CHAPTER II

PROFILE OF THE DISTRICT UNDER STUDY ALONG WITH A SHORT PROFILE OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC FEATURES OF THE DISTRICT

2.1 Introduction

The district of Uttar Dinajpur in the State of West Bengal came into existence on 01.4.92 by the bifurcation of the erstwhile West Dinajpur district. The partition of the Province of Bengal in August 1947 divided the district of Dinajpur into two parts. The western part of the province of the district lying in India was named West Dinajpur and the easter portion lying in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was named East Dinajpur

The district of Uttar Dinajpur is mainly an agrarian district and the vast area of it is mostly inhabited by economically and socially backward sections of population comprising of small farmers, marginal farmers, landless agricultural labourers , scheduled castes, scheduled tribes etc.

It is well known that Raja Ganesh, the Hindu Chieftain of North Bengal, became the King of Gour in the early part of the 15th Century A.D. He assumed the title of Danujamardana Deva. Perhaps the name of Dinajpur was derived from the title of Raja Ganesh.

The district is bound on the North by the Republic of Bangladesh and the district of Darjeeling, on the south by the districts of Maldah and Rajshahi (now in Bangladesh) on the west by the district of Purnea, now in Bihar and on the east by the district of Dakshin Dinajpur and the Republic of Bangladesh.

There are nine (9) blocks in Uttar Dinajpur district. All the blocks except Itahar Block have a border area with Bangladesh. As the district is situated in the border of Bangladesh and the State of Bihar it has got various problems. Inmigration and problem of law and order entangled with poverty, illiteracy and

unemployment ultimately lead to economic and social backwardness of the district.

According to the Census Report, 2001, the total geographical area of the district is 3140 sq.km which is approximately 3.45 percent of the total geographical area of the whole of West Bengal (88752 sq.km.).

2.2 Administrative Set-up

The district of Uttar Dinajpur is divided into two Sub-Divisions – Raiganj Sub-Division and Islampur Sub-division.

Raiganj Sub-Division has four blocks, viz. Kaliayaganj, Hemtabad, Raiganj and Itahar. Islampur Sub-Division has five blocks, viz., Chopra, Islampur, Goalpokhar I, Goalpokhar II (Chakulia) and Karandighi.

There are 1511(One thousand five hundred eleven) villages (inhabited), 9 (nine) Panchayat Samities, 99 (Ninety nine) Gram Panchayats, 1529 mouzas and 4 Municipalities in this district.

2.3 Population

According to the Census Report 2001, the district has a total population of 2441824 among whom 1260747 are male and 1181077 are female. Thus, there are 936 females for 1000 males in the district. There are 294471 persons living in urban areas and 2147353 persons living in rural areas in this district. Therefore only 12 percent population of the district live in urban areas.

As the district has a total population of 2441824 and a total geographical area of 3140 sq.km, the density of population of the district thus comes to 778 per sq.km. which is less than the average figure of West Bengal (904 per sq.km.).

The following Table exhibits the blockwise population figures with a district classification of rural and urban population of Uttar Dinajpur district as per Census Reports, 1981, 1991 and 2001.

Table- 2.1(a) Blockwise Population of Uttar Dinajpur as per Census, 1981.

Sl. No.	Name of Blocks	Population		
		Urban	Rural	Total
1.	Chopra	-	128699	128699
2.	Islampur	26353	145427	171780
3.	Goalpokhar I	-	170736	170786
4.	Goalpokhar II	-	114530	114530
5.	Karandighi	7402	161769	169171
6.	Raiganj (M)*	60343	-	60343
7.	Raiganj	6362	204827	211189
8.	Hemtabad	-	77881	77881
9.	Kalyaganj	26817	1266952	1293769
10.	Itahar	-	181977	181977
	Total :	127277 (8.84 %)	1312798 (91.16 %)	1440075 (100 %)

Table 2.1(b): Blockwise Population of Uttar Dinajpur as per census 1991

Sl.No.	Name of Blocks	Population		
		Urban	Rural	Total
1	Chopra	-	165720	165720
2.	Islampur	-	185086	185086
3.	Islampur (M)*	45240	-	45240
4.	Goalpokhar I	-	194058	194058
5.	Goalpokhar II	-	168409	168409
6.	Karandighi	10652	219469	230121
7.	Raiganj	8221	268937	277158
8.	Raiganj (M)*	151045	-	151045
9.	Hemtabad	-	95157	95157
10.	Kaliyaganj	-	150118	150118
11.	Kaliyaganj (M)*	37817	-	37187
12.	Itahar	-	197116	197116
	Total :	252975 (13.34 %)	1644070 (86.66 %)	1897045 (100 %)

Table 2.1(c): Blockwise Population of Uttar Dinajpur as per census 2001

Sl.No.	Name of Blocks	Population		
		Urban	Rural	Total
1.	Chopra	2690	220374	223064
2.	Islampur	2419	239491	241910
3.	Goalpokhar I	2794	245603	248397
4.	Goalpokhar II	5056	221175	226231
5.	Raiganj	9941	349550	359491
6.	Hemtabad	5168	113679	118847
7.	Kaliyaganj	5863	184151	190014
8.	Karandighi	3076	285845	288921
9.	Itahar	6238	243282	249520
10.	Raiganj (M)*	165222	-	165222
11.	Kaliyaganj (M)*	47669	-	47669
12	Islampur (M)*	52766	-	52766
13.	Dalkhola I(M)*	29772	-	29772
	Total :	338674	2103150	2441824
		(13.87 %)	(86.13 %)	(100 %)

* M = Municipality

Source : District Statistical Hand Book, Uttar Dinajpur District, taken from Census Reports, 1981, 1991 & 2001, Government of India.

The Tables 2.1(a, b and c) clearly reveal that Raiganj block has the highest number of both rural and urban population.

According to the Census Report 1981, about 91.16 percent of the total population live in the rural areas and only 8.84 percent live in urban areas of this district. It is to be noted that out of 127277 urban people of the district, about 53 percent live in Raiganj Block.

According to the Census Report, 1991, about 88.66 percent of the total population live in rural areas and only 13.34 percent live in urban areas of this district. Out of 252975 urban people of the district about 63 percent live in Raiganj Block.

As per the Census Report, 2001, about 86 percent of the total population live in rural areas and only about 14 percent live in urban areas of this district. Out of 338674 urban people, 175163 urban people live in Raiganj Block. It is noteworthy that more than 51.72 percent of the total urban population of the district is concentrated to Raiganj town area only.

Table 2.2 : State and Districtwise Density of Population and the Increase in the Percentage of Density of Rural and Urban Population, 1991-2001

State/District	Density of population 1991			Density of population 2001			percent of increase in density 1991-01		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
West Bengal	767	576	6079	904	676	6798	17.86	17.36	11.83
Darjeeling	413	293	5717	510	353	6924	23.49	20.48	21.11
Jalpaiguri	450	386	2915	547	459	4766	21.55	18.91	68.5
Coochbehar	641	596	5648	732	673	5455	14.2	12.92	-3.42
Uttar Dinajpur	604	530	6382	778	694	6638	28.81	30.94	4.01
Dakshin Dinajpur	555	485	7817	677	594	9315	21.98	22.47	19.16
Maldah	706	660	8985	881	822	9496	24.79	24.55	5.69
Murshidabad	890	814	4635	1101	988	5682	23.71	21.38	22.59
Birbhum	562	519	3801	663	613	5172	17.97	18.11	36.06
Burdwan	861	618	3179	985	698	3239	14.4	12.94	1.89
Nadia	981	805	3856	1172	975	4637	19.47	21.12	20.35
24 Parganas (N)	1779	971	8558	2181	1132	9926	22.6	16.58	15.99
Hugly	1383	1007	7919	1601	1134	8706	15.76	12.61	19.98
Bankura	408	378	2991	464	433	3826	13.73	14.55	27.92
Purulia	355	325	3009	405	369	3216	14.08	13.54	6.68
Midnapore	592	547	2279	685	630	2624	15.71	15.17	15.14
Howrah	2542	1502	8600	2913	1699	9823	14.59	13.12	14.22
Kolkata	23783	-	23783	24760	-	24760	4.11	-	4.11
24 Parganas(S)	574	506	4646	694	595	6165	20.91	17.59	32.69

Source : Census of India, 1991 and 2001.

The Table 2.2 clearly shows that the district of Uttar Dinajpur had a density of population at 604 in the year 1991 and 778 in the year 2001. So the percentage of increase in the density of population of the district stood at 28.81

which shows the highest increase in the density of population as compared to the other 17 districts of the state of West Bengal and also to the State of West Bengal as a whole which stands at 17.86.

The Table also reveals that the percentage in the increase of density of population in the district of Uttar Dinajpur in rural areas is the highest (30.94) as compared to any other districts of the State of West Bengal. The district of Uttar Dinajpur has a percentage of increase in the density of population in rural areas at 30.94 while the State of West Bengal has only 17.30. It is seen from the Table that the pressure of population on rural land including agricultural land has been increasing very rapidly in the district. As a result, percentage of population depending on agricultural sector is on the rise. This phenomenon is clear from the Table below :

Table – 2. 3 : Percentage of Rural Population to Total Population

Sl. No.	District	Percent of Rural Population to Total Population	
		1991	**2001**
1.	Birbhum	91.02	91.42
2.	Bankura	91.71	92.63
3.	Nadia	77.37	78.73
4.	Dakshin Dinajpur	86.65	86.91
5.	Uttar Dinajpur	86.66	87.94
6.	Darjeeling	69.53	67.56
7.	Jalpaiguri	88.64	82.25
8.	Koch Bihar	92.19	90.90
9.	Maldah	92.93	92.68
10.	Murshidabad	89.57	87.51
11.	Bardhaman	64.91	62.82
12.	Haora	50.42	49.61
13.	Medinipur	90.15	89.51
14.	Puruliya	90.56	89.93
15.	24 Parganas (N)	48.77	45.70

contd...

16.	24 Parganas (S)	86.70	84.28
17.	Hugli	68.81	66.52
18.	Kolkata	0.00	0.00
	West Bengal	72.52	71.97

Source : Census of India, 2001.

It is observed from Table 2.3 that the district of Uttar Dinajpur has the second highest rate of increase (1.28 percent) in rural population to total population. Nadia is the highest (1.36 percent) in this respect, while the majority of the districts in West Bengal shows decrease in the rate of population on rural areas, the district under study has a remarkable increase in the percentage of rural population to total population.The increase in the percentage of rural population to total population, indicates more and more concentration of people to rural areas showing that the scope of employment in urban areas is not expanding. Degree of urbanization and degree of dependence on agricultural land are the two vital criteria to measure the economic backwardness of an area. Moreover, if the man- land ratio in the rural areas increases, it has to absorb more people in agriculture creating more disguised unemployment which is not a good indication of a country's economic development. It is seen that this district is becoming more agriculturally dependent. The degree of urbanization has a significantly positive co-relation with per capita income. The introduction to the First Report of the National Commission on urbanization starts by stating that urban centres are "heroic engines of growth not only creating skills and wealth of the nation but also generating employment of the waves of distress – migration from rural areas."

