

AN EVALUATION OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMME IN WEST BENGAL WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DAKSHIN DINAJPUR DISTRICT

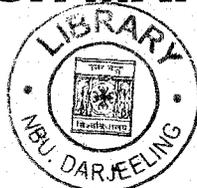
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(Sitesh Mandal)*

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Chapter-I

The Problem

1.1: Introduction

Most of the poor live in Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. Millions of children and adults in the poor households all over the world die of hunger every year and about 1/4th of the world population do not have access to safe drinking water and more than 1/4th of world population are without sanitary waste disposal facilities. About half of the world people are caught in a vicious cycle of poverty (Stutz and de Souza, 1998).

The poor of the world are overwhelmingly the people of developing countries that have failed to keep up with the economic levels of the West since the beginning of the modern colonial period in the 16th century. There are vast differences among the developing countries. Physiological density is one way in which the developing world varies. In some countries a small amount of arable land with large number of population can create poverty. There are also huge differences in wealth within countries and among people.

Human development calls for the progress of human lives and well-being. It's thus very much related to living with substantial freedoms. Freedom is associated with the ability to avoid starvation and undernourishment or to escape premature mortality. Poverty limits human freedoms and deprives a person of dignity. Human Development 2000 (OUP, UNDP, 2000) discusses in detail rights empowering people in the fight against poverty. The report specifically mentions that expanding human capabilities and securing human rights can empower people to escape poverty. Development Reports on strategies for human development ,poverty eradication and pro-poor economic growth(in 1992,1993,1996 and 1997),as the Human Development Reports 2000 mentions, point to the following elements of policy that can reduce poverty and improve human rights. These are as follows. First, the

less-developed or the developing countries should accelerate the pro-poor growth process to give more benefits to the poor. Second, the budgets of the low income countries should be restructured and should give priority on basic social services, review the priorities and remove discrimination against the most deprived. Third, poor people should be given right to take part in the decision-making processes. This requires to integrate them in the political processes. Fourth, environmental resources should be protected. The natural environment and social networks are the resources poor people use for their survival. Women and children in poorer families collect fuel wood, fodder, forest wastes etc. for their daily necessities. Sixth, there should not be any social discrimination in any form against women, ethnic minorities, racial groups. Social reforms are essential to remove all sorts of discrimination. Sixth, it is of utmost importance to secure human rights in law and these legal obligations need to be reflected in developmental and other policies.

Every country has every right to adopt more pro-poor and pro-rights policies that can accelerate poverty alleviation and the realization of human rights. For this purpose in particular, many countries have adopted serious reforms of their economic policies especially since the eighties of the last century, although it is impossible to eliminate poverty completely. If poverty is fixed, as Professor Amartya Sen argues, (The Standard of Living, The Tanner Lectures Clave Hall, Cambridge, 1985) to average income, there are some people who are relatively poor. Mack and Lansley, in their book, **Poor Britain(1985)** mentioned the speech delivered by Dr. Rhodes Boyson, Minister of Social Security in the US Parliament regarding poverty line as, "Those on the poverty line in the United States earn more than 50 times the average income of someone in India. That is what relative poverty is all about Apparently, the more people earn, the more they believe, poverty exists, presumably so that they can be pleased about the fact that it is not themselves who are poor". Amartya Sen observes that the problem of defining poverty line can be

eliminated if the standard of living is seen in terms of functionings and capabilities . Professor Sen continues “Some capabilities , such as being well nourished, may have more or less similar demands on commodities (such as food and health services) irrespective of the arrange opulence of the community in which the person lives . Other capabilities, such as the once with which Adam Smith was particularly concerned have commodity demands that vary a good deal with average opulence. Regarding good standard of living Professor Sen in his book *The standard of Living* 1985, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Lecture I, Concepts and Critiques, mentions, ‘To lead a life without shame, to be able to visit and entertain one’s friends, to keep track of what is going on and what others are talking about, and so on requires a more expensive bundle of goods and services in a society that is generally richer, and in which most people have, say, means of transport, affluent clothing, radios or television sets etc.’

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'Poverty' being a multi-dimensional concept refers to the dearth of access to a set of minimum needs for living such as food, housing, clothing, education and health facilities and many other related basic needs. Of these basic requirements the most important aspect is the food requirement. Food is in fact has the highest priority to every human being. Most of the developing countries in the world like Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia have been suffering from food insecurity. Asian nations are in fact in constant fight against poverty. We present below in table 1.1 the human poverty of some Asian nations such as Sri Lanka, China, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Table-1.1: Human Poverty in Some Developing Countries

Country	HDI rural	Human Poverty Index (HPI-1) 1998		Share of Income or Consumption			Population below income poverty line (%)	
		Rank	Value	Poorest 20% (1987-98)	Richest 20% 1987-98	Richest 20% to poorest 20% 1987-98	\$ 1 a day (1993)	National Poverty line 1987-1997
Sri Lanka	84	35	20.3	8.0	42.8	5.4	6.6	35.3
China	99	30	19.0	5.9	46.6	7.9		6.0
India	128	58	34.6	8.1	46.1	5.7	44.2	35.0
Pakistan	135	68	40.1	9.5	41.1	4.3	31.0	34.0
Bangladesh	146	70	43.6	8.7	942.8	4.9	29.1	35.6

Source: Human Development Report 2000, UNDP, OUP 2000.

Table-1.1 shows that India's human poverty index rank was 58 and the value was 34.6 in 1998. Sri Lanka's position was relatively better in 1998. Its HDI rank was 35 and value was 20.3. China's rank and value were 30 and 90.0 respectively. Pakistan and Bangladesh's position was bad. Pakistan's rank and value were 68 and 40.1. The position of Bangladesh was very bad. Its HDI rank was 70 and the value was 43.6.

Government of India, since its independence, has been trying to alleviate mass poverty with the help of a number of anti-poverty programmes especially since

the adoption of Five-Year Plans. Just after our independence, we found that for about 60 per cent of our total mass remained under abject poverty. The mass poverty has severely affected the Indian economy. The greater stress on alleviating poverty was undertaken especially since 1980-81 when our Sixth Five-Year Plan was in operation. During the Sixth Plan, the Planning Commission tried to evolve a poverty management technique as well as identifying the really poor as a target group. Accordingly, a number of programmes such as IRDP, MNP, NREP etc. were undertaken. The objective of adopting several anti-poverty measures apart from reducing poverty, is to narrow down economic inequality.

In India, especially since our independence, we have clearly noticed two diverse sections of people: One section enjoys the benefit of modern civilisation, while other section possesses nothing excepting its labour power for survival. Very often we frequently put a question. The question is: Whether the difference between the haves and the have-nots over time has been reduced or widening? Since the beginning of our first plan efforts have been made to deliver the fruits of development to every member in the society. But it has become a sorry state of affairs. It is the fact that the gap between the rich and the poor has been widened. The basic reasons for such an event are two-fold, i.e., the right to private property and the law of inheritance. Being a mixed economy India allows a person to hold private property, i.e., everyone has the right to hold land, factories and all factors of production. The possession of property by a section of people increased economic inequality among different people. The law of inheritance is, in fact, gives rise to income inequality. According to this law the son of a labour becomes ultimately a labour and the son of a landlord becomes

the landlord in course of time.

Twin problem, that is, the problem of poverty and unemployment has affected our economy very badly. Under such an impasse, India, had adopted new economic policy with the hope of reducing poverty and unemployment and increasing the standard of living by providing employment to them. As a part of new economic policy trade liberalisation was done in 1991 as a powerful tool in fostering economic development and reducing poverty. The supporters of free trade argue that unrestricted trade lowers the cost of bare minimum necessities like food and clothing, discourages corruption and allows democracy to develop. All these, according to them, lead to a better quality of life.

The new policy regime which opened the Indian economy radically pushed forward in favour of a more open and market oriented economy. Major changes that took place during the new economic policy were scrapping of the industrial licensing regime, reduction in the number of areas reserved for the public sector, amendment of the monopolies and the restrictive trade practices out, open up of the privatization programme, reduction in tariff rates and change over to market determined exchange rates. Thus the major items that have benefited the countries and opening up of world trade, advancement of means of communications, internationalization of financial markets, growing importance of multinational corporations', migration of population and free modility of labour, capital, goods, data and knowledge.

Globalization has helped escalating the trade and investment and due to this poverty has much reduced globally. This has at the same time increased income inequality within countries and between countries. Supporters of globalization believe that poverty can be reduced through the process of globalization. There may be other factors such as good national policies, role of sound institutions, and domestic political stability that may help in

the reduction of poverty.

1.2: Statement of the Problem

Poverty is a social evil in which a section of the community fails to achieve even its bare minimum necessities. Mass poverty is closely associated with the developing countries where a large section of the total population is being deprived of food, nutrition, education and other minimum needs. The US government defined the poverty line to be the minimum adequate standard of living. The poverty is thus related to 'minimum needs' which refers to the lack of access to a set of minimum needs for living.

Our analysis of poverty in the Indian context can be segregated into two parts: The first part is a description of the state of poverty for a period of 40 years since 1951 and the second part covers the state of affairs during the reformed regime (from 1991-2001). The core of our analysis will begin with the compilation, tabulation and analysis of data collected from the field survey. The problem that this study has investigated is that it evaluates the poverty alleviating programmes in the grassroots economy of Dakshin Dinajpur and to find out any shortcomings of implementing various government programmes, if any, and finally to build a model in which no member of the village economy is in a state of poverty and every member is in a position of enjoying the benefits of new technology.

1.3: Hypotheses tested

This study has sought to test the following hypotheses in the course of our investigation. The first hypothesis we want to test is that poverty has declined

over time. This may be due to the fact that in last forty years or so, a number of anti-poverty programmes have been adopted for the removal of poverty. This hypothesis is tested with the help of secondary as well as primary data. The validity of this hypothesis depends on the data to be collected in an unbiased manner. The second hypothesis is that the benefits of anti-poverty measures have not reached to all the poor equiproportionally. This may be due to the fact that due to politicisation the benefits are not distributed equally among the poor irrespective of their political parties. The result of such a test purely depends on the grassroots data we will be collecting from the grassroots level.

The third hypothesis that we want to test is that globalisation has harmed the poor. The results again will be data based and independent of likes and dislikes of the investigator. The conditions of success of various anti-poverty programmes will also be looked into. Fourth hypothesis is that the non-governmental organisations play a vital part in alleviating poverty. In the course of our study we will particularly look into the role of NGOs in improving the conditions of the poor. The result here again is data based.

1.4: Research Design, Sample Size and Data Collection

Poverty, as we all know, is related with population and unemployment. Poverty, at root, is the absence of human freedom and development, in one hand and on the other hand, is the fruit of human freedom. Our study will be concentrated in a backward district of North Bengal, viz., Dakshin Dinajpur. Since it is not possible to cover the whole district by a single research scholar we have just taken four village panchayats(GPs)- two are in Balurghat subdivision and two are in Gangarampur subdivision. The two village panchayats in Balurghat

subdivision are Patiram Gram Panchayat and Chakbhrigu Gram Panchayat. The sample GPs under Balurghat subdivision are Chalkvrigu and Patiram. From Chalkvrigu GP we have selected and surveyed five villages for detailed study and the respective selected number of households are 50,40,50,75 and 27. Two villages have been purposively selected from Patiram GP and the households chosen from each village are 100 and 54 respectively. The sample gram Panchayats of Gangarampur subdivision is Sukdevpur Gram Panchayat and Uday gram Panchayat. The selection of sample village panchayats is purely purposive. The villages thus selected under Sukdevpur GP are Katabari from where we have selected randomly 48 households. The second village we selected following the same technique is Daspur and from this village 73 households have been chosen. The third village is Sukdevpur and from it we have selected 100 households. Thus, from Sukdevpur GP the total number of households are 221. The second GP under Gangarampur subdivision is Uday GP in which four villages have been selected for detailed investigation. The villages are Ausha, Pulinda, Panchagram and Hajichak and the households finally chosen are 56,100,21 and 21 respectively. Total households under Chalkvrigu GP are 242 and from Patiram GP the number of households is 154. In all, the total households under Balurghat subdivision are 396. Thus, total households are 815 in the district of Dakshin Dinajpur.

1.5: Methods followed and techniques used

We have chosen Dakshin Dinajpur district for the purpose of surveying the farm families. Two subdivisions, as we just mentioned above, in which two GPs from each subdivision have been selected. In selecting the sample households we collected the BPL list from

the respective block development offices. From such lists we have randomly select the sample households. We have collected data from each household asking questions that were framed in the questionnaire schedules. After tabulation, we have used simple statistical techniques such as average, variance, standard deviation, etc. to test the hypotheses. We will again compare our results with the official results.

1.6: The Measurement of Poverty

Longevity, educational attainment and standard of living are the three indicators in measuring the human development index (HDI). Longevity is measured by life expectancy at birth and educational attainment is measured by the combination of the adult literacy rate (2/3rd weight) and the combined gross primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment ration (1/3 weight) Standard of living as measured by GDP per capita (PPP US \$).

Fixed minimum and maximum values

Life expectancy at birth: 25 years and 85 years and 85 years

Adult literacy rate (age 15 and above): 0% and 100%

Combined gross enrolment ration: 0% and 100%

GDP per capita (PPP US\$): \$ 100 and \$ 40,000 (PPP US \$)

HDI index is calculated as follows.

$$\text{Index} = \frac{\text{Actual value} - \text{minimum value}}{\text{Maximum value} - \text{minimum value}}$$

'Poverty' being a multi-dimensional concept refers to the dearth of access to a set of minimum needs for living such as food, housing, clothing, education and health facilities and many other related basic needs. Of these basic requirements, the most important aspect

is the food requirement. Food is in fact has the highest priority to every human being.

The concept of 'minimum need' is very important in the context of 'poverty line'. This issue of minimum needs came up first in the Indian Labour Conference in 1957. A working group set up by the Planning Commission advocated the national minimum consumer expenditure at Rs.20 per capita per month at 1960-61 prices to provide a minimum calorie intake. This does not include expenses on health and education which is to be provided by the State. The expert group suggested Rs.25 per capita per month for the urban area. Dandekar and Rath(1971) recommended a per capita daily intake of 2,250 calories as poverty line for rural and urban areas. On the basis of the NSS data on consumer expenditure, they showed that Rs.14.20 at 1960-61 price index would be sufficient to meet the above requirement of calorie intake in rural areas and for the urban areas it was Rs.22.60. Later on, Dandekar and Rath revised the rates at Rs.15.00 and Rs.22.50, respectively.

The Planning Commission, in 1977, defined poverty line as the mid-point of the monthly per capita expenditure having a daily calorie intake of 2400 per person in rural areas and 2100 in urban areas (fixed by applying the weighting diagram, worked out within the framework of category-specific calory norms recommended by the Nutrition Expert Group (NEG, 1968). Poverty Cut-Off Line used by the Planning Commission was also used during the sixth plan to measure the poverty line recommended by the Task Force. Based on this, a number of anti-poverty programmes were initiated.

1.7: Tentative Chapters

The tentative breakup of the study will be as under:

Chapter- I: The Problem

Chapter-II: The Review of Literature

Chapter-III Poverty-Alleviating Programmes in India

Chapter-IV: Poverty Analysis in India

Chapter-V: Poverty Scenario in West Bengal

Chapter-VI: Our Village Level Study: Findings

Chapter -VII: A Comparison of Our results with Official Results

Chapter-VIII: Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Chapter II

Review of Literature

2.1: Introduction

This chapter attempts to review important studies on poverty. These help us understand the problem of poverty and solutions of eradicating poverty completely from the world by 2020. Our main concern in this investigation is to enter into the detailed discussion on the problems of poverty in a backward district of the state of West Bengal and find out the concrete solutions to the problem. For this purpose, we have reviewed in this chapter the existing literature on poverty.

2.2: The Review

The problems of minimum needs along with the concept of poverty line came into focus in the Indian Labour Conference in 1957. The Nutrition Advisory Committee of the Indian Council of Medical Research (1958) pleaded for the minimum consumer expenditure at Rs. 20/- per person per month at 1960-61 prices to provide a minimum nutritional diet other than food in terms of calorie intakes. This excludes expenditure on two important items, e.g., health and education which were supposed to be provided by the state. The study group also suggested fixing Rs. 25/- per person per month for the urban areas. The explanation offered for this was that the cost of living in the urban areas was much more than in the rural areas.

Professor V.M. Dandekar and N. Rath (1970) estimated that 25.5 million people were below the poverty line in 1967-68. Their estimation was based on the NSS data on consumer expenditure. They defined the minimum level as

Rs.15/- for the rural population and Rs. 22.5/- for the urban areas at 1960-61 prices.

The quantitative index of poverty was formulated by the Task Force on Projection of Minimum Needs and Effective Consumption Demand set up by the Planning Commission in 1977 defines poverty line as the mid-point of the monthly per capita income expenditure in terms of 2400 calories food intake per person per day in rural areas and 2100 calories in urban areas. Many economists were working many other studies on the extent of poverty. Notable among them were B.S. Minnas, P.K. Bardhan, M.S. Ahluwalia and S.P. Gupta. B.S. Minnas estimated poverty line based on the NSS and Working Class Consumer Price Index Number data. He found that in 1968-69, 55 per cent of the rural population and 41 per cent of the urban population were under the poverty line. He also estimated that there had been a steady decline of the people living below the poverty line from 65 per cent in 1960-61 to 50.6 per cent in 1967-68. He took Rs. 17/- as the per capita consumption expenditure as poverty line in rural areas in which he used gross national product (GNP) deflator to explain the extent of poverty. P.K. Bardhan (1970) criticised the use of GNP deflator by Minnas. This included both the agricultural and industrial goods and since the expenditure on the manufacturers represents much smaller proportion of the budget of the rural poor than the national average, it might understate the rise in prices paid by them. Bardhan's study shows that the proportion of rural poor increased from 38 per cent in 1960-61 to 54 per cent in 1968-69. Another estimate by P.D. Ojha (1970) shows that rural poverty was 51.8 per cent in 1966-67 and it was only 7.6 per cent in the urban areas at 1960-61 prices. In all, 44 per cent of the total

population was below the minimum level of subsistence in 1967-68.

Ahluwalia's study (1977) estimated that in 1956-57 the rural poverty was 54.1 per cent which came down to 38.9 per cent in 1960-61. It took Rs. 15 as the poverty line at 1960-61 prices. Ahluwalia estimated that in 1973-74 about 46.1 per cent of the total rural population was under poverty. Thus the study covered a period of 16 years from 1957-58 to 1973-74.

The sixth five-year plan (1980-85) has laid down stress on alleviating poverty and accordingly the Planning Commission in India tried to evolve a poverty management techniques as well as identifying the really poor as a target group. Accordingly, a number of programmes such as integrated rural development programme (IRDP), NREP and MNP were adopted to solve the problems of poverty and unemployment. The estimate of poverty during this period was made on the basis of 38th round NSS data (1983).

has declined quite substantially in some states (e.g., in Kerala from 25.8 to 9.4 per cent, in Haryana from 28.0 to 8.3 per cent, in Himachal Pradesh from 30.3 to 7.9 per cent, in Bihar from 58.2 to 44.3 per cent), but there are some states (e.g., in Madhya Pradesh from 40.8 to 37.1 per cent, in Orissa from 49.7 to 48.0 per cent, in Punjab from 12.0 to 6.4 per cent), this decline is not too fast.

Thamarajakshi(1989) has tried to find the implications of the structural changes which have taken place in the Indian economy for employment generation. He has also examined the labour absorption potential in agriculture sector. He has calculated the employment elasticities and found that the elasticity has declined in agriculture and allied sectors from 0.81 to 0.55. It has trebled in mining and manufacturing and doubled in other sectors. Despite the decline in employment elasticities, the author has found, the agriculture continued to be the dominant

sector of labour absorption in absolute as well as relative terms. Out of total employment created of the order of 287.4 millions in the Indian economy in 1983, agriculture absorbed 196.7 millions. It was about 68 percent of the workforce.

Sundaram and Tendulkar(2003) in their study has made an analysis of changes in fifteen major states of India across four distinct dimensions of headcount ratio, size of the poor population, depth and severity for the rural, the urban and the total population. The data, they analyzed, show that the poverty situation worsened over the six-year period starting from 1993-94 to 1999-2000 in Assam, Madhya Pradesh, and Orissa. In other twelve states it improved in terms of the absolute size of the poor population.

Krishna, Kapila, Porwal and Singh (2003) studied twenty villages of Vadodara and Panchmahals districts in Gujarat. The study showed that every little progress had been noticed on the overall of the economy and progress of the population over the last 25 years. 59 percent of the households in this area were poor 25 years ago and the members in the 57 percent households remain poor today. The gigantic growth in the economy of Gujarat has failed to improve economic conditions of the poor people living there. Only 9.2 percent households in all the 20 villages are able to escape from poverty. Another 7.3 percent households have become poor at the same time. It thus appears that only two percent people have come out successful in eradicating the poverty in the last twenty years. The paper has made this estimation of poverty on the basis of caste, such as sc, st, obc, muslim and general category people. The analysis shows that sc, st and obc category people remain poorer compared to other category people. The economic

conditions of a significant percentage of population under these categories have improved ;but at the same time also a significant percentage of them have become poorer during the last 25 years.

Sundaram(2001) has reviewed the employment and poverty in 1990s on the basis of results from NSS 55th Round(Employment-Unemployment Survey,1999-2000).He basically offers a detailed industrial distribution of the workforce based on the additional tables provided by the NSS 55 the Round. The paper examined the evidence on average daily wage earnings from the NSS quinquennial Employment-Unemployment Surveys for 1983,1993-94,1999-2000.The author also examined the evidence from the Employment-Unemployment Survey, on the issue of changes in the incidence of poverty on the basis the size-distribution of per capita consumption emerging from the canvassing of an abridged consumer expenditure schedule from the sample households surveyed in the 55th Round Employment-Unemployment Survey. The author has found the results on unemployment as follows.1.An increase in the current daily status unemployment rate in three of the four population segments, with urban women as the sole exception. The increase in the daily status unemployment rate has been the steepest for rural males. It was 29 percent. This was in fact an increase due to a change in the status composition of the workforce and a conversion of the underemployment of the erstwhile self-employed into open unemployment of the casual labourers.2.The has been a reduction in the unemployment rates on the usual principal status for the educated in almost all the four population segments.3.There has been an increase in the self-perceived underemployment captured by a reduction in the proportion of usual status workers who had not sought additional work over the 1990s.The author also makes an estimate the



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proportion of population in house-holds below the poverty line, by gender, age, and rural-urban location, at the all-India level, for 1993-94 and 1999-2000 based on the distribution of population by per capita consumer expenditure size-classes derived from the Employment-Unemployment Surveys for 1993-94 and 1999-2000. At the all-India level, the results of 55th Round show that there is a decline in the proportion of population in households that lie below the poverty line. The same holds true, in terms of the proportion of households below the poverty line, for all the households distinguished by reference to their principal means of livelihood.

Pradeep Kumar Panda (2003), in his study has established linkages between poverty and young women's employment in the context of Kerala. This study attempts to explore the interlinkages between marital status, economic conditions and the employment of the women in Kerala. It is true that women's position in Kerala is relatively better. This is historically The Analysis provides strong proved (Agarwal, 1994a, 1994b). This mainly is due to the practice of matrilineal system. This allows inheritance rights among women and provides natal family support for daughters before and after marriage. Not only have this women in Kerala had access to education from long back. The data for this study have been collected from young women in Thiruvananthapuram district comprising 500 houses on 630 single and currently married women. The data collected show that single and married women have a comparatively higher rate of employment than the married women, that is, 42 percent against 27 percent. The data also show that there exists a U-shaped pattern of relationship between women's current employment status and class status. It is noticed that at the both ends of the class

spectrum, more proportion of women are employed in the paid labour force. The logit models have been applied and these show that there are important differences by marital status in the effects of women's employment among the four groups of explanatory variables. The analysis provides strong confirmation for the importance of marital status when considering young women's employment in Kerala. In case of single women, poverty increases the likelihood of paid work without significant effect at the upper end of the class spectrum. The author has suggested for the adoption of employment-supportive policies by the state for improving women's economic positions.

Bardhan(1973)examined the incidence of poverty in rural India during 1960 and for this purpose he analysed the NSS data for 1967-68 and 1968-69.In his paper ,Professor Bardhan mentioned the effect of two consecutive droughts Indian farmers witnessed in 1965-66 and 1966-67 on the rural population. He found some discrepancy in official data and the NSS data regarding the estimate of rural per capita consumption in 1967-68 (deflated by the national income deflator with 1961-62 as base).The NSS estimate of rural per capita consumption in 1967-68 was below the corresponding NSS estimate for 1960-61.The official estimatefor 1967-68, the author noted,was about 4 percent above that for 1960-61.The author stated that this might not be sufficient to claim that the official data were superior to that of the data provided by the NSS.In this paper the author noted that for further progress in measurement of the extent of rural poverty in India it would be appropriate to depend on a more intensive and systematic study of the differences in the total consumption estimates provided by the two separate sources,that is,the official source and the NSS source,

construction of more appropriate consumer price indices for the bottom fractile groups of the population and the specification of more satisfactory minimum diets taking account of regional and demographic variations in the population.

Gebert(1989),in her paper, presented data, conducting survey in twenty villages in two blocks of central Tamil Nadu during 1985 and 1986.It was found that once the milk society president had a society in operation, he had an important effect on the beneficiaries of the IRDP to increase the chances of making more profit. There were twelve operating milk societies in one of the two blocks in 1985.The other block had a large number of private vendors in charge of loans from the programme's earlier years. It was found that there existed factional rivalry in the village. This highlighted the way in which the village leaders tended to use political connections as it suited them to further their own ends in the village.In this study the author considered the loan broking milk society presidents as important figures in IRDP's implementation. The milk brokers were the important actors both in the process of allocating IRDP's resources and in determining its impact. It was observed in this study that the smaller the difference in socio-economic status between the president and the beneficiaries, the better chance the latter had to challenge authority of the former.

Human Development Report 2000(UNDP, Oxford University Press,2000) emphasizes that economic growth is a means to human well-being and to the expansion of human freedoms. This is a means; but the ends are realizing human rights and furthering human development through implementing pro-poor growth strategies. The Human Development Report 2000 states that and we also admit that poor people depend largely on public provisioning, natural environmental resources and employment for their livelihoods. But very few of them are

informed about the government policies and economic programmes. Not only this very few of them can express their personal views on the targeted for their development. In this context, the UNDP's Poverty Report 2000 mentions, 'holding governments accountable is a bottom-line requirement for good governance'. This thus requires that every citizen should be properly informed about the policy initiatives undertaken by the government targeting the poor people.

Chatterjee (1998), in his paper reviewed some of the existing studies on the incidence of poverty in West Bengal. The review period was two decades, i.e. 1970s and 1980s. The author found that the level and the rate of growth of per capita state domestic product (SDP) of the state of West Bengal consistently lagged behind the per capita GDP for India measuring at 1980-81 prices. The trend growth rate of SDP during 1970-71 to 1988-89 was 3.24 percent which was low if compared with India's GDP during the same period of time. The GDP for the country as a whole was 4.17 during the same period of time. The percentage deviation of per capita SDP of West Bengal from the per capita GDP for India consistently widened during 1970s and 1980s. This indicated a relative deceleration in West Bengal's standard of living vis-à-vis the all India average. The relative growth performance in the industries in West Bengal had been slow compared to India since 1970s. It became worsened since 1980s. The author analysed the implications of all-India or inter-state poverty studies on the poverty scenario in the state of West Bengal. The aggregative state level scenario as portrayed by these studies had been contrasted with the grass roots level picture of rural poverty as it had been brought out by some of the case studies based on household surveys. The author tried to establish the implication of all the studies for formulation of anti-poverty policies in West Bengal.

Bardhan and Mukherjee (2003) examined in their paper (Report of a project on land

reforms and decentralization in West Bengal funded by Mac Arthur Foundation and the Guggenheim Foundation, 2003). The poverty eradicating effort of West Bengal panchayats, comprising implementation of land reforms and pro-poor targeting of credit, agricultural minikits, employment generating programmes and fiscal grants. Four panchayat administrations and 89 villages were included in this survey. The survey results found very high level efforts of the poverty alleviating programmes in the state of West Bengal and at the same time there existed significant variations both across and within villages over time. The sample of 89 villages spread through 15 districts of West Bengal. The survey excluded Kolkata and Darjeeling. The data collected and presented in tables indicated that by mid-1980s all the villages were under the IRDP programme. The data also showed that the average level of targeting to the intended beneficiaries was quite high. Also it was noticed that there was a bias in the inter-village allocation of IRDP loan operating against landless and SC/ST households. Biases were also noticed in the inter-village allocation. In the case of minikit distribution, variation was found. It was observed how intra and inter-village targeting varied with village characteristics. The political biases were more prominent in the allocation of resources across villages rather than within villages.

Ray (2008) criticized the then Left Front Government for its inability to control and minimize the level of unemployment, poverty and hunger in the state of West Bengal. The author blamed the government of West Bengal because the government failed to take up effective measures to combat hunger and poverty in West Bengal. To fight against poverty, the state government identified 4,612 villages as 'backward' and these villages were mostly located in the districts of Purulia, Uttar Dinajpur, Maldah, Dakshin Dinajpur and West Midnapore. The selection of village, the author noted, was arbitrary. One of the criteria for selecting the villages was that the village should have female literacy rate below 30 percent. The other feature in selecting a backward village was that marginal workers and non-

workers would constitute more than 60 percent of the village population. The author reviewed a survey conducted by the Government of West Bengal in 2007. This survey was conducted in the state-designated 'backward villages' by the panchayats and rural development department. The survey came to the conclusion that about 20 percent of the people in those selected villages received only 'one meal' a day. The NSSO survey 61st round, assessed at around 9 percent of the total population. The panchayati raj institutions are being run in West Bengal, the author noted, in a most democratic way and they are implementing various anti-poverty programmes. The major expectation from the democratic panchayati raj institutions is that every individual within the respective gram panchayat must be totally free from hunger and mal-nutrition. But the reality is completely opposite, the author noted.

Income inequality, food insecurity and poverty prevail in India as well as different states of India. Karmakar and Sarkar (2004) made an extensive study based on rural West Bengal. This study shows that there remains an inequality in terms of share of income and population in case of agricultural and non-agricultural income among different income sub-groups. The study was conducted in Birbhum district of the state of West Bengal. Primary data were collected by personal interview with the help of pre-tested household schedule following a multistage stratified random sampling technique. The households thus selected had been based on different categories of landholdings. The categories of landholdings are marginal, small, medium, large and landless. The headcount ratio has been employed to measure the proportion of poor in a village.

The proportion of poor (Po) has been calculated as follows.

$$P_o = \frac{NP}{N}$$

Where Po	=	Proportion of poor
Np	=	Total number of poor
N	=	Total Population or Sample

The authors measured the poverty gap/food insecurity gap to identify the severity of poverty/ food insecurity. Data analysis shows that marginal farmers constitute 31.33 percent of the total population but the inequality in the share of population and income is only 26.01 percent in which only 1.36 percent comes from agriculture and the rest i.e. 21.68 percent comes from non-agriculture. Small (9.0 percent) and medium (2.67 percent) firms enjoy 9.9 percent and 10.32 percent share respectively. The size-class inequality in the share of population and household income has been shown in the following table-2.1.

