest 50.71 percent obtained less than 1 bigha of arable land followed by 21.13 percent of Others migrant households who occupied land between 1.0-3.0 bighas. Only 1.40 percent of Others category of migrant households possessed land between 15.1-30.0 bighas. So almost the same percent between SC and Others categories of migrant households hold the cultivable lands between 15.1-30.0 bighas.

As far as poverty status of migrant households is concerned, the highest 90.91 percent of APL migrant families possessed cultivable land less than 1 bigha followed by only 9.09 percent of the same category of migrant families occupied arable land between 1.0 bigha to 3.0 bighas. Among BPL migrant families, the majority percentages i.e. 53.85 percent migrant families hold less than 1 bigha of cultivable land followed by 23.08 percent that occupied arable land between 1.0 bigha to 3.0 bighas. The interesting result is noticed in the table that although 1.70 percent of BPL migrant households occupied between 15.1-30.0 bighas of cultivable land, there was no any percentage of APL migrant households who possessed the same amount of cultivable land. Including both social and poverty status of migrant households, there was no any percentage of migrant household who possessed greater than 30.0 bighas of cultivable land. Thus, it can be explored from the table that majority percentages of migrant households belonging to social status as well as poverty status possessed cultivable land less than 1 bigha and it is ultimately categorized as landless migrant families/households.

4.3 (b) (iv) Earning Status / Principal Earner of the Family

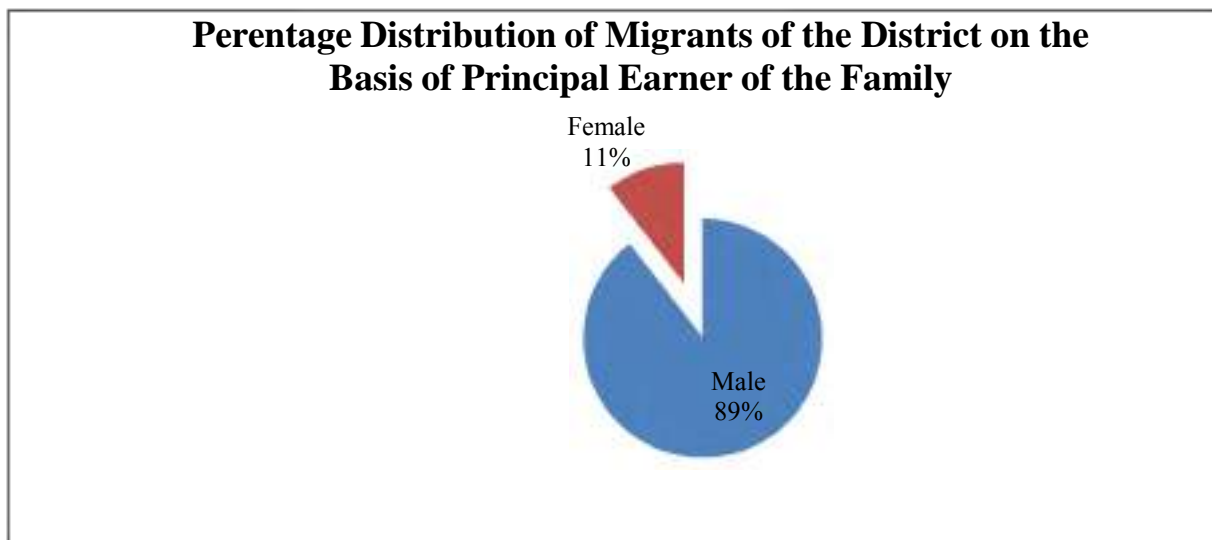
Table 4.11: Distribution of Migrants on the Basis of Principal Earner of the Family

District	Gender/ Sex	Migrants	Migrants (in percentage)
Cooch Behar	Male	187	89.47
	Female	22	10.53
	Total	209	100.00

Source: Field Survey.