The Table 2..3 also shows that Kolkata district has no rural area and next to Kolkata, 24 Parganas (North) district is the 17th in the rank of the percentage of rural people to total population of the district. 24 Parganas (N) has the second lowest percentage of rural people to total population in West Bengal. The highest percentage of rural people to total population of the district goes to the

district of Maldah, a district of North Bengal . In 1991 the district (Maldah) had 92.93 and it stood at 92.68 in 2001 with a decrease of only .25 percent over 10 years (as revealed in Table 2.3).

Table- 2.4(a) Distribution of Male And Female Population by Sex In The District of Uttar Dinajpur During 1981-2001.

Name of the Dist.	Year	Population		
		Total	Male	Female
Uttar Dinajpur	1981	1440075	745461	694614
"	1991	1897045	987771	909274
"	2001	2441824	1260947	1181077

Table – 2.4(b) : Distribution of Rural And Urban Population by Sex in the District of Uttar Dinajpur During 1981-2001

Name of the Dist.	Year	Population		
		Total	Rural	Urban
Uttar Dinajpur	1981	1440075	1312798	127277
"	1991	1897045	1644070	252975
"	2001	2441824	2103150	338674

Source : Census of India Reports.

From Table 2.4(a) it is evident that the female population to the total population of the district for the two decades from 1981-2001 constitutes a considerable percentage in total population of the district. The percentage of female population to total population is 48.23 in 1981, 47.93 in 1991 and 48.37 in 2001.

In respect of percentage of urban population to total population it is clear from Table 2.4(b) that the percentage of urban population to total population of the district is 8.84 in 1981, 13.34 in 1991 and 13.87 in 2001. These figures are much less than those of West Bengal which stand at 27.48 in 1991 and 28.03 in 2001. From the following Table 2.5 it can easily be understood how slowly the process of urbanization has been taking place in the district as compared to other districts and also to the State of West Bengal.

Table 2.5: Percentage of Urban Population to Total Population

Sl.No.	District	Percent of Urban Population to Total Population	
		1991	**2001**
1.	Darjeeling	30.47	32.44
2.	Jalpaiguri	16.36	17.74
3.	Koch Bihar	7.81	9.10
4.	Uttar Dinajpur	13.34	12.06
5.	Dakshin Dinajpur	13.35	13.09
6.	Maldah	7.07	7.32
7.	Murshidabad	10.43	12.49
8.	Birbhum	8.98	8.58
9.	Bardhaman	35.09	37.18
10.	Nadia	22.63	21.27
11.	24 Parganas (N)	51.23	54.30
12.	Hugli	31.19	33.48
13.	Bankura	8.29	7.37
14.	Puruliya	9.44	10.07
15.	Medinipur	9.85	10.49
16.	Haora	46.58	50.39
17.	Kolkata	100.00	100.00
18.	24 Parganas (S)	13.30	15.77
	West Bengal	27.48	28.03

Source : Census of India, 2001.

It is evident from Table 2.5 that the percentage of urban population of Uttar Dinajpur district is much less than many other districts of West Bengal. The percentage of urban population to total population of West Bengal is more than double the percentage of urban population of the district of Uttar Dinajpur. Not only that, while the percentage of urban population of West Bengal has increased from 27.48 to 28.03 from 1991 to 2001, the percentage of urban population of the district of Uttar Dinajpur has reduced from 13.34 to 12.06 from 1991 to 2001. It is noteworthy that the process of urbanization has been slower

over 10 years from 1991 to 2001 than that of West Bengal. So, it has not been able to keep pace with the process of urbanization of West Bengal as a whole. This is also a sign of economic backwardness of the district of Uttar Dinajpur.

Table 2.6: Decadal Variation of Population (in percent)

Sl.No.	District	1981- 1991	1991-2001
1.	Darjeeling	24.73	17.84
2.	Jalpaiguri	26.91	23.54
3.	Koch Bihar	22.55	14.15
4.	Uttar Dinajpur	34.00	28.72
5.	Dakshin Dinajpur	24.39	22.11
6.	Maldah	29.78	24.77
7.	Murshidabad	28.20	23.70
8.	Birbhum	21.94	17.88
9.	Bardhaman	25.13	14.36
10.	Nadia	29.95	19.51
11.	24 Parganas (N)	31.69	22.64
12.	Hugli	22.43	15.72
13.	Bankura	18.12	13.79
14.	Puruliya	23.57	15.68
15.	Medinipur	25.71	14.60
16.	Haora	20.00	13.96
17.	Kolkata	6.61	4.11
18.	24 Parganas (S)	30.24	20.89

Source : Census of India, 2001.

It is evident from Table 2.6 that during the two decades from 1981-2001, the decadal growth of population of the district of Uttar Dinajpur is much higher than the other districts of West Bengal over the two decades from 1981-2001.

During 1981-91, the decadal growth of population of the district of Uttar Dinajpur is 37.48 percent higher than that of West Bengal and during 1991-2001, it is 60.99 percent higher than that of West Bengal. So, the decadal growth of population of the area under study is more speedy than any other district of West Bengal and also the State of West Bengal.

Table 2.7 : Sex Ratios in the Districts of West Bengal (1951-2001)

Sl.No.	Name of District	Year 1951	Year 1961	Year 1971	Year 1981	Year 1991	Year 2001
	West Bengal	865	878	891	911	917	934
1.	Darjeeling	863	864	882	888	914	943
2.	Jalpaiguri	825	854	887	910	927	941
3.	Koch Bihar	855	890	916	935	935	949
4.	*Uttar Dinajpur	844	888	908	931	921	937
5.	Dakshin Dinajpur	@	932	941	946	944	950
6.	Maldah	966	965	948	949	936	948
7.	Murshidabad	973	974	956	959	943	952
8.	Birbhum	974	973	968	962	946	949
9.	Bardhaman	888	858	886	897	899	921
10.	Nadia	937	948	948	946	936	947
11.	24 Parganas (N)	846	866	882	891	907	927
12.	Hugli	883	892	896	909	917	947
13.	Bankura	981	981	958	964	951	958
14.	Puruliya	983	973	963	957	947	953
15.	Medinipur	955	952	945	951	944	955
16.	Haora	810	808	833	873	881	906
17.	Kolkata	580	612	636	712	799	828
18.	24 Parganas (S)	@	@	@	927	929	938

Source : Census of India, 2001.

@ - figures are not available

* Data compiled from Blockwise figures

Sex ratio means number of females per 1000 males. As mentioned earlier, the erstwhile West Dinajpur district had 16 blocks and it was chopped into two

separate districts in 1992 – one is Uttar Dinajpur and the other is Dakshin Dinajpur, 9 blocks came to the part of Uttar Dinajpur district and 7 blocks to the district of Dakshin Dinajpur. The figures of sex ratio of the two districts were made separately by the compilation of the blockwise break-up of female and male population of the erstwhile West Dinajpur from 1951 to 1991.

The Table 2.7 clearly gives the picture that the sex ratio of the district of Uttar Dinajpur is increasing constantly except in the year of 1991. The district has the considerable variations in sex ratio among some other districts in West Bengal over 50 years from 1951 to 2001. In many cases the sex ratio of the district of Uttar Dinajpur is higher than some other districts of West Bengal. It is also seen from the Table 2.7 that the sex ratio of Uttar Dinajpur district has always been higher than that of West Bengal from 1951-2001 except in 1951.

2.4 Meteorological Condition of the District

The district of Uttar Dinajpur welcomes the annual visit of the North Wester in the month of March and April. Monsoon breaks in late May and continues upto September in general, and sometimes it goes upto the middle of October. It is very often found that pre-monsoon showers grace the district for cultivation of jute and Aus paddy in the month of April or May. Rains cease generally at the end of October. Almost every year the district has to bear the fury of nature in the form of flood, hailstorm etc. It is experienced that Goalpukur Block-II is damaged by hailstorm almost every year in the month of April or May. Drought took place in this district in two consecutive years, viz, 1981-82 and 1982-83. Devastating flood happened in two consecutive years in 1987 and 1988. The flood of 1987 was a new experience to the people of this district. It was an unprecedented flood causing the destruction of human life, animal life, houses, assets and a total damage of crops in agricultural sector. The district also had to bear a severe flood in 1992. So, floods and droughts are the common phenomena in the district of Uttar Dinajpur.

2.5 Soil

The soil of the district of Uttar Dinajpur may be classified into old alluvium, alluvium and new alluvium. The texture of old alluvium varies from heavy clay to clay loam with poor internal drainage capacity and the soils are either neutral and slightly acidic in reaction. The texture of the alluvium soils varies from loam to sandy loam and clay loam with medium internal drainage system and the soils are slightly acidic in reaction. The new alluvium soil varies from sandy to sandy loam in texture with fair drainage capability and are slightly acidic to very acidic in reaction. The average fertility status of all the sub-groups is low nitrogen and medium phosphate content.

According to the Annual Action Plan on Agriculture of Uttar Dinajpur published by the Principal Agriculture Officer, Raiganj, the types of the soil of different blocks are as follows :

Table 2.8 : Blockwise Cultivable Area (in hectares) with Different Soils

Name of Blocks	Sandy	Sandy loam	Loam	Clay loam	Clay
Kaliyaganj	-	500	12,860	9140	500
Hemtabad	-	12,400	1,390	500	250
Raiganj	-	31500	3500	600	400
Itahar	-	1000	12500	17500	1000
Karandighi	5710	11420	8560	3060	300
Goalpokhar-I	11160	10260	5580	500	500
Goalpokhar-II	8000	7700	4000	300	-
Islampur	13700	10110	500	500	-
Chopra	16230	11190	500	500	-

Source : Meteorological Department, Government of India, 2002

From the above Table, it is clear that the average fertility status of all the three sub-groups is low nitrogen and medium phosphate content.

2.6 Climate and Rainfalls

The peculiar geographical situation causes variance in the climatic condition within the district The district is situated to the north of the Tropic of Cancer and the climate is characterized by hot Summer, abundant rainfall and humid atmosphere. The principal seasons are Summer, Rainy, Autumn, Winter and Spring. The Summer begins from the middle of March and May is the hottest month of the year. The Rainy season begins in the early part of June and continues upto the end of September. The rainfall varies from one part of the district to the other. The Winter is cold and dry, but the cold is not severe. January is the coldest month of the year. Occasional rains appear in Winter also. Except in late Summer and monsoon when winds are slightly stronger, they remain generally moderate.

Rainfall is generally the heaviest in July and August. About 75 percent of rainfall occurs between July and September.

Table 2.9 : Monthly Rainfall in the District of Uttar Dinajpur Raiganj (in mm)

Month	Normal	Actual				
		1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
January	7	26	21	1	0	0
February	12	10	5	26	0	19
March	19	0	11	28	0	1
April	78	16	79	1321	22	115
May	190	152	148	199	221	295
June	343	257	350	223	393	412
July	562	639	556	943	520	386
August	412	371	494	719	729	342
September	317	297	291	519	744	373
October	116	56	9	234	180	12
November	7	0	4	2	2	0
December	3	0	59	0	0	0
Total	2066	1824	2027	3026	2811	1955

Source : Meteorological Department Government of India, 2002

2.7 Topography

The district of Uttar Dinajpur is peculiar in shape, very much like the blade of a scythe. The flow of the river shows that the land is flat, sloping gently towards the South. The old alluvium belt with neutral to slightly acidic soil reaction is found in Hemtabad and Kaliyaganj Blocks. The soil of Raiganj, Karandighi and Goalpokhar II Blocks are predominantly alluvium in transition phase with slightly acidic to acidic soil reaction and medium internal drainage. The new alluvial deposits are found in the Islampur Sub division and here the soil is highly acidic in reaction. The ravines vary from shallow stretches of low land suitable for rice, to stretches of low land suitable for rice to deeper depression bearing a resemblance to old river beds and sometimes containing water. These old river beds are locally called 'Kharis'.