Table-2.1: Size-class inequality in the share of population and income

Category	Share in population (%)	Agriculture Income	Share in income (%)	
			Non-agriculture income	Total income
Marginal	31.33	1.36	24.68	26.04
Small	9.00	1.69	8.21	9.90
Medium	2.67	2.57	7.75	10.32
Landless	57.00	-	53.74	53.74
Overall	100.00	5.62	94.38	100.00

Source: Karmakar and Sarker, 2014

The monthly per capita income and expenditure, as the author explained, on food by the medium farmers is highest in absolute terms and lowest in percentage terms. Mean income is largest in marginal farmers followed by small and landless households. These are shown in table 2.2.

Table-2.2: size-class income and food expenditure inequality

Size-Class	Income	Mean (Rs) Food expenditure	Medium (Rs)		Food expediting (%) of monthly income
			Income	Food Expenditure	
Marginal	533.08	408.80	339.17	377.13	76.69
Small	580.45	429.14	335.07	404.42	73.93
Medium	1988.36	936.01	1839.03	964.13	47.07
Landless	644.95	352.63	522.92	341.20	54.68
Overall	639.91	381.85	462.50	350.88	59.67

Source: Karmaker and Sarkar, 2014

The study concludes that the severity of poverty and food insecurity may not depend on the house holding size itself. It may depend on other factors and this again requires further detailed study.

Dev and Ranade (1998) in their interlinked between the abnormal rise in food prices and that of rural poverty. In their paper they also tried to find out the reasons for which a group of poor people were mostly hurt by rising relative price of food. The authors examined the distributional impact of relative price of food. They pointed out that due to adverse distributional effect of relative price of food poor were hurt more than the non-poor. It was also found that a majority of rural population was hurt by a rise in relative price of food. The poverty was intensified, as the authors noted, with the rise in food prices. The persons in rural areas below poverty line and below calorie norm been presented in table -2.3 below.

Table-2.3: Persons in rural areas below poverty line and below calorie norm, 1983, 1987-88 and 1993-94

	1983	1987-88	1993-94
Below official poverty line	45.7	39.1	37.3
Below the calorie norm (2440Kcal)	66.6	65.8	70.0
Gap between the two norms	21.1	26.7	32.7

Source: Government of India (1993) and Draft 9th Five Year plan

The authors here also discussed the issue of rising food price and the benefit the rural poor derived. In this context, they examined the link between terms of trade and investment in agriculture and theories that link wages to food prices. During pre-reform agriculture witnessed adverse terms of trade because so much protection to industry, overvalued exchange rate and rigid controls on export and so on. During post liberalizing period due to increasing by favorable terms of trade for agriculture private investment was attracted in more amount into agriculture. This would lead to growth in output and demand for rural labour which again would lend to reduction in rural poverty in India.

Maheshwari (2002) found that rural poverty rose sharply in 1992. She investigated whether the rise in poverty was due to bad weather conditions or due to new economic reforms. In this paper the author evaluated the relative impact of weather – related factors, fiscal contraction and food grain prices on rural poverty. It was found that the impact of adverse weather conditions was the main reason for the decline in food grain production. Due to deficiency in rainfall and the consequent decline in food grain product in 1991-92, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andra Pradesh and Haryana came out as rainfall deficient states. But it was noticed that poverty in Haryana did not decline. In West Bengal and Punjab also foodgrain production did not decline in 1991-92. The impact of liberalization, the author explained, was captured mainly through the changes in per

capita government expenditure. In 1993-92, the author analysed for most of the states food grain production increased compared with 1991-92. But in Kerala, Orissa and Rajasthan there was a decline in food grain production of around 12 percent. The price rise, as noticed, was not only due to bad weather conditions but also due to changes in structural adjustment-related government policy.

Sundaram (2001) discussed the issue of employment and poverty in India in 1990s and also in this connection, he discussed the NSS 55th round Employment – Unemployment Survey, 1999-2000. The author in this paper gave a thorough description of industrial distribution of the workforce as well as an occupation distribution of the workforce based on the additional table from the NSS 55th Round Employment – Unemployment Survey. It was found that in all population segments the crude worker population ratios for 1999-2000 were lower. The decline in work population ratios were not offset by any significant rise in the ratio of unemployed in the population, so that crude labour force ratios would also show a decline between 1993-94 and 1999-2000 in all the population segments. The decline in worker-population ratios reflected a rise in the student – population ratio. In all the four population segments a decline over time, in the WPRs in the open-ended age-group '60 and above', the author found, was to be expected with the rising of the older (65 years and above) population. This was true for both the urban and rural females. For both rural males and females there was an unusual increase in WPR, in the 60 and above age-group between 1987-88 and 1993-94. This exaggerated the decline in WPRs in this open-ended age-group between 1993-94 and 1999-2000. In the case of rural women the decline in WPRs in the age-group of 25 and above was due to decline in WPRs on the subsidiary status. As regards unemployment status, only in the case of urban women the unemployment rate among them was not increasing. But in other three categories of population there was an increase in the current daily status of unemployment rate. The increase in the daily status unemployment

rate for rural males had been steepest. It was 29 percent. This was due to a change in the status composition of the workforce and a conversion of the unemployment of the underemployment of the erstwhile self-employed into open unemployment of the casual labourers. The author presented in table 2.4 below the estimates of the proportion of population in households below the poverty line by gender, age and rural-urban location, at all India level, for 1993-94 and 1999-2000.

Table-2.4: Proportion of Population in BPL Households by Gender, Age and Rural – Urban Location: All India (1993-94 to 1999-2000)

Households	1993-94			1999-2000		
	Children (0-14)	Adults (15 +)	All Ages	Children (0-14)	Adults (15 +)	All Ages
Rural Males	45.43	34.45	38.66	42.31	31.17	35.55
Rural Females	46.85	36.08	39.96	45.64	32.63	37.34
Rural Persons	46.10	35.09	39.36	43.89	31.90	36.35
Urban Males	37.44	25.09	29.14	36.42	23.57	27.68
Urban Females	39.69	27.69	31.69	39.41	25.53	29.83
Urban Persons	38.51	26.33	30.37	37.84	24.51	28.76
Male	43.62	31.95	36.26	40.98	29.07	33.52
Female	45.22	33.96	37.94	44.25	30.76	35.47
Persons	44.37	32.96	37.13	42.54	29.90	34.42

Source: 1993-94: Results of Employment Situation in India, 5th Quinquennial Survey, NSS 50th Round (July 1993 June 1994). Sarvekshana, Vol.20. No.1 July- September 1996

1999-2000: Results of Employment – Unemployment in India, 1999-2000, NSS 55th Round July 1999 June 2000.

Poverty Lines (Rs. Per Capita Per Month) during 1993-94 was as follows: Rural: 211.30,

Urban: 274.88 and during 1999-2000 it was: Rural: 325.46 ,Urban: 451.19.

The author after analyzing NSS data found that at the all-India level the prevalence of Poverty in India had declined over 1990s; but that was not uniform across all the major states. In the major 15 states, poverty had declined between 1993 - 94 and 1999-2000 both in rural and the urban areas but in other seven states poverty ratios had either remained unchanged or had increased over the 1990s.

Rajasekhar and Satapathy (2006) in their paper made an assessment of a major anti-poverty programme for women in India. They made a detailed study on the SGSY and its role to reduce poverty among the rural women through the provision of self-employment activities among them, particularly among the poor women in self help groups. They also found that in every case the fund released for this purpose was less than the actual allocation made.

The progress in the formation of SGSY groups from 1999-2003 was analysed in detail and also the gradation of groups, which is an important component of this scheme, was given. This was important because it gives us a developmental status of the group. The authors also analysed the progress in the number of swarojgaris by purpose for which loan was utilized during 2003-04 was also analysed. The authors found a steady growth of the self- help groups among the rural women including disadvantaged group. The total number of such groups was 3 lakh in the first year of its formation and by 2003-04 there were 48.48 lakh SGSY groups in the country as a whole. Many loopholes, in the programme , were identified also by the authors.

Chapter-III

Poverty-Alleviating Programmes in India

3.1: Introduction

India lacked most of the basic infrastructure when it became independent after a long colonial exploitation. The traditional industries were destroyed and there was no industrialization at all. Per capita income was very poor and also low was the labour productivity as compared to the rest of the world. Poverty was very high, nearly 70 percent and its trading relation with other countries was completely unfavourable. Under such a palpitating conditions of the economy and society India adopted her planning in 1951 with the objectives of increasing the per capita income, raising the standard of living of the people and reducing economic dependence to external sources. These objectives were later translated into a development strategy, the aim of which was to build fast the capital capacity of the basic and infrastructure industries through the increase in the growth of domestic savings and investments.

India had two strands of received theory and economic thinking on employment- there was the Keynesian framework emphasizing expansion of effective demand, consumption-led investment and multiplier effects on output and employment and there was the conventional neoclassical approach primarily relying upon the flexibility of wage rates and wage levels as a mechanism for clearing the labour market.

Both the approaches were not favoured by the mainstream Indian economists and policy planners. The conventional neoclassical approach was found inadequate, as employment generation on the basis of lowering the already miserably low wages, even if possible, was not acceptable. The Keynesian approach was also found inapplicable for the same as well as some other reasons. It assumed the existence of excess capacity in the form of capital equipment and elastic supply of capital for investment in response to an increase in effective

consumption demand. These assumptions were not found valid in the case of an underdeveloped economy like India. Besides, the nature of unemployment in India was different from the involuntary unemployment as visualized by Keynes. Unemployment in India, according to Keynes, was mainly of 'disguised' nature, on account of the predominance of the subsistence agricultural sector.

The generation of new employment opportunities at an annual rate of 2.6 to 2.8 percent may be possible in the process of a reasonably high and employment-intensive growth. This by itself however, may not take care of the problem of poverty, a large part of which arises from low productivity, low income and low employment rather than from unemployment, as such.

The present chapter discusses, in short, the poverty-alleviating programmes India adopted during its planning. We specifically examine here the impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme which incorporated almost all the anti-poverty programmes undertaken in India in the lights of employment(person-days) creation, food security, gender equity and empowerment, economic uplift of marginalized communities like the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward communities and the minorities, and what is more, it specifically evaluates the overall assessment of the impact of direct cash transfer through MGNREGA on the poor.

3.2: Anti-Poverty Programmes – A Short Sketch

Poverty alleviation programmes have been segmented into self-employment programmes(IRDP), wage-employment programmes (NREP and RLEGP which again merged into JRY), food safety programmes(PDS or UPDS and later during post-economic reform era as targeted public distribution system(TPDS) and social security programmes(National Social Assistance Programme or NSAP, launched in 1995)..

The raising of the standard of living of the masses is one of the objectives of Indian

planning. Indian plan models were macro-economic in nature and included primarily the aggregate and sectoral investments, the growth of income and also the growth of per capita income and hence increasing domestic saving. But it was soon felt that alone raising output and the overall growth of the economy might not provide the sufficient condition for improving the standard of living and consumption needs of the people. The second five year plan (1956-61) emphasized on creating a 'milieu' for the 'small man'. The fourth plan (1969-74) talked of improvement in the condition of the 'common man' and the weaker section, especially through the provision of 'employment and education'. It also emphasized the attainment of a 'national minimum' as an essential, prerequisite to improve the conditions of the 'lower income groups'. It recognized that the small farmers and the landless labourers constitute the bulk of the agricultural proletariat having no productive base and depending for its livelihood on wage employment. The 4th plan categorically mentioned: "In the implementation of the programme, the weakest are looked after and the benefits of development are made to flow by planned investment in the underdeveloped regions and among the more backward sections of the community" (Planning Commission, Fourth Five Years Plan, 1969-74 P- 23).

Professor Sukhamoy Chakravarty (1987) in his **Development Planning- The Indian Experience** (OUP, Delhi & London) mentioned: "The solution to the problem of rural poverty will require that small farmers must also be given access to land – augmenting innovation along with a programme of well-conceived public works. Both these make considerable effects on available services and organizational capabilities as they cannot be merely directed from above – many of the specific tasks will need to be done on a decentralized basis".

The development strategies adopted in many of the less-developed economies(LDCs)failed to materialize the 'trickling down' effect, i.e., the benefits of growth had not percolated

down to the masses. Realising this, India soon shifted its development strategy toward providing consumption benefits directly to the poor. Therefore, a number of programmes were initiated for creating additional purchasing power among the poor. India's most of the initial development strategy was close to the Soviet planning quantifying its basic strategy in the Harrod-Domar and Feldman-Mahalanobis models(S.P Gupta,1988).

The programmes initiated during the mid- 1970s for the poor and expanded later were designed as anti-poverty programmes. These programmes did not aim at tackling the problem of open unemployment but to tackle the problem of poverty through provision of productive assets and short-terms wage employment to supplement their incomes. The two types of programmes – one of self – employment programme like IRDP(started in rural areas in 1970s) and the other of short-term wage employment- were carried out during the 1980s and continued up to the start of MNREGA under the titles 'Integrated Rural Development Programme' (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment(TRYSEM), National Rural Employment Programme(NREP), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme(RLEGP) and 'Jawahar Rozgar Yojana' (JRY) in rural areas. The IRDP was tried in 300 blocks prior to the sixth five year plan and it was extended to the whole of India on October, 02, 1980.NREP was a structured version of the Food-For-Work programme(FWP).The Food-For-Work programme was launched on January04,1979 as a non-plan scheme. Replacing this programme NREP was started in October,1980.This became a regular programme from April,1981.The objectives of the programme,among others,were to create gainful employment in rural areas,generate durable community assets and improve nutritional status and living standard of the poor.Government also initiated a programme of distributing surplus land through land reforms programmes to the landless poor,tenants and sharecroppers along with necessary financial assistance and conferment of ownership rights on tenants.A lot of other programmes started in 1970 like Special Area

Development Programmes (SADP) in the selected drought prone and deserted areas were also continued. To a smaller extent, similar programmes had also been initiated and carried out in urban areas. These programmes were found inadequate and stress was given on some special employment programmes in the areas with high incidence of poverty and unemployment.

On April 1, 1999, the IRDP and allied programmes were merged into a single programme known as Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY). It was conceived as a holistic programme of microenterprise development in rural areas with emphasis on organizing the rural poor into self-help groups, capacity building, planning of activity clusters, infrastructure support, technology, credit and marketing linkages. It seeks to promote a network of agencies like the DRDAs, line departments of the state governments, banks, NGOs and the panchayati raj institutions for implementation of the programme. The programme has in-built safeguards for the weaker sections. It gives emphasis on the function of groups with the help of 50 percent members being selected from women and the rest from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. There is also a provision for disabled beneficiaries. The programme is credit driven and subsidy is back-ended and the credit-subsidy ratio is pegged at 3:1.

The NREP and RLEGP were merged in April 1989 under the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY). The objective of the programme was to create meaningful employment opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed in rural areas through the creation of economic infrastructure and community and social assets. The GRY was revamped from April 1, 1999 as the Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY). The objective was to create rural economic infrastructure with employment as a secondary objective. The Programme was implemented by the village panchayats and provided for specific benefits to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, the disabled and maintenance of community assets created in

the past.

Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) was launched on October 2, 1993 covering 1778 drought-prone, desert, tribal and hill area blocks in 1997-98. The scheme was designed to provide employment in the form of manual work in the lean agricultural season. The works taken up under the programme were expected to lead to the creation of durable economic and social infrastructure and address the felt-needs of the people. The fund support came from centre and state on 75:25 share basis. Zilla Parishad and the panchayat samities were the implementing agencies.

During the post-economic reform era, the challenging task before the government is to meet the need of access to food. People living below the poverty line especially face this acute problem. The poorer people cannot access the food at market price. They need the safety net of food security. In this context PDS assumes the prime importance. PDS was originally a universal public distribution system or UPDS. In 1997 this programme has been transformed into targeted public distribution system or shortly known as TPDS. The TPDS is directly acting as a safety net for the very poor. But it suffered from several problems during implementation.

Social security programmes are meant for those who are at the bottom of the BPL). Many of these people face destitution and desertion. The central government has started the National Social Assistance programme (NSAP, 1975). NSAP has three schemes. The first scheme is the National Old Age Pension Scheme or NOAPS. Apart from this scheme, the government has launched in 2000 a new scheme for the elderly poor. The elderly poor get 10 kilos of foodgrains free of cost. Another scheme under the NSAP is National Family Benefit Scheme or NFBS. Under this scheme a poorer family is provided an amount of Rs.10,000/= where the breadwinner of the family died on an accidental or natural causes. Benefit from this scheme is available only to the BPL card holding families.

There are some urban poverty alleviation programmes. It is a fact that urban poverty is the spillover effect of rural poverty. This is due to the push factor rather than the pull factor that is escalating the urbanization process in most of the developing countries of the world. Due to lack of employment opportunity in rural areas many people especially the younger people living in rural areas tend to migrate urban areas in search of job. The urban can provide informal jobs to the unskilled people migrated from the villages. This section of people forms slums in the cities/urban areas.

The central government launched the Nehru Rozgar Yojana in the urban areas. There are three components in this scheme-Scheme of Urban Micro Enterprises (SUME), Nehru Rozgar Yojana (NRY) and Scheme of Housing and Shelter Upgradation (SHASU). Under SUME, urban poor are provided training free of cost to learn new skills to start micro-enterprises. The trained persons are provided a subsidized bank credit for starting micro enterprises. This benefits are meant for the sc, st and women. Under SUWE urban labourers are utilized to create socially and economically useful public assets. Under SHASU, loans and subsidies are provided to urban poor for housing and shelter upgradation.

3.3: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA)

MGNREGA is an Indian job guarantee scheme enacted by legislation on August 25, 2005. The scheme provides the legal guarantee for 100 days' work in every financial year to people willing to work in public work-related unskilled work at the minimum wage of Rs.128 per day in 2009 prices. At present the minimum wage rate is changed and it has become state-specific. This minimum wage rates for different states has been fixed by the central government. The following table (1) explains the state specific wage-rates fixed by the central government.

The scheme MGNREGA aims at providing a perennial source of income and livelihood

security for the marginalized, poor and the vulnerable of the Indian economy and society. Literature suggests that MGNREGA is successful in giving basic income assurance to a large number of beneficiaries throughout India. An estimate during 2011-2012 states that in financial year 2011-2012 alone about five crore households, which, in fact, almost 1/4th of all rural households in India were provided over 209 crore person-days of work. This is clearly shown in table -3.1 below.

Table- 3.1: Performance of MGNREGA during 2006-2011

Year	No. of Districts (In crore)	No. of Households provided employment (In crore)	Total 2006-11
2006-07	200	2.1	Not Possible because households from one year to another are not distinct
2007-08	330	3.4	
2008-09	All Rural Districts	4.5	
2009-10	All Rural Districts	5.3	
2010-11	All Rural Districts	5.5	
2011-12	All Rural Districts	5*	

Note: * = provisional data

Source: MGNREGA samiksha 2011 government of India (website: www.mgnrega.nic.in)

Table -3.2: Person-Days (In crore) [% of total person- days]

Year	Category Person-Days (In crore)				Average person-days per employed households
	Total	SCs	STs	Women	
2006-07	90.5	23(25%)	33(36%)	36(40%)	43 Days
2007-08	143.59	39(27%)	42(29%)	61(43%)	42 Days
2008-09	216.3	63.4(29%)	55(25%)	103(48%)	48 Days
2009-10	283.6	86.5(30%)	58.7(21%)	136.4(48%)	54 Days
2010-11	257.2	78.8(31%)	53.6(21%)	122.7(48%)	47 Days
2011-12	209.3	46.2(22%)	37.7(18%)	101.1(48%)	42 Day
Total 2006-2011	1200	337(28%)	280(23%)	561(47%)	*

Note: *= not possible to calculate.

Source: MGNREGA samiksha 2011 government of India
(website: www.mgnrega.nic.in)

Table-3.2 exhibits category-wise person-days during 2006-2011. Total column showing year-wise man-days creation and that of total man-days creation during 2006-2011 represents huge number of temporary employment generation for wage labours and marginal farmers. The table shows the involvement of different sections of people, such as, scheduled castes (SCs), scheduled tribes (STs), and women in this wage-employment created under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme Details of financial expenses are shown in table-3.3.

Table-3.3: Financial Expenses in Detail.

Years	Financial Details (Rs. crore)			
	Budget Outlay (in Rs. crore)	Expenditure (in Rs. crore)	Expenditure on unskilled wages (in Rs. crore)	[% of total expenditure]
2006-07	11300	8824	5842	66
2007-08	12000	15857	10739	68
2008-09	30000	27250	18200	67
2009-10	39100	37905	25579	67
2010-11	40100	39377	25686	65
2011-12	40000	37303	24660	66
Total 2006-2011	172500	166516	110706	66

Source: MGNREGA Samiksha, 2011, Government of India

Table-3.4: Creation and Completion of Working Days

Years	Works (In Lakh)	
	Works taken up	Works completed
2006-07	8.4	3.9
2007-08	17.9	8.2
2008-09	27.8	12.1
2009-10	46.2	22.6
2010-11	51	25.9
2011-12	73.6*	14.3*
Total 2006-2011	146	87

Note: *= Provisional: At the time of the preparation of the report, data entry for state was still open for the year 2011-12

Source: MGNREGA Samiksha, 2011 Government of India

Works taken up and works completed under this nature have been shown in table-3.4. MGNREGA aims at providing a continuous flow of income and livelihood security for the underprivileged especially the poor, valuable and the marginalized. Workers under the scheme received Rs. 1,10,700 crore during 2006-2011 as wages. This shows a direct impact of this scheme (direct cash transfer to the workers) to the poorest of the poor. This scheme does have a positive impact on poverty and income. During the 'slack season' i.e. during the post kharif season and the pre-rabi season the poor wage labourers in the agriculture sector remain underutilized. This reveals the fact that the wage labourers during this lean period become unemployed is a normal phenomenon in the rural India especially engaged in agriculture. MGNREGA is such a scheme which provides additional employment opportunity to the rural poor (P. Dutta, R. Murgai, M. Ravallion and M.V. Dominique: "Does India's Employment Guarantee Scheme Guarantee Employment"? Policy Research Paper, Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2012).

R. Jha, R. Gaiha and M.K. Pandey, in their paper 'Net Transfer Benefits under India's Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme'. (Journal of Policy Modeling, vol.34, no.2, 2011), presented their survey results of 1,500 households in three states of Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra and they have found that the scheme MGNREGA has a positive impact on income. It is indicated that the scheme helped the poor to achieve an additional income of 17 percent in Andhra Pradesh which was 10 percent in Rajasthan and 8 percent in Maharashtra during 2010-2011.

The increased income achieved by the rural poor through their participation in MGNREGA activity during the slack period can help to start their own enterprises. A study by S. Mangatter notes that about 17 percent of the rural households holding job cards used additional income to start and run the rural enterprises.

Some studies reveal that the scheme does have direct effect on poverty reduction. A

study by M. Engler and S. Ravi, “Workforce as an effective way to fight poverty: The Case of India’s NREGS, 2012”: [Social Science Research Network:

<http://ssrn.com/paper=1336837>] states that MGNREGA has helped to increase monthly per capita consumption expenditure of about 10 percent for households in Andhra Pradesh and the consumption expenditure on non-food items rose by 23 percent and the expenditure on transport increased by 65 percent. The increase is more in case of transport because employment provided under the scheme to the workers was within five kilometers of their residence. Another study by V.S. Babu and K.H. Rao titled “Impact of MGNREGS on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes: Studies Conducted in 8 states,” Hyderabad: National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), 2010 states that the wage seekers have spent their additional income on items as shown in table-3.5 below.

Table-3.5: Spending on Different Items

Items	Spending (%)
Food	50
Clothing	20
Education	10-15
Health	10

National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), 2010

3.4: Women Participation in MGNREGA

Many studies on poverty state that deprivation across a wide range of nutrients can lead to a poverty trap. Low nutrition leads to low productivity vicious cycle. Low productivity leads to low wages. Low wages lead to low nutrition.

There is no denying that MGNREGA has helped achieve higher intake of food and food availability.

MGNREGA in its rural wage employment programme recognized the role of women in building the rural development and for this incorporated gender equity and employment in its design with a view to ensure that women have equitable and easy access to work, decent

working conditions, equal payment of wages and representation on decision-making bodies. From 2006-2007 to 2011-12, Rs. 53,000 crore have been spent on wages for women and 47 percent of the total percent-days generated have been done by women. We will see here the impact of such a transfer on the economic and social empowerment of women.

Overall, MGNREGA has been a positive and important scheme for women. Participation of women in the scheme has surpassed the statutory minimum requirement of 33 percent. In 2011-12 alone, women person-days of employment were close to 50 percent. The percentage of women participation from 2006-07 to 2011-12 is provided in table- 3.6 below.

Table-3.6: Percentage of women person-days

State	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2006-07)	Women percentage (years)				
		Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2007-08)	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2008-09)	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2009-10)	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2010-11)	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2011-12)
Andhra Pradesh	55	58	58	58	57	58
Assam	32	31	27	28	27	25
Bihar	17	28	30	30	28	29
Chhattish	39	42	47	49	49	45
Gujarat	50	47	43	48	44	45
Haryana	31	34	31	35	36	36
HP	12	30	39	46	48	60
Jammu & Kashmir	4	1	6	7	7	18
Jharkhand	39	27	29	34	33	31
Karnataka	51	50	50	37	46	46
Kerala	66	71	85	88	90	93
Madhya Pradesh	43	42	43	44	44	43
Maharashtra	37	40	46	40	46	46
Odisha	36	36	38	36	39	39
Punjab	36	16	25	26	34	43
Rajasthan	67	69	67	67	68	69
Tamil Nadu	81	82	80	83	83	74
Uttarakhand	30	43	37	40	40	45
West Bengal	18	17	27	33	34	32
All India	40	43	48	48	48	47

* Union Territories and some states are not included in the table.

** All India total is full all states and Union Territories.

*** Provisional

Source: MGREGA Samiksha, 2011, Government of West Bengal

Women are participating in the Scheme much more actively than they participated in all form of recorded work. This may support the hypothesis the MGNREGA creates decent favorable work condition for women.

MGNREGA has read and traditional Gender wage discrimination particular in the public works sector. As per NSSO 66th round, the average wage for labour in MGNREGA Table-3.7 and 3.8 show high-performing and poor-performing states in terms of women's participation in 100-day works.

Table-3.7: High Performing State

States	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2006-07)	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2007-08)	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2008-09)	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2009-10)	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2010-11)	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2011-12)
Kerala	66	71	85	88	90	93
Tamil Nadu	81	82	80	83	83	74
Rajasthan	67	69	67	67	68	69
Himachal Pradesh	12	30	39	46	48	60

Source: Data taken from table 3.6

Table-3.8: Poor-Performing States

States	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2006-07)	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2007-08)	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2008-09)	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2009-10)	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2010-11)	Women person-days (% of total percent-days in the state FY 2011-12)
Jammu Kashmir	04	01	06	07	07	18
Assam	32	31	27	28	27	25
Bihar	17	28	30	30	28	29
Jharkhand	39	27	29	34	33	31
West Bengal	18	17	27	33	34	32

Source: Data taken from table 3.6

3.6: Conclusion

After careful review of the anti-poverty schemes one may have the impression that all the programmes are not benefiting the targeted people as per the expectation especially in terms of increasing their income. This may perhaps be due to leakages that have had taken place in the different programmes. The then Prime minister of India Mr. Rajib Gandhi once commented in 1989 due to heavy leakages (85 percent) in government subsidy poverty alleviation programmes in India was not so much successful. Leakages in public distribution system(PDS),political corruption, high administrative cost, and the failure of the government to target the actual beneficiaries ,i.e., the really poor Apart from augmenting income and consequently improve the quality of food, health, education, and related amenities many more things are left behind. These are the loss of status in the community, social exclusion, sense of inferiority in the community, and marginalization of an individual or household in the community.

Chapter-IV

Poverty Analysis in Indian Context

4.1: Introduction

Poverty in any country is closely associated with income disparity and unemployment. It is therefore necessary to link any poverty alleviation measure with the problems of income disparity and unemployment in order to ameliorate the economic conditions of the poor. Any policy aimed at improving the conditions of the poor living under abject poverty should obviously be related to the social, economic and political environment in which the poor live (Dasgupta, 1995). This problem cannot be solved if the economy and the institutions are controlled by the landlords, corrupt politicians, and inept administration. The present chapter analyses, in detail, the poverty in Indian context.

4.2: Indian economy up to 1993 and poverty scenario

Per capita national income is a useful summary measure to determine the well being of people of country. Dandekar and Rath (1971) mentioned that national income of Indian Union during 1960-61 was Rs 13,308 crores and the corresponding population during this period was 43.4 crores. Thus, per capita (national) income was Rs. 306.7 only. This is a short-cut measure of a person's economic condition. A more direct measure of the level of living of a person in a country is the per capita private consumption expenditure. The distribution of population by per capita consumer expenditure in 1960-61 as presented by Dandekar and Rath is shown in table 4.1 below.

Table-4.1: Distribution of Population by Per Capita Consumer Expenditure in 1906-61

Monthly Per Capita Expenditure Class (Rs)	Rural		Urban	
	Average Annual Per Capita Expenditure (Rs)	Per Cent of Population	Average Annual Per Capita Expenditure (Rs)	Per Cent of Population
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
0-8	79.3	6.38	77.6	2.15
8-11	116.6	11.95	118.3	5.49
11-13	147.8	9.88	145.0	7.19
13-15	170.8	9.82	169.7	6.86
15-18	200.0	13.79	201.2	10.71
18-21	237.3	11.44	235.7	11.40
21-24	273.4	9.03	271.7	9.68
24-28	313.0	7.72	315.4	11.03
28-34	375.1	7.66	373.6	9.34
34-43	460.8	5.93	464.0	9.61
43-55	583.4	3.12	592.3	7.04
55 and above	1005.1	3.28	1032.5	9.50
All Classes	261.2	100.00	359.2	100.00

Source: Indian School of Political Economy, Poona, 1971

The distribution of rural consumer expenditure by major items at consumption level below the average during 1960-61 is shown in table 4.2.

Table-4.2: Distribution of Rural Consumer Expenditure by Major Items at Consumption Level Below the Average (1960-61)

Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (Rs)	Percent of Population	Annual Per Capita Expenditure (Rs)	Percentage Distribution of Total Expenditure				
			Food-grains and substitutes	Other Items of Food	Fuel and Light	Clothing	Others
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
0-8	6.38	79.3	64.42	18.25	8.74	1.23	7.36
8-11	11.95	116.6	63.57	17.43	8.56	2.51	7.93
11-13	9.88	147.2	60.25	19.09	7.36	5.70	7.60
13-15	9.82	170.8	58.12	20.44	7.48	4.63	9.33
15-18	13.79	200.0	54.50	23.66	6.93	5.23	9.67
18-21	11.44	237.3	50.31	24.10	6.67	6.97	11.95

Source: Indian School of Political Economy, Poona, 1971

It is also interesting to note that to judge the standard of living it is necessary to know the distribution of the total consumer expenditure between major items such as food, fuel, clothing etc. It is true that poor people spend majority of their income on the food items and obviously little is left to be used or spent for other purposes. The consumer expenditure pattern in the rural area is presented in table 4.2 and the urban consumer expenditure pattern is presented in table 4.3.

