

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **Indian Social Order and the Scheduled Castes of Maldah District**

### 3.0 INDIAN SOCIAL ORDER AND SCHEDULED CASTES OF MALDAH DISTRICT

#### 3.1 Introduction:

There is no satisfactory definition is possible to define the peculiar and complex Caste System. "It is difficult to define what a caste precisely connotes. The word 'caste' comes from the Portuguese word '*casta*', signifying 'breed, race or kind', *homem de boa casta* is a "man of good family". The Portuguese of the sixteenth century applied the term indiscriminately to the various social and occupational groups found in the subcontinent, and this confusion has continued to the present time. On the one hand, the term is used to describe in the broadest sense the total system of social stratification peculiar to India; on the other hand, it is used to denote three, perhaps four, more or less distinct aspects of this total system, i.e. varna, jati and gotra. Varna is not the same thing as jati, the former representing the four-fold division of society which the authors of the Dharamsutras sought to derive from one or other of the four varnas. By contrast, the gotra, or clan, described by Hutton as "an exogamous unit of individuals theoretically descended from a single ancestor," cuts freely across jati lines and possibly across varna lines. To this confusion of interlocking hierarchies may be added a fourth division when dealing with South India, where by the time of the Chola period (A.D. 850-1267) there had occurred a great and still unexplained bisection of the sudra varna into the "jatis of left hand" and the "jatis of the right hand", a division that still exists today and is reflected in the continuing rivalry between jatis of opposing hands." (1)

According to Risley, "a caste may be defined as a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name; claiming common descent from a mythical ancestor: human or divine; professing to follow the same hereditary calling and regarded by those who are competent to give opinion as forming a single homogeneous community. The name generally denotes or is associated with a specific occupation. A caste is almost invariably endogamous in the sense that a member of the large circle denoted by the common name may not marry outside that circle, but

within the circle there are usually a number of smaller circles each of which is also endogamous.”<sup>(2)</sup>

Beteille has attempted to define caste “as a small and named group of persons characterised by endogamy, hereditary membership, and a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation and is usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system.”<sup>(3)</sup>

According to Bogle, the French writer, “the caste system divides the whole society into a large number of hereditary groups, distinguished from one another and connected together by three characteristics: separation in matters of marriage and contact, whether direct or indirect (food); division of labour, each group having, in theory or by tradition, a profession from which their members can depart only with certain limits; and finally hierarchy, which ranks the groups as relatively superior or inferior to one another.”<sup>(4)</sup>

“The controversy over the terms, shudras, backward classes, depressed classes, dalits, harijans and finally, scheduled castes/scheduled tribes hinges mainly around three issues

(1) The origin, use and application of these terms;

(2) In view of the vast legal sanction, social recognition, though in a limited sense, and political approbation that these or at least some of these carry with themselves, the enormous amount of misuse and misapplication of these terms with a view to take advantage of the benefits accruing to them particularly after the advent of state intervention on the promulgation of the Indian Constitution;

(3) The *pseudo-legal* or juristic issue regarding whether as a result of marriage or conversion, etc, from or to an SC/ST family, the benefits accruing to these classes should continue to be or be made available to the person so married or converted.”<sup>(5)</sup>

**3.1.1 Shudras:** “Historically speaking, two terms, the shudras and the scheduled castes/scheduled tribes, are clearly identifiable as appearing at the two extreme ends of our civilization, the shudras having their origin in the Vedas and the SC/ST in the modern constitutional history of India particularly since 1950. Incidentally, shudras who were part of the four-class stratification of the Indian society and find a specific mention in the Purush Sukta of the Rgveda, the oldest known scripture of the world, have nowhere been referred to in the derogatory sense as today and certainly not in the sense of untouchability, which is clearly a later interpolation of our post-Vedic and even post-Manu scripts.”<sup>(6)</sup>

All historians agree that the harijans or the SCs/STs, as we know them today, were not classified under the original class of shudras as one of the four Varnas of Indian Society and were really the fifth or Pancham varna or the panchajanyas.

“Dr. Ambedkar, in his research “Who Were the Shudras”, has come to the finding that the shudras were also Aryans initially, belonging to one of the then existing three classes- brahmins, kshatriyas and vaishyas – namely, the kshatriyas, who were the ruler and there were constant fights between the Brahmins and kshatriyas (including shudras). The latter were regularly oppressing and insulting the Brahmins as a result of which the Brahmins stopped ‘initiating’ the shudras and gradually they were relegated to the lowest position, even lower than the vaishyas.”<sup>(7)</sup>

### **3.1.2 Backward Classes:**

The term ‘backward classes’ refers to the economically and socially backward classes owes its origin to a distant past and continued to be recognized by the Constitution, of the genes of which ‘scheduled castes’ and ‘scheduled tribes’ is only a specie. In order simply to give the latter a clearer identity, all the remaining ‘backward classes’ other than the SCs/STs are now being termed and duly recognized as Other Backward Classes (OBCs) officially.

### **3.1.3 Depressed Classes:**

“The term ‘depressed classes’ originated in the minds of the social reformers, who wanted the Census of India (1901) to identify these classes as separate from

Hindus and to secure a place for them in the political life of the community in the form of a separate electorate. The Simon commission, while rejecting Dr. Ambedkar's plea for a separate electorate, recommended that in all the eight provinces, there should be some reservation of seats for the depressed classes. The Communal Award of 1932 announced by the British offered double seats for depressed classes, one as a caste Hindu and another as a depressed class. This was opposed by Mahatma Gandhi who conceded reservation of 148 seats for the depressed classes for 10 years, which was incorporated in the Poona Pact and finally the Government of India Act of 1935. These depressed classes included: (a) untouchables, (b) aboriginals and hill tribes and (c) criminal tribes." (8)

**3.1.4 Dalits:** "Dalit literally means 'depressed' but why this new term with all its confusions and misleading nuances, particularly in the context of the already existing term 'backward classes'? In fact, the term 'dalit' has been coined with the avowed object of giving these classes a more 'dignified' and high sounding meaning than the 'depressed classes' or the 'backward classes', till then in vogue. Though the caste clearly covered 'untouchables' in 1960s the Maratha writers of this community avoided the latter term or even harijans as advocated by Mahatma Gandhi, and decided to call themselves as dalits.

**3.1.5 Harijans:** "The term harijan literally means folks of God, and Gandhiji tried to popularize this term throughout his life—it was a mission with him to brainwash the majority of Hindus calling them 'durjans' or the sons of evil, to accept the harijans as part of their own community---- a long battle indeed, which even today has not materialized. <sup>(9)</sup>The backward classes were originally known as achhutas or bhangis, which by convention carried with it a bad odour. Gandhiji rechristened them as harijans by bestowing upon them an artificially superior status."(9)

### 3.2 Origin of the terms: Scheduled Castes/Tribes:

The provincial government of Bengal proposed before the Indian Franchise Committee the nomenclature 'scheduled castes', instead of 'depressed classes', in 1932. While reviewing the recommendations of the Indian Franchise Committee, the Government of India observed:

“We support Dr. Ambedkar’s suggestion that the term ‘depressed classes’ should not be used in the electoral law. He suggested either “exterior” or “excluded” castes. We prefer the proposal of the Government of Bengal that the castes so protected should be simply described as ‘scheduled castes’, a term which carried out with it no specific connotation of their actual social status.”

Accordingly, in the Government of India Act of 1935, a schedule was added containing the list of these depressed classes and these classes were described as ‘Scheduled Castes’ first time in 1935. There was no mention or reference to ‘scheduled tribes’ at that time. Dr. Ambedkar, chairman of the drafting committee of the Constitution specified these two classes separately as ‘scheduled castes’ and ‘scheduled tribes’, of course without creating a separate schedule as a specific part of the Constitution, but only stating that the president may specify the castes and tribes which will be deemed as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes respectively.

### **3.3 Evolution of Caste in India:**

India is a laboratory of race religions and various cultures. From ancient times, India has been much attracted land for the people of foreign origin, the outsiders, more correctly the invaders. The historian, anthropologists and sociologists think that the Dravidians came to settle down on this land from some other parts of the world, even before Aryan-invasion. It is believed that the pre-Dravidian settlers were the native, the aborigines of India. It was, undoubtedly a savage and primitive society. According to the continental drift theory, the geographers and climatologists believe that northern part of Australia was linked with the southern part of India; another eastern part of Africa was enjoined with the western part of India’s sea costal- Maharastra, Kuch, Gujrat and Sindh now in Pakistan. <sup>(10)</sup>

#### **3.3.1 Pre-historic Stage:**

“The Pre-historic stage of social development marks the starting point in the evolution of India’s life and thought. The remotest past, as is generally held, represents the age when man lived in a state of nudity and barbarity. There was however, a simple, democratic and dynamic state of primitive society, which marched towards a civilized

living only by slow stages. The natural simplicity, the hunger- satisfying activity and indiscriminate sexuality were the modes of human relationship in primitive societies.”<sup>(11)</sup>

### **3.3.2 Dravidians:**

The Dravidians were an organized race and first attacked the aboriginals of India. They were basically nomads and wanted a settled life. The defeated race of natives or aboriginals joined the social life of Dravidians and not mixed up in due course of time. Social scientists believe that Dravidian formed another stage of social development in the remotest past. In ancient India they developed their own civilization and culture which was more advanced compared to other race. They knew farming and domestication of animals. They were the earliest people to build dams across rivers for irrigation. They constructed houses and fortifications.

### **3.3.3 The Aryan Race:**

“The Aryan race entered in India in groups. Gradually the Aryans had won over the natives, the Dravidians. In the process of diffusion, centuries old confrontation and contact with the indigenous people, the Aryan society underwent important changes, in their way of life, social thinking and culture. They were interested in permanent dwellings and establishment of tribalist socio-political system. With the passage of time the Varna system, which was initially social gradation, was on its way towards crystallisation.”<sup>(12)</sup>

There was clashes and conflicts for the social, cultural, occupational and functional division between the Aryans and the Dravidians and aboriginals. In order to avoid large scale intermixing of the natives amongst the invading race of Aryans a fourth caste, the Shudras came into existence.