Another remarkable feature of this district is that there are numerous tanks and marshes or beels formed by the over- flowing of rivers. The main rivers are the Mahananda, the Kulik, the Suin, the Nagar while the Chiramoti and the Gamari are some of the smaller ones of the district.

2.8 Economy of the District

The district of Uttar Dinajpur is predominantly agricultural. With the partition of Bengal in 1947 only the less fertile lands had come to the Indian part of the district of West Dinajpur which was bifurcated into two districts in 1992 – one is Uttar Dinajpur and the other is Dakshin Dinajpur. The former district is the area of our study.

Dinajpur was always rich and prosperous in agriculture, especially in producing rice. In 1981, about 83 percent of the total working population of the district was engaged either as cultivators or as agricultural labourers. Again, as per 1991 Census about 79 per cent of the total population of the district was engaged either as cultivators or as agricultural labourers. The development of industry is not prominent in this district. Only about 3 percent

of the total working population is engaged in industrial enterprises (Source : Economic Census – 1998, the percentage taken by separation of the combined figures of Uttar and Dakshin Dinajpur).

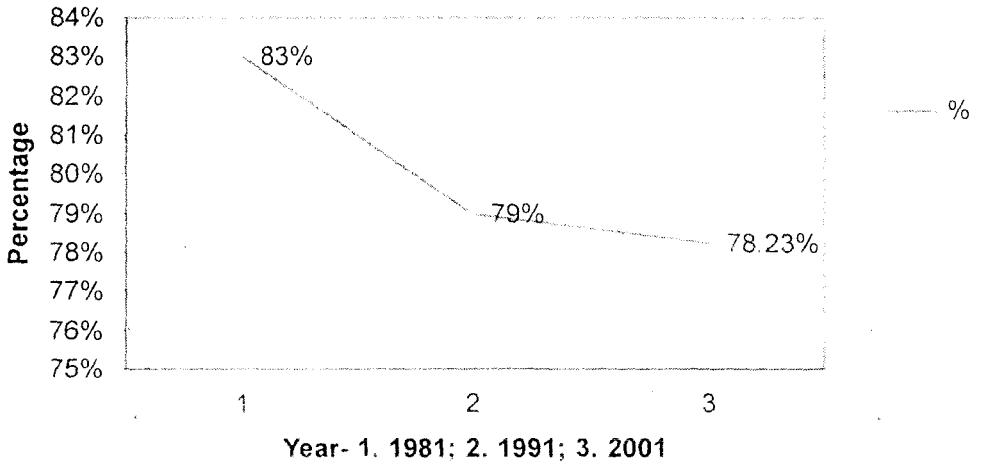
2.9 Occupational Pattern and Dependence on Agriculture

Since the district of Uttar Dinajpur is predominantly an agrarian economy, the primary occupation of its people must be agriculture and its allied activities. Primary occupations include agriculture, animal husbandry, fishery, poultry-farming, lumbering etc. A large section of population have to engage themselves in primary occupation. A sizeable portion of population are commonly engaged in sowing and harvesting operations of crops, especially in time of Aman and Boro crops. An important percentage of agricultural labourers have to migrate to Bihar and Punjab for their earnings during lean seasons. At present there is multi-cropping everywhere in West Bengal. Naturally, the demand for agricultural labourers persists throughout the year.

In a backward district like Uttar Dinajpur, agriculture is the most important source of economic activity among the people. 83 percent of the total working population of the district were engaged in agriculture and its allied activities in 1981, while the same decreased to 79 percent in 1991 and it is only 78.23 percent in 2001. It is seen from the data pertaining to the years - 1981, 1991 and 2001 that the percentage of the working population in agriculture and its allied activities are decreasing very slowly (Source – i. District Statistical Handbook-2001(Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics) and ; ii. Census Reports of India). It is a sign of hope that the district is proceeding to economic upliftment steadily. A diagram is given below to show the change in percentage of the working population engaged in agriculture and its allied activities :

Fig. 2.1

Fig. 2.1 Percentage of working population in agriculture and its allied activities



The continuous decrease in the percentage of the working population engaged in agriculture and its allied activities may be because of the fact that different sources of income or employment in the rural sector are being created. People are shifting their occupation from agriculture to business or other services.

As regards agricultural labourers it may be noted that the percentage of agricultural labourers to the total working population has a sharp increase. It is 10.7 percent in 1981 while it stands at 12.25 percent in 1991. Again, the Census Report of 2001 reveals that the percentage of agricultural labourers is 14.29 percent.

The following two main causes may be attributed to the increase in the percentage of agricultural labourers :

i) Rapid growth of population exerts more pressure on agriculture as the country is dominated by agricultural operations. As a good no. of population, in many cases, have to work as agricultural labourers as soon

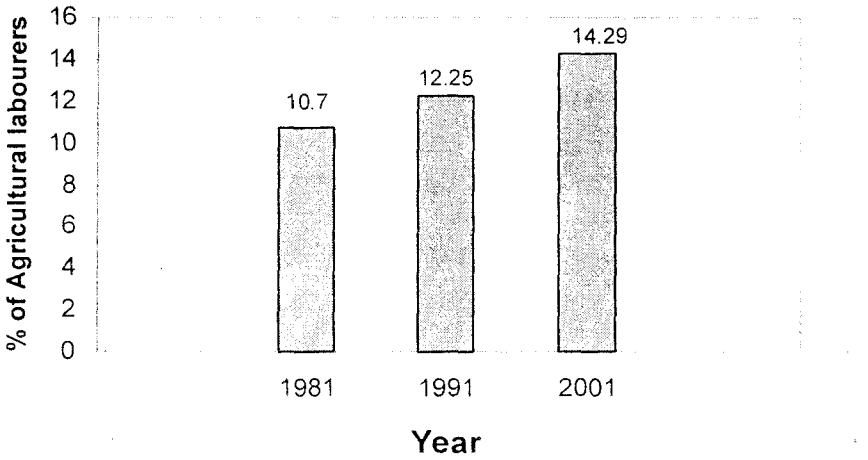
as they attain physical strength or capacity to do so due to non-possession of agricultural land and continue agricultural operations till their exhaustion of physical strength; the children of such agricultural labourers, as commonly evident, have to work as landless agricultural labourers. Thus, the number of landless agricultural labourers increase.

ii) Agricultural operations are expanding rapidly in new dimensions. Modern agricultural operations need huge outlays of cash for the purchase of agricultural inputs. Still Indian agriculture is dominated by poor small and marginal farmers who are really unable to purchase new agricultural technology due to their bad economic condition. Since the marginal farmers are not in a position of purchasing modern agricultural inputs, the cost of production of crops becomes higher than that of the middle and big farmers who can use modern agricultural inputs in their agricultural operations. So, due to the fear of sure loss in production of crops the marginal farmers sometimes sell their land and start working as landless agricultural labourers. As there is multi-cropping almost everywhere in West Bengal, the demand for agricultural labourers seems good throughout the year.

The increase in the rate of landlessness of agricultural labourers reveals that the economy is becoming either backward or there is no planned programme for sustainable development in the district.

From the Histogram exhibited below it can easily be understood how steadily the percentage of agricultural labourers is increasing.

Fig. 2.2 : Histogram showing the changes in the percentage of agricultural Labourers.



2.10 Infrastructural Position

The development of a region depends upon how much infrastructural facilities it gets. Setting aside the controversy on whether infrastructure makes development or development brings infrastructural facilities we can simply say that the availability of the infrastructural facility is one of the main determinants of economic development. Like industry, business and service sectors the growth of agricultural sector depends upon the degree of infrastructural facilities. Our district, i.e, Uttar Dinajpur district, the area of this study, is economically backward because of the non-availability of requisite infrastructural facilities. The infrastructure of a particular region is composed of the availability of transport and communication, irrigation, marketing and storage, education, power, medical facilities, financial institutions and many like this.

Now, let us proceed to study the infrastructural facilities of the district under the following heads :

2.11 Irrigation

The availability of irrigation facility is one of the vital determinants of agricultural development. The cultivation of our district is mainly dependent upon the natural rainfall. A very little portion of the cultivable area is under minor irrigation schemes.

Minor irrigation schemes include tube-wells, river-lifts, state-owned shallow tube-wells, private-owned shallow tube-wells, deep tube-wells and some tanks and beels. Food crops like rice and cash crops like jute require abundant, regular and continuous supply of water. The cultivation of Boro rice (HYV) requires continuous supply of water and the period when it is grown, does not get rainwater as it is sown in the Winter. In Winter, the supply of rain water is very scanty.

The existing facility of irrigation is very much limited and insufficient too. Only about 40 percent of the total cultivable area of the district falls under the facility of irrigation. About 60 percent of the cultivable land is dependent upon the natural water, i.e. rain water. As the supply of natural water is uncertain, irregular and scanty, farmers have to depend on uncertainty and risk which sometimes lead to poor productivity. Ultimately poor productivity results in higher cost of production of crops.

The following Table exhibits the position of irrigated area of different blocks of the district.

Table 2.10 :Blockwise and sourcewise irrigation statistics of Uttar Dinajpur district during the year 2001-2002.

Sl.No	Name of Block	Cultiva-ble area (ha)	D. T. W.		S.T.W. (Government)		S. T.W. (Pvt.)		R. L. I		Tank & Others		Total Area under Irriga-tion (ha)	percent of area under irriga tion from diff. source
			No.	Area (ha)	No.	Area (ha)	No.	Area (ha)	No.	Area (ha)	No.	Area (ha)		
1	Chopra	22260	2	100	150	300	2030	4060	7	400	750	750	5610	25.20
2	Islampur	26000	19	420	175	350	1750	3500	5	360	1300	1300	5930	22.80
3	Goalpokhar-I	29500	18	400	160	320	3006	6750	9	360	1216	1216	9046	30.66
4	Goalpokhar-II	29076	12	280	207	414	4400	9500	13	520	934	934	11648	40.06
5	Karandighi	29061	22	600	250	500	4500	9300	10	640	815	815	11855	40.79
	Islampur Subdivision	135897	73	1800	942	1884	15686	33110	44	2280	5015	5015	44089	32.44
6	Raigang	35200	20	760	205	410	8150	16300	16	720	1522	1500	19690	55.94
7	Hemtabad	15200	34	420	140	280	2350	4700	9	280	510	385	6065	39.90
8	Kaliyaganj	23360	35	460	195	390	4500	7000	10	560	1425	1068	9518	40.74
9	Itahar	31635	17	360	260	520	6611	13434	32	1000	1945	920	16284	51.47
	Raiganj Sub-Divn.	105395	106	2000	800	1600	18692	41484	67	2560	5402	3873	51557	48.92
	Uttar Dinajpur Dist.	241292	179	3800	1742	3484	37297	74594	111	4840	10417	8888	95646	39.64

Source : Principal Agriculture Office, Uttar Dinajpur district

From Table 2.10, it becomes clear that only 39.64 percent of the total cultivable area is under irrigation facility. 59.36 percent of the total cultivable area of the district has to depend upon the rainfed water. So, the majority portion of the cultivable area has to depend on natural water for irrigation purpose. Besides, from Table 2.10 it is evident that Islampur Block has the lowest irrigated land having only 22.80 percent and Raiganj Block has the highest irrigated land having 55.94 percent in regard to irrigation facility of the district. It is revealed that the irrigation facility has not reached evenly throughout the district.