Table-4.3: Distribution of Urban Consumer Expenditure By Major Items at Consumption Level Below the Average (1960-61)

Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (Rs)	Percent of Population	Annual Per Capita Expenditure (Rs)	Percentage Distribution of Total Expenditure				
			Food-grains and substitutes	Other Items of Food	Fuel and Light	Clothing	Others
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
0-8	2.15	77.6	63.79	17.87	8.93	0.63	8.78
8-11	5.49	118.3	52.67	26.65	8.23	1.13	11.32
11-13	7.19	145.0	48.32	27.35	8.64	2.27	13.42
13-15	6.86	169.7	45.73	29.11	8.03	2.87	14.26
15-18	10.71	201.2	41.72	31.37	7.38	3.57	15.96
18-21	11.40	235.7	37.17	33.40	7.49	3.41	18.53
21-24	9.68	271.7	36.45	33.81	7.12	3.94	18.68
24-28	11.03	315.4	32.72	34.56	6.19	5.29	20.52

Source: Indian School of Political Economy, Poona, 1971

Tables 4.2 and 4.3 show that urban households spend less on food and more on other items than the rural households. The rural poverty during early 1960s was very high and this was due to lack of land resources. Dandekar and Rath, in their Ford Foundation study made it clear specifically that due to landlessness among the poor households poverty among them was massive and for their survival they mostly relied on their personal labour.

In the 11th and the 12th rounds of the National Sample Survey covering 1956-57 agriculture labour household was defined as one for which agricultural wage employment contributed to the major source of income. 18th round of the National Sample Survey made the special inquiry which was conducted into the employment, earnings and consumer expenditure of sample of agricultural labour households which was also extended to cover all rural labour households. Also a distinction was made between agricultural labour households and non-agricultural households. The estimate showed that during 1956-57 about 25 percent of the rural households were agricultural labour households and in 1963-64 this went down to 20 percent. During 1963-64 about 5 percent of the rural households were classified as non-agricultural labour households. Comparing data between 1956-57 and 1963-64 it is noticed that about 60 percent of labour households had no land. This 60 percent solely depended for their livelihood on their own labour power and the remaining 40 percent cultivated their small pieces of land. The data also showed that about 3/4th of the workers were the casual workers. This means that they worked if and when that was available. They remained unemployed otherwise for long (from 1956 to 1975) India remained under a stringent regime of autarky and command and control economy "If started on a slow path of reintegration into the world economy.

But India's paradigm shift began in 1991 when it adopted its New Economic Policy (NEP, 1991 July). Comparing pre and post globalization periods we can see that India, instead of economic stagnation, achieved a marked acceleration in economic growth after globalization. The rate of growth, during 1975 to 2007, had been over 5.5 percent. This was much better than the 'Hindu' rate of growth of 3.4 percent over the period 1956-75.

India, during globalization, has seen well-being of the depressed people (lower income group). This has been noticed especially through the decline in poverty. Data depicted in

table 4.4 show the state-wise percentage of population below the poverty line during 1973-74, 1977-78, 1983, 1987-88 and 1993-94.

Table 4.4: State wise percentage of population below the poverty line (Modified Expert Group)

Sl. No.	State	1973-74	1977-78	1983	1987-88	1993-94
1	Andhra Pradesh	48.41	38.11	26.53	20.92	15.92
2	Arunachal Pradesh	52.67	59.82	42.60	39.35	45.01
3	Assam	52.67	59.82	42.60	39.35	45.01
4	Bihar	62.99	63.25	64.37	52.63	58.21
5	Goa	46.85	37.64	14.81	17.64	5.34
6	Gujarat	46.35	41.76	29.80	28.67	22.18
7	Haryana	34.23	27.73	20.56	16.22	28.02
8	Himachal Pradesh	27.42	33.49	17.00	16.28	30.34
9	Jammu & Kashmir	45.51	42.86	26.04	25.17	30.34
10	Karnataka	55.14	48.18	36.33	32.82	29.88
11	Kerala	59.19	51.48	39.03	29.10	25.76
12	Madhaya Pradesh	62.66	62.52	48.90	41.92	40.64
13	Maharashtra	57.71	63.97	45.23	40.78	37.93
14	Manipur	52.67	59.82	42.60	39.35	45.01
15	Meghalaya	52.67	59.82	42.60	39.35	45.01
16	Mizoram	52.67	59.82	42.60	39.35	45.01
17	Nagaland	52.67	59.82	42.60	3.35	45.01
18	Orissa	67.28	72.38	67.53	57.64	49.72
19	Punjab	28.21	16.37	13.20	12.06	11.95
20	Rajasthan	44.76	35.89	33.50	33.21	26.46
21	Sikkim	52.67	59.82	42.60	39.35	45.01
22	Tamil Nadu	57.43	57.68	53.99	45.80	32.48
23	Tripura	52.67	59.82	42.60	39.35	45.01
24	Uttar Pradesh	56.53	47.60	46.45	41.10	42.28
25	West Bengal	73.16	68.34	63.05	48.30	40.80
26	A & N Islands	57.43	57.68	53.99	1.29	32.48
27	Chandigarh	27.96	27.32	23.79	45.80	11.35
28	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	46.85	37.64	14.81	14.67	51.95
29	Daman & Diu	-	-	-	-	5.34
30	Delhi	24.44	30.19	7.66	67.11	1.90
31	Lakshadweep	59.19	51.48	39.03	29.10	25.76
32	Pondicherry	57.43	57.68	53.99	45.80	32.48
	All India	56.44	53.07	45.65	39.09	37.27

Source: Planning Commission estimates as quoted in India Rural Development Report, 1999

4.3: Poverty Scenario Since 1993

The new policy regime which opened the Indian economy radically pushed forward in favour of a more open and market oriented economy. Major changes that took place during the new economic policy were scrapping of the industrial licensing regime, reduction in the number of areas reserved for the public sector, amendment of the monopolies and the restrictive trade practices act , open up of the privatization programme, reduction in tariff rates and change over to market determined exchange rates. Thus, the major items that have benefited the countries are opening up of world trade, advancement of means of communications, internationalization of financial markets, growing importance of multinational corporations, migration of population and free mobility of labour, capital, goods, data and knowledge.

Globalization has helped escalating the trade and investment and due to this poverty has much reduced globally. This has at the same time increased income inequality within countries and between countries. But reduction in poverty not only due to globalization. There may be other factors such as good national policies, role of sound institutions, and domestic political stability that may help in the reduction of poverty.

In the period from 1995 to 2007 India's position was spectacular in terms of improvement in growth rate. This was 6.5 percent during this period. From 2008 to 2007, India witnessed an unprecedented average growth rate of over 8 percent.

India at the same time made huge investment in human capital. Not only this, India made an additional expenditure on social sectors and on poverty alleviation. As a result of an whole-hearted efforts by the national government, once the country known as 'the sick man of Asia', has been transformed into a credible contender for a major role in the balance of power in Asia. Spectacular growth was also initiated in the industrial sector – growth much larger than the growth occurred during the pre-liberalization period (period since independence in 1947 and up to 1990). Manufacturing sector grew at a large scale

especially since 1975 at the rate of 6.5 percent and it reached to the height to 7 percent over a decade up to 2007. Foreign investment has served to supplement the Indian industry and this has helped our industry to expand its horizon to the wider world economy. Data exhibited in table 4.5 also show state-wise population below the poverty line during 1999-2000. The data presented in table 4.5 and prepared by the Planning Commission for 199-2000 was based on 30 days recall period. It showed that overall poverty was the highest in Orissa which was 47.15 percent of which rural poverty had the largest, that is, 48.01. This was the largest in all the states of India. In Bihar poverty level was second highest and it was 42.60. Also rural poverty was second highest in this state and it was 44.30. In Sikkim, Assam and West Bengal percentages of people below the poverty were 36.55, 36.09 and 27.2 respectively. Rural poverty was also very high in Sikkim and Assam. In both the state rural poverty was 40.04. In West Bengal, It was 31.85 percent, larger than the national average of 27.09 percent.

Table- 4.5: State-wise Population below Poverty Line – 1999-2000
(Based on 30 days recall period)

Sl. No.	States/ UTs	Rural		Urban		Combined	
		No. of persons (Lakhs)	% of persons	No. of persons (Lakhs)	% of persons	No. of persons (Lakhs)	% of persons
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Andra Pradesh	58.13	11.05	60.88	26.63	119.01	15.77
2	Arunachal Pradesh	3.80	40.04	0.18	7.47	3.98	33.47
3	Assam	92.17	40.04	2.38	7.47	94.55	36.09
4	Bihar	376.51	44.30	49.13	32.91	425.64	42.60
5	Goa	0.11	1.35	0.59	7.52	0.70	4.40
6	Gujarat	39.80	13.17	28.09	15.59	67.89	14.07
7	Haryana	11.94	8.27	5.39	9.99	17.34	8.74
8	Himachal Pradesh	4.84	7.94	0.29	4.63	5.12	7.63
9	Jammu & Kashmir	2.97	3.97	0.49	1.98	3.46	3.48
10	Karnataka	59.91	17.38	44.49	25.25	104.40	20.04
11	Kerala	20.97	9.38	20.07	20.27	41.04	12.72
12	Madhya Pradesh	217.32	37.06	81.22	38.44	298.54	37.43
13	Maharashtra	125.12	23.72	102.87	26.81	227.99	25.02
14	Manipur	6.53	40.04	0.66	7.47	7.19	28.54
15	Meghalaya	7.89	40.04	0.34	7.47	8.23	33.87
16	Mizoram	1.40	40.04	0.45	7.47	1.85	19.47
17	Nagaland	5.21	40.04	0.28	7.47	5.49	32.67
18	Orissa	143.69	48.01	25.40	42.83	169.09	47.15
19	Punjab	10.20	6.35	4.29	5.75	14.49	6.16
20	Rajasthan	55.06	13.74	26.78	19.85	81.83	15.28
21	Sikkim	2.00	40.04	0.04	7.47	2.05	36.55
22	Tamil Nadu	80.51	20.55	49.97	22.11	130.48	21.12
23	Tripura	12.53	40.04	0.49	7.47	13.02	34.44
24	Uttar Pradesh	412.01	31.22	117.88	30.89	529.89	31.15
25	West Bengal	180.11	31.85	33.38	14.86	213.49	27.02
26	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	0.58	20.55	0.24	22.11	0.82	20.99
27	Chandigarh	0.06	5.75	0.45	5.75	0.51	5.75
28	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0.30	17.57	0.03	13.52	0.33	17.14
29	Daman & Diu	0.01	1.35	0.05	7.52	0.06	4.44
30	Delhi	0.07	0.40	11.42	9.42	11.49	8.30
31	Lakshadweep	0.03	9.38	0.08	20.27	0.11	15.60
32	Pondicherry	0.64	20.55	1.77	22.11	2.41	21.67
	All - India	1932.43	27.09	670.07	23.62	2602.50	26.10

Note:

1. For definition of poverty, Appendix I may kindly be referred to.

2. Poverty ratio of Assam is used for Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura.
3. Poverty line of Maharashtra and expenditure distribution of Goa is used to estimate poverty ratio of Goa.
4. Poverty line of Himachal Pradesh and expenditure distribution of Jammu and Kashmir is used to estimate poverty ratio of Jammu & Kashmir.
5. Poverty ratio of Tamil Nadu is used for Pondicherry and A & N Islands
6. Urban Poverty ratio of Punjab used for both rural and urban poverty of Chandigarh
7. Poverty line of Maharashtra and expenditure distribution of Dadra & Nagar Haveli is used to estimate poverty ratio of Dadra and Nagar Haveli.
8. Poverty ratio of Goa is used for Daman & Diu.
9. Poverty ratio of Kerala is used for Lakshadweep.
10. Urban poverty ratio of Rajasthan may be treated as tentative.

Source: 1. Planning Commission, New Delhi.

Poverty trend(Head Count Ratio)across the states of India during 2004-05 and 2009-2010has been shown table-4.6.

Table-4.6: Trend in poverty (Head Count Ratio) across the states

State	(2004-05) planning commission estimates based on Lakdwala Methodology	(2009-10) planning commission estimates based on Tendulkar Methodology
Andra Pradesh	15.8	21.1
Assam	19.7	37.9
Bihar	41.4	53.5
Gujarat	16.8	23.0
Haryana	14.0	20.1
Himachal Pradesh	10.0	9.5
Karnataka	25.0	23.6
Kerala	15	12.0
Madhya Pradesh	38.3	36.7
Maharashtra	30.7	24.5
Orissa	46.4	37.0
Punjab	8.4	15.9
Rajasthan	22.1	24.8
Tamil Nadu	22.5	17.1
Uttar Pradesh	32.8	37.7
West Bengal	24.7	26.7

Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative used Multi dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) found that about 53.7 percent people in India lived under poverty of which 28.6 percent were living under abject poverty in 2007.

Table-4.6: Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in India, 2007

Rank	States	Population (in millions) 2007	MPI	Proportion of poor	Average intensity	Contribution to overall poverty	Number of MPI poor (in millions)
	India	1,164.7	0.296	55.4%	53.5%	—	645.0
1	Kerala	35.0	0.065	15.9%	40.9%	0.6%	5.6
2	Goa	1.6	0.094	21.7%	43.4%	0.0%	0.4
3	Punjab	27.1	0.120	26.2%	46.0%	1.0%	7.1
4	Himachal Pradesh	6.7	0.131	31.0%	42.3%	0.3%	2.1
5	Tamil Nadu	68.0	0.141	32.4%	43.6%	2.6%	22.0
6	Uttarakhand	9.6	0.189	40.3%	46.9%	0.5%	3.9
7	Maharashtra	108.7	0.193	40.1%	48.1%	6.0%	43.6
8	Haryana	24.1	0.199	41.6%	47.9%	1.3%	10.0
9	Gujarat	57.3	0.205	41.5%	49.2%	3.4%	23.8
10	Jammu & Kashmir	12.2	0.209	43.8%	47.7%	0.7%	5.4
11	Andhra Pradesh	83.9	0.211	44.7%	47.1%	5.1%	37.5
12	Karnataka	58.6	0.223	46.1%	48.3%	4.2%	27.0
13	Northeast Indian States	44.2	0.303	57.6%	52.5%	4.0%	25.5
14	West Bengal	89.5	0.317	58.3%	54.3%	8.5%	52.2
15	Orissa	40.7	0.345	64.0%	54.0%	4.3%	26.0
16	Rajasthan	65.4	0.351	64.2%	54.7%	7.0%	41.9
17	Uttar Pradesh	192.6	0.386	69.9%	55.2%	21.3%	134.7
18	Chhattisgarh	23.9	0.387	71.9%	53.9%	2.9%	17.2
19	Madhya Pradesh	70.0	0.389	69.5%	56.0%	8.5%	48.6
20	Jharkhand	30.5	0.463	77.0%	60.2%	4.2%	23.5
21	Bihar	95.0	0.499	81.4%	61.3%	13.5%	77.3

Estimates by NCAER (National Council of Applied Economic Research) show that 48% of the Indian households earn more than ₹90,000 (US\$1,377.00) annually (or more than US\$ 3 PPP per person). A study conducted by the NCAER in 2009 shows that of the 222 million households in India, the absolutely poor households (annual incomes below

Rs.45,000) accounted for only 15.6 percent of them or about 35 million (about 200 million Indians). Another 80 million households are in income levels of Rs.45,000– 90,000 per year. These numbers also are more or less in line with the latest World Bank estimates of the "below-the-poverty-line" households that may total about 100 million (or about 456 million individuals).

Table- 4.7 shows head count ratio across states for 1973-74, 1977-78, 1983-84, 1987-88, 1993-94, 1999-2000, 2004-05*. 2004-05***, 2009-10**, and 2009-10*. Data of 2004-05* show the Planning Commission's estimate based on Lakdawala Methodology and data of 2004-05** is based on calorie consumption, data of 2009-10* show Planning Commission's estimate based on Lakdawala Methodology and data of 2009-10** were based on calorie consumption. 2004-05*** data show Planning Commission's estimate based on Tendulkar methodology.

Table -4.7: Trend in Poverty (Head Count Ratio) Across the States

States	1973-74	1977-78	1983-84	1987-88	1993-94	1999-00	2004-05*	2004-05***	2009-10**	2009-10***
Andhra Pradesh	48.86(6)	28.91(4)	28(4)	25.86(4)	22.19(2)	21.3(7)	15.8	29.6(6)	19.07	21.1(6)
Assam	51.21(7)	40.47(9)	40.47(9)	36.21(8)	40.86(12)	36.09(13)	19.7	34.4(11.5)	19.42	37.9(15)
Bihar	61.91(14)	62.22(15)	62.22(15)	52.13(15)	54.96(16)	41.5(15)	41.4	54.4(15)	23.5	53.5(16)
Gujarat	48.15(5)	32.79(5)	32.79(5)	31.54(5)	24.21(3)	16.2(5)	16.8	31.6(8)	27.11	23(7)
Haryana	35.36(3)	21.37(3)	21.37(3)	16.64(3)	25.05(4)	11.1(2)	14.0	24.6(4)	22.44	20.1(5)
Himachal Pradesh	26.39(1)	16.4(2)	16.4(3)	15.45(2)	28.44(7)	11.7(3)	10.0	22.9(3)	22.98	9.5(1)
Karnataka	54.47(9)	38.24(7)	38.24(7)	37.53(9)	33.16(8)	25.6(9)	25	33.3(10)	22.16	23.6(8)
Kerala	59.79(12)	40.42(8)	40.42(8)	31.79(6)	25.43(5)	15.7(4)	15	19.6(1)	23.68	12(2)
Madhya Pradesh	61.78(13)	49.78(12)	49.78(12)	43.07(12)	42.52(14)	37.65(14)	38.3	48.6(14)	27.17	36.7(12)
Maharashtra	53.24(8)	43.44(10)	43.44(10)	40.41(10)	36.86(11)	28.65(11)	30.7	30.2(7)	22.18	24.5(9)
Orissa	66.18(16)	65.29(16)	65.29(16)	55.58(16)	48.56(15)	44.35(16)	46.4	57.2(16)	17.6	37(9)
Punjab	28.15(2)	16.18(1)	16.18(1)	13.2(1)	11.77(1)	6.15(1)	8.4	20.9(2)	16.6	15.9(3)
Rajasthan	46.14(4)	34.46(6)	34.46(6)	35.15(7)	27.41(6)	21.2(6)	22.1	34.4(11.5)	16.5	24.8(10)
Tamil Nadu	54.98(10)	51.66(13)	51.66(13)	43.39(13)	35.03(9)	22.15(8)	22.5	29.4(5)	22.23	17.1(4)
Uttar Pradesh	57.07(11)	47.07(11)	47.07(11)	41.46(11)	40.85(12)	32.05(12)	32.8	40.9(13)	23.55	37.7(14)
West Bengal	63.43(15)	54.85(14)	54.85(14)	44.72(14)	35.66(10)	28.3(10)	24.7	34.2(9)	28.11	26.7(11)
C. V.	24.195	28.699	37.027	35.542	32.706	43.306	-	43.31	-	43.82807

Source: Planning Commission 2002. Figs in brackets are Ranks. * Planning Commission's estimates based on Lakdawala Methodology ** Author's Estimate based on Calorie consumption (2100 Kcal for Urban and 2400 K cal for Rural) *** Planning Commission's estimates based on Tendulkar Methodology.

4.4: Conclusion

Above analysis on poverty in India shows that we have different estimates of poverty following different methodologies. The data show that poverty alleviation is faster during post-reform period than the pre-reform period, although leakages are there in the spending of funds allocated to various anti-poverty schemes.

Chapter-V

Poverty Scenario in West Bengal

5.1: Introduction

Before discussing the poverty scenario in the state of West Bengal, it is of utmost importance to know its demography and economy.

West Bengal is situated at the centre of the eastern region of India strategically positioned three international frontiers like Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, sharing its borders with Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa and Assam. It is about 700 km from the Bay of Bengal in the south and has the Himalayas in the north. It covers a total area of 88752 sq. km. It is about 3 percent of total area of India and total population of 913.48 lakh (As per provisional figures of 2011 census). The table-5.1 below shows a comparative picture between India and West Bengal on the growth of population, density and literature during different censuses.

5.2: West Bengal - Early Development

To understand the incidence of poverty in rural India during 1960s and 1970s the consumption basket of Rs. 15 per capita per month at 1960-61 all- India rural prices was taken as the minimum level of living. Table-5.1 shows the estimated percentages of rural people in some 16 states (including West Bengal) below the level of living in 1960-61 and 1967-68.

Table-5.1: Percentage of Rural People below the Minimum Level of Living in Different States

Sl. No.	States	1960-61	1967-68
1	Andra Pradesh	47	38-51(44)
2	Assam	14	32-52
3	Bihar	38+	61-71
4	Gujarat	25-37	48+
5	Haryana	-	29+
6	Jammu and Kashmir	8	21+
7	Kerala	42+	67-
8	Madhya Pradesh	36-47	61
9	Maharashtra	40+	56-
10	Mysore	34+	57-
11	Orissa	56+	64+
12	Punjab	13	33+
13	Rajasthan	33-	37
14	Tamil Nadu	46-61(51)	61-
15	Uttar Pradesh	39-	60-
16	West Bengal	22-42	74+
All India		38	53

Source: NSS Estimate of Per Capita Private Consumer Expenditure in 1960-61 data used by Dandekar & Rath, 1971.

Table-5.1 shows that in 1967-68 about or more than half of the rural people were below the minimum level of living in West Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh. During 1960-61 and 1967-68 there had been a large increase in the number of people below the minimum level in Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Mysore, Punjab and Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

To fight against poverty the Government of West Bengal indentified 4,612 villages as

'backward villages' in 2004. The majority of such villages are located in Dakshin Dinajpur, Uttar Dinajpur, Maldah, Purulia, West Midnapore and Purulia. Two basic criteria- female literacy rate less than 30 percent and marginal and non-marginal workers constituting more than 60 percent- were considered in the selection of 'backward villages'. Many other variables such as mortality rate, income of the family, literacy rate, health facility, etc. were not considered here.

Again, Government of West Bengal conducted the rural household survey in 2006 by its panchayats and rural development department. The survey revealed that 3.5 percent people in the state failed to manage even one meal a day. What is more, 16.5 percent people were not in a position to acquire two square meals per day for all months in a year. In 2007 the state government surveyed in the backward villages and found that 20 percent people received one meal a day. The NSSO in its 61st round survey also found that in the whole of West Bengal there were 9 percent people who could not manage sufficient meal. The job cards are not distributed to a great number of people. The survey conducted by the state government also mentioned in 2008 that about 38 percent of people got jobs under NREGS and on average not more than 14 days work was provided.

Percentages of rural and urban population with inadequate calorie intake have been shown in tables 5.2 and 5.3 respectively.

Table- 5. 2: Percentage of Rural Population in the States with an Inadequate Intake of Calories, in 1961-62

Sl. No.	State	Monthly Per Capita Expenditure Class	Per Capita Total Annual Consumption Expenditure	Total Calorie Equivalent of Daily Diet	Percentage of Rural Population Lying below This Level
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	Rajasthan	8-11	120	2495	13.29
2	Uttar Pradesh	11-13	146	2237	18.13
3	Madhya Pradesh	11-13	147	2475	25.79
4	Jammu & Kashmir	13-15	165	2380	13.69
5	Punjab (including Haryana)	13-15	165	2402	13.89
6	Gujarat	13-15	164	2222	19.09
7	Mysore	13-15	172	2238	26.92
8	Bihar	13-15	169	2198	37.38
9	Orissa	13-15	167	2342	43.88
10	West Bengal	15-18	299	2233	44.09
11	Assam	18-21	233	2260	47.67
12	Tamil Nadu	18-21	235	2321	55.19
13	Maharashtra	18-21	238	2303	61.04
14	Andhra Pradesh	18-21	236	2355	62.14
15	Union Territories	21-24	276	2388	43.70
16	Kerala	34-43	464	3007	90.75
	Total	-	-	-	38.00
17	All India	13-15	170	2194	30.92

Source: NSS Estimate of Per Capita Private Consumer Expenditure in 1960-61 data used by Dandekar & Rath, 1971.

Table-5.3: Percentage of Urban Population in the States with an Inadequate Intake of Calories, in 1961-62

Sl. No.	State	Monthly Per Capita Expenditure Class	Per Capita Total Annual Consumption Expenditure	Total Calorie Equivalent of Daily Diet	Percentage of Rural Population Lying below This Level
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	Rajasthan	15-18	202	2343	21.84
2	Uttar Pradesh	15-18	202	2294	37.65
3	Bihar	18-21	238	2365	41.28
4	Jammu & Kashmir	18-21	239	2250	42.30
5	Assam	21-24	271	2213	23.37
6	Madhya Pradesh	21-24	271	2568	51.62
7	Punjab (including Haryana)	21-24	271	2128	52.09
8	Mysore	21-24	275	2273	57.39
9	Andhra Pradesh	21-24	275	2436	58.11
10	Gujarat	24-28	315	2187	50.50
11	Orissa	24-28	310	2293	55.57
12	West Bengal	28-34	374	2313	48.53
13	Union Territories	28-34	380	2292	48.90
14	Maharashtra	28-34	370	2226	58.18
15	Tamil Nadu	28-34	374	2196	70.78
16	Kerala	43-55	617	2672	88.89
	Total	-	-	-	54.00
17	All India	21.24	274	2159	46.50

Source: NSS Estimate of Per Capita Private Consumer Expenditure in 1960-61 data used by Dandekar & Rath, 1971.

Rural and urban population in the top six and top nine states with higher poverty in terms of calorie intake during 1961-62 respectively have been shown in tables 5.4 and 5.5 respectively.

Table-5.4: Percentage of Rural Population in the top six States with Higher Poverty in terms of Intake of Calorie, 1961-62.

Sl. No.	States	% of Rural Population Lying below the Minimum calorie
1	Kerala	90.75
2	Andhra Pradesh	62.14
3	Maharashtra	61.04
4	Tamil Nadu	55.19
5	Assam	47.67
6	West Bengal	44.09

Source: NSS Estimate of Per Capita Private Consumer Expenditure in 1960-61 data used by Dandekar & Rath, 1971.

Table-5.5: Percentage of Urban Population in the top six States with Higher Poverty in terms of Intake of Calorie, 1961-62.

Sl. No.	States	% of Rural Population Lying below the Minimum calorie
1	Kerala	88.89
2	Tamil Nadu	70.78
3	Maharashtra	58.18
4	Andhra Pradesh	58.11
5	Mysore	57.39
6	Punjab & Haryana	52.09
7	Madhya Pradesh	51.62
8	Union Territories	48.90
9	West Bengal	48.53

Source: NSS Estimate of Per Capita Private Consumer Expenditure in 1960-61 data used by Dandekar & Rath, 1971.

Vital information on West Bengal and India has been portrayed in table-5.6 below.

Table-5.6: Vital Information about India and West Bengal

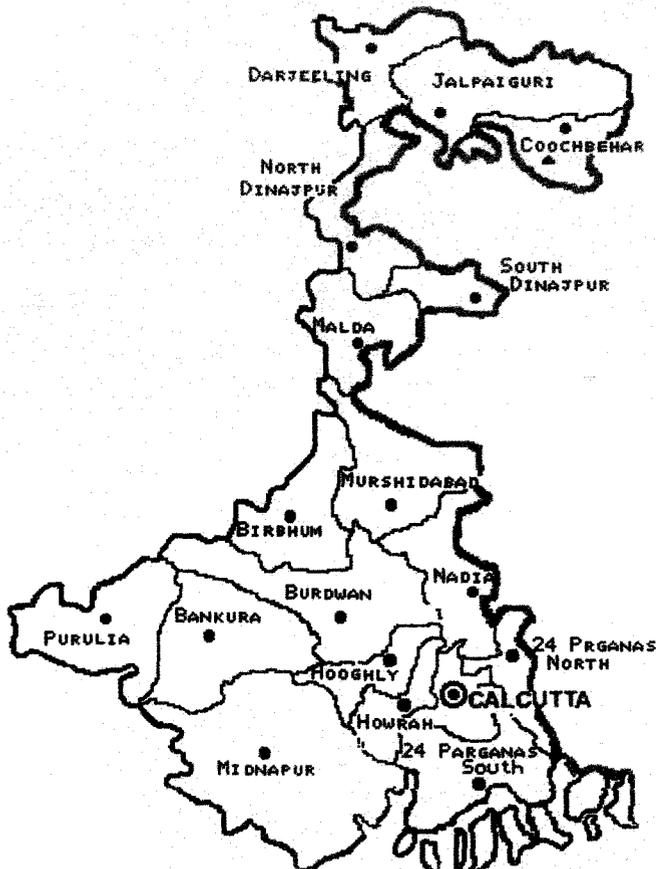
SL No.	Particulars	As per 2001 Census		As per 2011 (P) Census	
		West Bengal	India	West Bengal	India
1	Population (in Lakh)	801.76	10287.37	913.48	12101.93
2	Density of Population (per sqkm)	903	325	1029	382
3	Percentage of urban population to rural population	27.97	27.81	31.89	31.16
4	Literacy (percent)	68.64	64.82	77.08	74.04
5	Sex Ratio (Number of females per 1000 males)	934	933	947	940

Source: Census of India, 2001 and 2011(provisional)

P= Provisional

Note: Literacy relates to percentage of literates in population aged 7 years and above.

The map of West Bengal is displayed in figure 5.1 below.



5.3: Infrastructure

The power installed capacity in West Bengal is 10194.1 MW (April-November, 2011-12) and power generation capacity is 55527.0 MU. The state offers steady supply of power at a competitive rate. It is well connected with land, water and air with the other parts of the country accounting for 2578 kms of National Highways, 4505 kms of State Highways, and 4500 kms of Railway Network. It has an International airport in Kolkata and a domestic airport at Bagdogra in Siliguri. Two ports are available, one in Kolkata and the other in Haldia.

There are 12 Growth Centres for small and medium enterprises, for electronic industries, software Technology Park etc.

Major Industries

Chemicals & Petrochemicals, Cotton Textiles, Coal, Iron & Steel Products, Heavy & Light Engineering products, Leather & Leather products, Papers, Tea, Jute products, Breweries, Paper, Drugs & Pharmaceuticals, Electrical & Electronics, Plastics, Software and InfoTech, Infrastructure & Real Estate, Locomotives, Vegetable Oils, Gems & jewelleryes, Lather products, poultry products etc. are major industries in West Bengal.

5.4: West Bengal Scenario: current status

West Bengal is the sixth largest economy in the country after Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. The service sector is the highest contributor in the economy of West Bengal. It contributes 65.52 percent of the net state domestic product (NSDP) compared to 18.76 percent from primary and 15.72 percent from secondary sector. During 2011-12, the rate of growth of per capita income in the state was 6.21 percent. During 2011-12 the growth rate of industrial production was 1.8 percent compared to 2.8 percent growth rate at the national level. Similarly, during 2011-12, the

growth of Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) in West Bengal is 6.66 percent against 6.48 percent growth of gross Domestic Product (GDP) in India.

The state is highly dependent on agriculture, although services and industries play an increasingly significant role in the economy. A large part of the state is economically backward, namely, large parts of six northern districts and three western districts of Purulia, Bankura and Birbhum and the Sundarbans area. The Green Revolution (1965) only touched two districts-Burdwan and Hoogly. However, there has been a significant spurt in food production since the 1980s and the state now has a surplus food grain production. Agriculture contributes around 19 percent to the state's gross domestic product during 2009-2010 ('West Bengal' India Brand Equity Foundation, 2011). West Bengal's NSDP at factor cost(at current prices ,2004-05 Base) is shown below in table-5.7 and this shows an upward rise in the NSDP during 2004-2009 at 2009 price.