“The conquered aborigines, or the Broken-men, were deprived of all claim for a place in the divinely ordained social order and on the community land. They were forced to live outside the village, and occupations regarded low and contemptible were assigned to them. They were the ancestors of the untouchables (now a distinct number of castes) and were known as the Asprashyas or the Panchamas. They were attached to the Hindu society and yet did not belong to it, having been assigned no place in the

social hierarchy of caste in the Chaturvarna".<sup>(13)</sup> Some native tribes who easily submitted to the Aryans and accepted their faith and belief, rituals and cultural pattern were graded higher and those who did not submit and accept their faith were tortured and kept as untouchables. Thus, the Trivarnic societies become Chaturvarnic.

### **Rig Veda:**

According to Iyer: "The earliest reference to caste is found in the Rig Veda, in which mention is made of four castes which originate from Brahma, the Supreme Being."<sup>(14)</sup>

The Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda divides the entire society of Aryans and non-Aryans into four classes, known as Varnas. The Brahmin the Kshatriya, the Vaishya and the Shudra, created from Prajapati's mouth, arms, thighs and feet respectively.<sup>(15)</sup>

Brahmins or priests were just like bureaucrats of today. They were virtually powerful people. The Kshatriyas or warriors were the military personnel, the rulers. Vaishyas were merchants and cultivators, while the Shudras were menials and labours. Below Shudras were certain primitives and criminal tribes, defeated as well as degraded Brokenmen.<sup>(16)</sup>

### **3.3.4 Social Order during the Buddhist period :**

In the Jatakas, a collection of folk-tales, there is an account of the Hindu society in early Buddhist times. The colour distinction so prominent in the Vedas has faded into the background, though its memory survives in the word varna, used for the social classes namely, Kshatriyas, Brahman, Vaisya and Sudra. Here the Kshatriya heads the list. The lords spiritual have not assumed the pride of place at the expense of the lords temporal, the Brahman is held in status inferior to the Kshatriya nobility. The varnas have not yet become caste. The Birth qualification has not yet developed to make them close corporations. Vaisyas and Sudras rise to the rank of Kshatriyas. Anybody can become a Brahman by becoming a priest. There is no endogamous restriction; a Brahman marries a Kshatriyas widow, and according to one Jataka, Buddha himself, a Kshatriya, marries a poor cultivator's daughter. Marriage within the clan is considered preferable to marriage outside it. But social prejudice and social convention stand in the way of the latter. Below the varnas there are hina Jatyo, low tribes, of barbers, potters or weavers-for example, a remnant of the Dasya tribes on

the outskirts of civilization. The lowest of all are the Chandalas and other outcaste tribes.<sup>(17)</sup>

### **3.3.5 Social Order during the Maurya period**

Megasthenes, who was an ambassador in the court of Chandragupta (Sandrokotus of the Greeks) in 300 B.C., wrote an account of the social system of his day in a work compiled by him, and this was preserved by Strabo, Arrian, and other writers. His classification of the people of his day into seven groups is somewhat confusing. He speaks of the philosophers, the husbandmen, the herdsmen and hunters, the traders and laborers, the fighting men, the overseers, the councilors, and the judges and administrators. From the above, list Brahmans and Kshatriyas are easily identified. The third and fourth groups include Vaisyas and Sudras. The fourth would include all the guilds of armourers and ship builders of which Megasthenes speaks as possessing special privileges. The sixth and the seventh of Megasthenes groups refer to professional classes. According to Strabo's version, "no one is allowed to marry out for his own caste or to exchange one profession for another or to follow more than one business. An exception is made in the case of the philosopher, who for his virtue is allowed this privilege."<sup>(18)</sup>

### **3.3.6 Social Order in the Epic Age**

The Ramayana and Mahabharata are two great epics of the Hindu society. They preach supremacy of Brahminism and divinely order. The epics seem to have imposed the Varna system as originated by the gods themselves. The Kshatriyas are also placed in high position. The theory of Karma with transmigration of soul is combined with Varna Vyavastha as the central doctrine of the epics. The author of the epics declare that various functions and duties of the Varnas are allotted to men in accordance with their nature which they inherit from their past. By doing service and Bhakti to the gods they can attain Moksha.<sup>(19)</sup>

The Ramayana is a complete work which believes in divine government and the entire universe is governed by God's dispensation. All castes are supposed to perform their duties, which have been assigned to their Karmas of the past birth. The Ramayana has clearly accepted the authority of the Varnashram Dharma. The Mahabharata also accepts the authority of the divine social order, Karma and

transmigration. It believes that a man is born in high or low caste because of his Karma in the previous birth. The central theme, which identical with Gita is that one should perform his duties without caring for the reward (Nishkam Kama). Mahabharata has the complete faith in the divine origin of Varna Vyavastha. It resembles almost with the doctrine of Purusha Sukta of Rig Veda.

Surprisingly, the epics deny the right of Upanayana of Shudras and re-establish the Brahmin supremacy which was challenged by the Upanishads. Epics thus revive the hold of priests on Shudras, who were treated as Asuras. Demons, Rakshasas. Chandalas etc.<sup>(20)</sup>

### **3.3.7 SOCIAL DETERIORATION OF THE VAISHYAS**

In the Buddhist period, Vaisyas and Sudras were not to be found as pure castes, nor did they represent groups anywhere. There is no mention anywhere of a member of any particular professional caste belonging to either Dasya varna or Sudra varna. The real distinction existed only during the Vedic period. Even during the early period of the Brahmanas, the distinction had almost vanished, and in later periods still more so. In the early Buddhist period, mention is made of Gahapat or Grahapati, as a landowning and mercantile class which ranked below Kshatriyas and Brahmanas. Gradually the Vaisyas underwent a kind of social degradation.

Chandra and Mitra identified the following reasons for the social deterioration of the Vaisyas:

- The rapid increase in number of the Kshatriyas, coupled with the expansion of the Aryan domination, and the advance from tribalism towards feudalism and oligarchy;
- The advancement and separation of the sacerdotal class from the common people, and their domination over them. The Vaisya, according to Taittiriya Samhita, lived only to be exploited by the Brahmanas and Kshatriyas. Numerous passages attest to their inferiority to the first two twice-born classes;
- The abundant supply of slave labour in farming, pasturing and industrial arts, and the close association with certain branches of industry, together with a

growing contempt for manual labour which brought the industries themselves low in the estimation of the higher classes. The separation of Rathakaras (chariot-makers), Takshan (carpenters) and Kamaras (workers in brass) from the Vaisya community is an instance in point. Thus the artisan classes became separated from the Vaisyas, among whom there were merchants and farmers. At the outset there was no distinction, and gradually a Vaisya farmer was looked upon as inferior in status to a Vaisya merchant. In the Jataka literature, it is said that merchants alone formed what might be called the Vaisya community, while others sank to the status of Sudras;

➤ During the Vedic period all professions and industries were in the hands of the Aryans. But after the intermingling of the Aryan with non-Aryan races the industrial and economic life of the people became very much changed. A large number of occupations fell to the lot of lower classes;

➤ When the colour bar and purity of blood came to be considered, the cultured and the ruling classes adopted a policy of segregation and avoided intermarriage and interdining with the non-Aryan peoples.

### **3.4 Scheduled Castes of Maldah District:**

Scheduled castes commonly known as 'Untouchables', 'Chamars', 'Harijans', 'Down Trodden', 'Dalits', 'Bhangis', 'Sudras' etc. Scheduled castes constitute about one sixth of the total population of Maldah with a lot of spatio - temporal variations ranging from almost negligible (2.68% of Kaliachak-1) to as high as 49.87% of Bamangola block. Prior to independence and even later, they had been the poorest of the poor, and socially and economically most backward caste of the country. In spite of many socio-economic securities provided to them in the constitution and by the government, they are still comparatively less education, backward and in the dilemma of privilege and exploitation. This could be attributed to a variety of reasons such as illiteracy, social evils like gambling, liquor and litigation, superstition, dominance of higher castes, deprivation from socio-economic status due to their treatment as 'Sudras in the society' stratification on Manu system, inferiority complex against other castes and misuse of privileges and rights constitutionally provided to them.

Article 366 (24) of the Constitution of India has defined the term Scheduled Castes as follows:

Scheduled Castes means such castes, races or tribes as are deemed, under Article 341, to be Scheduled Castes, for the purposes of the Constitution.

In the year 1935 the then British Government in India prepared for the first time a list of castes, which are referred to as Scheduled Castes. But during the ancient and medieval periods they were known as panchamas i.e. fifth group, Chandals i.e. heathens or outcastes and Antyajans i.e. lowest castes. During the British period they came to be called first as Depressed classes, later as Harijans i.e. children of God and finally as Scheduled castes i.e. castes listed in the Government Scheduled.

The census of India 1901 identified some unclean castes suffering from disabilities and classified them as Unclean Castes. The Maharaja of Baroda used the term Untouchables first time before the Depressed Classes Mission of Bombay in 1909. The Census Report of 1931 listed out 31 castes and called them Exterior Castes. In 1932 the word Depressed Castes and Exterior Castes were officially defined as the Untouchables. In the year 1933 Mahatma Gandhi adopted the word Harijans for the Avarnas. In 1935 the Simon Commission recommended the term Scheduled Castes which was adopted by the British Government as a substitute to all other words hitherto use for identifying untouchables. Consequently certain castes were listed in the Provinces of Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Bombay, Central Provinces, Madras, Orissa, Punjab and Bombay, Central Provinces, taking into consideration the social, economic, and educational backwardness in the historical context of untouchability.

Ambedkar appeared as the leader of the untouchables in Maharashtra by 1920. He was the first highly educated and active leader from within the community. In 1924, he formed "Bahiskrit Hitkarini Sabha", an educational and cultural organization which aimed at improving the social conditions of the untouchables. The work of this organization continued for many years even though Ambedkar became their recognized leader. In 1942, Ambedkar founded the "Scheduled Caste Federation" and taught these caste men to struggle for their rights. The Federation, however, could not become a powerful organization through out the country mainly because of lack of resources and machinery necessary for making the organization strong and powerful. However, it is sure that the efforts of Ambedkar were necessarily responsible for this mass awakening but it was also indirectly produced by other movements directed

against the British rule. The hidden social discrimination, however, which has its origin in the traditions and upbringing of the Indian people still remains and will only change when attitudes change.