Table No. 2.11 : Blockwise Land use Statistics of Uttar Dinajpur District

Sl.No	Name of Block	Geograp hi-cal Area (ha)	Forest Area (ha)	Permanent Pas ture and other grazing land thereof(ha)	Area under Orchard, plan tation, trees etc (ha)	Cultiva-ble waste land (ha)	Net Area available for cultiva-tion(ha)	Net area sown more than once (ha)	Gross cropped area (ha)	Cropping intensity (percent)
1	Chopra	37840	576.80	205	107.80	800	22260	17273	39533	178
2	Islampur	36010	13.50	-	1100	816	26000	20020	46280	178
3	Goalpokhar-I	35840	-	-	450	100	29500	24190	54575	185
4	Goalpokhar-II	32208	-	-	200	5020	29076	21876	54081	186
5	Karandighi	38584	130	83	368	1009	29061	24411	55215	190
	Islampur Sub Division	180482	520.30	288	2225.80	8645	135897	10770	249684	184
6	Raiganj	47421	176	-	1250	140	35200	32032	71324	203
7	Hemtabad	19160	200	20	240	-	15200	12616	29255	192
8	Kaliyaganj	31160	-	10	1380	627	23360	20900	43900	188
9	Itahar	34856	-	-	1075	95	31635	24992	60935	193
	Raiganj Sub Division	132597	376	30	3945	862	105395	90540	205414	195
	Uttar Dinajpur District	313079	896.30	318	6170.80	9507	241292	101310	455098	189

Source . Principal Agriculture Office, Uttar Dinajpur District 2003.

The Table 2.11 shows that the area under study covers 77.07 percent of its geographical area as 'Net Area Available for Agriculture.' This figure proves that the district is agri-based . The percentage of net area available for cultivation as compared to geographical area is the lowest in Chopra block being 58.83 percent in Islampur Sub-Division of the district and the highest is Itahar block being 90.76 percent in Raiganj Sub-Division of the district. The cropping intensity is the lowest in Goalpokhar I block and highest in Itahar block.

It is seen from the Table 2.11 that the Raiganj Sub-Division is more agriculturally advanced than Islampur Sub-Division.

2.12 Production Trend of Some Major Crops

The district of Uttar Dinajpur has surplus agricultural production. It is true that agricultural production particularly rice has increased very significantly during the last decade from 1990-91 to 2000-2001. The district has a fertile land favourable for rice production and the quality of rice is very fine. Varieties of rice are grown here. Mainly Aus, Boro and Amon paddy are largely cultivated . A special variety of paddy named 'Tulai' is grown in a particular region of Raiganj Block. This rice is famous for its scent, and small and sharp size.

Table 2. 12 : Production Trend of Rice in the District of Uttar Dinajpur

Year	Area (ha) (in '000s)	Production(tones) (in '000s)	Yield (kg/hectare)
1989-90*	278.2	327.6	1178
1990-91*	285.7	311.6	1091
1991-92*	270.4	415.7	1537
1992-93	274.8	435.2	1584
1993-94	253.3	497.3	1963
1994-95	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1995-96	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1996-97	270.6	523.2	1934
1997-98	252.4	489.2	1938
1998-99	266.5	579.8	2175
1999-2000	284.4	567.5	1995
2000-01	283.2	628.6	222.0

Sources : i) Directorate of Agriculture, Government of West Bengal

ii) B.A.E & S, Government of West Bengal.

* The figures for the years 1989-90, 1990-91 and 1991-92 have been segregated and compiled from the figures of the erstwhile West Dinajpur District Profile.

It is revealed from the Table 2.12 that the area of the production of rice from 1989-90 to 2000-01 is more or less the same. In 1990-91, it was 285.7 and in 2000-2001 it slightly declined to 283.2. So, the area has not increased. During the last decade from 1990-91 to 2000-01 the area remained almost the

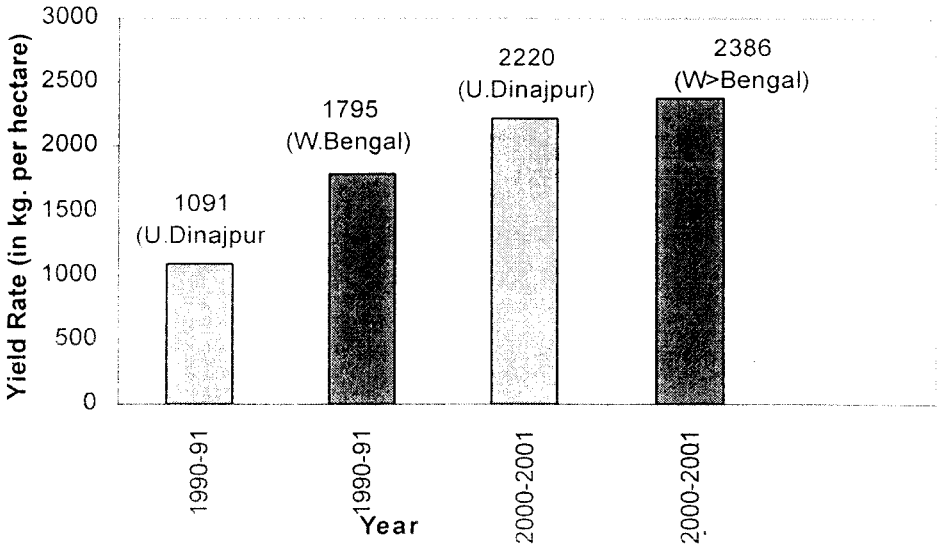
same. But if we consider the same in respect of West Bengal it is seen that in 1990-91 it was 5812.9 (in thousand hectares) and in 2000-01 it stood at 5435.3. So there is also a fall in the area of production of rice in the perspective of West Bengal.

Agricultural growth in the district of Uttar Dinajpur as well as West Bengal has been brought about not so much by increase in land area but by increasing the cropping intensity and yield rate per hectare.

Again, if we consider the production of rice in the district of Uttar Dinajpur during the last decade we see that in 1990-91 the production of rice was 311.6 (in thousand tones) and it stood at 628.6 (in thousand tones) in 2000-01. So, during the last decade the production increased by 101.73 percent. In the perspective of West Bengal, the increase in the production of rice during the same decade is 10436.5 in 1990-01 and 12428 in 2000-2001 (in thousand tones). So, the decadal increase in the production of rice is only 19.03 percent whereas it is 101.73 percent in the district of Uttar Dinajpur. The district of Uttar Dinajpur produces only 5.05 percent of the total rice of West Bengal.

The yield rate of rice production in the district of Uttar Dinajpur is 1091 (in kilogram per hectare) in 1990-91 and it stood at 2220 in 2000-01. The decadal increase in the yield rate is 103.5 percent in the district of Uttar Dinajpur. The yield rate of rice production in West Bengal is 1795 in 1990-91 and it stood at 2336 in 2000-01 in kg per hectare. The decadal increase in the yield rate of rice production in West Bengal is only 32.92 percent whereas it is 103.5 percent in the district of Uttar Dinajpur. So, there still lies immense scope to increase agricultural productivity in the district. The following chart gives the figure.

Fig. 2.3 : Comparative Trend of Yield Rate of Rice Between the District of Uttar Dinajpur and the State of West Bengal.



From the above chart, it is clearly seen that the yield rate of rice production has significantly increased by 103.5 percent during 1990-91 to 2000-01. Among so many factors contributing to this phenomenon the important ones are (i) Increasing trend in the rise of price of rice, (ii) wide use of HYV seeds, (iii) uses of agro-technology, (iv) uses of chemical manures (v) more availability of farm credit at lower interest from institutional sources of credit and (vi) awareness of farmers regarding scientific agricultural method, i.e. modern cultivation.

The area, production and yield of wheat in the district of Uttar Dinajpur are not encouraging mainly due to the fact that a large section of the people of the district still do not consume wheat. Actually the introduction of HYV seed of wheat has inspired farmers to cultivate wheat and as a result its cultivation has increased by leaps and bounds. Huge quantity of wheat produced in the district of Uttar Dinajpur is exported to Bangladesh (Central Excise and Customs Department, Import & Export Cell, Uttar Dinajpur District)

Table 2.13: Production Trend of Wheat in Uttar Dinajpur District

Year	Area (in 000 ha)	Production (in tones)	Yield (in kg/ha)
1989-90	29.0	58.0	2000
1990-91	25.4	61.9	2437
1991-92	23.0	55.7	2422
1992-93	23.6	55.7	2360
1993-94	27.2	59.9	2202
1994-95	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1995-96	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1996-97	27.0	59.0	2185
1997-98	29.0	65.0	2241
1998-99	30.5	60.9	1999
1999-00	33.8	87.5	25.90
2000-01	37.5	86.2	2300

Sources : (i) Directorate of Agriculture, Government of West Bengal
(ii) B.A.E.& S. Government of West Bengal.

Table 2.13 reveals that the area of wheat production in the district of Uttar Dinajpur has increased during the decade from 1990-91 to 2000-2001 to 47.64 percent, whereas the same is 58.31 percent in case of West Bengal.

In respect of production of wheat in the district of Uttar Dinajpur it can be seen from Table 2.13 that during the decade from 1990-91 to 2000-01 the production of wheat has increased by 37.26 percent whereas in case of West Bengal it has increased by 99.47 percent. Uttar Dinajpur district produces only 8.14 percent of the total production of wheat in West Bengal.

The yield rate of wheat in the district of Uttar Dinajpur is not encouraging. During 1990-91 to 2000-01 the yield rate of wheat in the district has slightly declined from 2437 kg per acre in 1990-91 to 2300 kg in 2000-01. but at the state level (West Bengal) the decadal increase of yield rate of wheat is 24.75 percent.

The area production and yield of wheat in Uttar Dinajpur district are not encouraging mainly due to the fact that a large section of the people of the district still do not consume wheat. The introduction of HYV seeds of wheat has inspired farmers to cultivate wheat and thus it is being cultivated gradually in larger areas. As the prices of wheat fluctuate every year, the farmers get afraid of not having encouraging price of their production.

Jute is one of the cash crops of the country. It is called the Golden Fibre. Once it did fetch a good amount of foreign exchange through export. After the introduction of synthetic substitutes the prices of jute began wanning and the production of jute has not increased considerably. Though in some years the market price of jute remains at such a level that it can not cover its production cost, farmers grow it for its straw which is largely used as fire straw (cooking fuel) in rural area.