Table-5.7: West Bengal's NSDP at factor cost (at current Prices, 2004-05 Base)

Net State Domestic Product at Factor Cost at Current Prices (2004-05 Base)	
Year	Net State Domestic Product
2004-05	190,073
2005-06	209,642
2006-07	238,625
2007-08	272,166
2008-09	309,799
2009-10	366,318

Source: "West Bengal" India Brand Equity Foundation, 2011

West Bengal is known for its position among one of the leading industrialized states of India. It is noted as one of the major centre for industries such as jute, steel, tea, sugar,

chemicals and fertilizers. But its share to total industrial output in the country has been in a declining condition (less than 6 percent). Very recently the state has been facing hardships. Land is not made easily available. In this context, it is necessary to have full cooperation from the people and from the state and central governments. The state government, in particular, should come forward to settle the problem and create a congenial atmosphere in establishing large and medium-sized industries along with the thrust for the expansion of cottage and small scale industries (SMEs). Service sector has been the fastest growing among the three sectors at a compound annual growth rate of 15.2 percent from 2004-2005 to 2009-2010. It is one of the country's leading exporters of finished leather goods. In 2009-10, the state accounted for around 13.5 percent of the country's exports of leather and leather products. The state accounted for around 70 percent of India's dried flower exports in 2008-09. It is also the leading exporter of shrimps and tea. However, the rapid industrialization process has given rise a debate over land acquisition for industry in this agrarian state; although NASSCOM-Gartner ranks West Bengal power infrastructure the best in the country.

We will now examine the performance of some of poverty alleviation schemes, such as, Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana, wage-employment scheme, distribution and redistribution of vested agricultural land and registration of bargadars under operation barga.

Swana Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana is one such programme for alleviating poverty in West Bengal. The data presented below in table 5.8 show the performance of the scheme from 2001-02 to 2011-12. The performance of the programme is judged in terms of credit disbursed, subsidy provided and physical achievement counted in terms of number of Swarogaries (self-employed) covered.

Table-5.8: Performance under Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana in West Bengal

Sl. No.	Performance	2001-02	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	Up to November	
									2010-11	2011-12
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Credit Disbursed (Rs. lakh)	2006.38	2252.39	3161.11	4310.56	6192.87	8688.45	9595.97	5041.84	7420.22
2	Subsidy Disbursed (Rs. Lakh)	1016.68	1614.98	2254.15	2736.04	3959.82	5400.07	5757.27	2981.33	4395.80
3	Physical Achievement (number of swarogaries covered)	15480	18829	28251	33551	46496	63092	66859	33790	50696

Source: Department of Panchayats and Rural Development Government of West Bengal, 2012.

Table-5.8 shows that there had been sharp increase in the disbursement of credit and subsidies from 2001-2002 to 2005-2006, and from 2005-2006 and continuously from 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010 and 2010 -20 11. The data for 2010-11 and 2011-2012 were partial (i.e. up to November in each year). For that reason the credit and subsidy disbursed to swarogaries (self-employed) sharply went down in both the years i.e. during 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. The physical achievement of any programme can best be judged in terms of number of beneficiaries received the benefit and the growth in the number of beneficiaries, the volume of credit and subsidy money received by them. From this point of view, it can be viewed that this programme is successful in West Bengal.

The performance of **wage-employment schemes** has been portrayed in table 5.9

Table-5.9: Performance under – Wage Employment Schemes in West Bengal

Year	Scheme	Expenditure (Rs. Lakh)	Physical Achievement (in lakh mandays)
1	2	3	4
2004-05	SGRY	37954.89	484.61
2005-06	SGRY	37851.40	531.59
2006-07	SGRY	32058.64	308.74
	MGNREGA	39618.39	439.09
2007-08	MGNREGA	96825.68	959.77
2008-09	MGNREGA	94038.48	786.62
2009-2010	MGNREGA	211039.87	1551.71
2010-11	MGNREGA	253395.02	1553.49
2010-11 (up to November, 2010)	MGNREGA	153791.78	1065.68
2010-11 (up to November, 2011)	MGNREGA	108848.03	469.13

Note: From September, 2007 SGRY scheme has been merged with MGNREGA.

Source: Deptt. of Panchayats and Rural Development, Government of West Bengal.

Two important wage-employment schemes are in operation in West Bengal as poverty alleviation measure. These are SGRY and MGNREGA. The performances under these schemes are presented in table 5.9 for 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011 (up to November, 2010) and 2011-2012 (up to November, 2011). Performance under these schemes during 2004-2005, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 was more or less static or deteriorating. The progress was spectacular especially since 2009 in terms of expenditure and man-days creation.

Some progress has been made in the distribution of vested agricultural in the state of West Bengal to the landless poor, day labourers and marginal farmers. The distribution of such land started since the Congress government. The system of land distribution continued also during the United Front government. The Left Front government in West Bengal claimed their success in land reform. Also the then government claimed that they had done much to the rural poor and marginal farmers through the distribution of vested agricultural land.

They also gave ownership right to the share-croppers registering them by the system of **Operation Barga**. The Left Front government also claimed that they success fully decentralized rural power by the three-tier panchayati raj institutions.

The data presented below in table-5.10 (gathered from the book written by Ajit Narayan Basu, Paschimbanger Krishi Niti, page 64) show the distribution of vested land under different regimes, i.e. under congress government, united front government and under left front government.

Table-5.10: Distribution of Vested Land

Government	Land Distributed (Lakh Acres)
Congress Government	3.76
United Front Government	2.50
Left Front Government	4.26
Total	10.52

Source: Ajit Narayan, Basu, Pashimbanger Krishi Niti, p-64

Data show that the total land distributed to land less and marginal farmers was 6.26 lakh acres (combining the distribution made under congress government and united front government). This is larger than the land distributed under the left front regime in West Bengal i.e. 4.26 lakh acres (up to 2001-2002, Ref. Economic Review, 2001-2001). Up to 2001-2002, 14.95 lakh share croppers had been recorded and usufructory right was conferred on them.

The revised data on vested agricultural land distributed to the poor published by the Land and Land Reforms Department, Government of West Bengal in 2011 are shown in table-5.11 below.

Table-5.11: Redistribution of Vested Land

No of beneficiaries	Upto 1977	1977-83	1983-91	Upto 1991	Upto 2000
	984032	472443	537141	1993616	-
Cropped area redistributed (areas)	628284	140417	146688	913389	103800

Source: Sen Gupta and Gazdar, 1997, Basu, 2000.

The area of agricultural land distributed and the number of beneficiaries (as on Nov.30, 2011) are shown in table-5.12.

Table-5.12: Area of Vested Agricultural Land Distributed and Number of Beneficiaries in West Bengal by District (As on 30th November, 2011)

Sl. No.	District	Area of land distributed (in hectares)	Number of beneficiaries (persons)			
			Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes	Other Castes	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Burdwan	25361	94657	44189	84038	222884
2	Birbhum	19698	77307	36743	47465	161515
3	Bankura	26143	94306	37758	50430	182494
4	Purba Medinipur	20407	44121	12407	172759	229287
5	Paschim Medinipur	95242	207736	177403	305952	691091
6	Howrah	1904	6326	542	19405	26273
7	Hooghly	5419	35885	14524	26357	76766
8	North 24-Paraganas	12401	55717	25047	71410	152174
9	South 24-Paraganas	31574	73128	13482	106571	193181
10	Nadia	9064	31579	6497	64794	102870
11	Murshidabad	18951	34685	9503	126722	190910
12	Uttar Dinajpur	29908	79632	22240	56222	157824
13	Dakshin Dinajpur	21018	40092	47078	43692	130862
14	Malda	31804	41821	30284	89415	161520
15	Jalpaiguri	41543	74817	28944	43495	147256
16	Darjeeling	12686	19882	14222	19480	53584
17	Cooch Behar	26075	87405	5567	41948	134920
18	Purulia	29904	32637	35067	30446	98150
West Bengal		459102	1131463	567497	1400601	3093561

Source: Land and Land Reforms Department, Government of West Bengal.

Table-5.12 also displays the district-wise distribution of vested land among different categories, such as, the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other castes. Recording of bargadars have been done under the system of 'operation barga'. The table-5.13 shows district-wise recording of bargadars and SC, ST and other caste people as on November, 30, 2011.

Table-5.13: Recording of Bargadars in West Bengal by District (As on 30th November, 2011 (Area in hectares)

Sl. No.	District	Scheduled Castes		Scheduled Tribes		Others		Total	
		No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Burdwan	46310	16689	17908	7232	72273	24285	136491	48206
2	Birbhum	47044	20382	17543	8137	49582	18038	114169	46557
3	Bankura	31912	7478	12533	3370	72438	16332	116883	27180
4	Purba Medinipur	21256	3168	1663	265	144866	17847	167785	21280
5	Paschim Medinipur	41001	6286	24464	5024	85969	20161	151434	31471
6	Howrah	10064	2641	432	34	32310	7403	42806	10078
7	Hooghly	38973	8292	13634	3207	62448	13861	115055	25360
8	North 24-Paraganas	20906	6045	10466	2414	42945	11109	74317	19568
9	South 24-Paraganas	42100	11677	3604	1449	69366	21501	115070	34627
10	Nadia	20864	5465	1889	398	41765	13055	64518	18918
11	Murshidabad	14470	4845	2411	1207	69352	21182	86233	27234
12	Uttar Dinajpur	12339	2785	4412	1309	15251	4975	32002	9069
13	Dakshin Dinajpur	20288	6376	16116	5655	35631	9665	72035	21696
14	Malda	20192	8768	20290	8806	41557	14516	82039	32090
15	Jalpaiguri	28480	15981	13555	12289	19367	10855	61402	39125
16	Darjeeling	4154	1903	3042	1576	5683	3534	12879	7013
17	Cooch Behar	50513	19711	952	506	33679	13625	85144	33842
18	Purulia	3416	1551	2411	816	3528	1082	9355	3449
West Bengal		474282	150043	167325	63694	898010	243026	1539617	456763

Source: Land & land Reforms Department, Government of West Bengal, 2012.

The distribution of vested agricultural land to the landless poor and the marginal farmers and that of registering the share croppers by the system 'operation barga' in West Bengal gave a great fillip to the landless and marginal peasants and the share croppers. But the amount of land distributed under this programme was very small or tiny i.e. up to 2000

among 25.44 lakh of landless and poor peasants were distributed vested land and the per head distribution of land is only 0.41 acres. (Economic Review, 2001-2002). This small plot of land is really economically non-viable. But a report responding the distribution of vested land published by the West Bengal Board of Revenue, Statistics Cell, statistical Report VII (Calcutta: 82) tells different story. The story is “it is perfectly understandable that if we want to maintain the status quo we should try to involve as many as people as possible in it so that at least a majority of the population acquires stance in the status – quo or the system in question. Keeping this view, it is perfectly reasonable to distribute small bits of land however uneconomic to land hungry peasants and / or agricultural labourers so that they never look for any radical alternative to the present property system and be eager to acquire some property. However to call it socialism is a sad travesty of truth [West Bengal Board of Revenue Statistics Cell, Land Reforms in West Bengal; Statistical Report VII (Calcutta: 82). The poor cultivators mostly could not/ cannot cultivate small plots of vested agricultural distributed to them, because cultivating this land cannot give them the crop that may be sustainable. Thus, this transfer of land has become economically non-viable to them.

Under operation barga, up to 2002-03, about 14,000,00 bargadars had been registered. The system allows 25 percent share of crops produced to the land owner if the owners do not bear the costs of other inputs. Thus, in many cases the operation barga becomes economically non-variable. Further, the selling off barga land was just not possible in the late seventies and early eighties of the last century. This right to land offered by the government was treated like the ownership rights. The registered share croppers felt that the landowners could not evict them from land at will. But since the mid-eighties onwards huge land selling by the tiny farmers (who received vested land) and registered sharecroppers. Later on, the government passed a bill that provides the tiller “by execution of a mutual

agreement, surrender the right of cultivation in respect of 50 percent of the land cultivated by him as a bargadar, if the owner of the land conveys the right and title in respect of the remaining 50 percent of such land under the same mutual agreement to such bargadar” (Ref. Times of India, 21.11.2006).

Land reform measure in such as distribution of vested land and operation barga to some extent benefited the beneficiaries. But the fact is that there has been rapid increase in landlessness among the rural peasants in spite of distribution of vested land and registration of share-croppers. The National Sample Survey, 1999-2000 also admitted the large increase in the landlessness among the rural households from 39.6 percent in 1987-88 to 41.6 percent in 1993-94 and to 49.8 percent in 1999-2000. This was occurred due to substantial diversification of rural employment to non-agricultural activities (HDR, West Bengal, 2004). The data shown in table 5.14 show the extent of land alienation of pattaholders and eviction of bargadars in West Bengal.

Table-5.14: Pattadars lost possession and bargadars evicted from land (By 2001)

District	% of partadars who have lost possession	Percent of bargadars who have been invited
Darjeeling	14.71	26
Japlaiguri	16.72	31.6
Cooch Behar	12.33	20.9
Uttar Dinajpur	22.35	31.49
Dinajpur	19.17	30.73
Malda	10.41	5.66
Murshidabad	15.87	19.06
Birbhum	16.62	9.83
Burdwan	11.93	14.5
Nadia	11.27	7.74
North 24 Parajanas	16.99	16.65
Hugli	14.63	10.48
Bankura	15.45	11.09
Purulia	16.11	6.7
Midnapore	5.62	15.9
Hawra	9.34	15.9
South 24 Paraganas	22.07	10.31
Total	13.23	14.37

Source: Land and Land Reforms Department, Government of West Bengal, 2002.

Chapter-VI

Our Village Level Study: Findings

6.1: Introduction

This chapter is the core of our research investigation. We have chosen Dakshin Dinajpur district for our detailed investigation. We have chosen the sample villages from two subdivisions, Balurghat and Gangarampur and from each subdivision two GPs have been selected. The survey results and our observations on the results have been presented in the following sections.

6.2: District Profile

Barendra Bhumi, according to Ramcharita Maanasha, was the homeland (Janakbhu) of the Palas. Gopal, the first king of the Pala dynasty, was hailed from this place. Reference may be made to Pancha Gour-Gour Empire of Emperor Dharma Pal. Extension of Pundra Vardhan Bhukti began under the Palas. It comprised number of Mandals and each Mandal comprised several vishayas. Kotivarsha was Vishaya situated on the river Punarbhava. It has been mentioned in the inscriptions as the most important Vishaya. Though Dharma Pala (C 770-810 A.D.) was a great patron of Buddhism and set up more than fifty Buddhist monasteries in different parts of his empire, he was not averse to Hinduism. He himself established a four faced Shiva image at Buddha Gaya. At Aminpur village in Kushmandi Police Station a five faced Ban Linga has been discovered. At Dehabandh village in Kushmandi PS, one Shiva Linga is seen on the road side with four goddess with folded palms engraved on four sides. It is a unique image belonging to Gupta age. A similar sand stone image has been kept at district library. Some beautiful sculptures of Gupta period can be seen at the said Library Museum.

A passage in Raj Tarangini refers to existence of a kartikeya Temple in Pundra Bardhan in 8th century AD. In Kushmandi , another black stone Kartikeya image has been discovered

which might belong to a little later period.

Several mounds at Dhampara and Danagram indicate existence of historical relics in the area. The ruins of the famous Jagdalla Mahabehar mentioned in Ramcharita, can still be seen under thick bamboo groves in a village called Jagadalla in Banshihari Block.

The Buddhist scholars who became famous in Tibet like Bibhuti Chandra, Danshila, Mokshaker Gupta and Subha Kar Gupta were associated with this Mahabehar. It is said that Sanskrit Texts were actually translated to Tibetan at Jagadalla. The presiding deity here was Abolokiteswar. This famous centre of Buddhist culture and education was demolished by Bakhtiyar Khilji in 1202-03 AD.

After the death of Dharma Pal, Deva Pal reigned for about forty years. He constructed Somepuri monastery which is near Paharpur. In Tapan Police Station a few Buddha images have been found-one of which has been kept at College Museum. In Kumarganj Police Station one village near Daudpur is named Buddha Nath Dham. Quite a large number of Buddhist images representing Mahayana Pantheon and belonging to Pala period have been found in different parts of this district. Recently (April, 1994) four miniature Bronze images about 5" (inches) high-two of Lord Buddha and two of Tara have been unearthed during re-excavation of a tank at Tapan Police Station. Those are kept in Thana presently. In Thakurpura Ghat in Balurghat PS, one big stone image of Buddha in sitting posture was found. At Bhakla village in Batun GP, Kumarganj PS, a small black stone Buddha images is still being worshipped in village Temple. The decline of the Pala dynasty began in the later half or the 9th century. A.D. The Pratihar got for some time control over North Bengal. In Dinajpur (now in Bangladesh) as inscription pillar of Pratihar king Mahendra Pal, son of king Bhoja has been found. A prosperous village on the bank of river Srimati in itahar PS is called Prtirajpur.

Narayan Pal (C854-908 AD) somehow retained Gour region. A record refers to the

construction of a shiva temple by Narayan Pal somewhere near Punarbhava. Gopal – II's inscription on copper plates have also been found in the district. Mahipal (C988-1038 AD) was famous for his construction activities. He restored and repaired many monasteries and Buddhist monuments. Traditions have associated the name of Mahipal with a number of Tanks. One such big tank called Mahipal Dighi can be seen in Banshihari Block. At that time big monasteries existed at Tapan and Vikahar in Tapan PS, Devikot in Gangarampur Police Station, Dehabandh and Amalahar in Kushmandi P.S.

Tantric Buddhism flourished in Bengal at this time under the Chandras. King Gopi Chandra belonged to this dynasty. Atish Dipankar is said to have been born in that royal family. The kingdom of Nayapal was invaded by king Karnya of west. Karnya defeated the Pal king and destroyed many monasteries. Dipankar Sri Jnan was then in the court of Magadha. He made sincere efforts to bring peace. Through his good offices, a treaty was concluded. Dipankar left India for Tibet some time in 1038-1042 AD.

During the reign of Mahipal-II (C1072-75 AD) Divyok organized a revolt against the Palas. He usurped the throne and made his position secure in Barendra Bhumi. Rudaka and Bhima succeeded one after another. Alter Vijay Sen, Ballal Sen became the king of Bengal. His dominion comprised among other Barendra Bhumi. Lakshman Sen had his second. Capital at Lakshmanavati in Gour. Biswarup Sen was also called Goureswar. The early Sen kings were followers of Shaivism. A few beautiful black stone Shiva Parvati images have been recovered in the district. One such image can be seen at District Library museum. Another exquisite image has been kept at Balurghat Treasury. The royal seal of the Sens was engraved with the image of Sadashiva. A few images of Ganga and Yamuna have also been found in the district. A relief depicting a lady lying with a child by represents the scene of Krishna's nativity or birth of Kartikeya (Kumar Sambhava). The later rulers of the Sena dynasty were Vaishnavas. Hundreds of Vishnu images built of black stone, exquisitely

decorated have been found in almost every prosperous village in the district. The last addition to such collection is the black stone idol in village Kaigram in Balurghat Police Station (March 94) which has been kept at Balurghat Thana. Another beautiful piece of Vishnu image 32"x16" has come to notice during re-excavation of Bhabna Dighi (June, 94) in Harirampur Police station. This has been kept in Banshihari Block office.

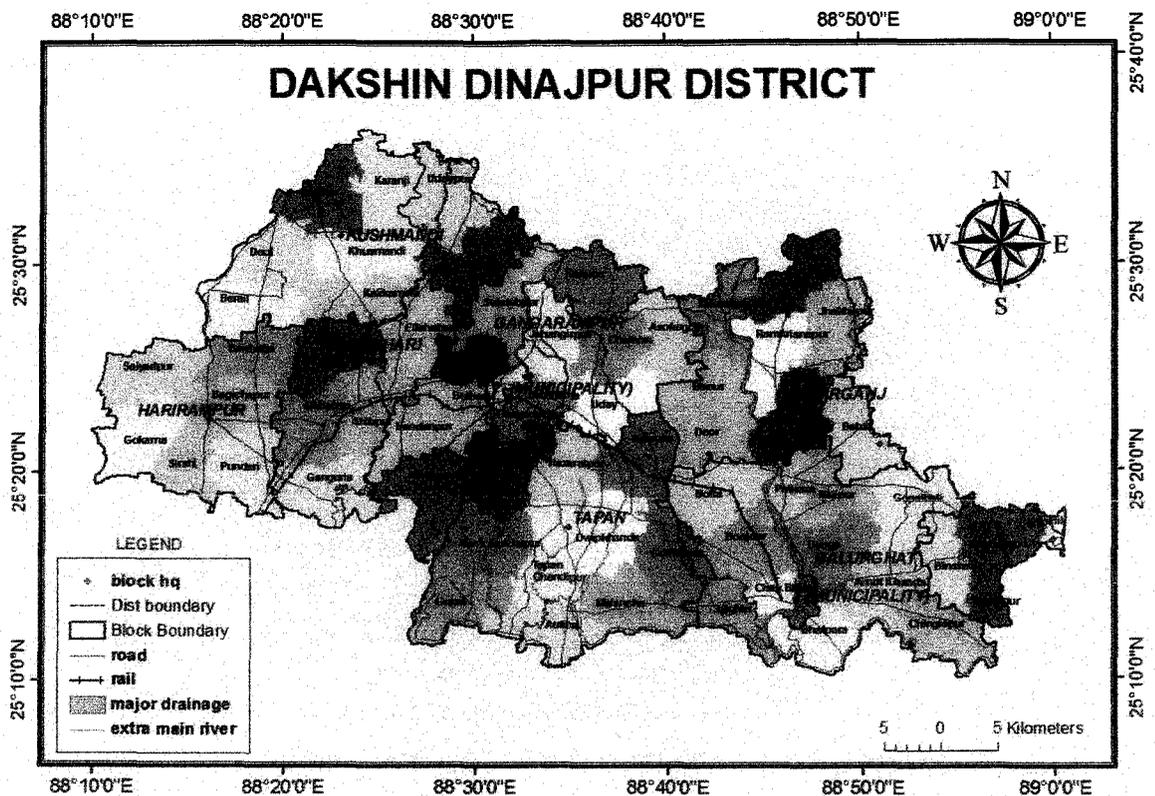
The last king of Sena dynasty Keshab Sen came to power in 1225 AD. He was a Sun worshiper and some Sun images of his time have been found in the district. Mention may be made about a few-black stone images of Sena period which stand unique in the locality. One such image is that of Ardhanarishwar recovered from Dehabandh, now kept at Kushmandi Block office. Another interesting image is that of Barahi (goddess with face of a pig) recovered from Bairhatta and now kept at Harirampur Thana.

Broken piece of Chandi image with Godhika at the bottom found at Bairhatta and about eight feet high huge Mahismardini image (or may be a Buddhist goddess, lying at Bhikahar deserve special mention. At Sarbamangala village about 10 km away from Shivabati in Gangarampur PS. one black stone eight armed Mahismardini image (about 2 1/2 ft high) and another eighteen armed Chandi image (about 2ft high) are seen kept in a mandir. Under a tree in front of the Mandir, a number of broken stone images of Mahismardini, Surya and Vishnu are found. It appears that in ancient times. The village now called Patharpunji in Tapan PS, indicates that stones were brought from Rajmahal hills by boat through river Punarbhava and stored in that village and in other places which were used for stone carving by the local artists).

Bakhtiyar Khilji after defeating Lakshman Sen and destroying Nadia, made Gour his capital. The body of Bakhtiyar lay in a tomb in a village near Narayanpur, which was known as Dumduma in Gangarampur Thana.

In 2011, Dakshin Dinajpur has population of 1,670,931 of which male and female are

855,104 and 815,827 respectively. In 2001 census, Dakshin Dinajpur has a population of 1,503,178 of which males are 770,335 and remaining 732,843 are females. Dakshin Dinajpur District population constituted 1.83 percent of total Maharashtra population.



Dakshin Dinajpur District Population Growth Rate

There was change of 11.16 percent in the population compared to population as per 2001. In the previous census of India 2001. Dakshin Dinajpur District recorded increase of 22.15 percent to its population compared to 1991.

Dakshin Dinajpur District Density 2011

The initial provisional data released by census India 2011, shows that density of Dakshin Dinajpur district for 2011 is 755 people per sq. km. In 2001, Dakshin Dinajpur district density was at 677 people per sq. km. Dakshin Dinajpur district administers 2,219 square kilometers of areas.

Dakshin Dinajpur Literacy Rate 2011

Average literacy rate of Dakshin Dinajpur in 2011 were 72.82 compared to 63.59 of 2001. If things are looked out at gender wise, male and female literacy were 78.37 and 67.01 respectively. For 2001 census, same figures stood at 72.43 and 54.28 in Dakshin Dinajpur District. Total literate in Dakshin Dinajpur District were 1,083,685 of which male and female were 596,474 and 487,211 respectively. In 2001, Dakshin Dinajpur District had 799,479 in its district.

Dakshin Dinajpur Sex Ratio 2011

With regards to Sex Ratio in Dakshin Dinajpur, it stood at 956 per 1000 male compared to 2001 census figure of 951. The average national sex ratio in India is 940 as per latest reports of Census 2011 Directorate. In 2011 census, child sex ratio is 957 girls per 1000 boys compared to figure of 966 girls per 1000 boys of 2001 census data.

Dakshin Dinajpur Child Population 2011

In census enumeration, data regarding child under 0-6 age were also collected for all districts including Dakshin Dinajpur. There were total 178,374 children under age of 0-6 against 246,034 of 2001 census. Of total 178,374 male and female were 91,564 and 86,810 respectively. Child Sex Ratio as per census 2011 was 948 compared to 966 of census 2001. In 2011, Children under 0-6 formed 10.68 percent of Dakshin Dinajpur District compared to 16.37 percent of 2001. There was net change of -5.69 percent in this compared to previous census of India.

Table-6.1: Population, 2001 & 2011

Description	2011	2001
Actual Population	1,670,931	1,503,178
Male	855,104	770,335
Female	815,827	732,843
Population Growth	11.16%	22.15%
Area Sq. Km	2,219	2,219
Density/km2	753	677
Proportion to West Bengal Population	1.83%	1.87%

Source: Census of India, 2001 & 2011

Table-6.2: Sex Ratio, Literacy & Child Population, 2001 & 2011

Description	2011	2001
Sex Ratio (Per 1000)	954	951
Child Sex Ratio (0-6 Age)	948	966
Average Literacy	73.86	63.59
Male Literacy	79.63	72.43
Female Literacy	67.81	54.28
Total Child Population (0-6 Age)	178,374	246,034
Male Population (0-6 Age)	91,564	125,157
Female Population (0-6 Age)	86,810	120,877
Literates	1,102,355	799,479
Male Literates	607,992	467,296
Female Literates	494,363	332,183
Child Proportion (0-6 Age)	10.68%	16.37%
Boys Proportion (0-6 Age)	10.71%	16.25%
Girls Proportion (0-6 Age)	10.64%	16.49%

Source: Census, of India, 2011

Table-6.3: Population: Dakshin Dinajpur (Rural-Urban) 2001, 2011

Description	Rural	Urban
Population (%)	85.87 %	14.13%
Total Population	1,434,856	236,075
Male Population	735,688	119,416
Female Population	699,168	116,659
Sex Ratio	950	977
Child Sex Ratio (0-6)	948	951
Child Population (0-6)	161,481	16,893
Male Child(0-6)	82,905	8,659
Female Child(0-6)	78,576	8,234
Child Percentage (0-6)	11.25%	7.16%
Male Child Percentage	11.27%	4.25%
Female Child Percentage	11.24%	7.06%
Literates	906,370	195,985
Male Literates	505,416	102,576
Female Literates	400,954	93,409
Average Literacy	71.42	89.42%
Male Literacy	77.42	92.61%
Female Literacy	64.61	86.15%

Source: Census of India, 2001 & 2011

Dakshin Dinajpur District Urban Population 2011

Out of the total Dakshin Dinajpur population for 2011 census, 14.13 percent lives in urban regions of district. In total 236,075 people lives in urban areas of which males are 119,416 and females are 116,659. Sex Ratio in urban region of Dakshin Dinajpur district is 977 as per 2011 census data. Similarly child sex ratio in Dakshin Dinajpur district was 951 in 2011 census. Child population (0-6) in urban region was 16,893 of which males and females were 8,659 and 8,234. This child population figure of Dakshin Dinajpur district is 7.25 % of total urban population. Average literacy rate in Dakshin Dinajpur district as per census 2011 is 89.42 % of which males and females are 92.61 % and 86.15 % literates respectively. In actual number 195,985 people are literate in urban region of which males and females are 102,576 and 93,409 respectively.

Dakshin Dinajpur District Rural Population 2011

As per 2011 census, 85.87 % population of Dakshin Dinajpur districts lives in rural areas of villages. The total Dakshin Dinajpur district population living in rural areas is 1,434,856 of which males and females are 735,688 and 699,168 respectively. In rural areas of Dakshin Dinajpur district, sex ratio is 950 females per 1000 males. If child sex ratio data of Dakshin Dinajpur district is considered, figure is 948 girls per 1000 boys. Child population in the age 0-6 is 161,481 in rural areas of which males were 82,905 and females were 78,576. The child population comprises 11.27 % of total rural population of Dakshin Dinajpur district. Literacy rate in rural areas of Dakshin Dinajpur district is 71.18 % as per census data 2011. Gender wise, male and female literacy stood at 77.42 and 64.61 percent respectively. In total, 906,370 people were literate of which males and females were 505,416 and 400,954 respectively.

Table-6.4: District Urban Population

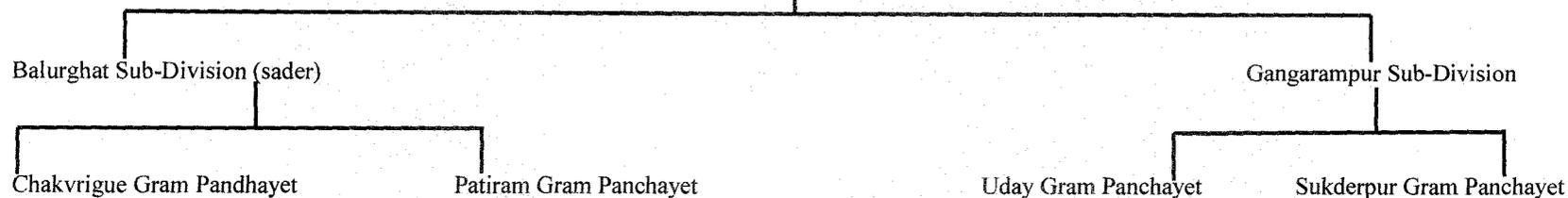
Urban Agglomerations inside Dakshin Dinajpur District	Population	Male	Female
Balurghat (Urban Agglomeration)	164,593	82,466	82,127
Cities inside Dakshin Dinajpur District	Population	Male	Female
Balurghat (Municipality)	151,183	75,677	75,506

6.3: Our Survey Frame

We have selected Dakshin Dinajpur, a backward district, as our survey spot. The survey plan has been displayed as follows (Chart-I). The detail of the selection of sample villages has been discussed in sample design and research methodology section of chapter-I of the dissertation.