### **3.4.1 Spatial Pattern of Variations of Scheduled Castes in Maldah District:**

The table-3.1 represents that there is high variation in the concentration of the SCs. The highest concentration of SCs is found in Bamangola block (49.87%), while the lowest concentration is found in Kaliachak block (2.68%).

**Table-3.1**

#### ***DISTRIBUTION OF SCHEDULED CASTES POPULATION , (RURAL),2001***

SL No.	BLOCK	TOTAL POPULATION	Scheduled Castes Population	MALE	FEMALE
1.	RATUA-1	217356	17646 (8.12%)	9109 (4.09%)	8537 (3.93%)
2.	RATUA-2	160904	12812 (7.96%)	6531 (4.06%)	6281 (3.90%)
3.	HARISCHANDRA PUR-1	162406	40806 (25.12%)	20921 (12.88%)	19885 (12.24%)
4.	HARISCHANDRA PUR-2	198039	22126 (11.17%)	11480 (5.79%)	10646(5.38%)
5.	KALIACHAK-1	310935	8337(2.68%)	4337(1.39%)	4000(1.29)
6.	KALIACHAK-2	211406	17349(8.20%)	8967(4.24%)	8382(3.96%)
7.	KALIACHAK-3	284376	22351(7.85%)	11501(4.04%)	10850(3.81%)
8.	HABIBPUR	171125	81349(47.53%)	41458(24.22 %)	39891(23.31 %)
9.	BAMANGOLA	127252	63459(49.87%)	32810(25.78 %)	30649(24.09 %)
10.	ENGLISH BAZAR	226236	35085(15.50%)	18262(8.07%)	16823(7.43%)
11.	OLD MALDAH	131255	36572(15.81%)	18822(8.14%)	17750(7.67%)
12.	MANIKCHALK	214127	24192(11.29%)	12527(5.85%)	11665(5.44%)
13.	GAZOLE	294715	98649(33.47%)	50683(17.19 %)	47966(16.28 %)
14.	CHANCHAL-1	174204	23736(13.62%)	12076(6.93%)	11660(6.69%)
15.	CHANCHAL-2	165192	14518(8.78%)	7275(4.40%)	7243(4.38%)
TOTAL		3049528	518987	266759	252228

Source:-CENSUS OF INDIA-2001

Depending on the percentage of the SCs to total population of the block, Maldah district is divided into 3 zones i.e. (Map-3.1)

**A) Areas of Very Low Concentration:** Kaliachak-I falls under this category with the concentration of SCs 3%.

**B) Areas of Low Concentration:** Ratua-I, Manikchak, Ratua-II, Kaliachak-III, Kaliachak-II, Harischandrapur-II and Chanchal-II are the areas of low concentration accounting percentage of SCs 4-11%, to total population of the block.

**C) Areas of Moderate Concentration:** Old Maldah, Chanchal-I and English Bazar are the areas of moderate concentration accounting percentage of SCs 12-16, to total population of the block.

**D) Areas of High Concentration:** High concentration of the SCs is found in the 2 blocks of the district viz. Gazole and Harischandrapur-I, with concentration of SCs 17-33%.

**E) Areas of Very High Concentration:** Habibpur and Bamangola are the areas of very high concentration accounting percentage of SCs 34-50, to total population of the block.

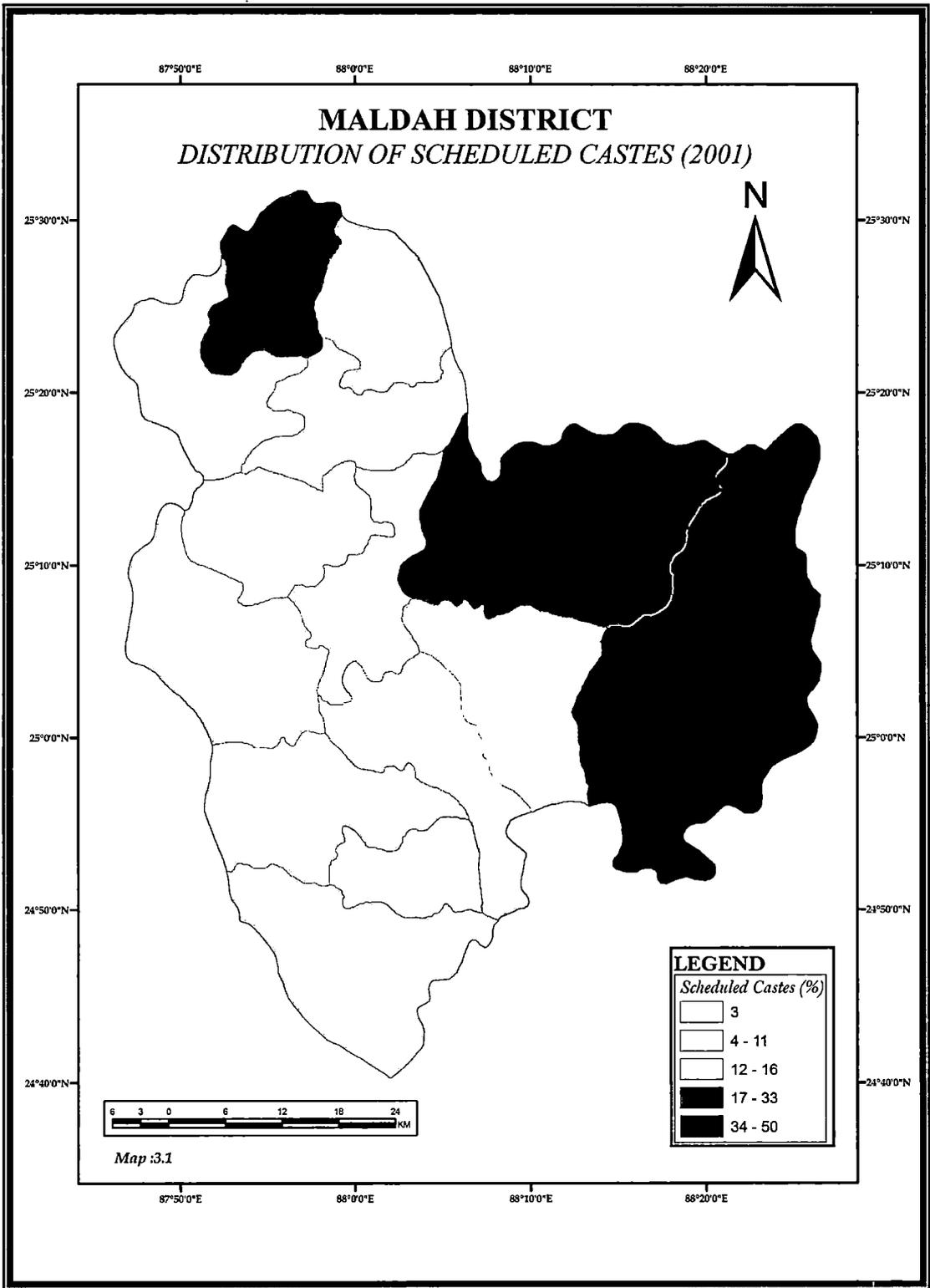
The table- 3.2 represents that moderate to high concentration of SCs is observed in urban centres of the district. All the urban centres except Aiho (with high concentration, >30%), falls under the category of moderate concentration (15-30%) of the SCs.

**Table-3.2**

***URBAN SCHEDULED CASTES POPULATION, 2001***

Sl. No	Urban Centres	TOTAL POPULATION	Scheduled Castes Population	MALE	FEMALE
1	OLD MALDAH(M)	62959	11365(18.05%)	5831(9.26%)	5534(8.79%)
2	ENGLISH BAZAR(M)	161456	18297(29.06%)	9363(14.87%)	8934(14.19%)
3	KACHU PUKUR(C.T)	5343	1593(29.81%)	795(14.88%)	798(14.93%)
4	KENDUA(C.T)	5773	1655(28.67%)	827(14.33%)	828(14.34%)
5	AIHO(C.T)	5409	2268(41.93%)	1151(21.28%)	1117(20.65%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>240940</b>	<b>35178</b>	<b>17967</b>	<b>17211</b>

Source:-CENSUS OF INDIA-2001



### 3.4.2 RURAL-URBAN VARIATIONS IN SEX RATIO OF THE SCs OF MALDAH DISTRICT:

The table -3.3 indicates that the sex ratio of SCs of Maldah district is 946. It is 945 in rural areas whereas it is 958 in urban areas. So, the number of females than males is high in urban areas compared to rural areas (Figure-3.3).

**Table-3.3**  
**RURAL-URBAN VARIATIONS IN SEX RATIO, 2001.**

Settlements	Scheduled Castes Population			
	Total	Male	Female	Sex-Ratio
Rural	518987	266759	252228	945
Urban	35178	17967	17211	958
Total	554165	284726	269439	946