Table 4.11 and Fig. 4.8 show the distribution of migrants on the basis of principal earner of the family in Cooch Behar district. The field survey data show that the total number of migrants who are the principal earner of the family is 209. Out of these, male migrants are 187 and female migrants are 22. It is revealed from the above table that 89.47 percent male migrants act as principal earner of the family and only 10.53 percent female migrants perform as principal earner of the family. They are engaged with a number of principal activities. So, the migrant families are mainly dependent upon the male migrants to maintain their socio-economic conditions.

Fig. 4.8



4.3 (b) (v) Occupational Engagement

Table 4.12: Distribution of Work Status / Occupational Engagement of Members of Migrant Households (Gender-wise) in the District (in percentages)

District	Gender	No. of M / F	11	12	21	31	41	51	81	91	92	93	95	97
Cooch Behar	Male	100.00	8.20	1.17	0.23	17.80	2.34	33.49	0.00	20.38	2.81	1.17	1.17	11.24
	Female	100.00	4.02	0.00	4.02	3.41	0.62	13.93	0.31	24.15	36.84	0.00	1.55	11.15
	Total	100.00	6.40	0.67	1.87	11.60	1.60	25.07	0.13	22.00	17.47	0.66	1.33	11.20

Notes: (i) Figure in brackets indicate the percentage of total sample of villages/ districts

(ii) 11= Worked in h. h. enterprise (self-employed): own account worker; 12= Employer; 21=Worked as helper on h. h. enterprise (unpaid family worker); 31=Worked as regular salaried/wage employee; 41= Worked as casual wage labour: in public works; 51= In other types of work; 81= Did not work but was seeking and/or available for work; 91=Attended educational institution; 92=Attend domestic duties only; 93=Attended domestic duties and also engaged in free collection of goods (Vegetables, roots, firewoods, cattle feed, etc), sewing, tailoring, weaving, etc. for household use; 94=Rentiers, pensioners, remittances recipients, etc.; 95=Not able to work due to disability; 97=Others (including begging, prostitution, etc.).

Source: Field Survey.

The distribution of work status/ occupational engagement of members of migrant households in the district is presented in Table 4.12. It can be shown from the Table that 8.20 percent male members worked in household enterprise categorized as own account worker, whereas only 4.02 percent female members were engaged in the same. Very few percent, i.e. 1.17 percent male members engaged as employer. There was no any percentage of female members of the survey households who engaged as employer. Among the work status categories of members of survey households, the minimum percentage i.e. 0.23 percent male members are engaged as helper on household enterprise who do not get payment and the highest 36.84 percent female members who attended only domestic duties. There was no any male member who was assumed to be engaged as seeking for work and also there was no any female member who either attended the domestic duties or engaged in collection of free goods, sewing, tailoring, weaving etc. for household use. Only 1.17 percent male members are not able to work due to disability and 1.55 percent of female members who are slightly more than the percentage of male members did not work due to the same reason as stated above. A quite good percentage i.e. 22 percent of male and female members of surveyed households attended educational institutions. Interestingly, it is revealed from the Table that more or less the same percentage of male and female members of survey households engaged in other works like begging, social works in the local areas etc. The highest 25.07 percent of male and female members of surveyed households were engaged in other types of work like building construction labour, road construction labour, mason, shuttering labour etc. and the lowest 0.13 percent male and female members were not engaged in work but for seeking or

available to get work. So, it can be observed from the Table that most of the male and female members of migrant surveyed households engaged as regular salaried or wage employee and other types of work like mason, shuttering labour, building construction labour etc. although there is a lack or crisis of work in the local area throughout the year.

4.3 (b) (vi) Subsidiary Occupation

Table 4.13: Distribution of Members of Migrant Households on the Basis of Subsidiary Occupation