Table 2.14 : Production Trend of Jute In The District Of Uttar Dinajpur

Year	Area (in 000 ha)	Production (in tones)	Yield (in kg/ha)*
1989-90	27.0	206.3	7.6
1990-91	34.2	195.8	5.7
1991-92	57.6	379.9	6.6
1992-93	53.7	371.9	6.9
1993-94	46.0	395.3	8.6
1994-95	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1995-96	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1996-97	57.8	461.7	8.0
1997-98	59.4	476.6	8.0
1998-99	61.2	462.4	7.6
1999-2000	57.7	508.4	8.8
2000-01	59.0	457.5	7.8

* Production in bales of 180 kgs each per hectare.

Sources : (i) Directorate of Agriculture, Government of West Bengal

(ii) B.A.E & S, Government of West Bengal.

It becomes evident from Table 2.14 that the area under jute as well as the production of jute in the district of Uttar Dinajpur had a jump of 67.64

percent and 94.35 percent from the year 1990-91 to 1991-92 respectively and after then both the figures more or less maintained a rising trend. Though not as important as in the year of 1990-91. The jump in both the area and the production of jute were mainly due to huge export demand for jute in 1990-91. The price of jute rose considerably in that year. The farmers saw a light of hope and expanded the area of producing jute. Naturally production of jute went up. But in the following years the rise in the area under jute and the production of jute is not as prominent as in 1991-92, mainly due to the instability in price of jute in the market. Besides, the price which Jute Corporation of India (JCI) offers to the jute–growers to purchase jute is not encouraging and sometimes, the offered price is even below the cost of growing jute. It is a matter of sorrow that many jute-growers have to commit suicide for the non-availability of satisfactory market price and this situation was uttered by Mr. Y.V.Reddy, Governor , Reserve Bank of India. in a seminar in Washington in the words – 'Credit is not the only reason to the committing of suicide of the Indian farmers. lack of quality seeds, pesticides and also the lack of measures to combat natural calamities lead Indian farmers to commit suicide' (Ananda Bazar Patrika, 18.10.2007, p.4).

The district of Uttar Dinajpur has a fertile land and favourable climatic condition for the production of potato. This crop has demand throughout the year. Due to the rise in the open market-price of potato, farmers are becoming more and more interested in growing potato. The pictures of potato production can be clear from the Table given below.

Table 2.15 : Production Trend of Potato in the District of Uttar Dinajpur

Year	Area (in 000 ha)	Production (in tones)	Yield (in kg/ha)
1989-90	3.6	26.5	7361
1990-91	1.5	12.8	8533
1991-92	2.7	26.6	9852
1992-93	3.0	13.3	4433
1993-94	3.5	18.6	5314
1994-95	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1995-96	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1996-97	4.5	32.9	7765
1997-98	4.1	33.6	9695
1998-99	6.0	34.6	9144
1999-2000	5.5	21.0	10421
2000-01	6.7	28.7	11131

Sources : (i) Directorate of Agriculture, Government of West Bengal
(ii) B.A.E & S. Government of West Bengal.

It is observed from Table 2.15 that the area, production and the yield rate show a upward trend, though the figures do not have evenly rising tendency. In some years the area has risen but the production and the yield rate have fallen due to the natural calamity and in some cases low quality of seeds. The yield rate has considerably risen. But it is still much lower as compared to the districts of Burdwan, Midnapore and Hooghly.

Mustard oil seed is the main and most important in the group of oil seeds grown in the district of Uttar Dinajpur. The following Table depicts the picture of mustard oil seed in the district.

Table 2.16 : Production Trend of Mustard Oil-Seed in The District of Uttar Dinajpur

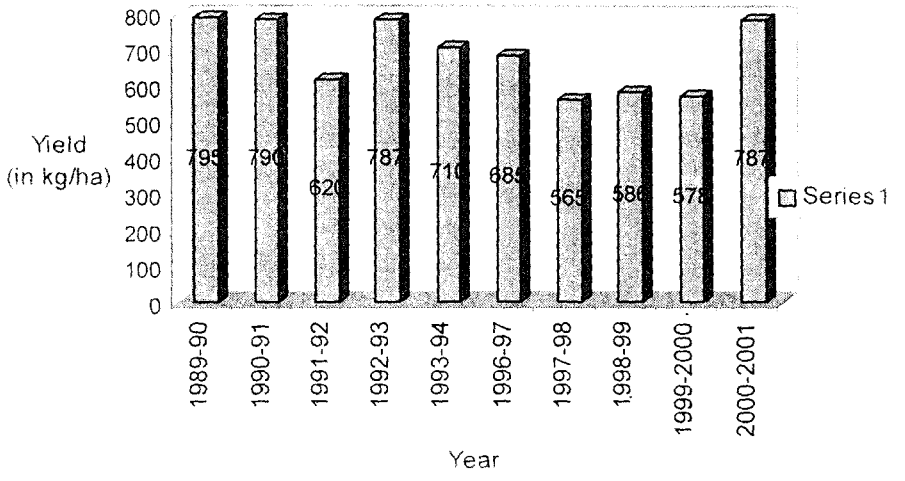
Year	Area (in '000 ha)	Production (in tones)	Yield (in kg/ha)
1989-90	30.7	24.4	795
1990-91	24.3	19.2	790
1991-92	26.6	16.5	620
1992-93	31.5	24.8	787
1993-94	30.0	21.3	710
1994-95	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1995-96	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1996-97	32.3	22.1	685
1997-98	28.3	16.0	565
1998-99	28.8	16.9	586
1999-2000	29.5	17.1	578
2000-01	34.3	27.0	787

Sources : (i) Directorate of Agriculture, Government of West Bengal

(ii) B.A.E & S. Government of West Bengal.

From the above Table 2.16 it stands clear that the production and coverage-area of mustard oil-seed are increasing. But the yield rate of mustard oil seed has not increased. Very often it fluctuates.

Fig. 2.4 : The Trend of Yield Rate of Mustered Oil Seed in the District of Uttar Dinajpur



The yield rate of mustard oil seed of Uttar Dinajpur district is very volatile.

The production of mustard oil seed has increased due to the application of HYV mustard seed, irrigation facility, chemical fertilizers and fair market price of the oil seed. The department of agriculture, Government of West Bengal, is trying its best to encourage the farmers to grow oil seed in large-scale.

The economy of the district of Uttar Dinajpur is enriched by the production of chillis. Here chillies include only long and thin variety chillies. Such chillies are abundantly grown in Kaliyaganj Block of the district of Uttar Dinajpur. When green chillies become matured and starts getting reddish colour they are plucked and after plucking they are dried in the sun in the open yard. Being dried in the sun they are packed in gunny bags and sent to the market. It fetches good cash to the farmers. Chillies of this district have a high demand in the states of North-East India. Chillies are sent to these states in large-scale. The production of chillies (dried) is shown below:

Table 2.17 : Production Trend of Chillies (Dried) in the District of Uttar Dinajpur.

Year	Area (in '000 ha)	Production (in tones)	Yield (in kg/ha)
1989-90	4.5	2.2	489*
1990-91	6.3	2.2	508*
1991-92	5.9	2.5	424*
1992-93	6.8	2.8	412*
1993-94	7.2	3.1	431*
1994-95	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1995-96	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1996-97	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1997-98	4.4	2.4	558
1998-99	4.3	2.3	528
1999-2000	4.2	2.2	517
2000-01	4.1	2.3	570

Sources : (i) Directorate of Agriculture, Government of West Bengal
(ii) B.A.E & S. Government of West Bengal.

* Combined figure of Uttar and Dakhin Dinajpur

Table 2.17 clearly shows that both the area and production of chillies are decreasing. The main reason of the decline in area and production of chillies in recent years is the import of HYV chillies (dried) from Andhra Pradesh. As chillies from Andhra Pradesh have been available in the market the market price of chillies is declining. As a result, farmers of the district are becoming reluctant to grow chillies. The introduction of HYV seed of chillies is to be applied in the district to overcome the problem.

2.13 Transportation

Since the availability of railway facility in this district is very much limited, the road transportation is the main mode of transportation. Passengers and goods are carried by both public and private buses. Buses of North Bengal State Transport Corporation (NBSTC) run almost on all important routes within the district and also in the inter-district routes. Privately owned buses ply on all

important routes simultaneously with the buses run by NBSTC. In villages, traditional modes of transportation like bullock and buffalow carts are still dominant. Very recently trekkers are sufficiently found in some rural areas. They carry both passengers and goods. Besides, carriage run by horse (Tonga) is very common in Goalpokhar Blocks (I and II) under Islampur sub-division. Such type of carriage carry both passengers and goods in rural areas.

The district of Uttar dinajpur is very much deficient in respect of rail communication. There is a proposal to set up railway from Gunjaria to Gajol, via Raiganj. But the said proposal is still to be implemented. Raiganj sub-division is very poor in railways. Only one local train twice a day run from Bahin, a border area of Bihar, to Radhikapur, a border area of Bangladesh, covering a length of 43 kms. In Islampur sub-division railway communication is also poor except Dalkhola where there is a station with stoppage of some long-distance trains. So, only Dalkhola in the district has a bit better facility of railways.

Table 2.18(a) :District Profile of Roads Maintained by P.W.D. and Zilla Parishad in the District of Uttar Dinajpur (in km)

Year	P.W.D.			Zilla Parishad (Panchayat)		
	Surfaced	Un-surfaced	Total	Surfaced	Un-surfaced	Total
2000-01	593.90	26.00	619.90	154.30	59.75	214.05

Sources : 1 (i) P.W.D.(Roads) : (ii) Zilla Parishad

Table 2.18(b) : Length of Different Classes of Road Maintained by P.W.D. in the District of Uttar Dinajpur

Year	National	State Highways	Dist. Roads	Village roads	Total
2000-01	168.90	96.00	127.00	228.00	619.00

Source : P.W.D. (Roads), Uttar Dinajpur District.

It is noteworthy that from 2000-01 to 2003-04 an amount of Rs. 43,59,61,000 crores has been spent for the construction, improvement, widening and strengthening of different rural roads in different blocks of the district

covering a length of 125 km under (Prime Minister's Gramin Sadak Yojana) PMGSY.

Besides the schemes under PMGSY an amount of Rs. 27,90,77,000 has been spent for the improvement , construction, widening and strengthening of roads in rural areas of the district, covering a length of 115.01 km under (Rural Infrastructure Development Fund) RIDF.

(The figures of PMGSY and RIDF have been taken from AEO, Uttar Dinajpur Zilla Parishad).