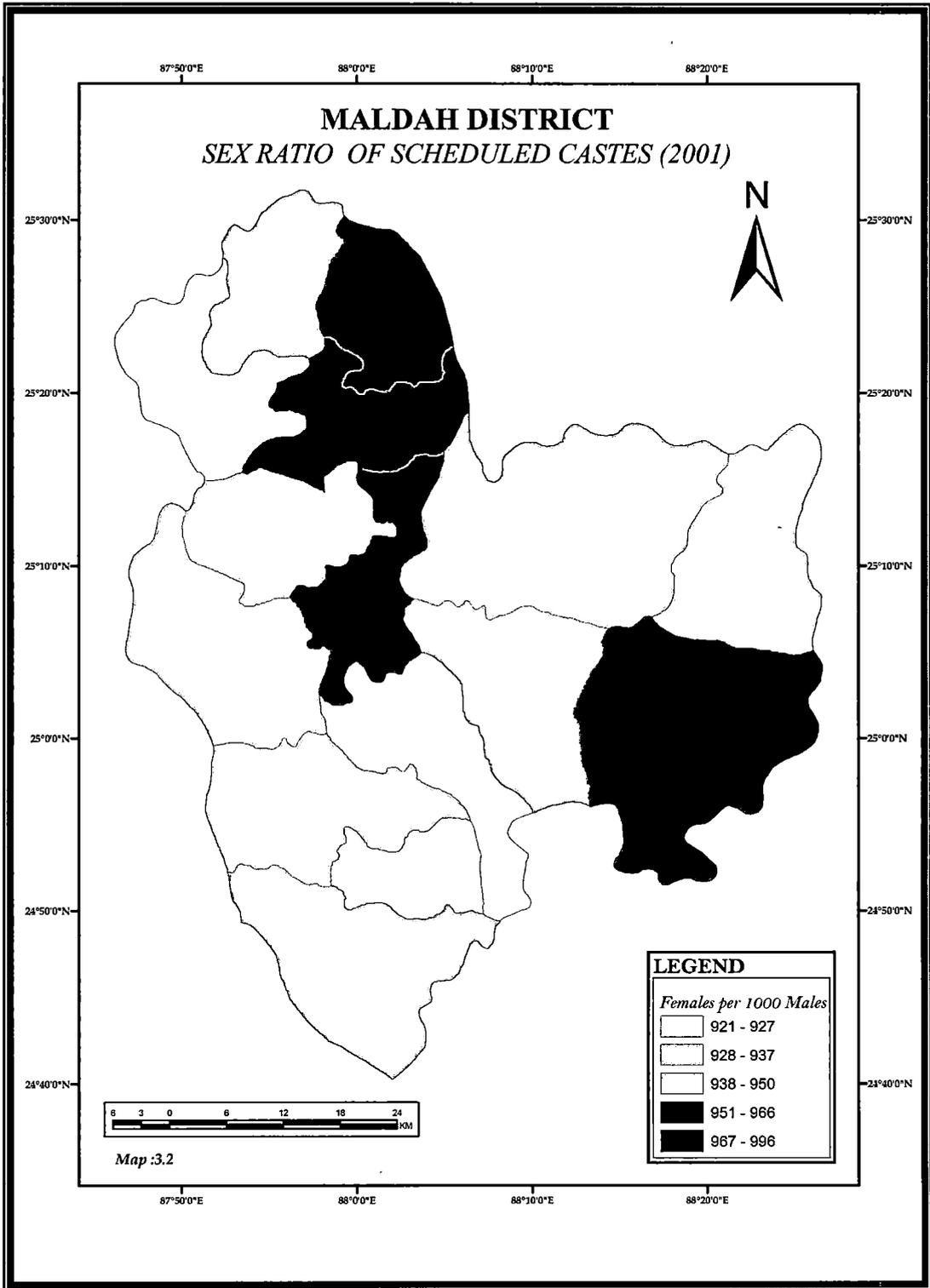
Source:-CENSUS OF INDIA-2001

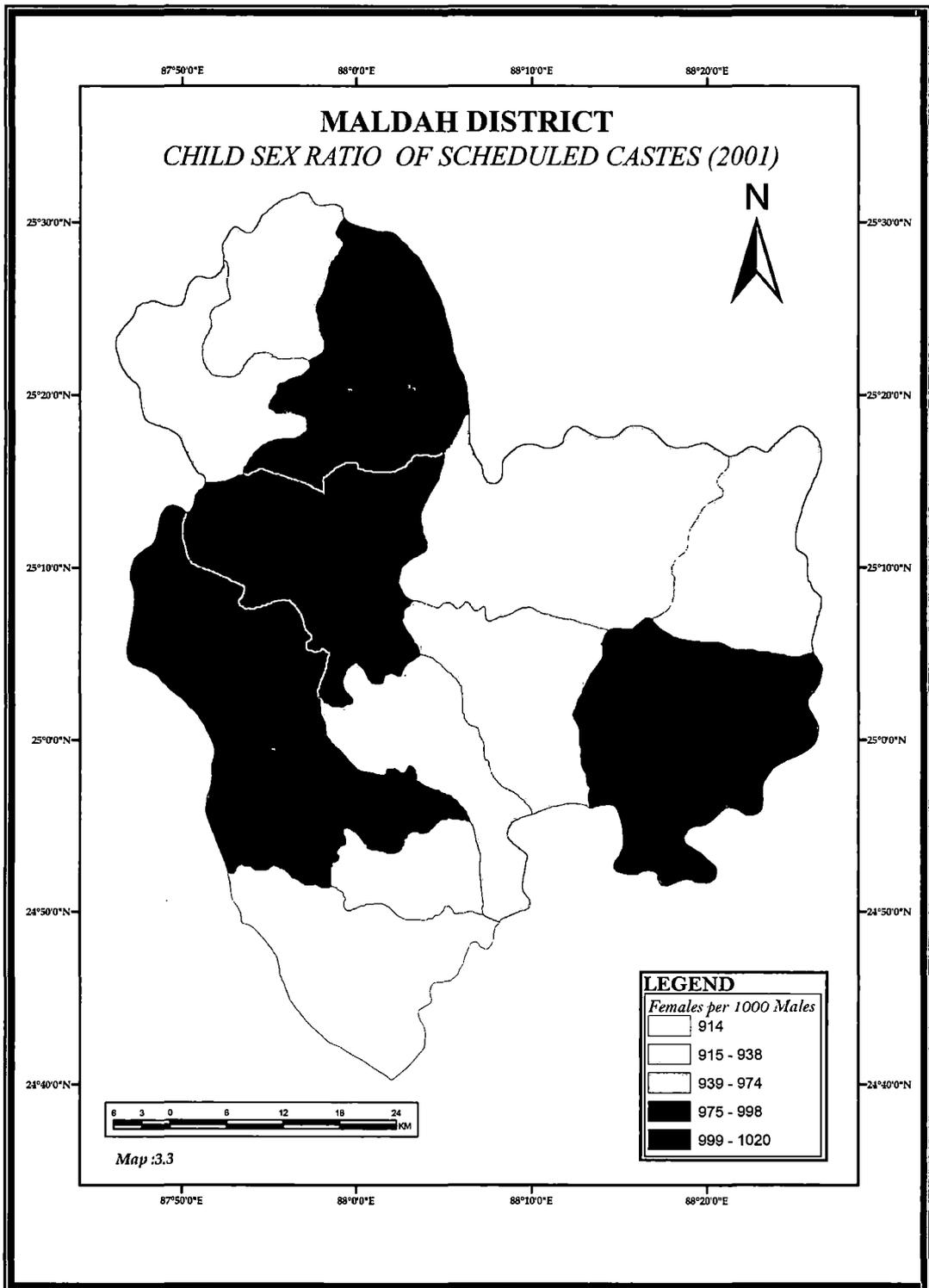
### 3.4.3 BLOCK WISE VARIATIONS IN SEX RATIO OF THE SCs OF MALDAH DISTRICT:

**Table-3.4**  
**BLOCKWISE VARIATIONS IN SEX RATIO OF SCHEDULED CASTES, 2001**

SL. No.	Block	Sex-Ratio	Child Sex-Ratio
1.	RATUA-1	937	1006
2.	RATUA-2	962	1020
3.	HARISCHANDRA PUR-1	950	928
4.	HARISCHANDRA PUR-2	927	964
5.	KALIACHAK-1	922	914
6.	KALIACHAK-2	935	996
7.	KALIACHAK-3	943	914
8.	HABIBPUR	958	988
9.	BAMANGOLA	934	958
10.	ENGLISH BAZAR(R)	921	938
11.	OLD MALDAH(R)	943	927
12.	MANIKCHALK	931	998
13.	GAZOLE	946	974
14.	CHANCHAL-1	966	987
15.	CHANCHAL-2	996	986
Maldah District		946	966

Source:-CENSUS OF INDIA-2001





It is observed from the table-3.4 that the sex ratio of SCs is highest in Chanchal-II block (996) while it is lowest in English Bazar Block (921). The encouraging fact is that the child sex-ratio (0-6 age) is 1006 and 1020 in Ratua I and Ratua-II blocks respectively. The sex ratio of the total SCs of the district is 946 and the child sex ratio is 966(Figure-3.4).The distribution sex ratio of SCs is represented in the map no.3.2. Map-3.3 represents the block wise variations in the child sex ratio of scheduled castes.

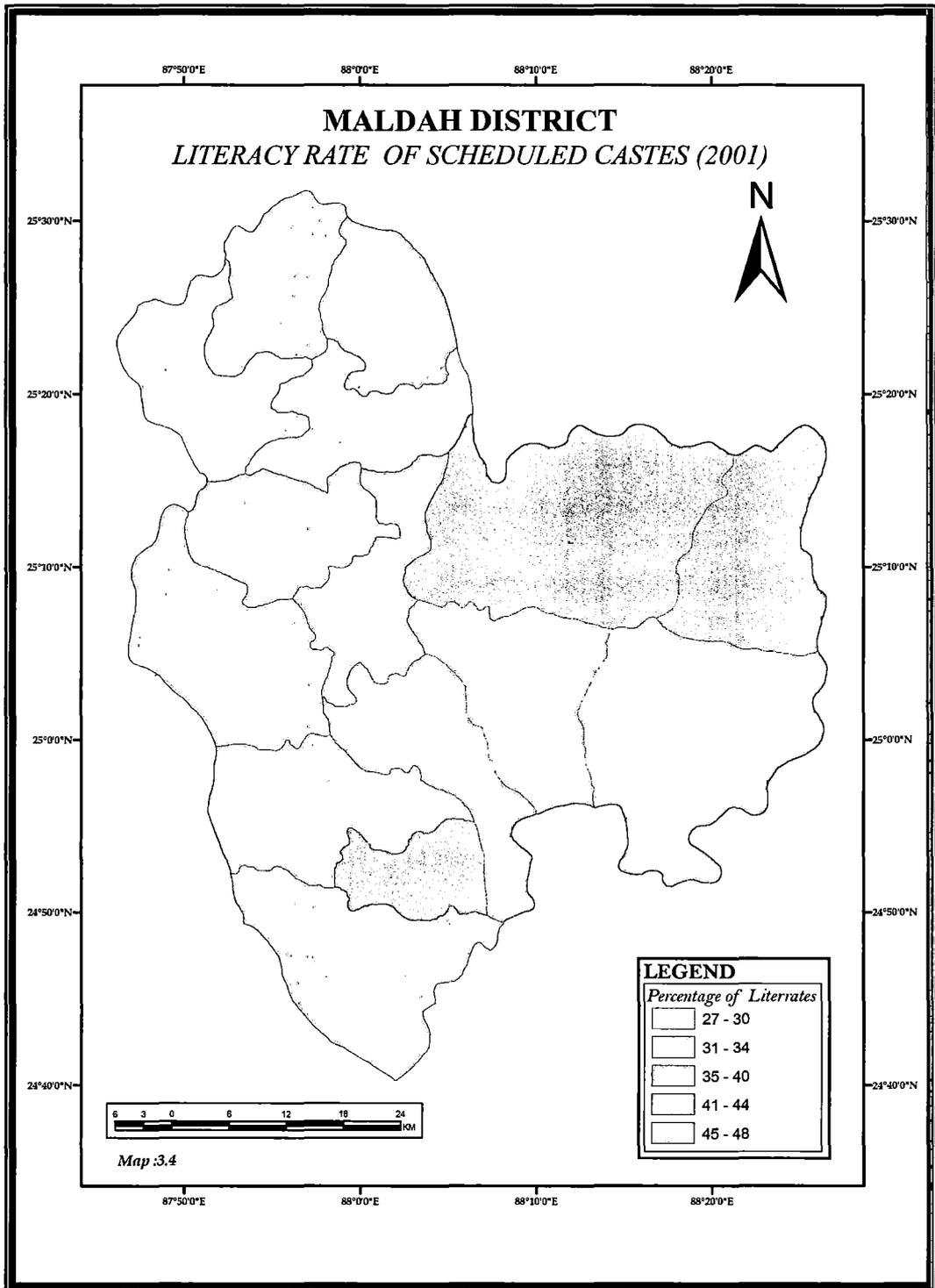
#### 3.4.4 BLOCK WISE VARIATIONS IN LITERACY RATES OF SCHEDULE CASTES:

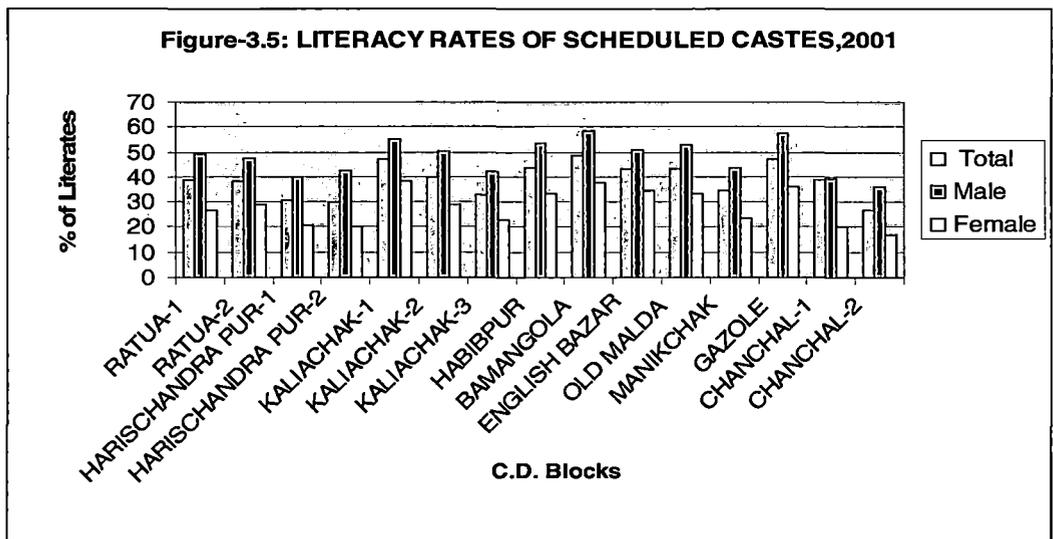
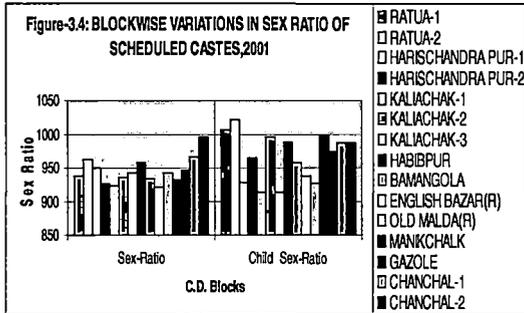
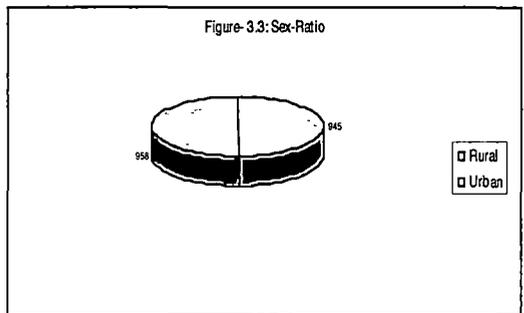
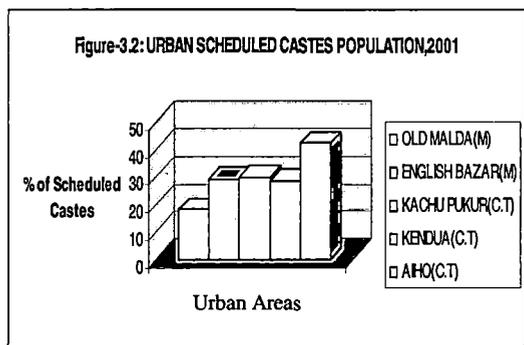
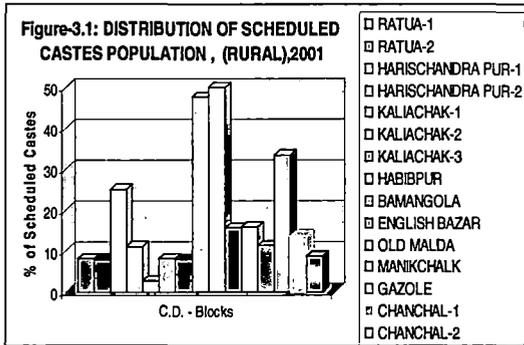
The literacy rate of SCs of Maldah district is 42.18% .Highest literacy rate is observed in Bamangola Block (48.42%) while literacy rate of only 26.62% is observed in Chanchal II block.Highest and lowest male literacy rate is found in Chanchal-II (68.23%) and Kaliachak-I (61.23%) block. The rate of female literacy is high in Kaliachak –I (38.77%) and low in Chanchal-II (31.77%) block.(Map3.4)

**Table-3.5**  
**LITERACY RATES OF SCHEDULED CASTES,200.**

SL. No.	Block	General Literacy%	% of SC Literates		
			Total	Male	Female
1.	RATUA-1	45.00	38.70	49.41	26.80
2.	RATUA-2	47.80	38.37	47.42	28.96
3.	HARISCHANDRA PUR-1	44.10	30.53	39.87	20.70
4.	HARISCHANDRA PUR-2	40.70	30.24	42.62	20.22
5.	KALIACHAK-1	54.30	47.05	55.38	38.02
6.	KALIACHAK-2	46.10	39.87	50.29	28.72
7.	KALIACHAK-3	41.80	32.86	42.22	22.94
8.	HABIBPUR	48.20	43.58	53.54	33.25
9.	BAMANGOLA	56.10	48.42	58.65	37.48
10.	ENGLISH BAZAR	50.40	42.95	50.93	34.28
11.	OLD MALDAH	47.70	43.45	53.19	33.13
12.	MANIKCHAK	44.10	34.19	44.01	23.63
13.	GAZOLE	51.00	46.82	57.16	35.88
14.	CHANCHAL-1	56.10	38.84	39.52	20.22
15.	CHANCHAL-2	44.50	26.62	36.25	16.95
Maldah District 2001		50.30	42.18	51.73	31.96

Source:-CENSUS OF INDIA-2001.





### **3.4.5 Brief Account on Important Scheduled Castes Of Maldah District :**

#### **RAJBANSHI**

The highest percentage of SCs of the district belongs to the Rajbanshi. According to the 2001 census total Rajbanshi population of the district is 144158 accounting 26% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 73921 and 70237 representing 950 sex ratio. 96.20% population of this caste is rural.

Rajbanshi literally means 'Royal Race'. Risley describes that Koch, Koch-Mandi, Rajbanshi, Pallia and Desi belong to a large Dravidian tribe of north eastern and eastern Bengal amongst whom there are grounds for suspecting some admixture of Mongolian blood. The Rajbanshi's are cultivating and landowning community of North Bengal. They are also known as Desi or Bahey. The Rajbanshi are non-vegetarian. They eat fish, egg and meat, but refrain from taking pork or beef. Rice is the staple food. The Rajbanshi have two social sub group, known as chhotobhag and barabhag. The Rajbanshis marry within their community and practice gotra exogamy. They practice and prefer adult marriage by negotiation. The Rajbanshis prefer nuclear families. A few of them here mixed extended families. The major economic resource of the Rajbanshi is land. The Rajbanshi have among them both landowning and landless people. The Rajbanshis profess Hinduism. They worship Narayan, Lakshmi etc. as home deity. Now a day's they are aware of the need of education and boys and girls study up to college level. They use chemical fertilizer as well as organic manure. They avail the facility of public distribution system. They use modern medicine and practice family planning. <sup>(21)</sup>

#### **NAMASUDRA**

Namasudra is very important caste of Maldah district. According to the 2001 census total Namasudra population of the district is 101444 accounting 18.3% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 52284 and 49160 representing 940 sex ratio. 95.70% population of this caste is rural.

The Namasudra are well known community which previously had various synonyms like Chandal, Chanral, Nama etc. They derived their name from Namas or Lomosa muni. Their surnames are Mondal, Biswas, Sarkar, Sardar, Kirtonia etc. Namasudras are land owning community. They also have among them a large number of day laborers. Educationally the Nomasudras are sometimes very advanced and sometimes totally illiterate. They are availing themselves of the educational grants for the scheduled caste. .<sup>(22)</sup>

#### JHALO MALO

According to the 2001 census total Jhalo Malo population of the district is 28165 accounting 5.1% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 14457 and 13708 representing 948 sex ratio. 97.9% population of this caste is rural. Malo or Malo- Patni is a Dravidian boating and fishing caste. The social rank of the Malo is low and Brahmans will not take water from their hands, the Napit and Dhoba usually work for them. Malo's generally use a shorter Jalka boat than the Tiyars. Like the Kaibatta, the Malos is often a cultivator.