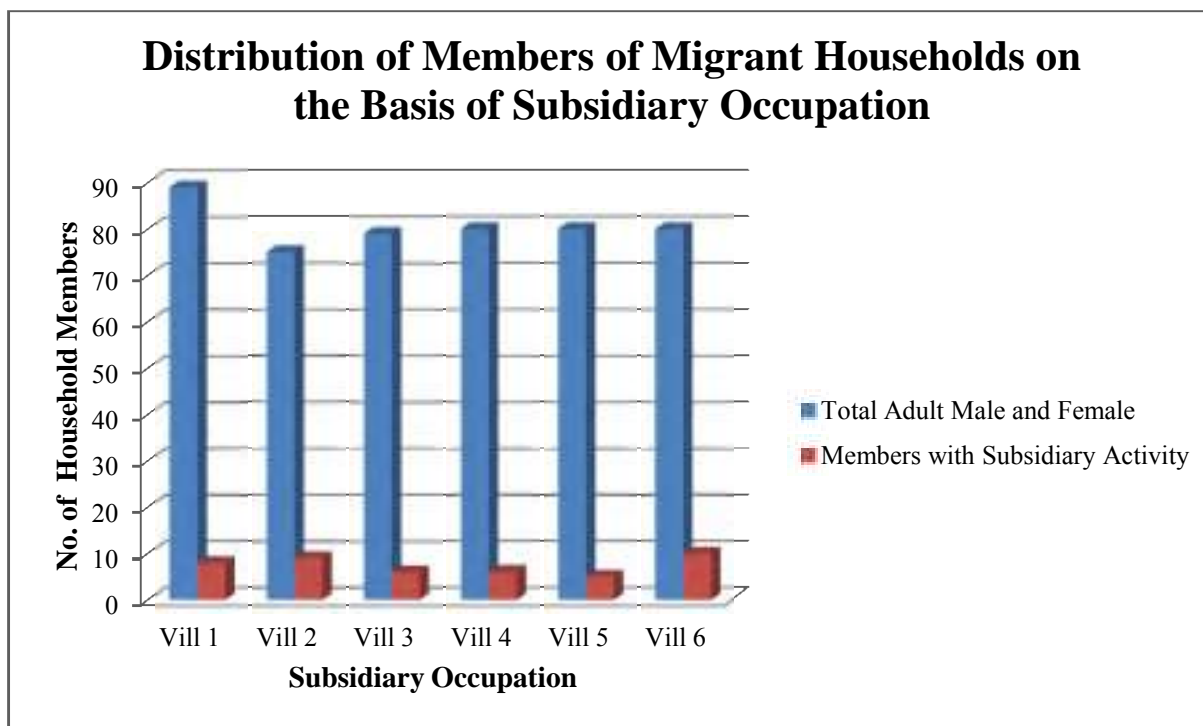
District	Village (Vill)	Total No. of Adult Male and Female	Members with Subsidiary Activity	% Engaged in Subsidiary Activity
Cooch Behar	Vill 1	89	8	8.99
	Vill 2	75	9	12.00
	Vill 3	79	6	7.59
	Vill 4	80	6	7.50
	Vill 5	80	5	6.25
	Vill 6	80	10	12.50
	Total	483	44	9.11

Source: Field Survey.

The distribution of members of migrant households based on subsidiary occupation is presented in Table 4.13 and in Fig. 4.9. We have surveyed 150 migrant households of six villages in Cooch Behar district. The Table shows that the total numbers of adult male and female migrant households were 483 in which there were only 44 members i.e., 9.11 percent were engaged with subsidiary occupation in six villages of Cooch Behar district. Among six villages, the highest number of members i.e., 10 who were engaged with subsidiary activity lies in Vill 6 and the lowest number of members i.e., 5 who were engaged with subsidiary activity lies in Vill 5. As a percentage, Vill 6 occupied the highest percentage i.e., 12.50 engaging with subsidiary activity, Vill 2 occupied the second most percentage i.e., 12.00 engaging with subsidiary activity followed by Vill 6 and Vill 5 occupied the lowest percentage i.e., 6.25 engaging with subsidiary activity. So, it is revealed from the above Table

that very few members were engaged with subsidiary activity in each village to maintain their socio-economic status of the families.

Fig. 4.9



4.4: Test of Hypothesis-1

1. Mainly workers from weaker socio-economic background migrate from rural to urban areas.

We have tested hypothesis-1 in this chapter through the tabular forms and with figures.