Chart-I

Dakshin Dinajpur District



Sl. No.	Name of the village	No. of household survey
1	Gobindapur	50
2	Mayamari	40
3	Kuaron	50
4	Chakvriqie (proper)	75
5	Dakre	27
Total		242

Sl.No.	Name of the village	No. of household survey
1	Patiram (proper)	100
2	Dakshin Para and the adjacent area	54
Total		154

Sl. No.	Name of the village	No. of household survey
1	Ausha	56
2	Pulinde	100
3	Panchagram	21
4	Hajichak	21
Total		198

Sl. No.	Name of the village	No. of household survey
1	Katabari	29
2	Hosenpur	12
3	Daspore	61
4	Sukdevpur (proper)	100
Total		221

Source: Chart prepared by the researcher himself, 2007

6.4: Our Survey I: Data Analysis: Chakvrigu and Patiram

In rural India there exists massive poverty; because majority of the rural masses fail to attain a well-being considered to be a reasonable minimum by the standards of the society. In the analysis of poverty in India, we consider 'poverty line' as the most important measure and we consider the persons who fall below this line as 'poor persons'. But all such measurements of poverty line are done on the basis of income or consumption expenditure. This may not be right measure of poverty (Sen, 1985; Dutta (2012); Bajerjee & Latif, 2008). In explaining the concept of standard of living and poverty, Professor Amartya Sen (1985) specifically mentions that to measure poverty properly it needs to include education and health parameters along with income or consumption expenditure. The income of the rural masses or the poor in particular exhibits greater variability than current consumption. Naturally, current consumption has been considered to be more authentic indicator of the current standard of living. For this purpose, we have ultimately considered 'meal status' (two square meals in three months, six months, nine months and 12 months) of the sample households as the measure of poverty. On the basis of meal status, we have measured the proportion of poor. Apart from this, we have examined the literacy, government aid received, status of residential buildings, migration, etc. to judge the socio-economic status of the rural people of a backward district of North Bengal region of West Bengal. The educational status of the sample villages as well as the GPs under Balurghat subdivision has been presented in tables 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12, 6.13, and 6.14.



Table -6.5: Literacy: Village Patiram

Income (Rs)	Illiterate			Up to X			MP			Above XII			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Up to 2000	85	85	170	56	45	101	-	-	-	01	01	02	273
2001-3000	30	18	48	15	12	27	-	01	01	-	-	-	76
3001-4000	04	02	06	03	04	07	01	-	01	-	-	-	14
Above 4000	02	02	04	02	05	07	01	-	01	04	02	06	18
Total			228			142			03			08	381

Source: Field survey, 2007

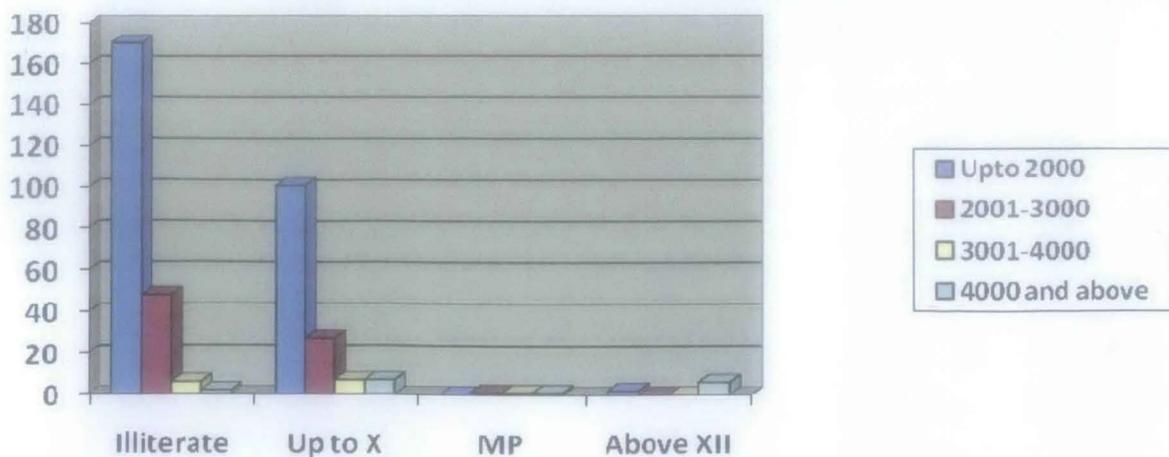
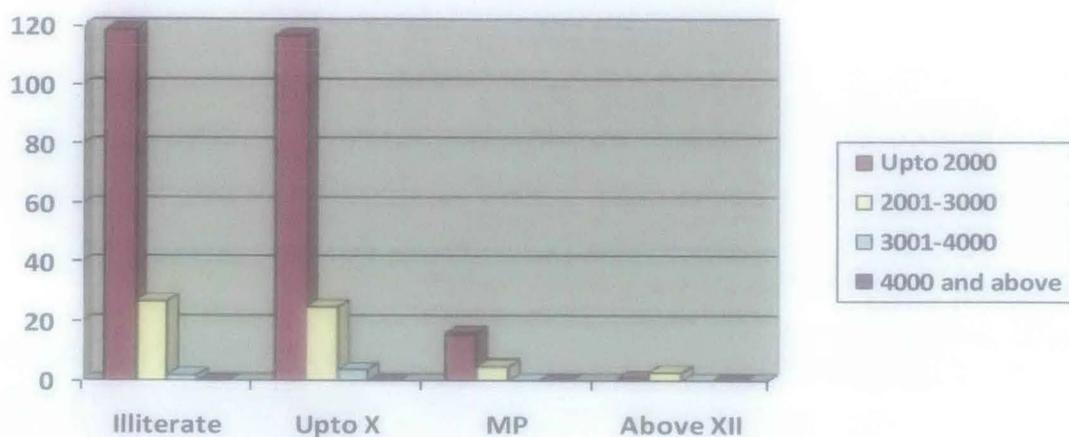


Table-6.6: Literacy: Village Dakshin Para and adjacent area

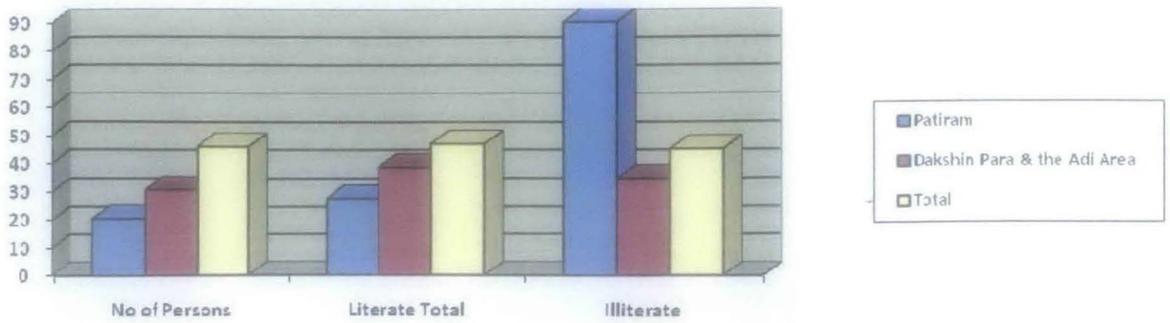
Income (Rs)	Illiterate			Up to X			MP			Above XII			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Up to 2000	49	70	119	58	59	117	06	10	16	01	-	01	253
2001-3000	13	14	27	8	17	25	04	01	05	02	01	03	60
3001-4000	02	-	02	02	02	04	-	-	-	-	-	-	06
Above 4000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total			148			146			21			04	319

Source: Field survey, 2007

**Table-6.7: Literacy: Patiram GP.**

Village	No. of Persons	Literate Total	Illiterate Total
Patiram	381	153 (40.15)	228 (59.84)
Dakshin Para & the Adi. Area	319	171 (53.60)	148 (46.40)
Total	700	324 (46.28)	376 (53.71)

Source: Field survey, 2007



The literacy of Patiram GP consisting of 700 persons has been shown in table-3. The literacy rate of Patiram village is 40.15 percent whereas it is 53.60 percent in Dakshinpara and the adjacent area. Overall literacy rate in Patiram GP is 46.28 percent. This means that about 54 percent people were illiterates.

Table- 6.8: Literacy: Village Gobindapur

Income (Rs)	Illiterate			Upto X			MP			Above XII			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Upto 2000	38	38	76	46	52	98	03	02	05	-	-	-	179
2001-3000	07	09	16	07	08	15	-	-	-	1	1	02	33
3001-4000	-	-	-	02	04	09	-	-	-	-	-	-	09
Above 4000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total			92			122			05			02	221

Source: Field survey, 2007

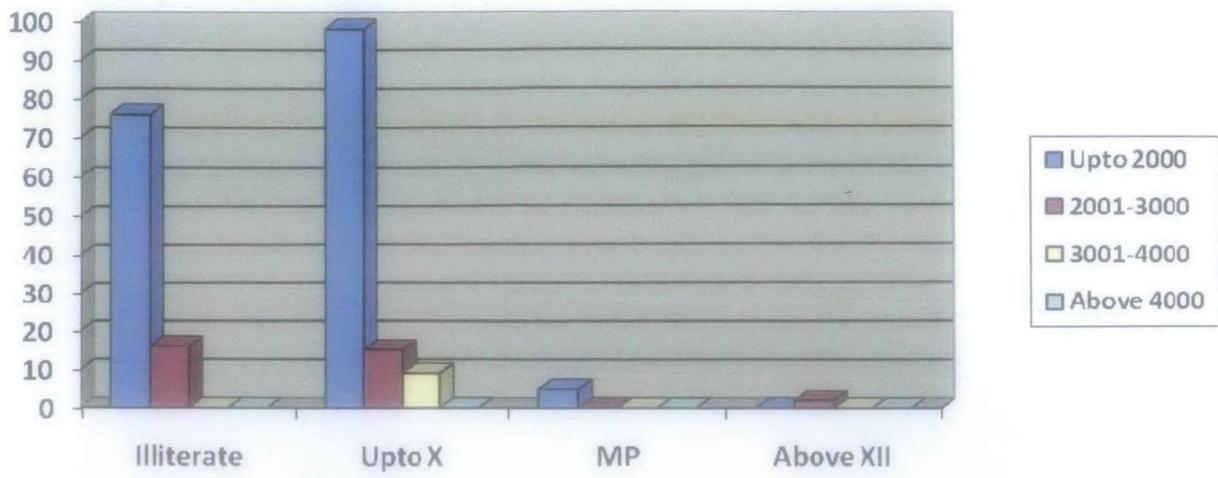


Table-6.9: Literacy: Village Mayamari

Income (Rs)	Illiterate			Upto X			MP			Above XII			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Upto 2000	22	19	41	27	29	56	04	02	06	-	-	-	103
2001-3000	02	06	08	12	11	23	02	-	-	01	-	01	32
3001-4000	02	02	04	04	04	08	-	-	-	-	01	01	13
Above 4000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total			53			87			06			02	148

Source:Field survey,2007

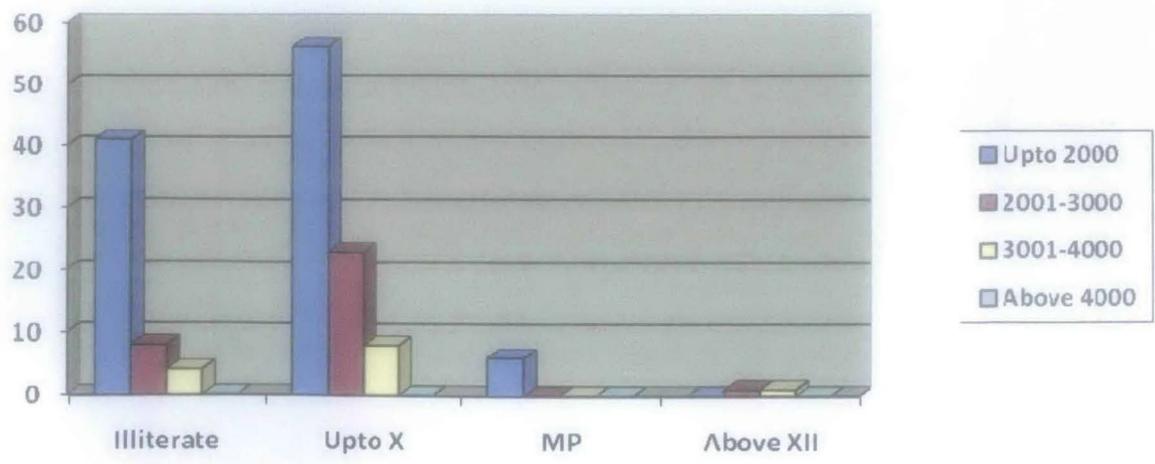
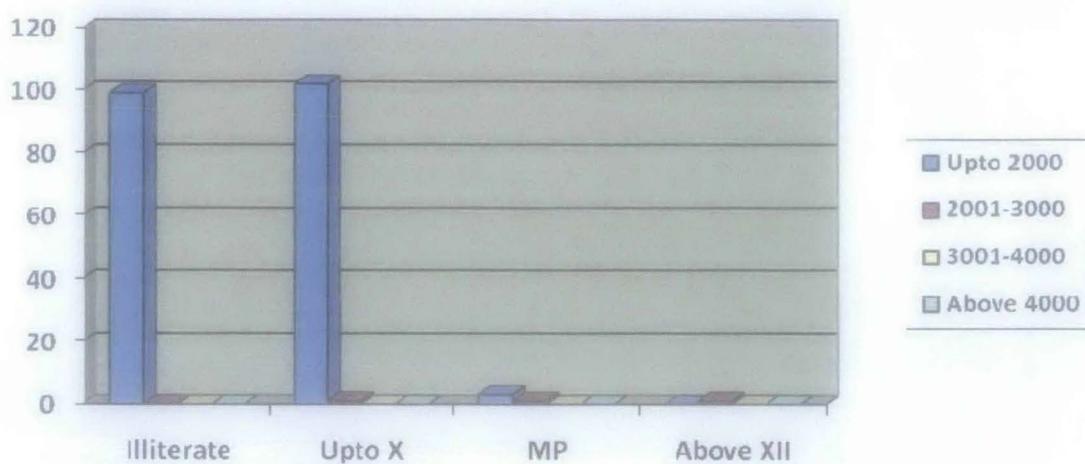


Table- 6.10: Literacy: Village Kuaran

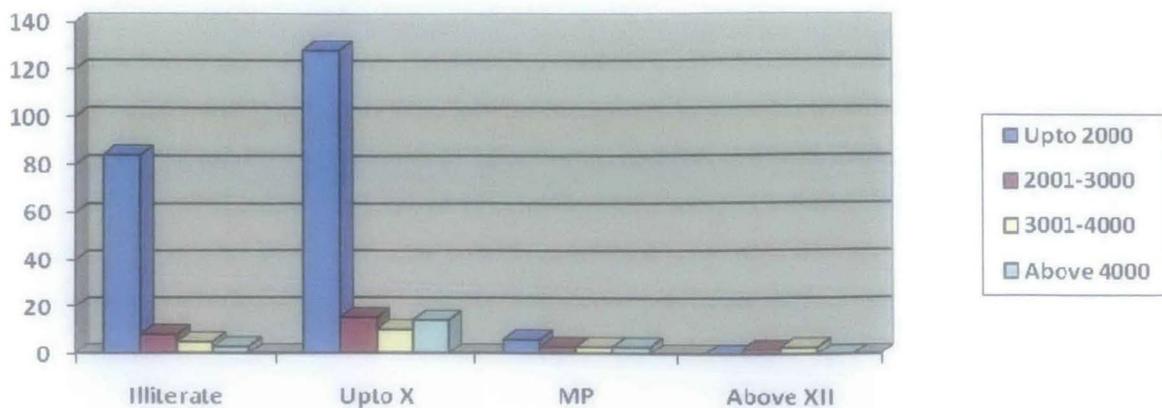
Income (Rs)	Illiterate			Upto X			MP			Above XII			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Upto 2000	47	52	99	43	39	102	03	-	03	-	-	-	204
2001-3000	-	-	-	-	01	01	01	-	01	01	-	01	03
3001-4000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Above 4000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total			99			103			04			01	207

Source:Field survey,2007

**Table-6.11: Literacy: Village Chakvrigu**

Income (Rs)	Illiterate			Upto X			MP			Above XII			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Upto 2000	47	37	84	55	73	128	04	02	06	-	-	-	218
2001-3000	03	05	08	05	10	15	01	02	03	02	-	02	28
3001-4000	03	02	05	06	04	10	01	02	03	03	-	03	21
Above 4000	03	-	03	05	09	14	01	02	03	-	-	-	20
Total			100			167			15			05	287

Source: Field survey, 2007



About 35 percent of the people in Chakurigu village under GP Chakvrigu of Balurghat subdivision are illiterates in Chakvrigu village.

Table -6.12: Literacy: Village Dakra

Income (Rs)	Illiterate			Upto X			MP			Above XII			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Upto 2000	25	36	61	41	31	72	-	-	-	-	-	-	133
2001-3000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3001-4000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Above 4000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total			61			72							133

Source:Field survey,2007

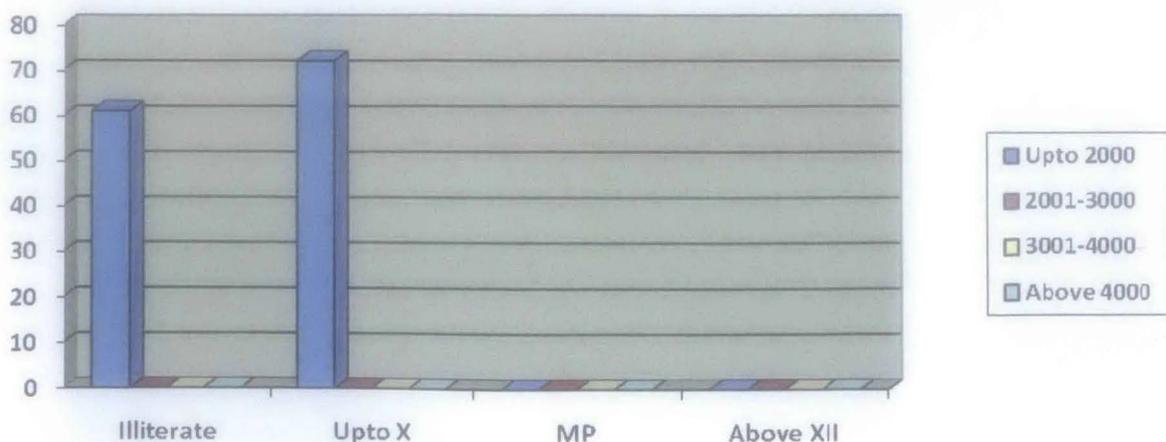
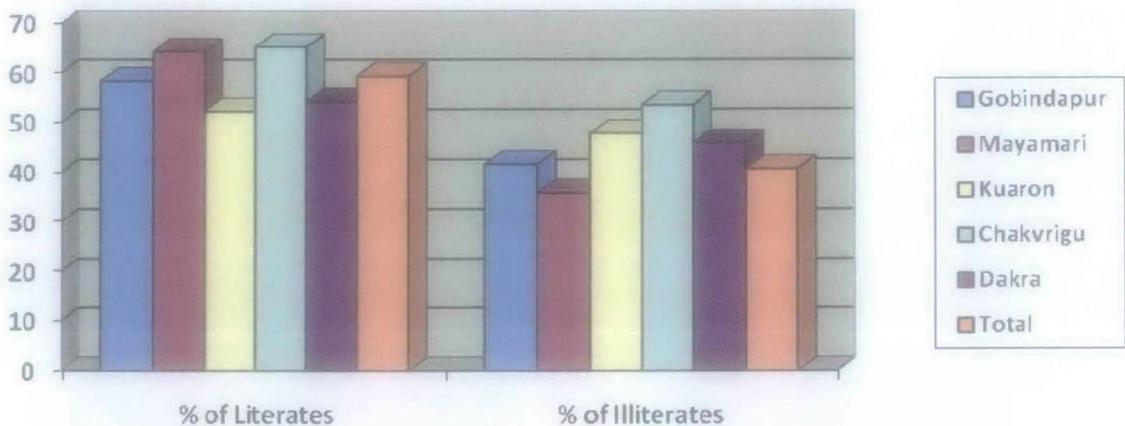


Table-6.13: Literacy: Chakvrigu GP

Village	Total no. of Persons	Literates		Illiterates	
		Total	%	Total	%
Gobindapur	221	129	58.37	92	41.62
Mayamari	148	95	64.18	53	35.81
Kuaron	207	108	52.17	99	47.82
Chakvrigu	287	187	65.15	100	53.47
Dakra	133	72	54.13	61	45.86
Total	996	591	59.33	405	40.66

Source: Field Survey, 2007



The literacy in Chakvrigu GP is shown in table -6.13. Total number of sample villages is seven and the total number of persons 996. The Literacy rate is 59 percent and the illiteracy rate 41 percent.

Table -6.14: Literacy: Balurghat Sub – Division (Sadar)

GP	No. of Persons	Literates	Illiterates
Chakvrigu	996	591 (59.33)	405 (40.66)
Patiram	700	324 (46.28)	376 (53.71)
Total	1696	915 (53.95)	781 (46.05)

Source: Field Survey, 2007

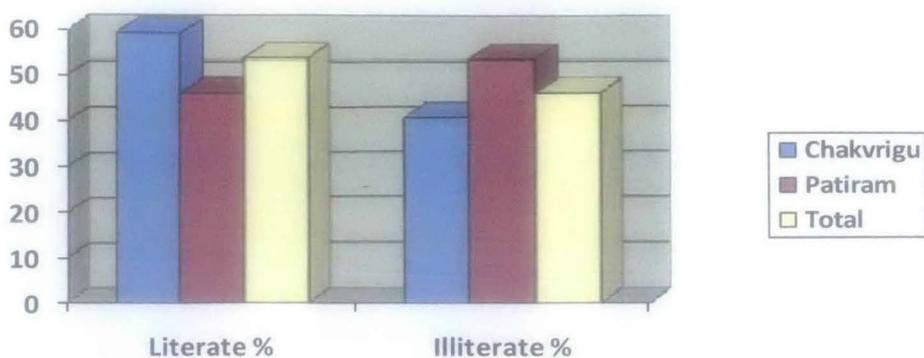


Table- 6.14 represents the overall literacy and illiteracy of the sample villages under Balurghat subdivision. Overall literacy rate is 46 percent and the illiteracy rate is 54 percent. It is a shame to us all that even today more than 50 percent of rural population remains illiterate in spite of so many steps adopted by the central and state governments to reduce/ eliminate poverty.

Tables 6.15, 6.16, 6.17, 6.18,6.19 , 6.20,6.21, 6.22, 6.23, 6.24, 6.25, 6.26, 6.27,6.28 & 6.29 exhibit the government aid enjoyed and wage-employment received by the villagers (Sample households of Patiram GP & Chakvrigu GP of Balurghat subdivision) migration and BPL or proportion of poor of the sample villages of Balurghat subdivision.

Table-6.15: Government Aid Received: Patiram GP

Village	No. of Households	Govt. Aid Received (No. of Households)
Patiram	100	03 (3)
Dakshin Para & the Adi. Area	54	08 (34.4)
Total	154	11 (7.1)

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentage to total.

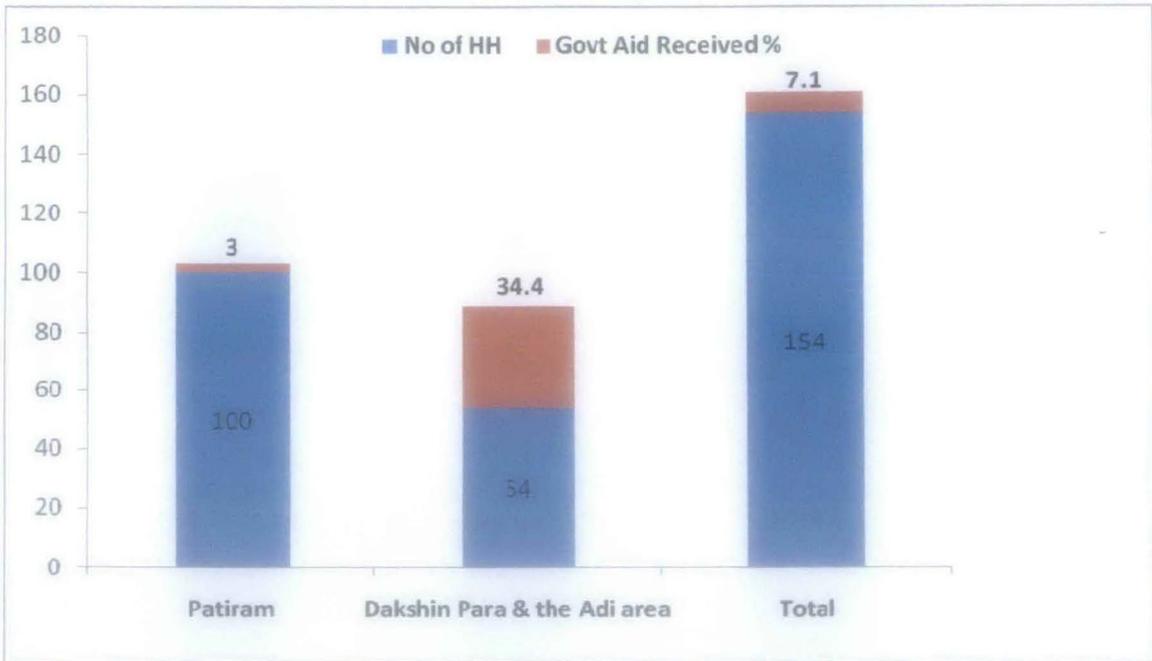


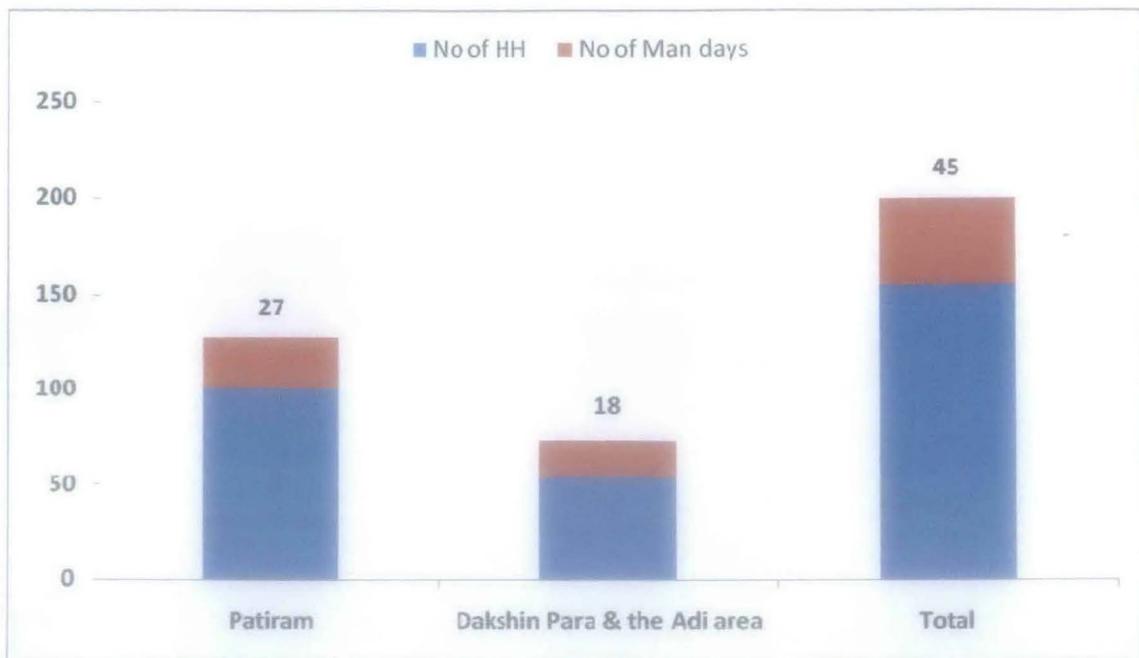
Table-6.15 shows that a few number of villagers under Patiram GP received Government aid during 2007. It shows that on average, only 7 (seven) percent of the villagers came under the government aid.

Table -6.16: 100 days work: Patiram GP (During 2007)

Village	No. of Households	No. of Man days
Patiram	100	27
Dakshin Para & the Adi. Area	54	18
Total	154	45 (12)

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate per person man-days.



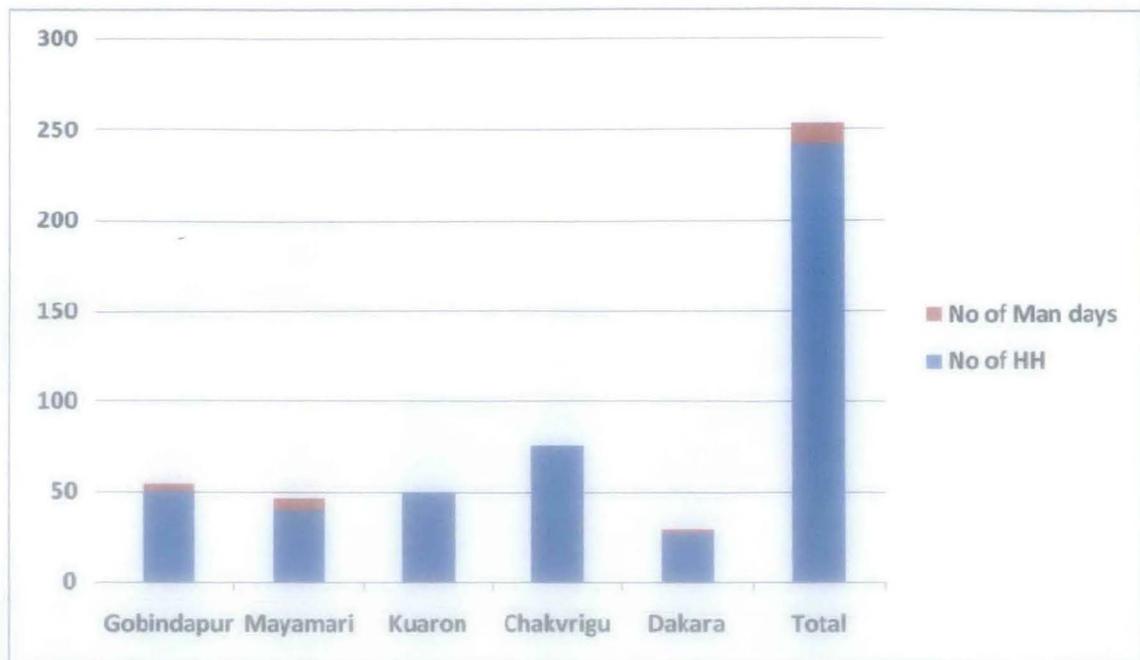
The data presented in table - 6.16 shows that only 12 man days had been created in Patiram GP in 2007. This programme is known as the 'food for work' programme. This was started on November 14, 2004 in 150 most backward districts of India.