Table 2.18 (c) : Blockwise Coverage of Railways

Sl.No.	Name of Blocks	Length of Railway Trucks
1.	Chopra	Nil
2.	Islampur	Nil
3.	Goalpokhar-I	18 kms
4.	Goalpokhar-II	nil
5.	Karandighi	11 kms
6.	Raiganj	18 kms
7.	Hemtabad	nil
8.	Kaliyaganj	25 kms
9.	Itahar	nil

Source : Annual Action Plan – 1994 (Uttar Dinajpur)

2.14 Electricity

Electricity is one of the main items of infrastructure conducive to economic development of an undeveloped region. The district of Uttar Dinajpur is very much weak in the generation and supply of electricity. Since this district lacks sound generation and supply of sufficient power, it is very weak in the adoption of new technology in the field of agriculture and also in the creation of agro-based small and cottage industries. Thus, the lack of sound

supply of power has led to low productivity in agriculture and low prospects for development and expansion of small and cottage industries helpful for the creation of additional income and employment. The position of electricity is given below Table 2.19(a)

Table 2.19(a) : Number of Villages Electrified in the Blocks of the District

Name of Blocks	No. of villages electrified (as on 31.3.2001)
Chopra	95
Islampur	94
Goalpokhar-I	99
Goalpokhar-II	121
Karandighi	179
Raiganj	197
Hemtabad	81
Kaliyaganj	172
Itahar	228

Source : Divisional Engineer 'D' (O & N) Div., WBSEB

Table 2.19(b) : Consumption of Electricity in the District of Uttar Dinajpur (in '000 K.W.H.)

Year	Domestic	Commercial	Industrial
1997-1998	18913	7607	8811
1998-99	24992	8290	8793
1999-00	30053	10716	8951
2000-01	32104	9788	9830

Source : Divisional Engineer 'D' (O & M), Div. WBSEB.

The district of Uttar Dinajpur has 1511 villages, 1266 villages are now electrified, 245 villages in the district are still to be electrified. Thus, 83.79 percent villages have been electrified.

2.15 Medicine and Health

The development of human resources in a particular region largely depends upon the availability of the facilities of medicine and health. Soundness

of health improves physical and mental strength to undertake risks in gainful jobs and also to undertake innovative practices leading to technological improvement.

The district of Uttar Dinajpur lacks sufficient facilities of health and medicine. Only a few number of primary health centers and sub-centres are there in some blocks. Most of the blocks are without sufficient number of doctors, staff and field-workers. As a result, the poor villagers in many areas are compelled to go to the quacks for treatment. Even many serious diseases are handled by such quacks. This condition results in pre-matured death of rural people. The mortality rate among the child and female population is high in the remote corners of the district. The position of Government hospital, primary health centres, sub-centres, charitable dispensary, nursing home etc. of the district are given below :

Table 2. 20 : Blockwise Break-up of Establishment Pattern of Different Health Centres in the District of Uttar Dinajpur

Raiganj Block

Name of PHC	M.O.	Other Staff	Bed	Delivery	Quarter
Karnajora BPHC	3	8	nil	no	nil
Rampur PHC	2	17	15	yes	2 habitable
Bahatun PHC	1	11	nil	no	1 Non habitable
Bindole PHC	1 (contract)	10	nil	no	nil
Durgapur PHC	2	11	nil	no	1 habitable

Itahar Block

Itahar BPHC	5	31	25	yes	3 habitable
Marnai , PHC	2	6	nil	no	1 non-habitable
Churaman PHC	1	9	nil	no	1 non-habitable
Suran	2	10	nil	no	nil

Hemtabad Block

Name of PHC	M.O.	Other Staff	Bed	Delivery	Quarter
Hemtabad BPHC	5	25	25	yes	3
Bangalbari PHC	3	21	10	yes	nil
Baharail PHC	2	13	nil	no	nil

Kaliaganj Blocks

Name of HC	M.O.	Other Staff	Bed	Delivery	Quarter
Kaliyaganj BPHC	9	67	70	yes	1 Habttable
Majihar PHC	1	12	nil	no	1 Habitable
Kunor PHC	1	15	nil	no	1 Habitable

Karandighi Block

Name of HC	M.O.	Other Staff	Bed	Delivery	Quarter
Karandighi BPHC	5	29	30	yes	1 habitable
Rasakhowa PHC	1	7	nil	no	nil ...
Dalkhola PHC	1	6	nil	no	nil

Islampur Block

Name of PHC	M.O.	Other Staff	Bed	Delivery	Quarter
Ramganj BPHC	1	20	nil	no	nil
Sujali PHC	1	5	nil	no	nil

Chopra Block

Name of PHC	M.O.	Other Staff	Bed	Delivery	Quarter
Dolua BPHC	3	21	20	yes	2 Habitable
Lakhimpur PHC	1	2	nil	no	nil
Daspara PHC	1	5	nil	no	nil

Goalpokhar I Block

Name of PHC	M.O.	Other Staff	Bed	Delivery	Quarter
Chakulia BPHC	3	16	10	yes	2 Habitable
Kanki PHC	1	9	nil	yes	1 Habitable
Torial PHC		Non Functioning			

Goalpokhar II Block

Name of PHC	M.O.	Other Staff	Bed	Delivery	Quarter
Lodhan BPHC	2	19	15	yes	2 HabiTable
Goagaon PHC	1	5	nil	no.	nil

Raiganj District Hospital (350 beded)

No. of M.O.	Nursing Staff	No. of technician	No. of GDA	No.of sweeper
35+2 (Dental M.O) & contract = 43	71	10	81	22

Other – Washerman-1, Tailor-1, Carpenter-1, Linan Keeper – nil

Islampur Sub Divisional Hospital

No. of M.O.	No. of nursing staff	No. of GDA + sweeper
22	42	71

There are 3 Leprosy Control units (comprising of one M.O. in each unit) and one District Tuberculosis Centre.

Besides district hospital, sub-divisional hospital, BPHC & PHC, there are 281 Community Health Centres in the district .

Block wise break-up of CHC in the district is as follows :

Chopra-29, Islampur-32, Goalpokhar-I–26, Goalpokhar II-26, Karandighi-39, Raiganj-48, Hemtabad – 18, Kaliyaganj-29, Itahar-34, Total – 281.

From the above block-wise data regarding health infrastructure it stands clear that the health service in rural areas is not rich, rather very poor. Rural people have to depend upon the quacks to get medical treatment even in case of dreadful diseases too.

2.16 Marketing and Storage

Availability of sound marketing and storage facilities ensures maximum sale of produced items at fair prices so that the exploitation from middlemen

can be avoided. In a poor agrarian economy like the district of Uttar Dinajpur sound marketing and storage facilities are very much essential for the development of the region. However, this district lacks such facilities. The '*hats*' in rural areas are the only source of marketing of local products. These '*hats*' are mainly dominated and controlled by the '*dalals*', *farias* and also some speculators who do not offer fair prices to the sellers or producers. In order to meet temporary monetary need the rural people have to sell their products to such types of middlemen at unfair prices just after harvesting. Since the farmers find no scope of storage of their products and are unable to wait for better prices due to their financial incapacity, they have to sell their products in the '*gramin hats*' where there are no stability of prices of the products.

There are only two cold storages in this district – one is at Islampur in Islampur sub-division and another is at Panishala in Raiganj sub-division. Farmers have to face a lot of troubles to protect and store their green vegetables and fruits for the lack of sufficient number of cold storage.

There are only two regulated market committees in the district – one is KRMC (Kaliyaganj Regulated Marketing Committee) and the other is IRMC (Islampur Regulated Marketing Committee). There are 26 sub-market yards and 210 primary markets in the district. (Directorate of Agriculture, Marketing Branch, Government of West Bengal).

2.17 Involvement of Financial Institutions in the District of Uttar Dinajpur

The economic development of a particular region or area largely depends upon how much financial support it enjoys from financial institutions. Financial institutions mobilize and channelise individual savings into investment which, in turn, creates more production and employment (absorption of reserve army) and thereby accelerates the process of economic development. There are a number of branches of commercial banks situated throughout the district, yet the number can not be called a good number as there are still hundreds of villages in the district where no branch of commercial banks exists. The remote

villages are still not having any facilities from banking system. As a result, people, specially marginal farmers, rural artisans, poor landless labourers, agricultural labourers etc. have to go to the door of moneylenders (non-institutions credit suppliers) to have credit at an exorbitant rate of interest at times of their financial need.

The district is serviced by the following banking network.

Table 2. 21(a) : Distribution of Commercial Bank Branches in the District of Uttar Dinajpur

Name of Agency	Name of Banks	No. of Branches
Commercial Banks	State Bank of India	18
	United Bank of India	10
	Central Bank of India	8
	Uco Bank	1
	Bank of India	4
	Allahabad Bank	6
	Punjab National Bank	1
Regional Rural Bank	Gour Gramin Bank	34
Central Co-Op. Bank	Raiganj Central Co-Op. Bank	7
Agriculture and Rural Development Bank.	Raiganj Agriculture and Rural Development Bank	4
	Total :	93

Source : District Credit Plan, 2003-2004 , Uttar Dinajpur District.

The progress of implementation of the credit plan for the district of Uttar Dinajpur upto the year ended on 31-3-2002 is shown below .

Table 2.21(b) :Statement Showing C/D Ratios of Different Banks in the District of Uttar Dinajpur.

Name of the Banks	No. of Branches	Total deposit	Total Adv.	C/D ratio(%)
Commercial Banks including GGB.	82	41322.11	16320.37	39.50
Raiganj Central Co-Op Bank Raiganj- Corp.	7	5791.53	5576.16	95.25
ARDB Ltd.	4	178.31	1807.27	1013.55

Table 2.21(c): Statement Showing Bank-wise and Sector-wise Disbursement of Credit upto 31-3-2003. (in lacs)

Sl. No.	Name of Bank	No. of Branches	Ag. Allied	Industries	Services	Total	% of ag. Adv. to total advances
1.	S.B.I.	18	787.07	358.74	914.09	2059.09	38.21
2.	Allahabad Bank	6	7.61	42.90	23.41	74.22	10.66
3.	B.O.I.	4	79.49	8.96	85.73	174.18	45.64
4.	C.B.I.	8	65.67	6.60	42.22	114.49	57.36
5.	P.N.B.	1	4.00	15.89	29.69	49.58	8.07
6.	U.B.I.	10	152.82	55.72	241.45	449.99	33.97
7.	U.Co. Bank	1	-	-	-	-	-
8.	G.G.B.	34	349.50	877.98	646.05	1873.53	18.65
9.	ARDB Ltd.	4	204.13	12.52	18.50	235.15	86.81
10.	RCCB Ltd	7	567.81	-	2959.29	3527.10	16.10
Total		93	2218.40	1379.31	4960.43	8558.14	-

Source: District Credit Plan, Annual Action Plan published by Lead Bank, UBI, Uttar Diunajpur 2003-04.

As we have noted earlier that the economy of the district of Uttar Dinajpur is predominantly based on agriculture, majority of the population primarily depends upon agriculture. But the Table 2.21(c) shows that only 25.92 percent of the total loan disbursed by banks was for agriculture and its allied activities. Among different commercial banks only Central Bank of India has crossed above 50 percent of the total loan disbursed for agricultural sector. It is very unfortunate that though the Regional Rural Banks (RRB's) were set up

for the upliftment of the rural economy by catering the credit need of the farming population, Gour Gramin Bank, the RRB of the district have rendered only 18.65 percent of the total loan disbursed for agriculture and allied activities.

2.18 Education

Educational institutions are regarded as one of the most powerful sources of infrastructural facilities in a particular region. The development and usage of human resources largely depend upon the level of education. High level of educational facilities ensures proper utilization of human resources and technology which , in turn, accelerate the wheel of national growth and development. Education creates consciousness among people.

However, the district of Uttar Dinajpur possesses a very low rate of educational advancement and naturally the rate of literacy in this district is very low as compared to some other districts of West Bengal.