From the Tables 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.9 and the Figures 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7, we have found regarding profile of religion that out of 100 percent migrant households of surveyed villages, 68 percent migrant households belong to Hinduism whereas 32 percent belong to Muslims. There are no Christian migrant households in any of the sample villages of Cooch Behar district. So, there is supremacy of Hindu migrant households in total sample villages of the district. Regarding caste distribution, about 51 percent migrant households belong to SC category and about 47 percent belong to others that is General category whereas only 1 percent of migrant households belong to ST category in all six surveyed villages. So, majority

percentages of migrant households belong to SC category. Regarding poverty status and land possession of migrants, we have found that most of the migrant households are under BPL category who possess land less than one bigha, that is, they are landless or near landless families and few belong to APL category who have little agricultural land. Thus, overall it is observed that migrant workers of the district mainly belong to weaker socio-economic background. Therefore, the hypothesis-1 is true in this context and in this way it is tested.

4.5: Demographic and Socio-Economic Description of the Surveyed Villages in Cooch Behar District of West Bengal

Surveyed Villages in Cooch Behar District

(i) Chhotonatabari (Vill 1) (Census 2001 Code number: 279)

The village Chhotonatabari is under the Goshanimari II Gram Panchayet in Dinhata – I Block in the district of Cooch Behar. It is situated at a distance of 14 km to the west of Dinhata Town. The village is almost round shaped. In one side of the village there are some scattered households.

A recently constructed road under ‘Pradhan Mantri Gram Sarak Yojana’ passes through the middle of the village. Besides, under ‘Sampurna Gramin Rojgar Yojana’ one road has been made. There is no primary or secondary school in the village. Only one Shisu Siksha Kendra (SSK) is present there. Bara Natabari village is situated in the western side of the village. In Bara Natabari, there is a primary and a secondary school. So the Students of primary and secondary level of Chhoto Natabari normally go to the Bara Natabari schools. No river passes through the village. According to Census 2001, the total population of the village was 938, out of which 500 were male and 438 were female. Most of the families of this village are poor. They are almost illiterate. Tobacco and Paddy are the main crops of this village. The lands are rain-fed. It is a Muslim dominated village. There are very few Hindu families who live in the western corner of the village. Most of them belong to Scheduled Castes community.

In census 2001, the total literacy rate of the village was 53.7 percent, out of which 58.9 percent were male and 47.8 were female. Most of the families have very small amount of agricultural land and some families are landless. So, due to shortage of agricultural land, poverty and lack of employment in the local area, members from most families migrate to