Table-6.17: Government Aid Received: Chakvrigu GP

Village	No. of Households	No. of Man days(per person)
Gobindapur	50	04
Mayamari	40	06
Kuaron	50	NIL
Chakvrigue	75	NIL
Dakra	27	02
Total	242	12 (10)

Source: Field survey, 2007

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate per person man-days.



The table -6.17 shows that only 12 families received government aid during 2007. Only about 10 families received government aid during 2007 in Chakvrigu GP.

Table- 6.18: 100 days work: Chakvrigu GP (During 2007)

Village	No. of Households	No. of Man days(per person)
Gobindapur	50	12
Mayamari	40	14
Kuaron	50	05
Chakvrigue	75	08
Dakra	27	07
Total	242	46 (15)

Source:Field survey,2007

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate per person no. of man-days created.

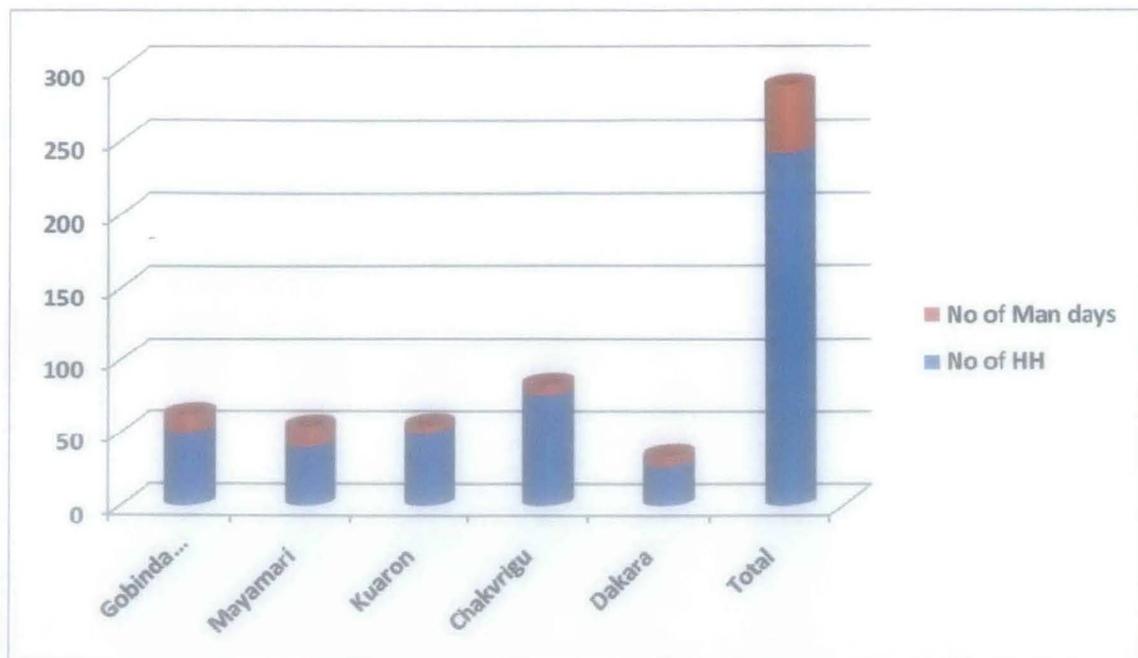


Table-6.18 shows that in Chakvrigu GP only 15 man-days were created during 2007.

Government aid received and 100-days work got by the rural people of Balurghat subdivision are shown in tables-6.19 and 6.20, respectively. Table 6.19 shows that only 5 percent households received government aid and table 6.20 shows that only 13.5 man-days were created in Balurghat rural areas.

Table-6.19: Government Aid Received: Balurghat

GP	No. of Households	Govt. Aid Received
Patiram	154	11 (7.1)
Chakvrigu	242	12 (4.95)
Total	396	23

Source: Field survey, 2007

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percent to total.

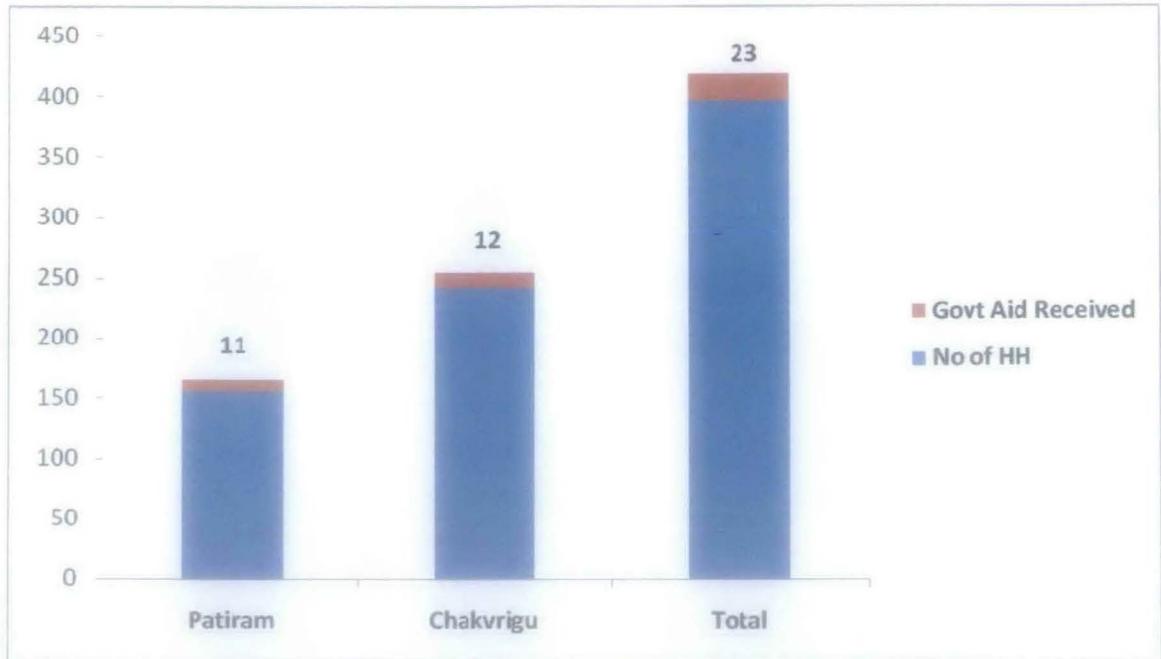
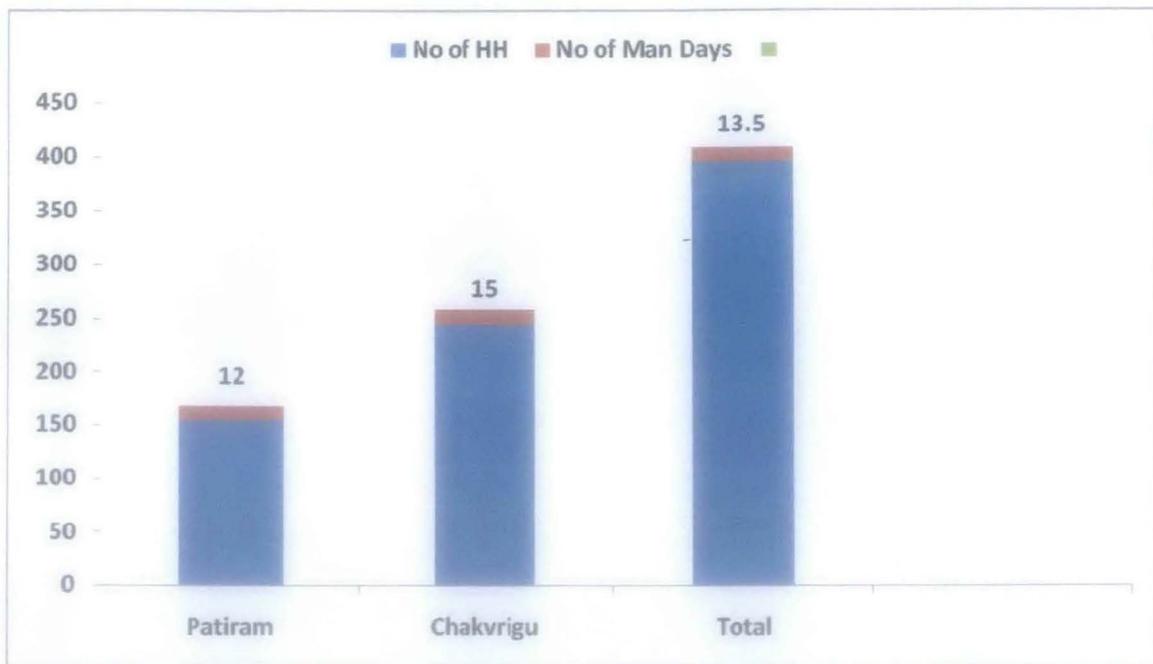


Table-6.20: 100 Days work: Balurghat sample villages

GP	No. of Households	No. of Man days(per person)
Patiram	154	12
Chakvrigu	242	15
Total	396	13.5

Source:Field survey,2007

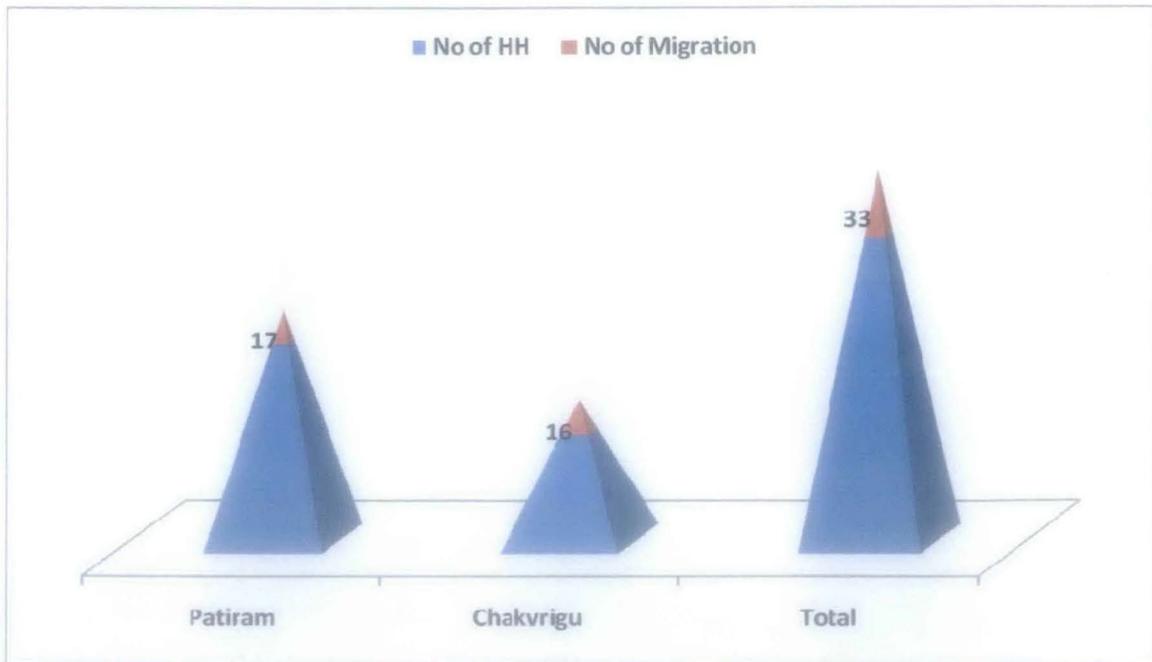


We have examined the **migration status** at Patiram and Chakvrigu GPs in Balurghat subdivision and the migration data are shown in table-6.21.

Table -6.21: Migration: Patiram & Chakvrigu GPs

GP	No. of Households	No. of Migrants
Patiram	100	17
Chakvrigu	54	16
Total	154	33

Source: Field Survey, 2007



From our survey we found only 17 persons migrated from Patiram villages during 2007 and there were 16 persons who migrated from Chakurigu villages. But all such migrations were temporary migration. The time period during which they did migrate was 3 to 6 months. Certainly, the migration of at least one member from a family improved the economic status of the household; but at the same time the people migrated & returned back to their home with fatal disease.

We noticed that about 100 families from where at least one person migrated to Delhi, or Haryana, or Kerala had improved their residential buildings (partially pucca) with toilet facilities along with personal tube well. Along with this, each and every child of such families was regularly attending school. The dropout rate was almost nil. The illiteracy rate which we found (about 45 percent) was among the elders and seniors of the villagers.

Table-6.22: Meal Status: Village Gobindapur

Two square meals taken No of Persons				
Land Holding (in acre)	Three months	Six Months	Throughout the year	Total
0- .33	-	38	01	39
.34- 1.0	-	04	05	09
1.01 -2.00	-	-	02	02
Above 2.00	-	-	-	-
Total	-	42	08	50



Examining the meal status of Gobindapur shown in table 6.22, we can see that 84 percent of people cannot take two square meals throughout the year. They are really the poorest of the poor. Only in terms of food intake, also we can estimate poverty. Meal status of the sample households (village-wise, GP-wise, and the sample households in the Balurghat subdivision as a whole) has been shown in tables 6.22, 6.23, 6.24, 6.25, 6.26, 6.27, 6.28 and 6.29 respectively.

Table-6.23: Meal Status: Village Mayamari

Two square meals taken and no. of persons				
Land Holding (in acre)	Three months	Six Months	Throughout the year	Total
0- .33	02	28	-	30
.34- 1.0	-	-	09	09
1.01 -2.00	-	-	01	01
Above 2.00	-	-	-	-
Total	02	28	10	40

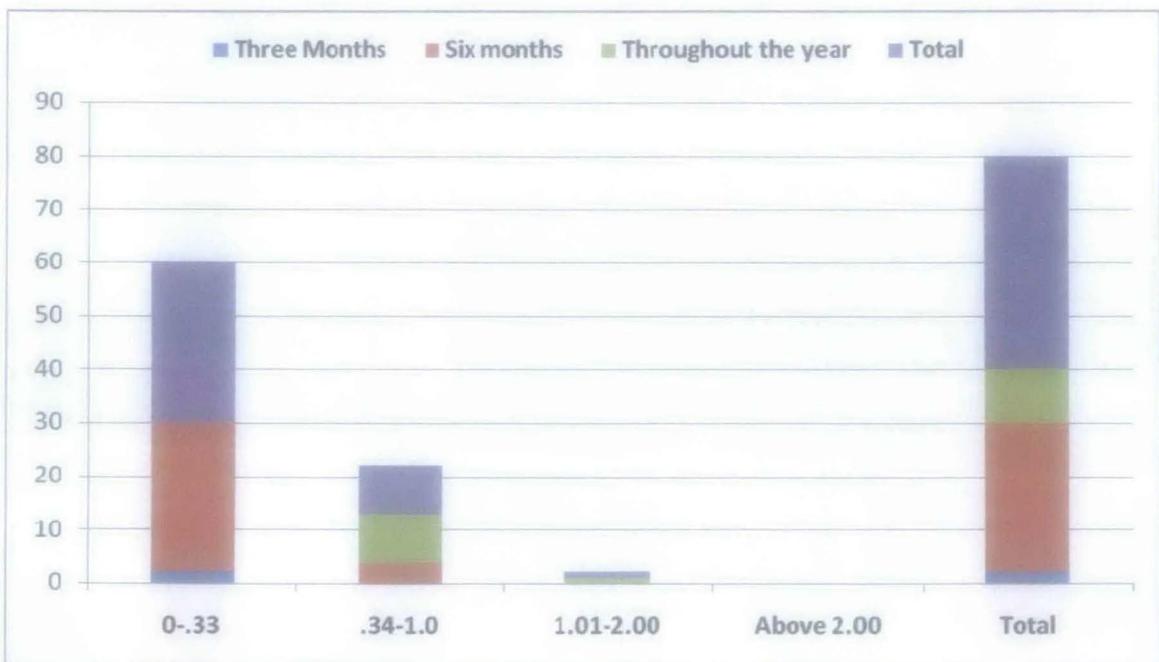


Table-6.24: Meal Status: Village Kuaran

Two square meals taken No of Persons				
Land Holding (in acre)	Three months	Six Months	Throughout the year	Total
0- .33	23	22	05	50
.34- 1.0	-	-	-	-
1.01 -2.00	-	-	-	-
Above 2.00	-	-	-	-
Total	23	22	05	50

Table-6.25: Meal Status: Village Chakvrigu

Two square meals taken and no of persons				
Land Holding (in acre)	Three months	Six Months	Throughout the year	Total
0- .33	06	58	07	71
.34- 1.0	-	-	-	-
1.01 -2.00	-	-	-	-
Above 2.00	-	-	04	04
Total	06	58	11	75

Table-6.26: Meal Status: Village Mayamari

Two square meals taken no of Persons				
Land Holding (in acre)	Three months	Six Months	Throughout the year	Total
0- .33	07	19	-	26
.34- 1.0	-	-	01	01
1.01 -2.00	-	-	-	-
Above 2.00	-	-	-	-
Total	07	19	01	27

Table-6.27: Meal Status: Village Patiram

Two square meals taken and no. of persons				
Land Holding (in acre)	Three months	Six Months	Throughout the year	Total
0- .33	17	50	27	94
.34- 1.0	-	-	02	02
1.01 -2.00	-	-	03	03
Above 2.00	-	-	01	01
Total	17	50	33	100

Table-6.28: Meal Status: Village Dakshin para and adjacent area area

Two square meals taken and no. of persons				
Land Holding (in acre)	Three months	Six Months	Throughout the year	Total
0- .33	16	22	03	41
.34- 1.0	01	05	03	09
1.01 -2.00	-	-	03	03
Above 2.00	-	-	01	01
Total	17	27	10	54

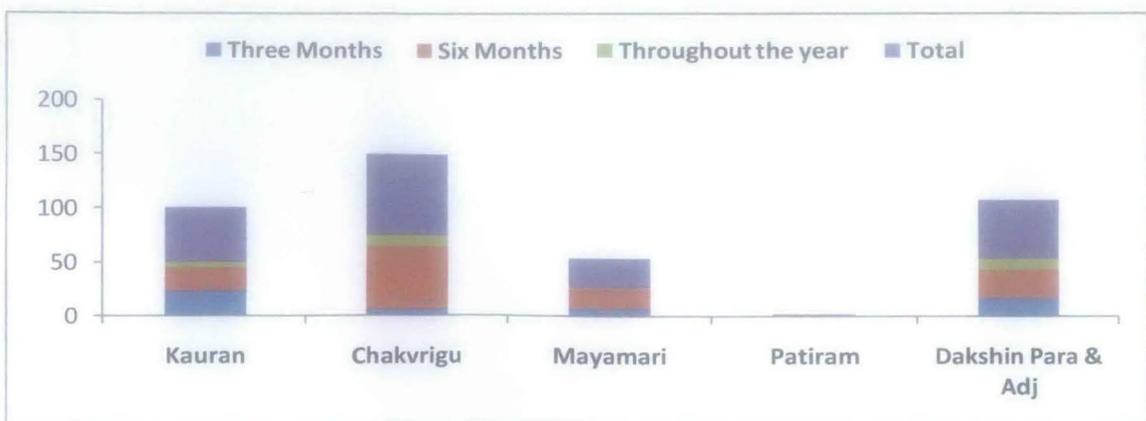
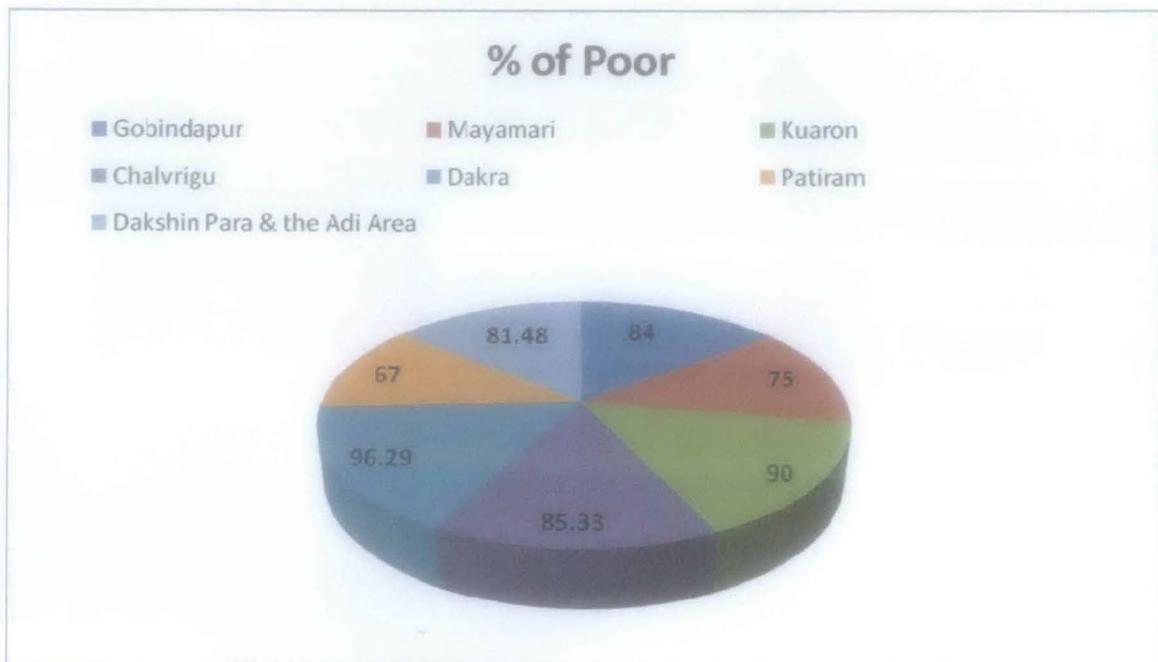


Table-6.29 BPL Status: Balurghat subdivision

Village	Poor (%)	Non-poor (%)	Total
Gobindapur	42 (84%)	08 (16%)	50
Mayamari	32 (75%)	10 (25%)	40
Kuaron	45 (90%)	05 (10%)	50
Chakvrigu	64(85.33%)	11 (14.6%)	75
Dakra	26(96.29%)	01 (3.7%)	27
Patiram	67(67%)	33 (33%)	100
Dakshin Para & the Adi. Area	44 (81.48%)	10 (18.51%)	54
Total	318 (80.34%)	78 (19.66%)	396

Source: Field Survey, 2007



We have identified the BPL status of survey villages under Balurghat subdivision and presented this in table-6.29. We surveyed seven villages. Total number of respondents was 396, of which 318 belonged to BPL category. We now count the proportion of poor in the

sample villages under Balurghat subdivision. The formula for calculating proportion of poor is as follows.

Here

$$P_o = \frac{P_N}{N}$$

$$P_o = \frac{318}{396} = 0.803$$

Where P_o = Proportion of Poor
 P_N = Total number of Poor
 N = Total Population

This means that more than 80 percent of people of the sample villages (seven villages of Balurghat Subdivision) lived below the poverty line. It needs revisit of the villages to ascertain the present economic status.

Landholding status and residential buildings of a household also show the economic status of the family. We present below the landholding status and residential buildings of the sample households of Balurghat rural area in tables 6.30, 6.31, 6.32, 6.33, 6.34, 6.35, and 6.36, respectively.

Table-6.30: Land Holding and Residential Buildings: Gobindapur

Land Holding and Residential Building			
Land Holding (in acre)	No. of Households	Kachha	Pucca
Up to .33 (acre)	39	39	-
.34- 1.00 (acre)	09	07	02
1.01 -2.00 (acre)	02	-	02
Above 2.00 (acre)	-	-	-
Total	50	46	04

Source: Field Survey, 2007

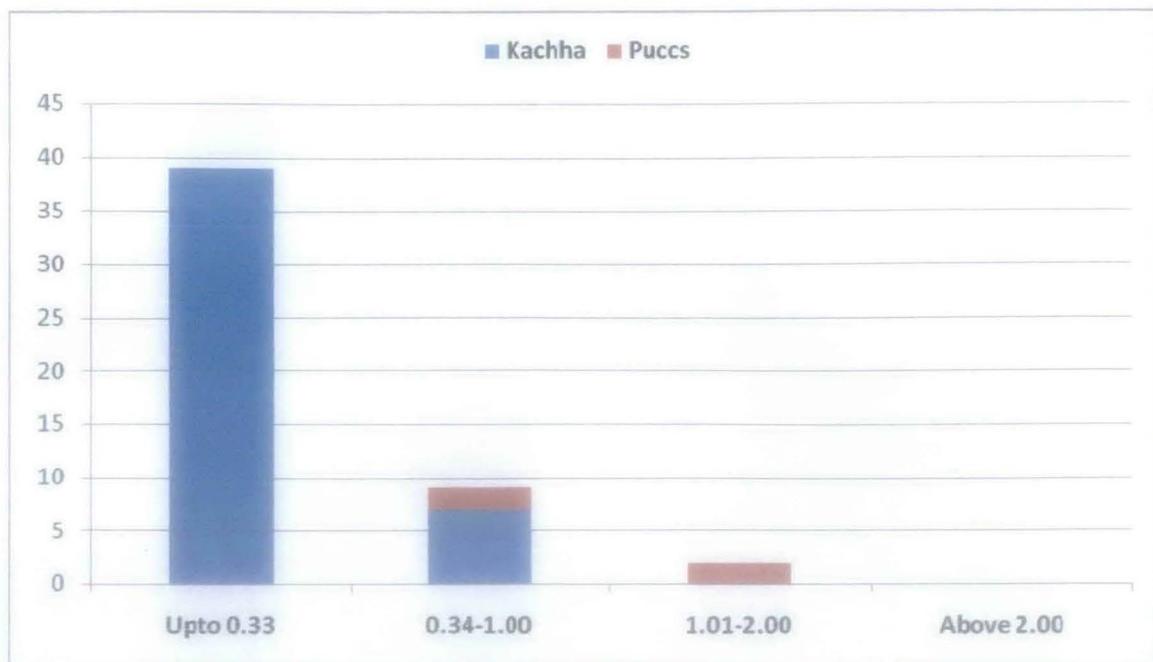


Table –6.31: Land Holding Residential Buildings: Mayamari

Land Holding and Residential Building			
Land Holding (in acre)	No. of Households	Kachha	Pucca
Up to .33 (acre)	29	28	01
.34- 1.00 (acre)	10	09	01
1.01 -2.00 (acre)	01	-	01
Above 2.00 (acre)	-	-	-
Total	40	37	03

Source:Field Survey,2007

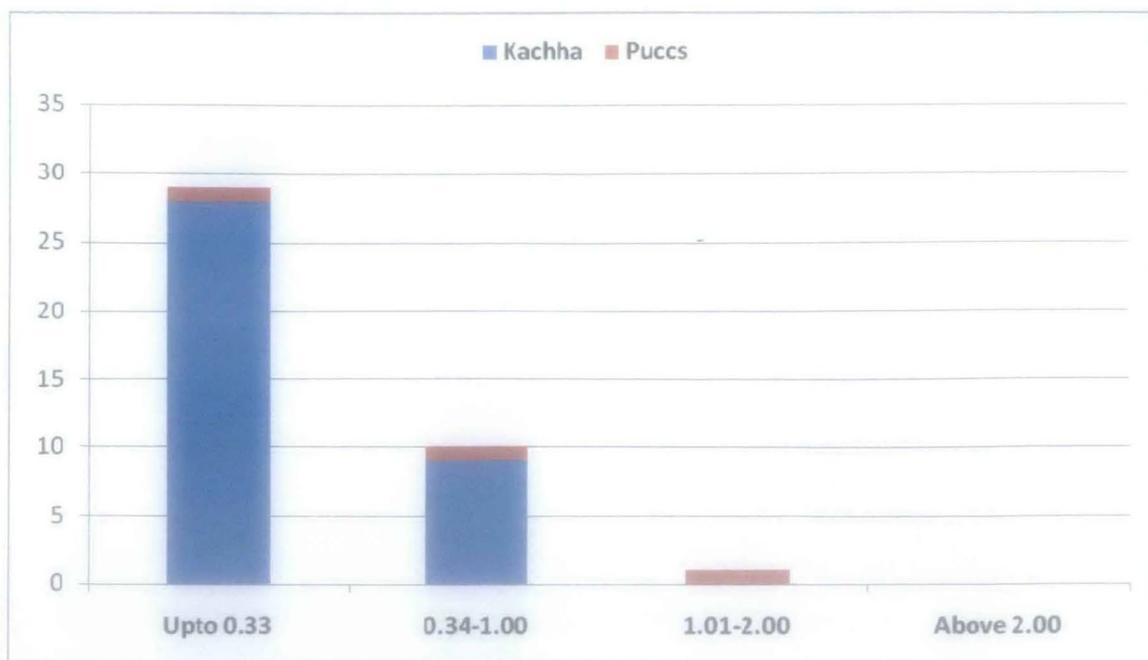


Table-6.32: Land Holding Residential Buildings: Kuaron

Land Holding and Residential Building			
Land Holding (in acre)	No. of Households	Kachha	Pucca
Up to .33 (acre)	49	49	-
.34- 1.00 (acre)	01	-	01
1.01 -2.00 (acre)	-	-	-
Above 2.00 (acre)	-	-	-
Total	50	49	01

Source:Field Survey,2007

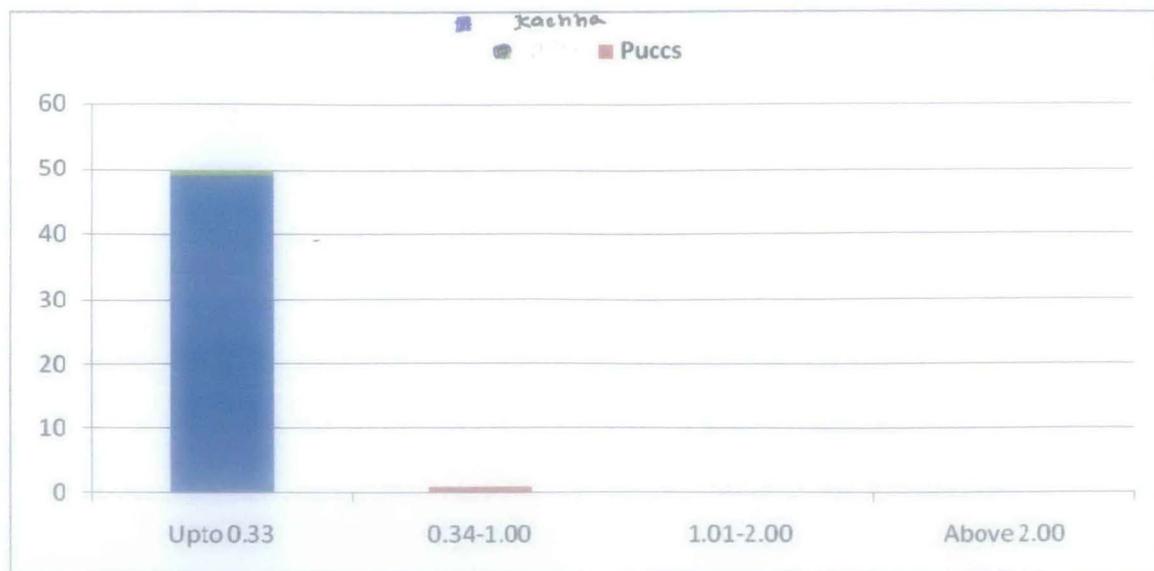


Table-6.33: Land Holding Residential Buildings: Chakvrigue

Land Holding and Residential Building			
Land Holding (in acre)	No. of Households	Kachha	Pucca
Up to .33 (acre)	69	69	-
.34- 1.00 (acre)	04	04	-
1.01 -2.00 (acre)	01	-	01
Above 2.00 (acre)	01	-	01
Total	75	73	02