#### TIYAR

Tiyar is a Dravidian boating and fishing caste of Bengal and Bihar. They are Vaishnava in creed and their religious ceremonies being always held beneath trees. Girls are usually married as infants. Tiyars employed in manufacturing of mats with nal are known as Nal Tiyars. .<sup>(23)</sup>

According to the 2001 census total Tiyar population of the district is 26669 accounting 4.8% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 13701 and 12968 representing 947 sex ratio. 82.9% population of this caste is rural.

#### CHAMAR

According to the 2001 census total Chamar population of the district is 21450 accounting 3.9% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 10966 and 10484 representing 956 sex ratio. 90.2 % population of this caste is rural. Chamar, the tanner caste of Bihar and upper India, found also in all parts all Bengal as tanners and workers in leather under the name chamar. Like the Doms and unlike most other castes, chamars forbid the marriage of

two sister to the same husband. Sripanchami is their principal festival. Chamar are employed in tanning leather, making shoes and saddlery and grooming horses

#### HARI

According to the 2001 census total Hari population of the district is 19357 accounting 3.5% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 9845 and 9512 representing 966 sex ratio. 97.4% population of this caste is rural. Hari is a menial and scavenger caste of Bengal proper. Hari admitted both infant and adult marriage but the former practice is deemed the more respectable and all parents endeavour to get their daughter married before the age of puberty.

Although Haris profess to be Hindus and worship Kali and other of the standard gods in a more or less meagre fashion, it seems probable that they have embraced Hinduism at a comparatively recent date. Their social status was of the lowest. No one will eat with a Hari or take water from his hands, and members of the caste are not permitted to enter the courtyard of the great temples.

#### JALIYA KAIBARTTA:

Jaliya or Jele is a general name in use throughout Bengal proper as the popular designation of all classes of people who are engaged in boating or fishing. According to the 2001 census total Jalia Kaibartta population of the district is 13411 accounting 2.4% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 6919 and 6492 representing 938 sex ratio. 91.70% population of this caste is rural.

#### KEOT:

Keot is fishing and cultivating caste of Maldah district. They are orthodox Hindus, who regards Bhagabati as their special goddess. .<sup>(24)</sup>

According to the 2001 census total Tiyyar population of the district is 26669 accounting 4.8% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 13701 and 12968 representing 947 sex ratio. 82.9% population of this caste is rural.

### **DHOBA**

Dhoba, the washerman caste of Bengal and Orisa, who claim descent from Neta Muni or Netu Dhopani, who washed clothes of Brahma. .<sup>(25)</sup>

According to the 2001 census total Dhoba population of the district is 10951 accounting 2.0% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 5668 and 5283 representing 932 sex ratio. 90.90% population of this caste is rural.

### **NUNIYA:**

The Nuniyas are also known as Chauhan in neighbourhood. The name has been derived from the word 'Nun' or salt because salt making was their traditional occupation. Risley has mentioned several sub-castes among them, which are-Awadhia or Ayodhia basi, Bhojpuri, Kharant, Maghaya, Orh, Chouhan and Semarwar. According to the 2001 census total Nuniya population of the district is 10170 accounting 1.8% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 5266 and 4904 representing 931 sex ratio. 84.5% population of this caste is rural.

### **SUNRI**

According to the 2001 census total Sunri population of the district is 8564 accounting 1.5% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 4488 and 4076 representing 908 sex ratio. 90.02% population of this caste is rural. Sunri a large and widely-diffused caste, found in most districts of Bengal, whose original profession is believed to be the manufacture and sale of spirituous liquors.

### **MUSAHAR**

According to the 2001 census total Musahar population of the district is 7617 accounting 1.4% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 3853 and 3764 representing 977 sex ratio. 99.5% population of this caste is rural. They are non-vegetarian. They eat pork, snails, guggli and jhinuk. The Musahars show no great interest either in literacy and education, or in health and medicare, though family planning programme has made some progress among them.<sup>(26)</sup>

**DOSADH:** According to the 2001 census total Doshad population of the district is 7608 accounting 1.4% of the total SCs population of the district.No. Of male and female population of this caste is 3971 and 3637 representing 916 sex ratio. 85.2% population of this caste is rural.Dosadh is a degraded Aryan or refined Dravidian cultivating caste of Bihar and Chotonagpur.The caste is divided into eight sub-castes. Such as- Kanaujia, Magahiya, Bhojpurda, Pailwar, Kamar, Kuri Dharhi, Sithotia. The members of nearly all these groups will eat cooked food together, but don't intermarry.They are arthodox Hindus and in proof of this allegation will refer to the fact that they employ Brahmans and worship the regular Gods.The social rank of Dosadhs was very low and no higher caste eat with them.

### **GONRHI**

According to the 2001 census total Gonhri population of the district is 6187 accounting 1.1% of the total SCs population of the district.No. Of male and female population of this caste is 3195 and 2992 representing 936 sex ratio. 96.20% population of this caste is rural.Gonrhi is fishing and cultivating caste, who claims descent from Nikhad, a mythical boatman who is said to have farried Ram Chandra across the Ganga at Allahabad. The fact that the word Nishad which is used in the Rig Veda as a general name for the non-Aryan races, should appear in the traditions of the Ganerhi as a personal eponym, suggests the conjection that the caste my be desceanded from one of the oboriginal tribes whom the Aryans found in possession of the Ganges valley.

### **KOCHH**

According to the 2001 census total Kochh population of the district is 5224 accounting 0.9% of the total SCs population of the district.No. of male and female population of this caste is 2656 and 2568 representing 967 sex ratio. 96.30% population of this caste is rural. In North Bengal the principal sub-caste is Rajbansi. "Inspite of their protections to be Kshatriyas, the social status of Rajbansi is still extremely low and no well known castewill take food from their hands or smoke in their hookas."<sup>(27)</sup>

## **BHUMALI**

According to the 2001 census total Bhumali population of the district is 2481 accounting 0.9% of the total SCs population of the district.No. of male and female population of this caste is 2481 and 2379 representing 959 sex ratio. 91.90% population of this caste is rural.Bhumali, a cultivating, palanquin- bearing and menial caste of Eastreern Bengal, generally considered to be the remnant of an aboriginal tribe which embraced Hinduism, and accepted a servile position in relation to the Hindus of Eastern Bengal.

## **MAL**

According to the 2001 census total Mal population of the district is 3612 accounting 0.7% of the total SCs population of the district.No. of male and female population of this caste is 1863 and 1749 representing 939 sex ratio. 88.00% population of this caste is rural.Mal, a Dravidian cultivation caste, many of whom are employed as chaukiddrs. The mal are non vegetarian but avoid eating beef and pork. They eat boiled rice, pulses, vegetables or fish. The Mal can't marry into the same pitri-kul . Mal families are, mostly nuclear, though a joint or extended families do exist among the comparatively richer members of the community.Agricultiure is supposed to be the original profession of the caste and most Mal's and landless are day labourers.

## **DOM:**

Dom is a Dravidian manial caste of Bengal, Bihar and the North Western provinces. According to the 2001 census total Dom population of the district is 3229 accounting 0.6% of the total SCs population of the district.No. of male and female population of this caste is 1632 and 1597 representing 979 sex ratio. 95.00% population of this caste is rural.

## **MAHAR**

The Mahar originally migrated from parts of Maharastra to West Bengal in the decade of this countries, especially when work shops and colonies of the Indian Rail ways were being set up.According to the 2001 census total Mahar population of the district is 2451 accounting 0.4% of the total SCs population of the district.No. of male and female population of this caste is 1233 and 1218 representing 988 sex ratio.

93.70% population of this caste is rural. The Mahars are non vegetarian but don't eat beef. Both rice and Chapatis are their staple food. The Mahar are clan exogamous. Marriages are negotiated and monogamous. The marriageable age for men is between 20-26 years and for women between 18-21 years. The Mahars live in both and nuclear and joint families. The Mahar are a landless community, and are mainly self employed in business. Making thongas with old newspaper and biri binding is their primary occupation. Literary and education levels of the Mahars are low though both boys and girls have some kind of formal education.

### **BAGDI**

According to the 2001 census total Bagdi population of the district is 2305 accounting 0.4% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 1170 and 1135 representing 970 sex ratio. 95.60% population of this caste is rural.

Bagdi is a cultivating, fishing and menial caste of Central and Western Bengal who appear from their features and complexion to be of Dravidian descent. Bagdis are divided into the following sub-castes such as, i) Tentulia- Bagh, Santra, Rai, Khan, Puila etc., ii) Kasaikulia – Manjhi, Masalchi, Palankhai, Pherka are its titles. iii) Dulia – Sardar and Dhara iv) Ojha v) Machhua vi) Gulimanjhi vii) Dandamanjhi viii) Kusputra ix) Matial. A Bagdi can't marry outside the sub-caste or inside the section to which he belongs. Bagdis practice both child and adult marriage. The religion of the bagdis is compounded of elements borrowed from orthodox Hinduism.

### **KHAIRA**

Khaira is a small caste who grow vegetables and other crops. According to the 2001 census total Khaira 2212 population of the district is 2305 accounting 0.4% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 1169 and 1043 representing 892 sex ratio. 75.4% population of this caste is rural.

### **BELDER**

According to the 2001 census total Belder population of the district is 1224 accounting 0.2% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 615 and 609 representing 990 sex ratio. 80.7% population of this caste is rural. Belder means 'one who works with a bel or hoe'. Belders are

Dravidian caste of earth workers and navvies in Bihar and West Bengal, many of whom are employed in the coal mines of Raniganj and Barakar. Both men and women labour, the former digging the earth and the latter removing it baskets carried on the head.