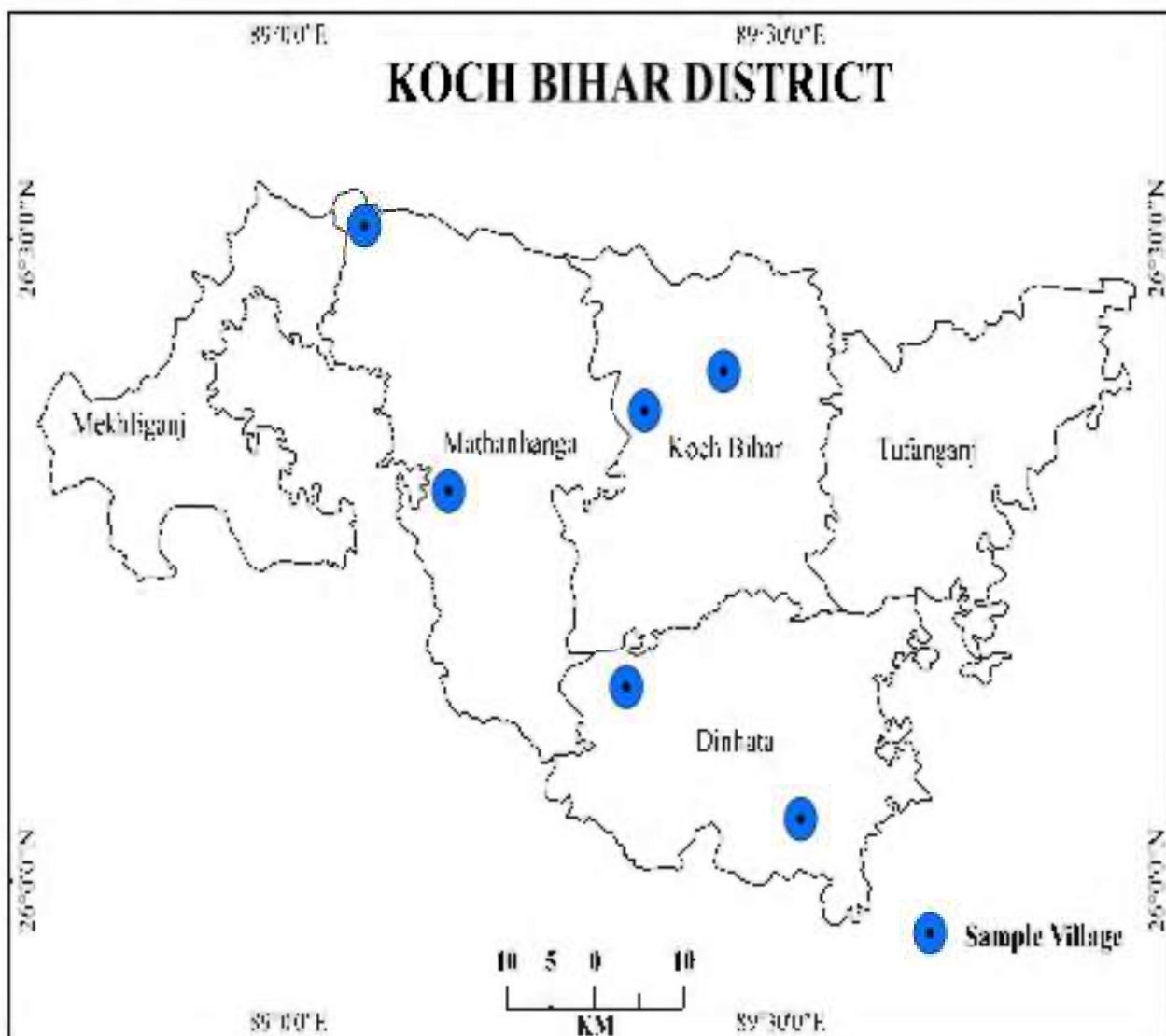
various other districts of West Bengal like Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri and to other states like Hariyana, Maharastra, Delhi etc.

(ii) Dakshin Kharija Gitaldaha (Vill 2) (Census 2001 Code number: 399)

The village Dakshin Karija Gitaldaha is on the Gitaldaha II Gram Panchayet under Dinjata-I Block of Cooch Behar District. It is situated at a distance of and 15 kilometers to the south of Dinjata town near Bangladesh border. A metalled road passes through the village. According to Census 2001, the total population of the village was 2,274 out of which 1,193 were male and 1,081 were female. There are almost equal numbers of Hindu and Muslim families in the village.

‘Singijani’ river passes through the western side of the village. The river remains dry almost throughout the year except for the rainy season. In rainy season flood occurs in the river. At the time of flood some agricultural lands are inundated and crops are damaged. The main livelihood of people of the village is cultivation. Irrigation is done by using pump machine. For some time of the year, rivers help to get lands irrigated. In census 2001, the total literacy rate of this village was 50.9 percent out of which 61.9 percent were male and 39.2 percent were female. Most of the families of this village are poor and they have very small amount of agricultural land. Due to shortage of agricultural land and lack of employment opportunity in the local area, members from most of the families migrate to various districts of West Bengal and other districts of India.

Map 4.1



(iii) Uttar Gopalpur (Vill 3) (Census 2001 Code number: 068)

Uttar Gopalpur village is under the Gopalpur Gram Panchayet in Cooch Behar II Block of the district of Cooch Behar. It is situated at a distance of 18 kilometers towards the north of Cooch Behar Town. It is a Hindu dominated village. Few Muslim families live in one portion of the village. According to Census 2001, the total population of the village was 11,800 out of which 6,095 were male and 5,705 were female. A portion of the village has metalled and semi-metalled roads but most parts of the village have non metalled road.