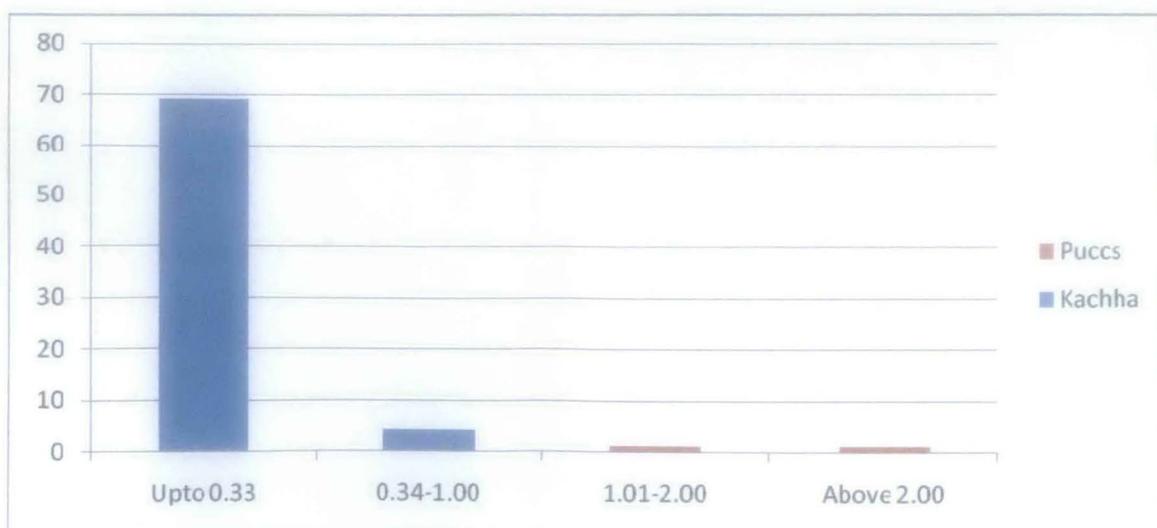


Table-6.34: Land Holding Residential Buildings: Dakra

Land Holding and Residential Building			
Land Holding (in acre)	No. of Households	Kachha	Pucca
Up to .33 (acre)	26	26	-
.34- 1.00 (acre)	01	-	01
1.01 -2.00 (acre)	-	-	-
Above 2.00 (acre)	-	-	-
Total	27	-	-

Source: Field Survey,2007

Table-6.35: Land Holding Residential Buildings: Kuaron

Land Holding and Residential Building			
Land Holding (in acre)	No. of Households	Kachha	Pucca
Up to .33 (acre)	89	81	11
.34- 1.00 (acre)	05	03	01
1.01 -2.00 (acre)	04	-	03
Above 2.00 (acre)	02	-	01
Total	100	84	16

Source: Field Survey,2007

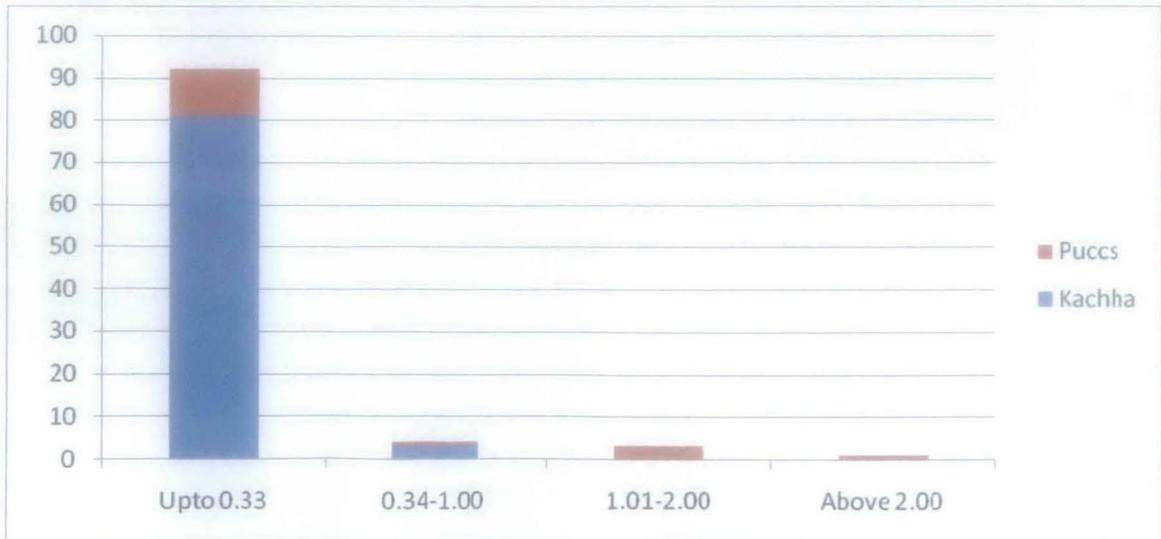
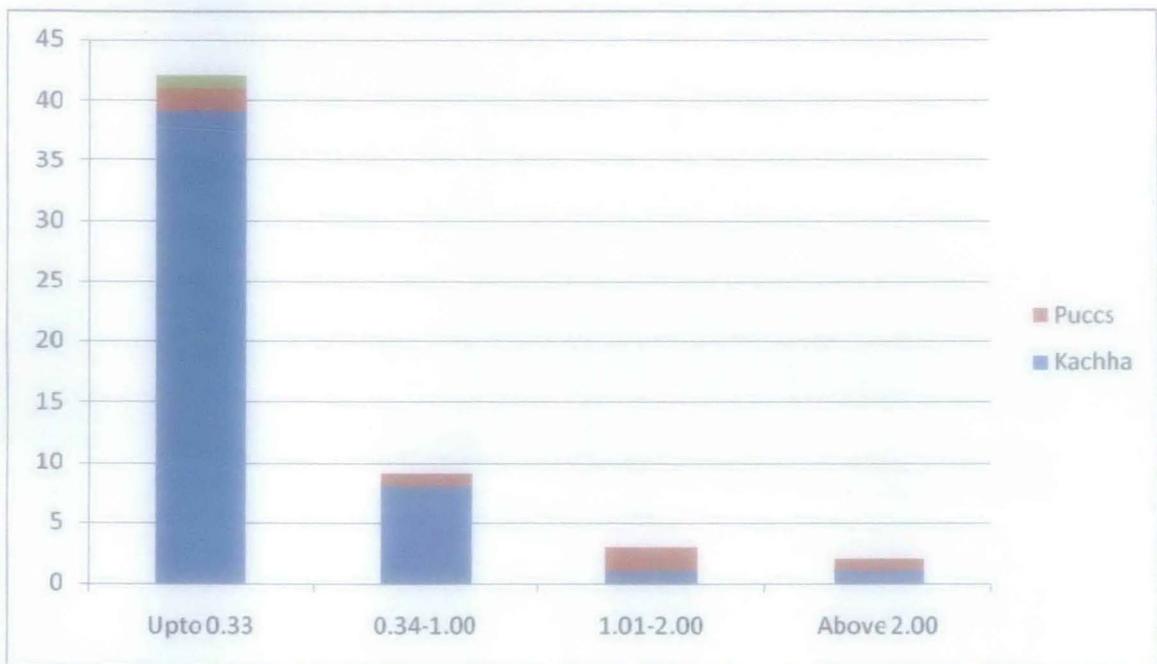


Table-6.36: Land Holding Residential Buildings: Dakshin Para & the Adj. Area

Land Holding and Residential Building			
Land Holding (in acre)	No. of Households	Kachha	Pucca
Up to .33 (acre)	41	39	02
.34- 1.00 (acre)	09	08	01
1.01 -2.00 (acre)	03	01	02
Above 2.00 (acre)	01	01	01
Total	54	48	06

Source: Field Survey, 2007



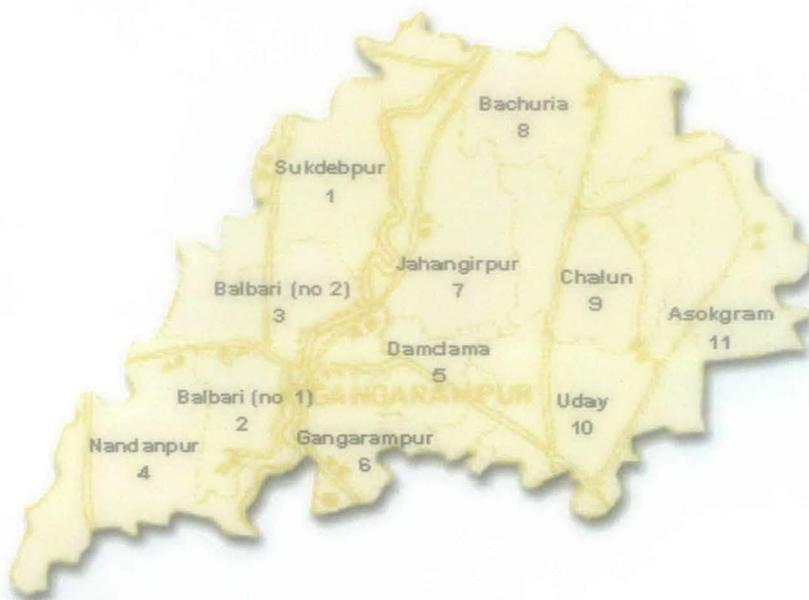
6.5: Our Survey – II

Our second survey relates to two GPs under Gangarampur subdivision of Dakshin Dinajpur District. This covers some important parameters of sample villages, such as land holding, status of residential building, meal status, government aid received by the households, food for work benefit (100-days work), migration, educational status of the members of households etc. The villages surveyed under Gangarampur subdivision are relatively more rural and

remote than those of the Balurghat villages. The results collected and tabulated have been displayed in tabular forms.

The literacy status (village-wise, GP-wise and Gangarampur subdivision as a whole (total samples) is shown in tables 6.37, 6.38, 6.39, 6.40, 6.41, 6.42, 6.43, 6.44, 6.45 & 6.46, respectively.

Literacy data of Sukdevpur GP show that illiteracy rate is extremely high at Daspara (79.65 percent). It is marginally low at Katabari ,i.e. ,77.41 percent and low at Sukdevpur (64.42). Average illiteracy is 72.66 percent. Illiteracy here is highly positively correlated with poverty.



The census data, 2011 show that in Sukdevpur GP there were 62.66 percent BPL status people. Our survey reveals that it was 63 percent in 2007. In the whole of Gangarampur subdivision, the illiteracy rate was more than 50 percent (52.79 percent).

Table-6.37: Literacy: Village Katabari

Income (Rs)	Illiterate			Upto X			MP			Above XII			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Upto 2000	43	47	90	11	14	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	115
2001-3000	19	22	41	07	08	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	56
3001-4000	03	03	06	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	06
Above 4000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total			137			40							177

Source: Field Survey, 2007

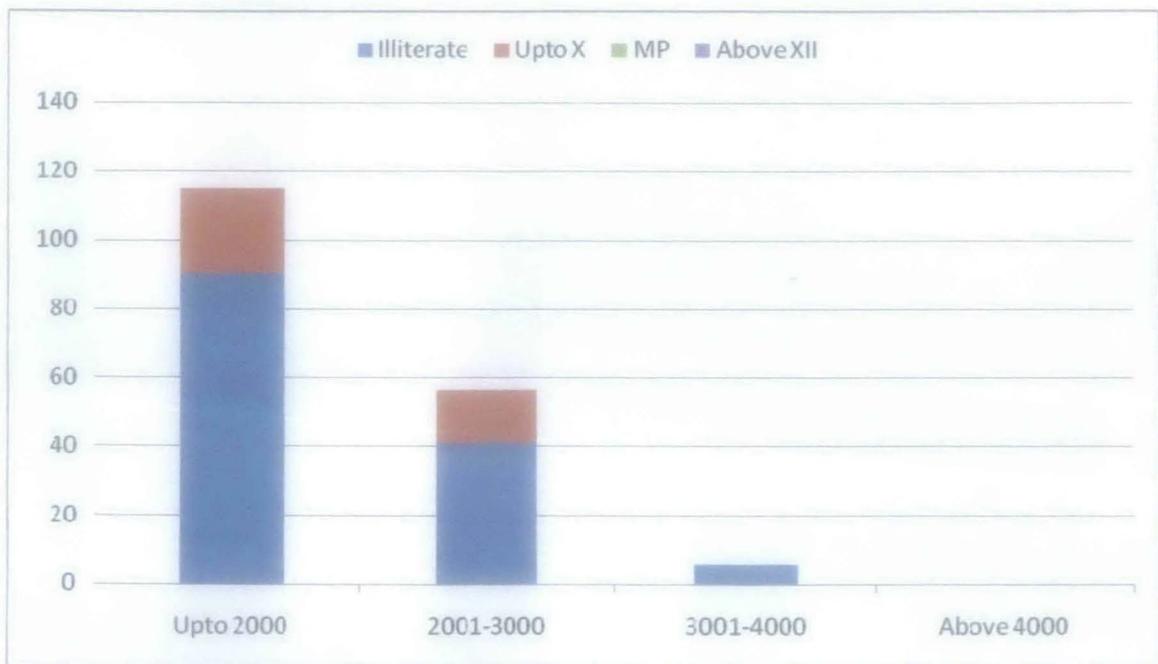


Table-6.38: Literacy: Village Daspara

Income (Rs)	Illiterate			Upto X			MP			Above XII			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Upto 2000	84	83	167	15	10	25	01	6	01	01	-	01	194
2001-3000	06	08	14	08	06	14	01	04	05	01	-	01	34
3001-4000	02	01	03	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	03
Above 4000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total			184			39			06			02	231

Source: Field Survey, 2007

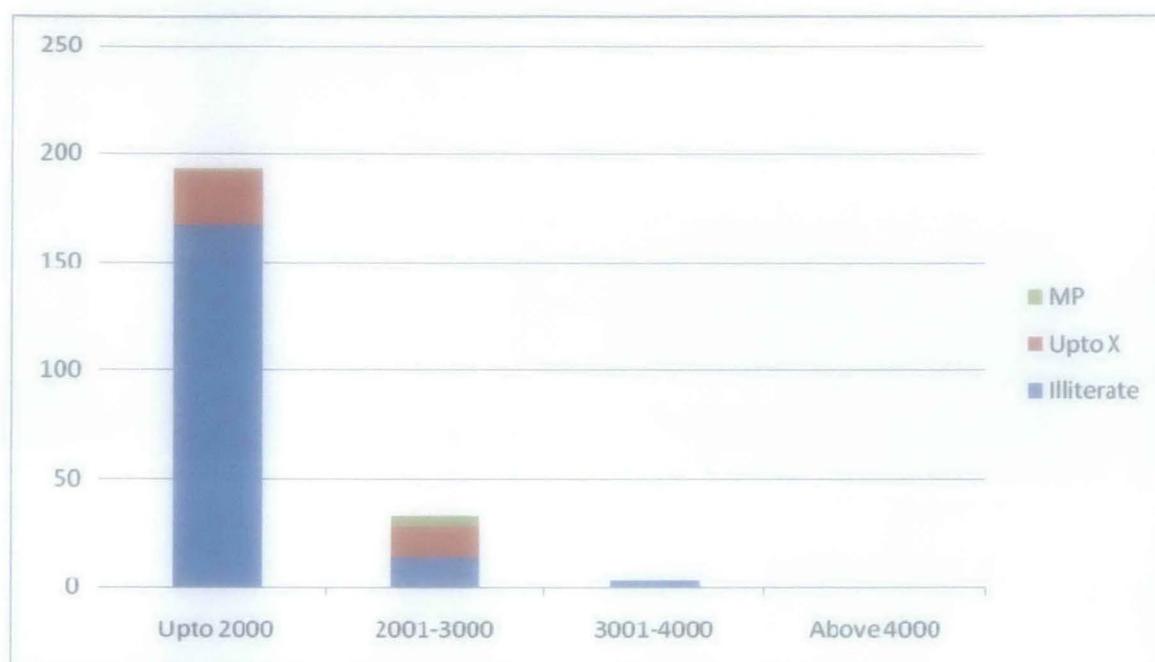
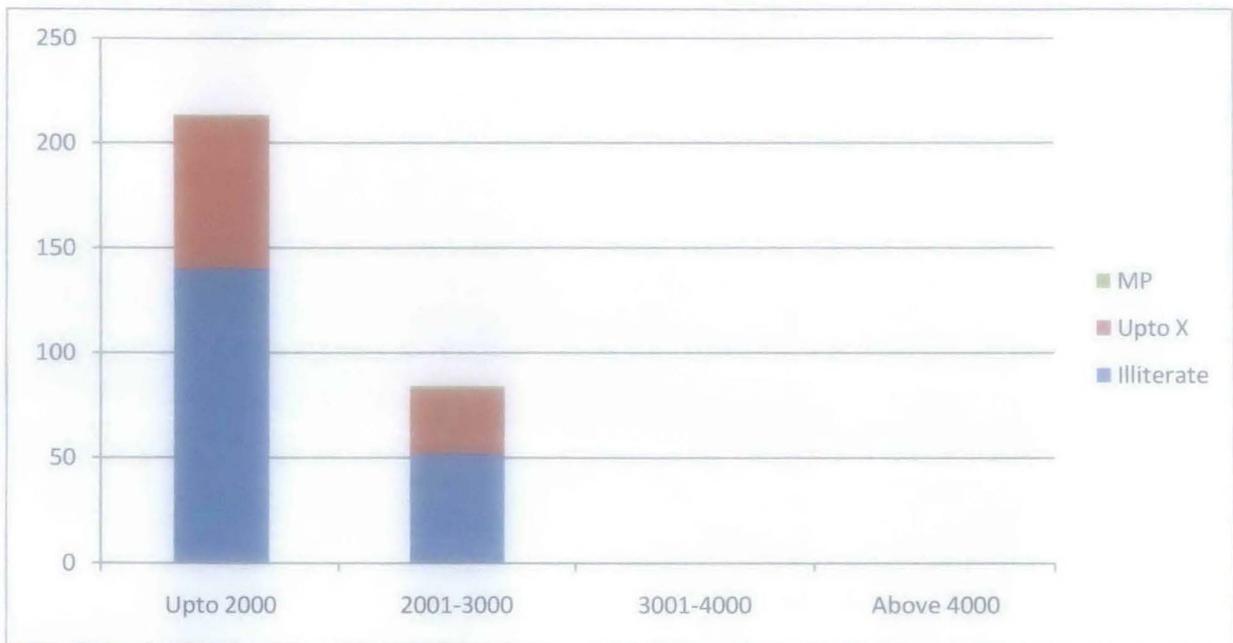


Table-6.39: Literacy: Village Sukdevpur

Income (Rs)	Illiterate			Upto X			MP			Above XII			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Upto 2000	95	75	140	36	36	72		01	01		01	01	214
2001-3000	26	26	52	12	19	31		01	01				84
3001-4000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Above 4000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total			192			103			02			01	298

Source: Field Survey, 2007

**Table-6.40: Literacy: Sukdevpur GP**

Village	No. of Persons	Literate (Total %)	Illiterate Total (%)
Kotabari	177	40 (22.50)	137 (77.41)
Daspara	231	47 (20.34)	184 (79.65)
Sukdevpur	298	106 (35.57)	192 (64.42)
Total	706	193 (27.33)	513 (72.66)

Source: Field Survey – 2007

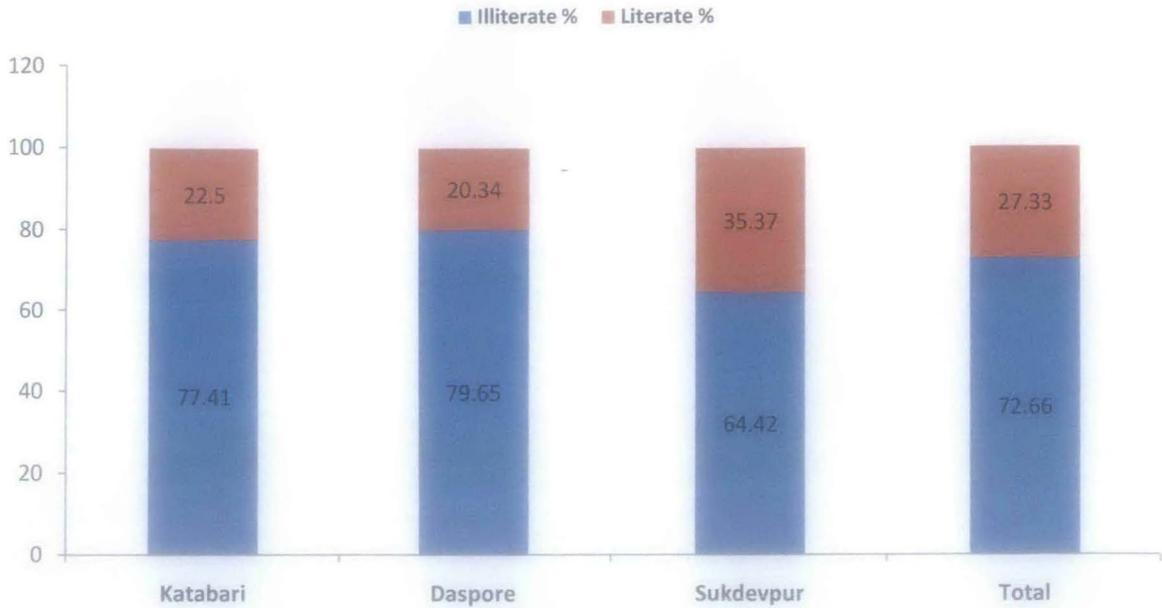


Table-6.41: Literacy: Village Ausha

Income (Rs)	Illiterate			Upto X			MP			Above XII			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Upto 2000	25	52	77	47	53	100	01	01	02	-	-	-	179
2001-3000	03	07	10	14	08	22	04	01	05	-	-	-	37
3001-4000	-	-	-	02	02	04	-	-	-	-	-	-	04
Above 4000	02	01	03	10	09	19	01	01	02	-	-	-	24
Total			90			145			09				244

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Table-6.42: Literacy: Village Pulinda

Income (Rs)	Illiterate			Upto X			MP			Above XII			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Upto 2000	93	106	199	87	77	164	05	01	06	01	-	01	370
2001-3000	15	15	30	06	07	13	02	01	03	-	-	-	46
3001-4000	03	03	06	08	08	16	01	01	02	-	-	-	24
Above 4000	04	04	08	03	02	05	02	01	03	01	-	01	17
Total			243			198			14			02	457

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Table-6.43: Literacy: Village Panchagram

Income (Rs)	Illiterate			Upto X			MP			Above XII			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Upto 2000	19	24	43	12	07	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	62
2001-3000		01	01	01		01	-	-	-	-	-	-	02
3001-4000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Above 4000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total			44			20							64

Source: Field Survey,2007

Table-6.44: Literacy: Village Hajichak

Income (Rs)	Illiterate			Upto X			MP			Above XII			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Upto 2000	10	16	26	13	14	27	-	01	01	-	-	-	54
2001-3000	02	02	04	04	07	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
3001-4000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Above 4000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total			30			38			01				69

Source: Field Survey,2007

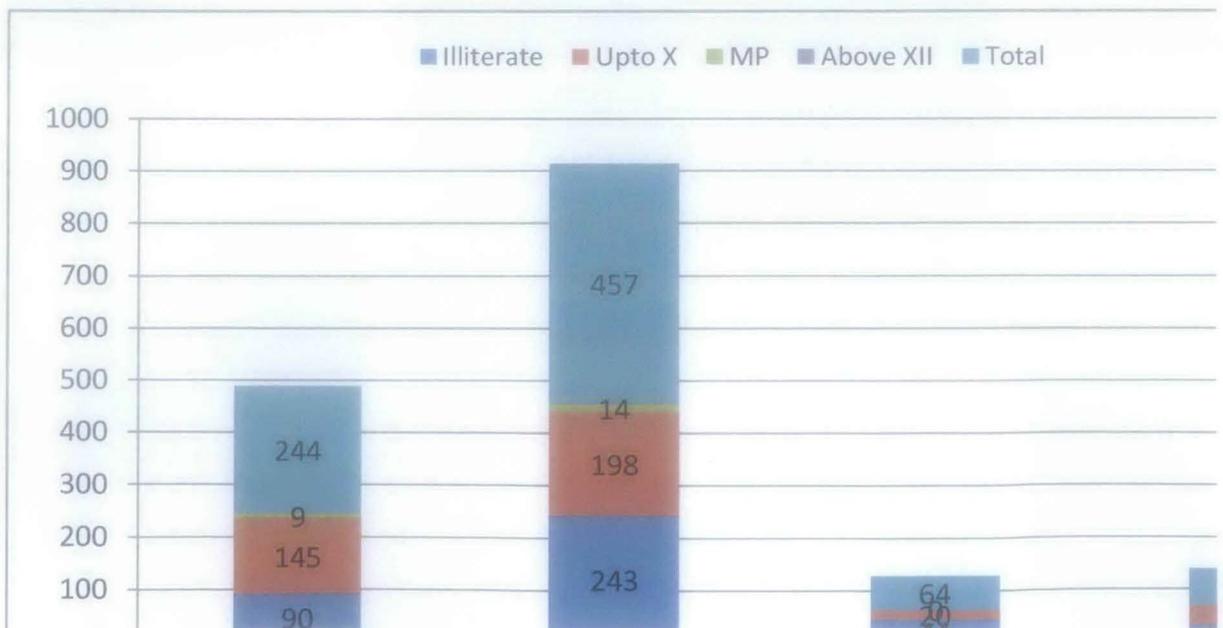
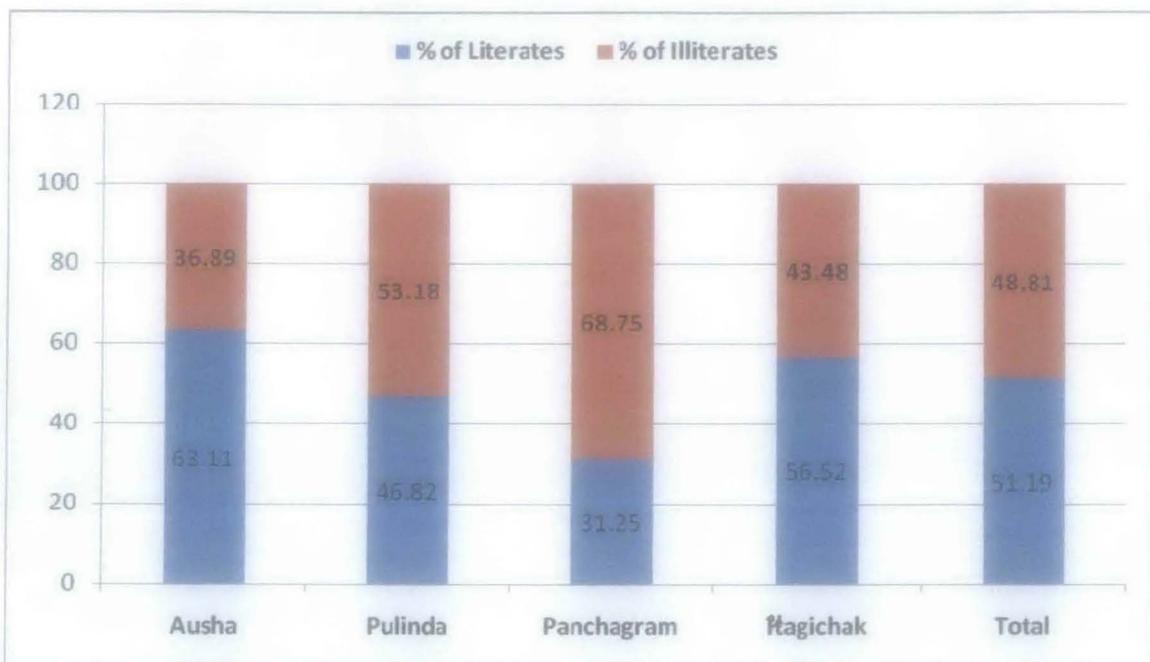


Table-6.45: Literacy: Uday GP

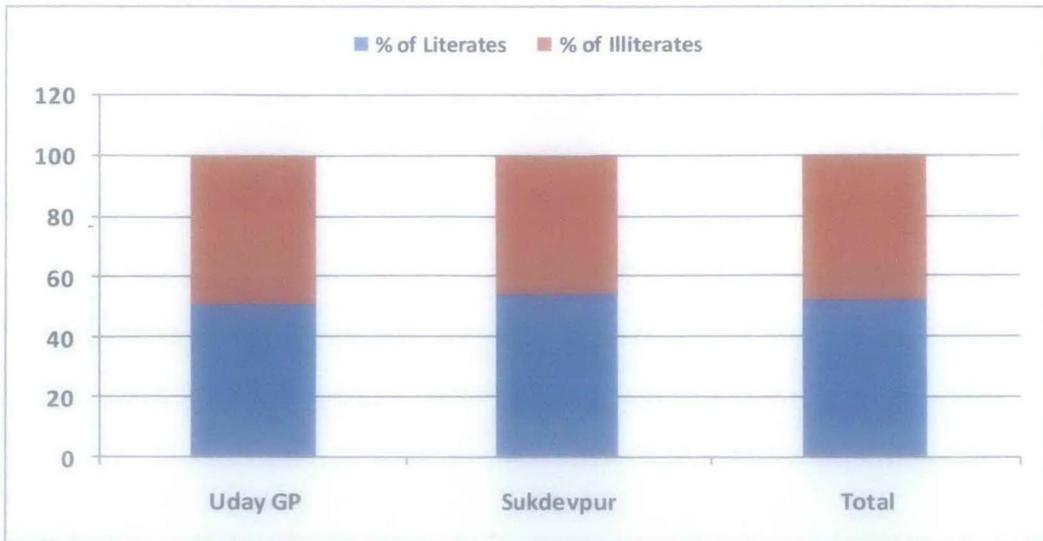
Village	No. of Persons	Literate (Total %)	Illiterate Total (%)
Ausha	244	154 (63.11)	90 (36.89)
Pulinda	457	214 (46.82)	243 (53.18)
Panchagram	64	20 (31.25)	44 (68.75)
Itagichak	69	39 (56.52)	30 (43.48)
Total	834	427 (51.19)	407 (48.81)

Source: Field Survey – 2007

**Table-6.46: Literacy: Gangarampur Sub: Division**

GP	No. of Persons	Literates	Illiterates
Uday GP	834	427 (51.10)	407 (48.81)
Sukdevpur	706	386 (54.67)	320 (45.33)
Total	1540	813 (52.79)	727 (47.21)

Source: Field Survey – 2007



During our entire survey in 2007, we have clearly noticed that most of the sample villagers do not have access over land, financial resources, knowledge and other assets along with levels of literacy. They also have inadequate access over health facilities. They do not have piped drinking water nor do they have sanitary facilities (excepting a few).

We begin our analysis with the discussion of access to land (land-holding status) and the status of residential buildings. Data collected on land-holding status (land for building residence and cultivated land) show that about 68 percent of the sample households possess land up to .33 acre. They don't have access over cultivated land and a few of them have cultivated land over tiny plots which are not economically viable and thus not remunerative. In this category (households having land less than .33 acre), also landless vested land-holders belong. In the whole of our sample villages under Gangarampur subdivision, the total numbers of households received vested land are only 12. The land holding status and the status of residential buildings have been shown in tables 6.47, 6.48, 6.49, 6.50, 6.51, 6.52, and 6.53 respectively.