#### **KAORA:**

According to the 2001 census total Kaora population of the district is 324 accounting 0.1% of the total SCs population of the district.No. of male and female population of this caste is 164 and 160 representing 976 sex ratio. 99.1% population of this caste is rural.The Kaora is a little community of West Bengal. Kora seems a generic name signifying the occupation of digging earth. Koras have migrated from Chhotanagpur and its related adjacent area.The Kaoras are non-vegetarian. They eat rice, wheat, fish, mutton, chicken, and pork. Child and Adult marriages are a fashion of Kaoras.. Remarriage of widows, widowers, male and female divorcés is permissible.Kora woman have various socio-economic roles they work in a agriculture, look after domestic animals and poultry birds etc. Nowadays, they have roles in rituals and some take part in politics.The Kaoras believe in tribal religion. They do Kalipuja, Manasapuja, etc.The Koras are still educationally backward. Majority of them can't save money in banks since they are very poor.

#### **KADAR**

Kadars is a non Aryan caste of cultivators, day labourers, probably a degraded offshoot from the Bhuiya tribe. Fishing and wood cutting are their other occupation. They are divided into two sub caste Kadar and Naiya.According to the 2001 census total Kadar population of the district is 44 accounting 0.01% of the total SCs population of the district.No. of male and female population of this caste is 20 and 24 representing 1200 sex ratio. 77.3% population of this caste is rural.

#### **KHATIK**

According to the 2001 census total Khatik population of the district is 38 accounting 0.01% of the total SCs population of the district.No. of male and female population of this caste is 17 and 21 representing 1235 sex ratio. 73.7% population of this caste is rural.The khatik is a very small community of West Bengal. They migrated from Ayodhya, Varanasi, Sultanpur and Faizabad districts of U.P. The Khatik are non-

vegetarian and eat fish, egg, and mutton but not eat beef. The Khatiks are divided into two sub-groups, such as i) Khatiks and ii) Sonakars. In early days Khatiks marry their daughters as infants, between the age of 5 and 12 years. Khatiks are mainly a landless community. According to Risley, the Khatiks major economic activities are selling fruits and vegetables. Khatiks are Hindus and worship Satyanarayan and Lakshmi as their family deities. Janmashtami, Charak, Rathayatra and Holi are the main festivals of Khatiks. They are educationally backward.

### **GHASI**

According to the 2001 census total Ghasi population of the district is 35 accounting 0.01% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 17 and 18 representing 1059 sex ratio. 77.1% population of this caste is rural. Ghasi, a Dravidian fishing and cultivating caste who attend as musicians at weddings and festivals.

### **BAHELIA**

According to the 2001 census total Bahelia population of the district is 26 accounting 0.005% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 14 and 12 representing 857 sex ratio. 34.60% population of this caste is rural. Bahelia is a sub caste of Dosadhs in Bihar, also called Bhula, who are employed as laborers and bird catchers. Although closely allied to Dosadhs, the Behelias will not eat or drink with them; and when serving as policeman they call themselves Hazaras. Many pursue agriculture, while some serve as groom in Bengal who are professional hunters, and are thus taro and are thus allied to Bediyas.

### **KOTAL**

According to the 2001 census total Kotal population of the district is 13 accounting 0.002% of the total SCs population of the district. No. of male and female population of this caste is 7 and 6 which represents 857 sex ratio. 38.5% population of this caste is rural. Their titles are Mondal and Roy. Kotals are Namasudras and have the following subgroup – i) Kotal ii) Nune iii) Ghune iv) Sangol.

The term Kotals has come from their occupation of being kotal, its mean guard or watchman. It was said that the Hindu feudals had Kotal in the Nawabi period. They were given rent free land, instead of a

The kotalas are non vegetarian. Their staple food is rice. They have been no recent changes in their food habits except that they now have meat and eggs. The kotal woman works as agriculture laborers and maids in the house of rich neighboring communities. Kotalas are mostly landless agriculture labour. Some are share croppers.

### **3.4.6 WORK PARTICIPATION RATE OF SCHEDULED CASTES OF MALDAH DISTRICT:**

#### **Work participation rates (W.P.R);**

WPR is defined as the percentage of total worker (Main & Marginal) to total population-

$$\text{Work Participation Rate} = \frac{\text{Total workers (Main + Marginal)}}{\text{Total population}} \times 100$$

#### **Male & Female workforce to total workers:**

The WPR of 72.23 for main workers indicates that nearly 72 persons among 100 persons are main workers and nearly 28 persons are marginal workers to total workers of SCs. Out of 72.25% males constitute 57.53% and female constitute 14.70% to total workers. The main workers are those who had worked for the major part of the reference period (i.e. 6 months or more). Marginal workers are those persons who had worked for less than 6 months during reference period. Out of 27.77% of marginal workers male constitute 8.90% and female constitute 18.87%. It shows that males are engaged more as main workers and female as marginal workers in the district (Figure-3.6).

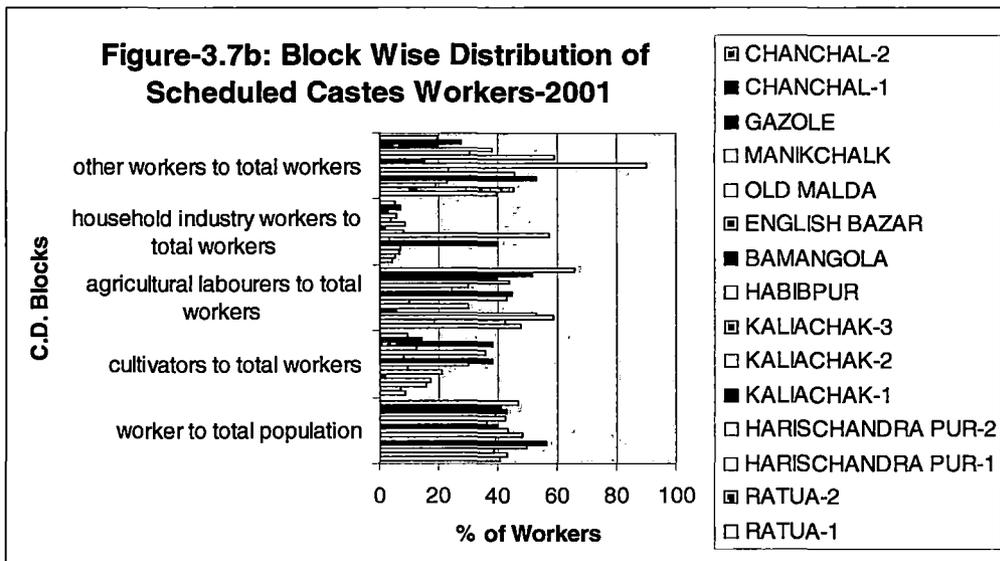
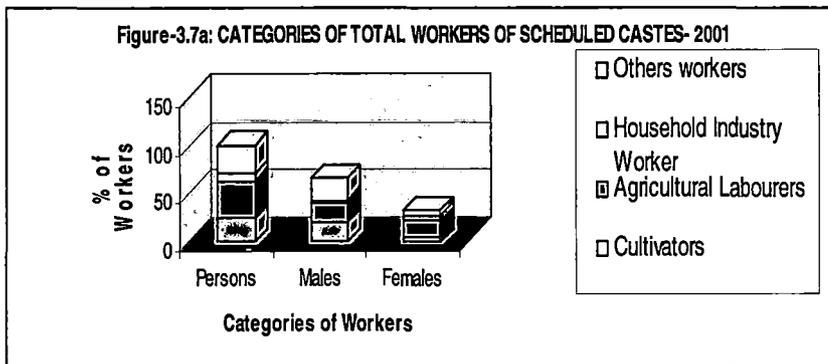
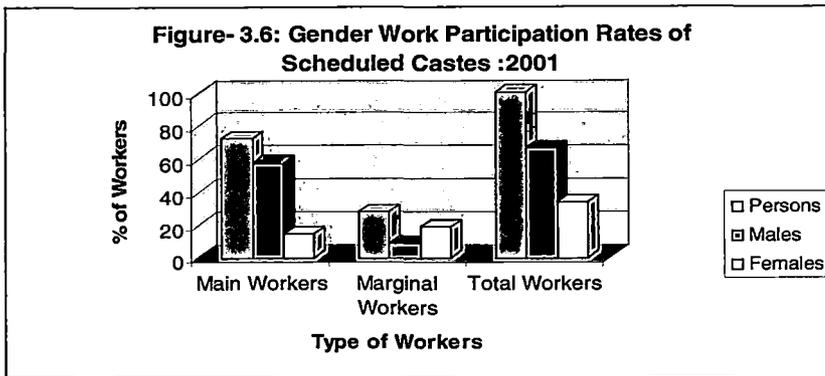


Table-3.6  
Gender WPR of Scheduled Castes :2001

Gender	Persons	Males	Females
Workers			
Main Workers	166246(72.23%)	132413 (57.53%)	33833 (14.70%)
Marginal Workers	63904 (27.77%)	20485(8.90%)	43419 (18.87%)
Total Workers	230150 (100%)	152898 (66.43%)	77252 (33.57%)

Source:-Census of India 2001

**Categories of total Workers Of Scheduled Castes :**

Gender disparity among S.Cs is observed in different categories of workers. Figure-3.7a shows the gender wise W.P.R for different categories.

Table 3.7  
CATEGORIES OF TOTAL WORKERS OF SCHEDULED CASTES- 2001

Gender	Persons	Males	Females
Workers			
Cultivators	54969 (23.89%)	46139 (20.05%)	8830 (3.83%)
Agricultural Labourers	89706 (38.98%)	47048 (20.44%)	42658 (18.54%)
Household Industry Worker	19099 (8.3%)	6336 (2.76%)	12766 (5.54%)
Others workers	66376 (28.84%)	53375 (23.19%)	13001 (5.65%)

Source:-Census of India 2001.

**A) Gender Disparity in Cultivators**

Out of total 230150 S.Cs workers cultivator are 54960( 23.88%).Among total cultivator 20.05% are males and 3.83% are females. So, the gender gap is nearly 16%.But in case of marginal workers 1.76% is female and 1.15% is males.

**B).Gender Gap in Agricultural Labourers**

Table 3.7 represents the distribution of male and female workers engaged as agricultural labourers. It may be observed that as 38.98% of total workers are cultivator, 20.44% are males and 18.54% are females. So in terms of total agricultural labourers the gender gap of W.P.R. is 1.90%.