The river ‘Ghoramara’ passes through the village but remains dry for most time of the year. For this reason, the river water is not enough for the irrigation of village lands. Most of the

families have very little agricultural land and are economically backward. There is a primary School, Secondary (H.S) School and a sub-primary health centre in the village. According to census 2001, the total literacy rate of the village was 76.3 percent out of which 85.3 percent were male and 66.5 percent were female. Due to scanty agricultural land and lack of employment opportunity in the local area, members from most of the families out migrate to various districts of West Bengal and other states of India.

(iv) Sajerpar Ghoramara (Vill 4) (Census 2001 Code number: 055)

The village Sajerpar Ghoramara is under the pundibari Gram panchayat of Cooch Behar II block of Cooch Behar district. It is situated at a distance of 12 kms. to the west of Cooch Behar Town. Sajerpar village is one of the biggest villages of Cooch Behar II block. A high way and train line passes through the village Sajerpar. It has four hamlets, namely, Ghoramar, Sajerpar, Paschimpara and Bahanna ghar. There are four members of Gram panchayet from the village. According to Census 2001, the total population of the village was 5,171 out of which 2,663 were male and 2,508 were female.

Torsha river flows along the western side of the village. The water of the river helps in irrigation. The main crop is paddy. The irrigation is done by pump machine. Paddy crop is cultivated two times in a year. Most of the families have small amount of agricultural land and they earn their livelihood from agricultural land. Some families are very poor. They have no agricultural land. Most of the families belong to Hindu community. Some families belong to Muslim community. According to census 2001, the total literacy rate of the village was 72.1 percent out of which 80.5 percent were male and 63.0 percent were female. Due to poverty and lack of employment members from most of the families migrate to other districts of West Bengal and states like Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Maharashtra etc.

(v) Ashokbari- I (Vill 5) (Census 2001 Code number: 765)

The village Ashokbari -I is under the Bairagirhat Gram Panchayat in Mathabhanga-I block in the district of Cooch Behar. It is situated at a distance of 14 kilometers to the west of Mathabhanga Town at the border of Bangladesh. A high way passes through the village. The road communication is satisfactory. There are a primary school and a primary health centre in the village. There is no river or cannel system in the village. According to census 2001, the total population of the village was 5,175 out of which 2,612 were male and 2,563 were female.

Most of the lands are fertile. Tobacco and paddy are the main crops of this village. Besides, seasonal vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower, brinjal, potato etc. are cultivated widely in the village. Shallow tube well is used by operating pump machine for irrigating the cultivable land of the village. There is a poultry firm in the village in which some people are engaged on weekly or monthly salary basis. Most of the families possess agricultural land and some families are landless. So some families maintain their subsistence by working as agricultural labour in the local area. In census 2001, total literacy rate of the village was 57.7 percent out of which 69.2 percent were male and 45.9 percent were female. So, there is a huge gender gap in literacy. Due to shortage of agricultural land and lack of employment opportunity in the local area etc., members from most of the families migrate to states like Kerala, Karnataka, Assam etc.

(vi) Joreshimuli (Vill 6) (Census 2001 Code number: 714)

The village Joreshimuli is under the jurisdiction of Kedarhat Gram panchayet of Mathabhanga I block of the district of Cooch Behar. It is situated at a distance of about 25 kilometres North-east of Mathabhanga town. It is a very remote village of the block. According to Census 2001, the total population of the village was 4,215 out of which 2,176 were male and 2,039 were female. The village is situated on the bank of river Jaldhaka. Every year flood occurs in Jaldhaka river. Due to flood agricultural crops are damaged almost every year.

Joreshimuli is a Hindu community dominated village. In one side of the village, there are some Muslim families. Most of the families belong to scheduled castes. According to census 2001, the total literacy rate of the village was 63.2 percent out of which 76.8 percent were male and 48.4 percent were female. So there is a vast gender gap in literacy. Most of the families have very little agricultural land. Due to short of agricultural and lack of employment opportunity in the local area most of the families send migrants to various states like Karnataka, Maharashtra, Delhi etc. to earn higher levels of income.