Table 2.22 : Block-wise Break-up of Educational Institutions Students and Teachers in the District of Uttar Dinajpur-2004

Chopra Block

Type of Institution	No.of Institutions	No. of students	No. of Teachers
Primary	142	31239	237
Middle	2	497	12
High Secondary	7	5029	92
Higher Secondary	3	3495	57
College	-	-	-
P & T School & College	-	-	-

Islampur Block

Type of Institution	No.of Institutions	No. of students	No. of Teachers
Primary	152	34010	304
Middle	6	1686	36
High Secondary	3	1792	38
Higher Secondary	2	4541	37
College	-	-	-
P & T School & College	1	36	3

Islampur Municipality

Type of Institution	No.of Institutions	No. of students	No. of Teachers
Primary	18	2369	88
Middle	-	-	-
High Secondary	1	469	114
Higher Secondary	4	5597	1
College	1	1208	19
P & T School & College	-	-	-

Goalpokhar I Block

Type of Institution	No.of Institutions	No. of students	No. of Teachers
Primary	112	15062	210
Middle	5	2076	80
High Secondary	4	2518	55
Higher Secondary	2	915	37
College	-	-	-
P & T School & College	-	-	-

Goalpokhar II Block

Type of Institution	No.of Institutions	No. of students	No. of Teachers
Primary	119	19510	246
Middle	6	1518	36
High Secondary	7	4539	87
Higher Secondary	3	2375	67
College	-	-	-
P & T School & College	-	-	-

Karandighi Block

Type of Institution	No.of Institutions	No. of students	No. of Teachers
Primary	146	27365	338
Middle	5	2017	31
High Secondary	9	6763	121
Higher Secondary	4	5374	78
College	1	132	4
P & T School & College	-	-	-

Kaliyaganj Block

Type of Institution	No.of Institutions	No. of students	No. of Teachers
Primary	162	30272	535
Middle	3	723	18
High Secondary	10	6115	102
Higher Secondary	3	2848	68
College	-	-	-
P & T School & College	1	90	11

Kaliyaganj Municipality

Type of Institution	No.of Institutions	No. of students	No. of Teachers
Primary	25	4180	125
Middle	-	-	-
High Secondary	1	773	53
Higher Secondary	4	3866	89
College	1	1168	18
P & T School & College	1	124	12

Hemtabad Block

Type of Institution	No.of Institutions	No. of students	No. of Teachers
Primary	85	19436	253
Middle	2	539	12
High Secondary	8	4548	81
Higher Secondary	3	3729	59
College	-	-	-
P & T School & College	-	-	-

Raiganj Block

Type of Institution	No.of Institutions	No. of students	No. of Teachers
Primary	255	49755	273
Middle	5	1421	31
High Secondary	13	8840	160
Higher Secondary	5	4817	86
College	-	-	-
P & T School & College	2	153	15

Raiganj Municipality

Type of Institution	No.of Institutions	No. of students	No. of Teachers
Primary	48	5399	196
Middle	4	556	26
High Secondary	5	6580	75
Higher Secondary	7	7986	206
College	2	3672	56
P & T School & College	1	100	18

Itahar Block

Type of Institution	No.of Institutions	No. of students	No. of Teachers
Primary	194	36447	559
Middle	6	1476	36
High Secondary	7	3732	121
Higher Secondary	4	3246	58
College	-	-	-
P & T School & College	-	-	-

The causes for and constraints of agricultural backwardness in the district of Uttar Dinajpur.

1) Being an agriculturally based district the majority of the population of the district of Uttar Dinajpur has to depend upon agriculture. Agriculture here is not only the supplier of foodgrains to the people, but also the main source of raw materials to the industries in the district. Though it is an agri-based district, the productivity, as compared to many other districts of West Bengal, is still very low.

A busket of opinions may be cited behind the slowness of agricultural development in the study area. Some opine that slow growth of agriculture is due to the institutional deficiencies which have adversely affected the incentive to

work and invest. A set of opinions holds that due to low productivity low investment prevails. Another view holds that the rapid growth of population is a hindering factor for agricultural improvement. Whatever be the constraints, it is fact that all these factors have individually and collectively adversely affected agricultural growth. The main factors for the backwardness of agricultural growth in the district are enumerated in a nutshell as follows :

2.19 Problems of Land

Since land is a natural resource, its supply is fixed. But the agricultural land may be expanded with the usage of improved human resource and technology. In agriculture, the problems of land, labour and productivity are closely interlocked.

A good number of researches have been carried on and still many individuals and consultancy firms have engaged themselves to find out the probable solutions of agricultural problems in different countries. The Government of West Bengal had appointed a foreign consultancy firm (Mekinsay) in 2001 to prepare draft report on agricultural policy framework. The term submitted its report but the report could not be adopted since there was difference of opinion among the members of the Ministry of the Government of West Bengal. Still today there is no consensus opinion to us. Some of the opinions of experts are in this area are : S.R.Sen "The Strategy of Agricultural Development", G.D.Agarwal "Size of Agriculture Holdings – Actual and Operational", A.Rudra , " Indian Agricultural Economics, Myths and Realities", C.H.Hanumantha Rao – "The optimum firm- a Comment", N.L.Dantwala and D.R.Gadgil have established that agricultural productivity is the collective result of so many factors like the size of land holdings (ownership and operational), fragmentation of land, size of firm, man-land relation, labour relation, technology used in production, farm finance and many so. Several studies have been made on this topic and many are still to be made on this

important area. The study of agricultural land sector supplies labourer to industrial sector.

2.20 The State of Socio-Economic Environment

The district is backward in respect of education and culture. A considerable number of farmers of the district are still illiterate, ignorant, superstitious, conservative and bound with some unscientific beliefs which have practically made them to be satisfied with the present holdings of land with backdated methods of cultivation. They do not want to see and think of what is happening around them by the mercy of the usage of modern farm technology.

As the district is a non-industrial belt, the alarming growth of population has created much pressure on agriculture. Due to heavy population pressure on agriculture the size of land holdings has been becoming more and more fragmented and this fragmentation of land hinders the adoption of farm technology. Naturally, the improved human resource and capital outlays have been very difficult to be used in agriculture. So, unless or until the state of socio-economic environment is changed, the effort on the improvement of agriculture can not be effective. Recently many awareness program have been launched to make the farmers aware of the present position of agriculture in respect of cultivation method and technology. These awareness program in many cases have been effective.

2.20.1 Insufficiency of Non-farm Services

Insufficiency in the supply of non-farm services such as finance, marketing, storage, transport etc. has been one of the main hindrances of agricultural development in the district of Uttar Dinajpur. Though there are institutional sources of finance, such as, different commercial banks, Regional Rural Banks, Central Co-op Bank, Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS) etc. a large section of farming population still have to depend upon the supply of credit of moneylenders at an exorbitant rate of interest and for which in many

cases, marginal and small farmers have to sell their land to the moneylenders or to others due to the non-repayment of loan taken from moneylenders at a high rate of interest, and thus they become agricultural labourers. It is very unfortunate that inspite of so many institutional sources of credit in the district farmers have to depend upon moneylenders. It is due to the fact that institutional sources of credit, even the RRBs, which were established specially to cater to the credit need of the farming population, have been becoming more interested to finance non-agricultural sector. The rural marketing structure is very poor. Most markets are unorganized and scattered. As a result, middlemen and brokers exploit the farmers by offering cheaper prices for agricultural products. As there are only two cold storage in the district, the farmers can not store their vegetables and fruits in the storage. The capacity of the two storage is much less than the demand for space of the storage. Since the space is not available for the farmers , the farmers, specially the potato-growers, have to sell their products at a cheaper price and thus the middlemen take the price advantage of the agricultural products.

The infrastructure of rural transport is yet to be improved to a great extent. Recently the roads under RIDF and PMGSY have improved the infrastructure of rural transport.

2.20.2 Inadequate Use of Inputs

Fertiliser is one of the main ingredients of agricultural production. Farmers of the district of Uttar Dinajpur are well aware of the utility of the usage of manure in agriculture. The usage of chemical manures in agriculture has actually started after eighties. Before eighties farmers would use indigenous manures. Just before the coming of monsoon farmers used to spread cow-dung and earth dug out from tanks over the paddy land. Cow-dung and earth dug out from tanks act as manure. Couch-grasses are heaped and fired in the field and ashes of Couch-grass also act as manure. Even today such type of indigenous manures is used in agricultural operation in huge quantity. After eighties

farmers started using chemical manures for the benefits of agricultural production. The following Table shows the consumption of chemical fertilizer in the district of Uttar Dinajpur.

Table 2.23 : Fertiliser (NPK) Consumption in Uttar Dinajpur

(000 tonnes)

Year	N	P	K	Total (N + P + K)
1981-82	5.33	.16	1.28	6.77
1991-92	12.32	5.74	4.05	22.11
1996-67	16.76	6.75	3.88	27.39
1997-98	17.78	8.21	4.56	30.55
1998-99	18.56	9.68	5.4	33.64
1999-00	20.53	11.48	6.64	38.65
2000-01	17.72	10.18	6.36	34.26

Source : Directorate of Agriculture, Government of West Bengal

N - Nitrogen

P - Phosphate

K - Potash

It is evident from the Table 2.23 that the consumption of chemical fertilizer rosed to 5.06 times from 1981 to 2001. There is a steady increase in the consumption of chemical measures except in the year 2000-01 where the consumption of nitrogen, potash and phosphate has been lower than its preceding year 1999-2000. Though the consumption of chemical fertilizer in average is not satisfactory as because a large portion of cultivable land is fed with indigenous manures, it is true that farmers have realized the importance and benefits of the usage of,chemical manures. Besides, a district wise network of the distribution of chemical fertilizer has been developed. Now-a-days farmers can get chemical manures at their door step. Such availability of chemical manures has made farmers motivated to be inclined to the consumption of chemical fertilizer. Farmers consume chemical fertilizers for various reasons. Some important ones are as under ;

i) Higher productivity of crops

ii) Easy availability through distribution network

iii) Hazardous process of preparing natural manure and its transportation to the farmers' cultivable land by bullock carts/tractors etc.

iv) Availability of manures at subsidized prices . (Though a process has recently been started to lift subsidy on manures by the Government

The district is not rich in the usage of agricultural equipments. Primitive and traditional agricultural equipments are still dominant in our agriculture. As most of our farming population are marginal and small, they do not have the capacity to buy agricultural implements like tractors, power-tiller, harvestor, thrashing machine etc. According to Dr. Buchanan Hamilton- "the plough is of the wretched construction used in India, and has neither to cut the soil nor could board to turn it over." The "Moyi" is a traditional agricultural instrument which is used for levelling the tilled soil. 'Noyi' is made of two bamboos of about six feet in length. These two bamboos are joined together by some cross bars. 'Moyi' is drawn by bull and a man gives his body weight on the Moyi to break the nods of earth. 'Bida' is also a traditional agricultural instrument made of wooden teeth, which is drawn by two oxen, specially to free soil. In recent years banks are encouraging large and medium farmers to take bank loan to purchase agro-technololgy like fooder-cutters , tractors, power-tillers, thrashing machine etc. Being encouraged by bank approach many farmers took bank loan and purchased tractors. The position of tractors in the district of Uttar Dinajpur is as under.