### **C.)Gender Gap in Household Industry Workers**

In Maldah district the percentage of household industry workers to total workers is 8.30%.It is found that 5.54% workers are females and 2.76% are males. So only in this sector the participation of females is 2.78% more compared to males.

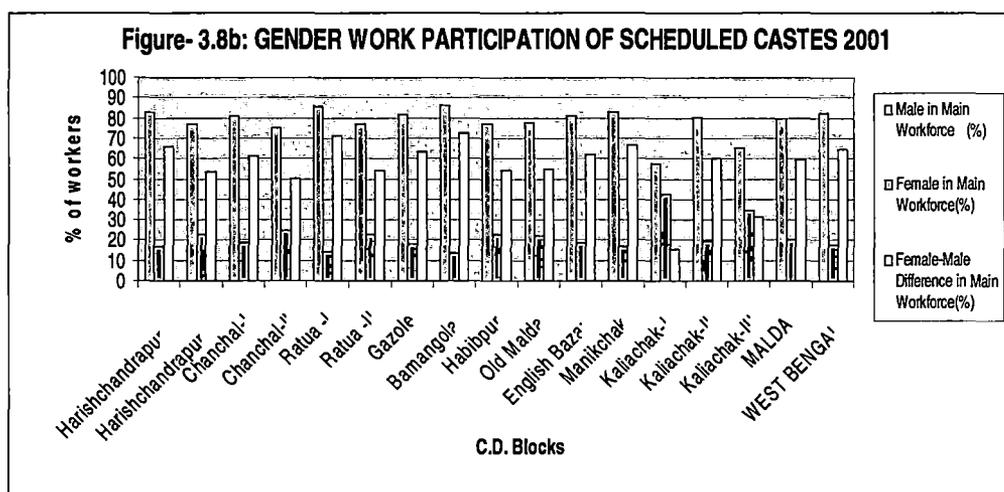
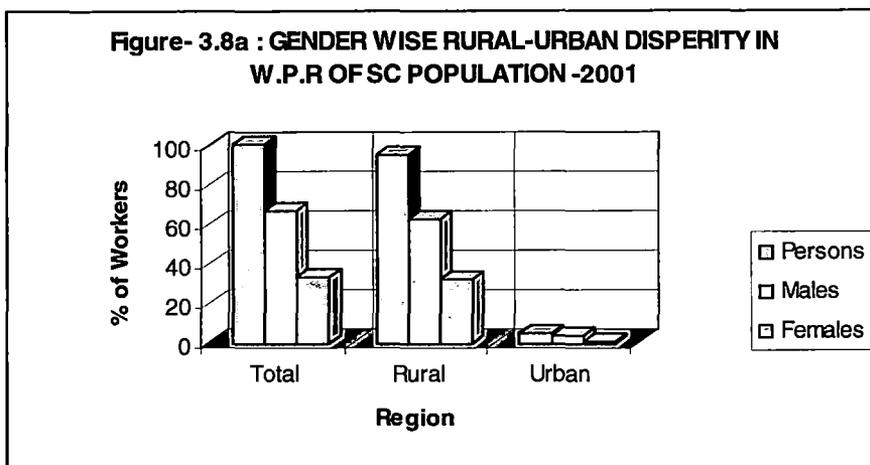
### **D) Gender Situation in Other Workers**

Table 3.7 represents the distribution of male and female workers as Other Workers. It may observe that other workers constitute 28.84% of total workers of scheduled castes population in the district. Percentage of males (23.19%) are more than females ( 5.65% )as other workers. So high gender gap observed (17.54%) in this sector.

When female workers are considered ,it is found that 3.83% are cultivators,5.65% are other workers and18.54% are agricultural labourers .Thus a higher portion of male workers are cultivators and other workers, while a higher proportion of female workers are agricultural labourers.This scenario is just like national level.

### **Gender wise rural-urban disparity in WPR ;**

Like national scenario WPR of females in rural area is comparatively high than urban areas in all categories of females workers. Table 4 represents the gender wise rural urban disparity in W.P.R. in Maldah district. It is observed that out of total workers 95% are rural and nearly 5% are urban workers. In rural workers of the district 62.65% are males and 32.51% are females, while in urban workers 3.79% are males and only 1.05% are females.



**Table:3.8**

***GENDER WISE RURAL-URBAN DISPERITY IN W.P.R OF SC POPULATION TO TOTAL WORK FORCE-2001***

Region \ Gender	Total	Rural	Urban
Persons	230150 (100%)	219002 (95.16%)	33348 (4.84%)
Males	152898 (66.43%)	144183(62.65%)	8715 (3.79%)
Females	77252 (33.57%)	74819 (32.51%)	2433 (1.05%)

Source:-Census of India 2001

### Block Wise Gender W.P.R. In Maldah District :

It is clear from the Table 3.9 that the number of SCs. female workers is lowest in Bamangola block (13.76%) and highest in Kaliachak 1 block (42.28%). Thus the gender gap in main workforce in kaliachak 1 is lowest (15.44%) and in Bamangola block is highest (72.48%)(Figure-3.8b)

**Table-3.9**

#### **GENDER WORK PARTICIPATION OF SCHEDULED CASTES POPULATION- 2001**

##### **Main workforce**

CD Blocks	Total Main Workers	Male main Workers	Female main Workers	Male in Main Workforce (%)	Female in Main Workforce (%)	Female-Male Difference in Main Workforce (%)
Harishchandrapur-I	11693	9717	1976	83.1	16.9	66.2
Harishchandrapur-II	6717	5167	1550	76.92	23.08	53.84
Chanchal-I	6975	5635	1340	80.79	19.21	61.58
Chanchal-II	4224	3180	1044	75.28	24.72	50.56
Ratua -I	4447	3809	638	85.65	14.35	71.3
Ratua -II	3884	3001	883	77.27	22.73	54.54
Gazole	30139	24626	5513	81.71	18.29	63.42
Bamangola	17799	15349	2450	86.24	13.76	72.48
Habibpur	26877	20734	6143	77.14	22.86	54.28
Old Maldah	11979	9291	2688	77.56	22.44	55.12
English Bazar	10242	8294	1948	80.99	19.01	61.98
Manikchak	6406	5330	1076	83.2	16.8	66.4
Kaliachak-I	3813	2201	1612	57.72	42.28	15.44
Kaliachak-II	5316	4262	1054	80.17	19.83	60.34
Kaliachak-III	7416	4860	2556	65.53	34.47	31.06
MALDAH	166246	132413	33833	79.65	20.35	59.3
WEST BENGAL	5291661	4364870	926791	82.49	17.51	64.98

Source:-Census of India 2001

On the basis of gender gap in main workforce the blocks are divided into 3 categories i.e.

- 1) High gender gap,
- 2) Moderate gender gap,
- 3) Low gender gap .

### **1) High Gender Gap Zone (Gender Gap Above 60%) :**

In the blocks – Harischandrapur 1, Chanchal 1, Ratua 1, Gazole, Bamangola, English bazaar, Manikchak and Kaliachak 2, the gender gap among main workers of scheduled casts is more than 60%.

### **2) Moderate Gender Gap Zone ( Gender Gap 40%-60% ) :**

Moderate gender gap among main workers of scheduled casts observed in Harischandrapur 2, Chanchal 2, Ratua 2, Habibpur and old Maldah block with gender gap between 40% -60%.

### **3) Low Gender gap zone (Gender Gap below 40%) :**

Low gender gap in W.P.R. is observed in Kaliachak 1 (15.44%) and in Kaliachak 3 (31.06%) blocks.

It is also observed from the table that the gap between female and male in W.P.R. for Maldah district is 59.30% and for West Bengal is 64.98%. So , the disparity is low in terms of gender W.P.R. of the district compared to state average.

#### ***Causes of gradual decreasing participation rates of women:-***

- Growth of population and increasing wage competition between men and women.
- Transformation of the traditional working-roles of women within modern urban society, as a consequence of which employment rates among educated urban women are considerably lower than those among illiterate rural women.
- The shifting of women from paid work to unpaid work-roles within the home, as male earnings expand.
- A farther reason why women's employment is generally underestimated is the attitude of society.
- Low educational level and illiteracy, particularly in rural areas are responsible for unemployment.
- The primary role of women is that of a unpaid homemaker in the society.
- Less physical ability than males to perform hard work is the main cause for low-wage workers and unemployed.

### **Measures to reduce the gender gap in W.P.R:**

- Remove barriers to labor market participation,
- Strengthen women's property right to land and other assets,
- Reform legal system to eliminate gender discrimination.
- Increase political participation of women,
- Continue reducing gender inequalities in education sector,
- Invest in women health and nutrition,
- Steps taken by Government, like introduction of schemes like

M.S.Y(Mahila Samridhi Yoyona),M.K.Y.(Mahila Kishan Yoyona) and Self Help Groups, increased the female W.P.R .

Number of women beneficiaries under different schemes of the West Bengal Sch. Castes and Sch.Tribes Dev.& Finance Corporation, Maldah for the year 2008-09 is 185 and for the year 2009-10 is 762. More recent studies from India and many other countries of the world reveal that the process of Globalization has severely impacted upon the incomes of the poor, which include a disproportionate number of women. Transformation of the traditional farm economy through shifts from food crops to cash crops has drastically reduced the demand for women's employment in the farm sector. As agriculture progressively becomes more export oriented, rural women lose their control over productive resources and are thus perceived as dependents rather than as independent producing agents. The shrinkage of the natural resource base that supports the rural economy, because of overexploitation, adversely affects rural women in their home-making roles, forcing them to spend greater amounts of time and effort in fetching drinking water, Livestock-fodder and fuel for their homes. The enunciations of the National Policy, several women-specific programmes that target gender development have been launched across the state and the country. The formation of women's Self-Help Groups [SHGs] seeks to transform rural Indian women into development agents. Focused interventions of this kind that were launched in recent years have begun to show positive results. Their biggest potential lies in their ability to empower rural women to seize new opportunities and developmental roles.

Better paid and better educated women in rural India were more likely to send children, particularly daughters to school, and keep their children out of child labour.

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