Table 2.24 : Position of Tractors in Uttar Dinajpur.

Year	No. of Tractors
1997	846
1998	3245
1999	3530
2000	1158

Source : Home (Transport) Department., West Bengal

From the above Table 2.24 it is evident that farmers started purchasing tractors but tractors could not meet the hope of the farmers. As our agricultural land is fragmented into small plots of land, mechanized cultivation could not be successful. So, the number of tractors drastically decreased and it is seen that in 2000 the no. of tractor fell to 1158, where it was 3530 in 1999. Just after one year the figure became only 32.80 percent of the previous year. Besides, the sense of joint farming has not yet developed among our farmers.

As regards seeds, most of the farmers of the district can not afford much for purchasing high quality of seeds due to the badness of their financial capacity. On the other hand, it is also true that high quality seeds are not available in proper time.

2.20.3 Poor Irrigation System

Agriculture in the district of Uttar Dinajpur is still dominated by the vagary of nature. Most of our farmers have to depend on the mercy of monsoon. Main source of irrigation is rainfall and as the monsoon is erratic and uncertain in nature, the productivity of agricultural products can not reach the desired level.

2.20.4 Soil Erosion

Soil erosion is one of the problems of agriculture in some parts of the district of Uttar Dinajpur. There are some blocks where the fertile upper surface of agricultural land is eroded by floods or heavy rain water. Itahar,

Goalpokhar II, Kaliyaganj, Raiganj and Chopra are the blocks where every year floods cause havoc damage to the standing crops.

2.20.5 Land Tenure System

India is a land of marginal and small farmers. West Bengal cannot escape this feature. Like other districts of West Bengal the land holding pattern of the district of Uttar Dinajpur is dominated by marginal and small farmers. The land holding is highly scattered. In post-indcependence period, many land reform measures have been undertaken, first with the abolition of Zamindari System, then by the Bhoodan and Gramdan movement of Vinoba Bhave in 1951, thereafter by enacting land ceiling acts and the establishment of people's organizations such as Panchayat Raj and institutional changes. The land reform in West Bengal relating to share cropping (Bargadar) by way of giving land to the actual tillers of the land – 'a right to cultivate' was initiated in 1972 but got the Presidential accent only in 1977. The main features of the system are to empower the actual tillers (Bargadar) the right to cultivate. 'Operation Barga' acted as incentive to the sharecroppers improved their economic condition. The pattern of land holding in the district of Uttar Dinajpur is clear from the Table 2.25 given below:

Table 2.25 : Land holding pattern in the district of Uttar Dinajpur (area in hectares)

Year	Marginal		Small		Semi - Medium		Medium		Large		Total		Av. Size of holding (in ha)
	percent of holding	percent of total area	percent of Holding	percent of total Area	percent of holding	percent of total area	percent of holding	percent of total Area	percent of holding	percent of total Area	percent of holding	percent of total Area	
1985-86	62.37	23.17	21.31	29.15	13.39	33.46	2.92	14.13	0.009	0.09	100	100	1.10
1990-91	70.53	35.71	19.12	29.35	8.33	23.72	2	10.89	0.02	0.33	100	100	1.03
1995-96	71.33	40.3	19.95	30.52	7.5	22.19	1.2	6.73	0.02	100	100	100	0.95

Source : Calculated from District Statistical Handbook - 2001 Uttar Dinajpur , page 60-61

Note :

Marginal : Below 1.0 acre
Small : 1.0 acre and above but less than 2.0 acre
Semi medium : 2.0 acre and above but less than 4.0 acres
Medium : 4.0 acres and above but less 10.0 acres
Large : 10.0 acres and above
1 acres : 0.404686 hectare

The Table reveals that 83.68 percent of total land holding is with the marginal and small farmers in 1985-86 and it is 91.28 percent in 1995-96. This figure shows a sharp increase in the percentage of land holding with marginal and small farmers. This increase may be due to the following :

i) Hereditary division or transfer of land .

ii) Distribution of vested land to the landless labourers who have become marginal farmers.

iii) Semi-medium farmers are selling their land specially due to agricultural labour problem in time of harvesting.

iv) The members of the families of the semi-medium farmers are getting education. They are showing unwillingness to work in their own cultivable land. Land is being sold out and they are setting at town.

The Table shows a constant decrease in average size of holding and its probably due to heavy pressure of population on agriculture. Agriculture is absorbing additional population.

2.20.6 Inadequate Finance

Institutional sources of credit are not sufficient in the district of Uttar Dinajpur. Due to the lack of adequate availability of financial help from formal credit sources, farmers have to go to the village moneylenders for credit need. Village moneylenders charge exorbitant rate of interest. Sometimes farmers have to sell their land to the moneylenders due to non-payment of loan bearing exorbitant rate of interest. To meet the credit need of the farmers many credit delivery institutions have been established in villages, but these institutions are not sufficient to meet the credit need of the farmers.

2.20.7 Inadequate Agricultural Research

Very few researches have been conducted on agriculture in the district of Uttar Dinajpur. Since there is poor Co-ordination between the agricultural laboratory and the farmer of the district, farmers do not get latest information in regard to modern agricultural procedures. So, they have to depend upon the backdated or traditional agricultural procedures. They are not in a position to adopt new farm inputs and practices. Due to non-availability of latest agricultural information many blocks, such as Chopra, Goalpokhar I and Itahar still continue to be low productive and unstable.

2.21 Prospect of Agriculture in Uttar Dinajpur District

The district of Uttar Dinajpur is a border district of Bangladesh. The district is enriched with agricultural resources. It is very weak both in social and economic yardstick. As per Census Report, 2001, about 89 percent people of the district live in rural area. The infrastructure of the district is not developed. The rapid growth of urban population has created an alarming number of unemployed persons. Since the district is a non- industrial belt, it is the only probably way to absorb the unemployed youths in large-scale in agriculture. So, agricultural resources should be exploited in such a fashion that can mitigate the problems of unemployment. The district may be divided into two regions as follows :

2.21.1 Prospect of Agriculture in Raiganj Sub division.

Raiganj sub-division occupies an important position in agriculture. The sub-division is completely barren in mineral resources. About 78.23 percent (as per Census Report, 2001) people earn their livelihood on agriculture. In respect of sericulture the sub-division claims the first position in the district. There is

also some orchards in Hemtabad and Itahar Blocks. A large number of rural people earn their bread on sericulture in Kaliyaganj and Hemtabad blocks. Principal pulses grown in the district sub-division are gram, kalai and tur. A special quality of paddy named tulai punja' is grown in Raiganj block. This 'tulai punja' has a statewide fame for its scent and smell and sharp size. Recently some unemployed youths have organized a 'tuali show' at Salt Lake in Calcutta for its publicity and commercialization. The cultivation of Sun-flower is spreading rapidly. Agricultural crops such as sugarcane, jute, potato, mushroom, betel-peans have been identified for large-scale production.

2.21.2 Prospect of Agriculture in Islampur Sub-Division

Very recent Islampur Sub-Division has occupied a position in the map of tea in North Bengal. Chopra, Islampur and the northern part of Goalpokhar I blocks have remarkably developed in tea plantation. Islampur Sub-Division has a name in jute in the State of West Bengal. The sub-division may be divided into two parts – one with Karandighi and Goalpokhar II (Chakulia) blocks and the other with Goalpokhar I, Islampur and Chopra blocks. The second three blocks have been developing with tea plantation. The cultivation of betel-leaves, banana and pineapples has been a profitable source of income. Goalpokhar I block is also enriched with ginger production. In Chakulia block (Goalpokhar II) some farmers particularly those who came from Bangladesh in time of war in 1971, have been inclined to the cultivation of vegetables in large-scale. The cultivation of vegetables is also very profitable. The department of Agriculture, Uttar Dinajpur, has been trying to encourage the farmers to grow non-traditional agricultural products like bean, mushroom, betel-leaves, pineapples, banana plantation etc.

2.22 Summary

1. The district of Uttar Dinajpur came into existence on the 1st April, 1992, by the bifurcation of the erstwhile West Dinajpur district. The partition of the province of Bengal in August, divided the district of Dinajpur into two parts. The portion lying to the west of the province of Bengal was named West Dinajpur and the portion lying to the east of East Dinajpur, now in Bangladesh.

2. The district of Uttar Dinajpur is bound by the border of the Republic of Bangladesh except the west which is bound by the state of Bihar. There are nine blocks in the district. All the blocks except Itahar block have the border area of Bangladesh.

3. The district of Uttar Dinajpur is predominantly an agrarian district. The vast area of it is mostly inhabited by economically and socially backward sections of population comprising of mainly small farmers, marginal farmers, landless agricultural labourers, scheduled caste, scheduled tribes etc.

4. According to the Census Report 2001, the total geographical area of the district is 3140 sq. km. which is approximately 3.54 percent of the total geographical area of West Bengal.

5. The district headquarter is at Raiganj and the district has only two sub-divisions – Raiganj and Islampur.

6. The district has a total population of 241824 of which 338674 lives in urban area and 2103150 in rural area, according to the Census Report, 2001. The density of population per sq.km. is 778.

7. The sex ratio of the district of Uttar Dinajpur is 984 in 2001 i.e. 984 females per 1000 males. From Table 2.7 it is observed that the sex ratio

of the district of Uttar Dinajpur has always been higher than that of West Bengal for the last 50 years except in 1951.

8. The district of Uttar Dinajpur welcomes the annual visit of the North Wester in the months of March and April. Monsoon breaks in late May or early in June and continues upto the end of September. So, drought and flood are the common features of the district.

9. The average fertility status of the soil of the district is low nitrogen and medium phosphate content.

10. The district is situated to the north of the Tropic of Cancer and the climate is characterized by hot Summer, abundant rainfall and humid atmosphere. Summer begins from March and continues upto May. May is the hottest month of the year. The rainy season begins from June and continues up to the end of September. About 75 percent of rainfall occurs between July and September.

11. The primary occupation of the majority of the people of Uttar Dinajpur is agriculture and its allied activities. As per census, 2001, of the total working population of the district 78.23 percent are engaged in agriculture and its allied activities. The percentage in this respect was 79 in 1991 and 83 in 1981. (As revealed in Graph No.2.1). So, the continuous decrease, though very slow, indicates that some sources of income other than agriculture or employment in the rural sector are being created and people are shifting from agriculture to business or services. This is a good sign for development.

12. The percentage of landless agricultural labourers has been increasing (as revealed in chart 2.2) It reveals that the rural economy is becoming

either backward or there is no planned programme for rural development at the district level.

13. Only 39.64 percent of the total cultivable area of the district is under irrigation facilities by different sources of irrigation.

14. The district of Uttar Dinajpur is a surplus district in agricultural production. The yield-rate of principal agricultural crops in the district is on increase.

15. In respect of transportation, road transportation is the main mode of transportation. The availability of railway facilities is very much limited.

16. Electricity is one of the main items of infrastructure for economic development of an undeveloped region. 83.79 percent of the total mouzas of the district have already been electrified.

17. The district lacks sufficient facilities of health and medicines. Still the majority of the rural people have to depend upon the quacks to get medical treatment even in case of dreadful diseases.