Table-6.47: Status of Land Holdings & Residential Building: Village Ausha

Resd. Building			
Land Holding (in acre)	No. of Households	Kachha	Pucca
Up to .33 (acre)	29	29	-
.34- 1.00 (acre)	14	14	-
1.01 -2.00 (acre)	09	09	-
Above 2.00 (acre)	04	-	04
Total	56	52	04

Source:Field Survey,2007

Table-6.48: Status of Land Holdings & Residential Building: Village Pulinda

Resd. Building			
Land Holding (in acre)	No. of Households	Kachha	Pucca
Up to .33 (acre)	52	52	-
.34- 1.00 (acre)	28	28	-
1.01 -2.00 (acre)	15	15	-
Above 2.00 (acre)	05	05	-
Total	100	100	-

Source: Field Survey,2007

Table-6.49: Status of Land Holdings & Residential Building: Village Panchagram

Resd. Building			
Land Holding (in acre)	No. of Households	Kachha	Pucca
Up to .33 (acre)	14	14	-
.34- 1.00 (acre)	07	06	01
1.01 -2.00 (acre)	-	-	-
Above 2.00 (acre)	-	-	-
Total	21	20	01

Source:Field Survey,2007

Table-6.50: Status of Land Holdings & Residential Building: Village Hajichak

Resd. Building			
Land Holding (in acre)	No. of Households	Kachha	Pucca
Up to .33 (acre)	18	18	-
.34- 1.00 (acre)	01	01	-
1.01 -2.00 (acre)	02	01	01
Above 2.00 (acre)	-	-	-
Total	21	20	01

Source: Field Survey,2007

Table-6.51: Status of Land Holdings & Residential Building: Village Katabari

Resd. Building			
Land Holding (in acre)	No. of Households	Kachha	Pucca
Up to .33 (acre)	35	35	-
.34- 1.00 (acre)	11	10	01
1.01 -2.00 (acre)	01	-	01
Above 2.00 (acre)	01	-	01
Total	48	45	03

Source:Field Survey,2007

Table-6.52: Status of Land Holdings & Residential Building: Village Daspara

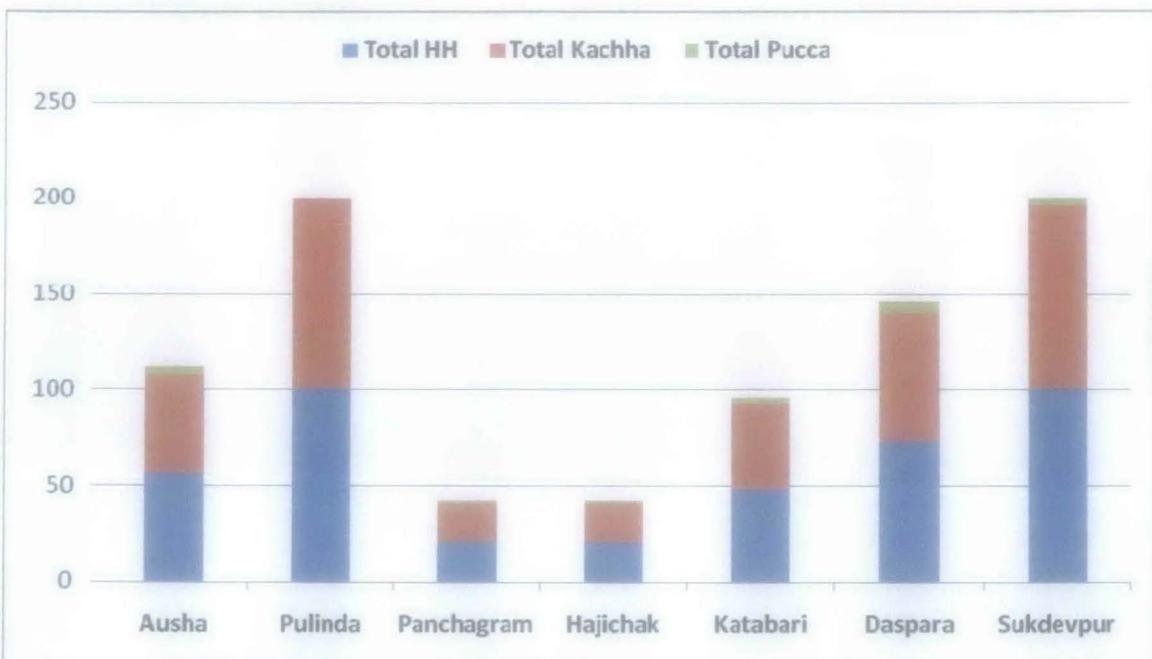
Resd. Building			
Land Holding (in acre)	No. of Households	Kachha	Pucca
Up to .33 (acre)	51	51	-
.34- 1.00 (acre)	17	16	-
1.01 -2.00 (acre)	03	-	04
Above 2.00 (acre)	02	-	02
Total	73	67	06

Source:Field Survey,2007

Table-6.53: Status of Land Holdings & Residential Building: Village Sukdevpur

Resd. Building			
Land Holding (in acre)	No. of Households	Kachha	Pucca
Up to .33 (acre)	84	84	-
.34- 1.00 (acre)	12	11	1
1.01 -2.00 (acre)	04	1	3
Above 2.00 (acre)	-	-	-
Total	100	96	04

Source: Field Survey,2007



Identifying the poor is very time consuming and painstaking if that is done on the basis of income earned or consumption expenditure made by a person. For this reason, most of the developing countries use 'proxy means tests' to identify the 'poor'. In a proxy means test, each family gets scored on the basis of a small number of variables essential for the family's minimum standard of living (Dutta, 2013). These are like the ownership of land, kind of home, i.e. whether the house is pucca or kucha, meal status i.e. whether a person does have two

square meals, a day. Also some measures of earning capacity such as the education and training of the adults, type of jobs they hold etc. Some other indices are also taken into consideration. These are called behavioral responses to poverty i.e. whether the children are in school or working, whether they are working in times of playing, etc.

In identifying the BPL population in the rural areas the identification either suffers from 'inclusion error' or 'exclusion error'. In inclusion error it happens 'over identification' of the BPL population i.e. there are some persons who are ineligible to become poor have got BPL card. In the case of 'exclusion error' some persons who are really poor have not been considered as poor and thus not been placed in the BPL list.

Our survey results on government aid received by the beneficiaries, 100-days work enjoyed, migration took place, meal status of the sample households & BPL status have been shown in tables 6.54,6.55,6.56,6.57,6.58,6.59,6.60,6.61,6.62,6.63,6.64,6.65,6.66,and 6.67.Official BPL status (data supplied by the Department of Panchayat and Rural Development, Government of West Bengal, 2009) has also been shown in table -6.68,respectively.

Table-6.54: Govt. Aid Received: Uday GP

Village	Total no. of Households	No. of households received aid
Ausha	56	07
Pulinda	100	08
Panchagram	21	01
Hajichak	21	02
Total	108	18

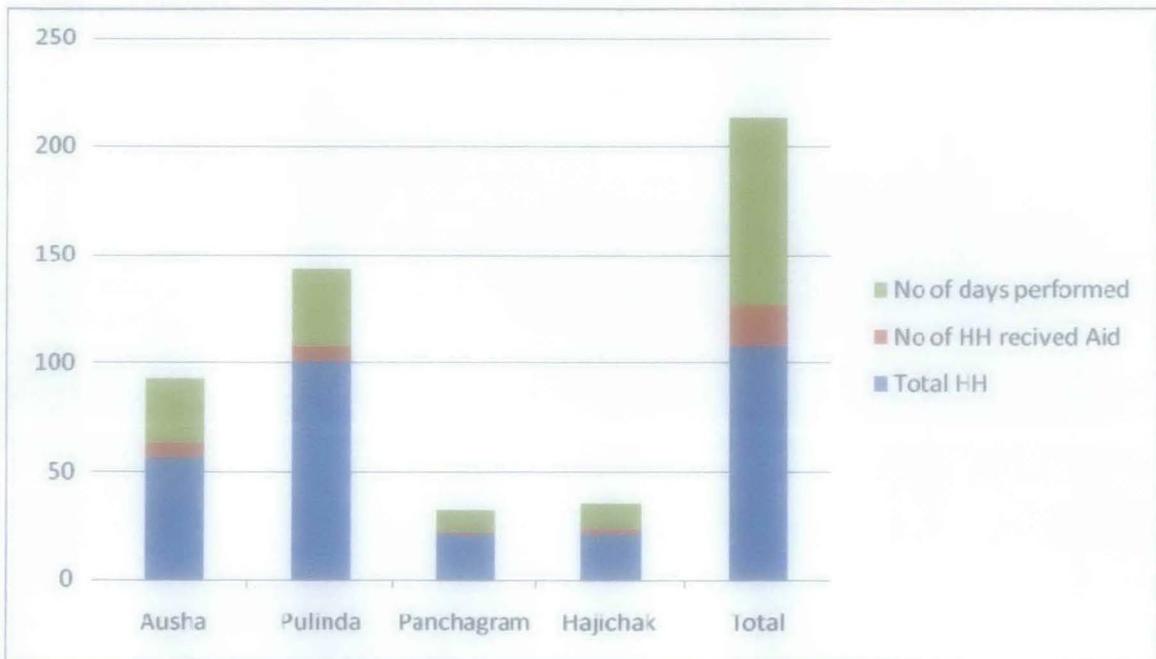
Source: Field Survey-2007

Table-6.55: 100 Days Work: Uday GP

Village	No. of House Holders	No. of Days Worked (Per Person)
Ausha	56	30
Pulinda	100	35
Panchagram	21	10
Hajichak	21	12
Total	108	87(18)

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate per person man-days.

**Table-6.56: Govt. Aid Received Sukdevpur GP**

Village	No. of Households	Govt. Aid Received
Katabari	48	01
Daspara	73	07
Sukdevpur	100	09
Total	221	17

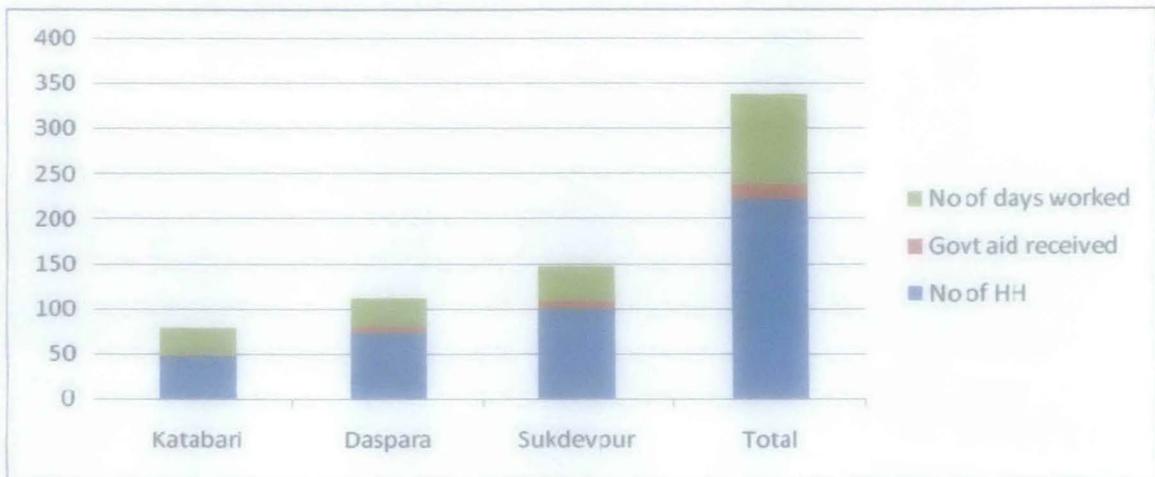
Source: Field Survey-2001

Table-6.57: 100 Days Work: Sukdevpur GP

Village	No. of House Holds	No. of Days Worked (per person)
Katabari	48	30
Daspara	73	32
Sukdevpur	100	38
Total	221	100 (21.5)

Source: Field Survey-2001

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate per person man-days.

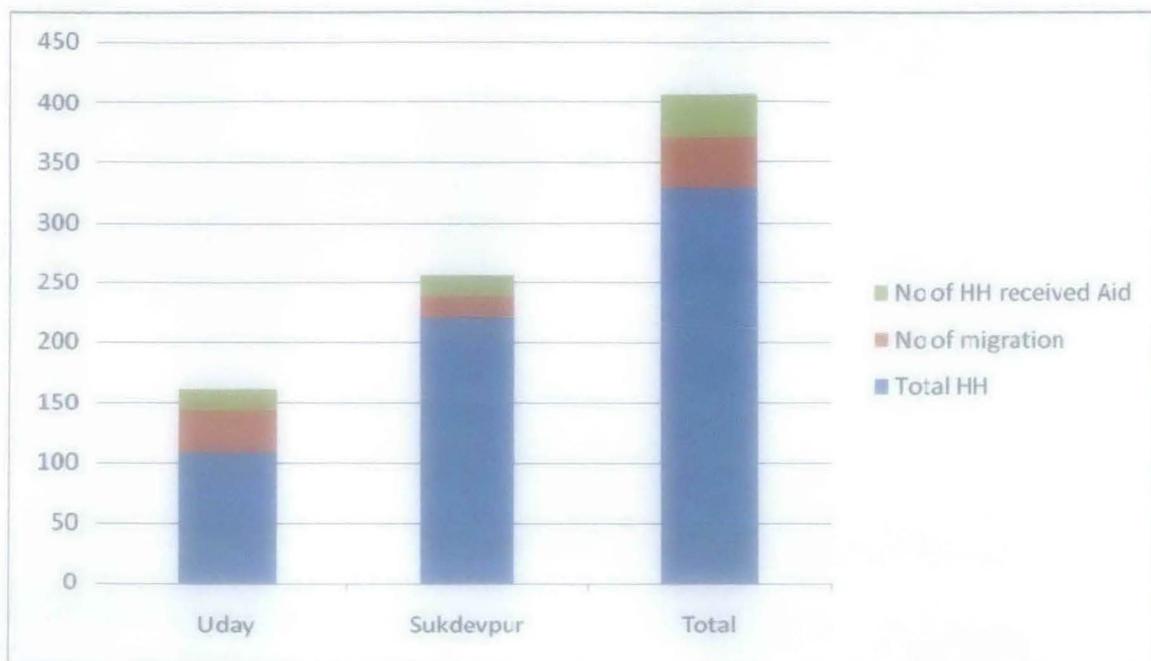
**Table-6.58: Migration**

Name of Gp	Total households	No. of Migration
Uday	108	35
Sukdevpur	221	17
Total	329	42

Source: Field Survey-2007

Table-6.59: Government Aid Received: Gangarampur

Name of Gp	Total no. of households	No. of households received aid
Uday	108	18
Sukdevpur	221	17
Total	329	35

**Table: 6.60: 100 Days Work: Gangarampur**

Name of Gp	Total no. of households	No. of days worked (per person)
Uday	108	18
Sukdevpur	221	21.5
Total	329	20.5

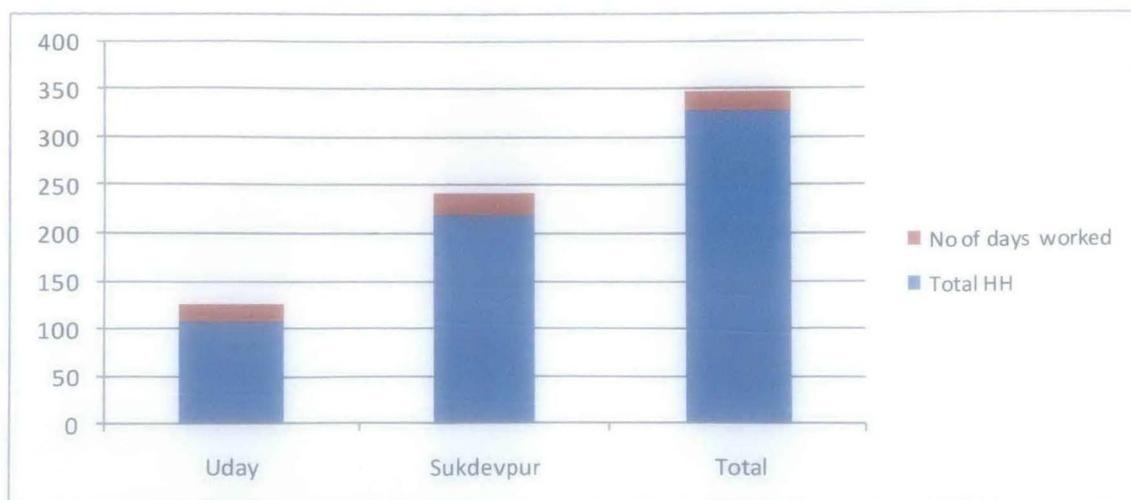


Table-6.61: Meal status: Ausha

Land Holding (in acre)	Two square meals Taken (No.of Households)			Total
	Three Months	Six months	Throughout the year	
0- .33	12	16	01	29
.34 – 1.0	-	12	02	14
1.01 – 2.00	-	-	09	09
Above 2.00	-	-	04	04
Total	12	28	16	56

Source: Field survey, 2007

Table-6.62 : Meal Status: Pulinda

Land Holding (in acre)	Two square meals Taken (No.of Households)			Total
	Three Months	Six months	Throughout the year	
0- .33	19	41		60
.34 – 1.0	-	13	02	15
1.01 – 2.00	-	-	06	06
Above 2.00	-	-	08	19
Total	19	54	16	100

Table-6.63: Meal Status: Panchagram

Two square meals Taken (No.of Households)				
Land Holding (in acre)	Three Months	Six months	Throughout the year	Total
0- .33	-	14	-	14
.34 – 1.0	-	-	05	05
1.01 – 2.00	-	-	02	02
Above 2.00	-	-	-	-
Total	-	14	07	21

Table-6.64: Meal Status: Hajichak

Two square meals Taken (No.of Households)				
Land Holding (in acre)	Three Months	Six months	Throughout the year	Total
0- .33	01	11	07	19
.34 – 1.0	-	-	01	01
1.01 – 2.00	-	-	01	01
Above 2.00	-	-	-	-
Total	01	11	09	21

Table-6.65: Meal Status: Katabari

Two square meals Taken (No.of Households)				
Land Holding (in acre)	Three Months	Six months	Throughout the year	Total
0- .33	12	18	06	36
.34 – 1.0	03	02	05	10
1.01 – 2.00	-	-	01	01
Above 2.00	-	-	01	01
Total	15	20	13	48

Table-6.66: Meal Status : Village Daspara

Two square meals Taken (No.of Households)				
Land Holding (in acre)	Three Months	Six months	Throughout the year	Total
0- .33	04	45	02	51
.34 – 1.0	-	07	10	17
1.01 – 2.00	-	-	03	03
Above 2.00	-	-	02	02
Total	04	52	17	73

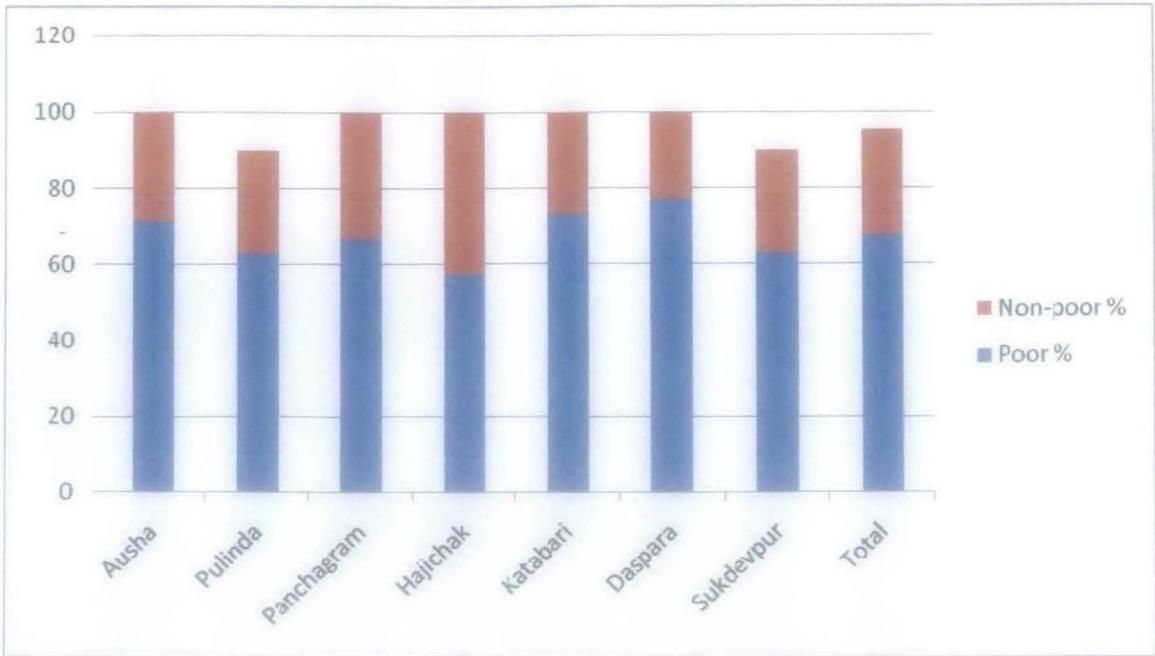
Table-6.67: Meal Status: Sukdevpur

Two square meals Taken (No.of Households)				
Land Holding (in acre)	Three Months	Six months	Throughout the year	Total
0- .33	06	67	-	73
.34 – 1.0	-	-	20	20
1.01 – 2.00	-	-	07	07
Above 2.00	-	-	-	-
Total	06	67	27	100

Table-6.68: BPL Status : Gangarampur Sub Division.

Village	Poor (%)	Non-Poor (%)	Total (%)
Ausha	40 (71.43)	16 (28.57)	56
Pulinda	63 (63%)	27 (27%)	100
Panchagram	14 (66.66)	07 (33.33)	21
Hajichak	12 (57.14)	09(42.85)	21
Katabari	35(72.91)	13(27.08)	48
Daspara	56(76.71)	17(23.28)	73
Sukdevpur	63 (63%)	27(27%)	100
total	283 (67.54)	116(27.68)	419

Source: Filed Survey, 2007.



The proportion of poor in the rural Gangarampur is calculated as follows.

$$P_o \dots\dots\dots = \frac{P_N}{N} = \frac{283}{419} = 0.675$$

Table-6.69: Official BPL Status: Dakshin Dinajpur

Name of GP	Population	BPL	%
Chakvrigue	26,890	8,978	33.38
Patiram	35,821	10,377	28.96
Uday	14,168	8,345	58.90
Sukdevpur	23,347	14,631	62.66
Total	1,00,226	42,331	42.23

Source: Census of India, 2011 Dept. of Panchayat and Rural Development Govt. of West Bengal, 2009 Dakshin Dinajpur District.

Table-6.70: Official BPL: Dakshin Dinajpur District, 2009

Name of Block	Population	BPL (2004)	%
Balurghat	4,02,158	153776	38.23
Hili	83,754	48248	57.60
Kumarganj	169102	75593	44.70
Tapan	250504	108414	43.27
Gangarampur	293845	97278	33.10
Bangghihari	68665	51737	75.34
Kushamomdi	198752	74774	37.62
Harirampur	209496	87911	41.96
Total	16,76,276	6,97,731	41.62

Source: Census, 2011, Deptt. Of P & RD, Dakshin Dinajpur.

Chapter VII

A Comparison of Our Results with Official Results

7.1: Introduction

This chapter gives the description of the overall socio-economic status of the rural economy of Dakshin Dinajpur on the basis of primary data we have collected from 14 villages of two subdivisions of Balurghat (Sadar) and Gangarampur covering 815 households. We have also collected secondary data from government departments ,reports published by the government of West Bengal and government of India, reports published by NGOs, UNDP, World Bank, ILO etc.

7.2: Comparing Socio-Economic Data

Analysis of literacy data shows that in rural West Bengal (for example, our rural villages of Balurghat and Gangarampur) the illiteracy rate is still high and this is more so because of more illiteracy among the women. Amartya Sen (2003) mention, “.. half the adult population and two-thirds of Indian women remain unable to read or write. Statistically reliable surveys indicated that even in the late 1980s nearly half of the rural girls between the ages of 12 and 14 did not attend any school for a single day of their lives”. This is, as Sen hints, due to British imperial neglect of mass education reinforced by India’s tradition of elitism and upper-class dominated contemporary politics. Rabindranath Tagore also identified, as Sen says, illiteracy and neglect put India socially backward and economically underdeveloped. The literacy data collected during 2007 and presented in table 7.1 shows that illiteracy is still very high, about 47 percent, in rural areas of Dakshin Dinajpur District.

Table 7.1 Literacy Data: Balurghat and Gangarampur (Rural)

Sub division (Rural)	No. of Persons	Literates	Illiterates
Balurghat	1696	915 (53.95)	781 (46.05)
Gangarampur	1540	813 (52.79)	727 (47.21)
Total	3236	1728 (59.31)	1508 (46.6)

Source: Field Survey, 2007

We now turn to the discussion on government aid received by the rural households. This is shown in table 7.2

Table 7.2 Government Aid Received: Rural Dakshin Dinajpur

Area	Total households	No. of households received aid
Balurghat	336	23 (5)
Gangarampur	329	35 (10.6)
Total	665	58 (8.7)

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Data presented in table 7.2 tell us that the government aid received by the rural households is very negligible. In rural Balurghat only about 5 percent households received government aid and in rural Gangarampur only 10.6 percent households received government aid, nearly double the number of aid recipients received by rural Balurghat households. Overall amount of Government aid received by rural households of the Dakshin Dinajpur District was only 8.7 percent. This amount of aid, we think, cannot improve the economy status of rural poor.

As regard the implementation of 100 days work we also find the grim picture. Data shown

below in table 7.3 represent that only 13.5 man – days were created in rural Balurghat and that 20.5 in rural Gangarampur. Overall man-days created in rural Dakshin Dinajpur were only 17 days (per person)

Table-7.3: 100- Days work : Rural Dakshin Dinajpur

Area	Total no. of households	No. of days worked (per person)
Rural Balurghat	396	13.5
Rural Gangarampur	329	20.5
Total	725	17

Source: Compiled from data collected from Field Survey, 2007

Migration data in the rural Dakshin Dinajpur district has been displayed in table7.4 below.

Table 7.4 Migration Data: Rural Dakshin Dinajpur

Area	No. of households	No. of migrants
Balurghat	396	33
Gangarampur	329	42
Total	725	75 (10.3)

Source: Field Survey, 2007

We now compare the BPL status between rural Balurghat and rural Gangarampur with the help of data collected from the sample villages.

Table 7.5 BPL Status: Rural Balurghat and Rural Gangarampur

Area	BPL population
Rural Balurghat	318 (80.34)
Rural Gangarampur	283 (67.54)

Source: Field Survey, 2007

The proportions of poor have been shown in table 7.6

Table 7.6 Proportions of poor: Rural Dakshin Dinajpur

Area	proportions of poor
Rural Balurghat	0.803
Rural Gangarampur	0.675

Source: Field Survey, 2007

7.3: Comparison with Official Results

A comparison of our survey results with the official results has been shown in table 7.7

Table 7.7 Migration Data: Rural Dakshin Dinajpur

GPs	Our results (%)	Official results (%)
Chakvrigue	85.33	33.38
Patiram	67.0	28.96
Uday	65.8	58.90
Sukdevpur	63.0	62.66
Total	67.54	42.23

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Comparing official BPL data with our survey data, we find a marked variation. Official data (2009) show that BPL population in rural Dakshin Dinajpur are 42.23 whereas it is 67.54 percent as per our survey data on BPL.

Chapter VIII

Short Summary, Overall Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

8.1: Introduction

We have achieved our long dream of independence 65 years back and since then our successive governments have been spelling out innumerable schemes and programmes to combat poverty and hunger. In every budget, allocations have been made specifically for these programmes. But all such programmes have not been successful in achieving the desired results.

In this research investigation we have tried to identify the socio-economic bottlenecks of the existing poverty alleviation measures. Also we have discussed the overall poverty analysis in the developing country context. This chapter is structured as short summary, overall conclusions and policy recommendations.

8.2: Short Summary

Most of the poor of the world belong to the developing countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia who are in fact not capable of keeping them up with the economic levels of the West. In any analysis of poverty we very often discuss the issue of human development. Human development, broadly speaking, calls for the progress of human lives and the well-being of every citizen of the country. Many reasons have been identified for the prevalence of poverty. One such example identified is that some countries may have small amount of arable lands with an excessive large number of populations. This creates poverty to a greater extent. The UNDP published (published by the Oxford University Press, 2000) Human Development Report 2000, suggests that expanding human capabilities and ensuring human rights can empower people to remove poverty. In this report a number of steps have

been suggested such as to adopt pro-poor growth process, remove discrimination against the poor to ultimately improve the conditions of poverty. It is also suggested that poor people especially the women should be given right to participate in the decision making process. More access need to be provided to the poor, the landless in particular, on natural resources for their survival. Regarding the definition of 'poor' or the 'poverty line' in particular innumerable definitions have been provided. But the common definition of poverty relates to the situation in which poor people do have less access over resources like, land, food, shelter, cloth, education, health, natural resources etc. for sustainable livelihood. In this context, human poverty in some developing countries such as India, Sri Lanka, China, Pakistan and Bangladesh have been considered and their HDI rank and value have been compared.

Poverty aspects in India and West Bengal have been analytically discussed with a detailed analysis of major poverty alleviation measures adopted since independence. Many of such programmes suffered from a number of drawbacks. The poverty dimension changed with the introduction of new economic policy since 1991. Globalization allows free movement of capital, labour, knowledge and Technology due to which there has been marked escalation in the volumes of trade and investment. This in fact the globalisers believe, has helped to reduce Poverty globally, benefiting all the countries and people, although not equally.

In our research study we have tested some hypotheses like the reduction in poverty over time and that has been proved to be true. This we have noticed while analyzing both primary as well as secondary data. The next important hypothesis we have tested is that anti-poverty measures have not reached to all the poor equally. These we have also tested. We have also found that due to change in the market structure and that of the demand pattern of consumers and the rising pattern of standard of living price indices have raised which may have negative

effect on the poor on their standard of living.

The core of our investigation is the analysis of the survey data, cross-section data for the year 2007-2008, on socio-economic issues, such as literacy, government aid, food for work, mid-day meal, meal status, etc. Dakshin Dinajpur district has been chosen for our detailed investigation. The data collected, presented in tabular and graphical forms have been presented in chapters six and seven where we have presented the village level study and compared our results with official results.

8.3:Overall Conclusions

This study narrates especially the impact of anti-poverty programmes of India since independence. In the discussion of poverty in India we have reviewed existing literature related to poverty in India and West Bengal. We have reviewed literature relating to poverty analysis in general. We have analyzed the data of Draft 9th five year plan (1993), Government of India and found that rural poverty presented in terms of 'poverty line' had gone down from 45.7 percent in 1983 to 39.1 percent in 1987-88 and again to 37.3 percent in 1993-94. Following calorie norm i.e., 2440 Kcal it was found that poverty ratio was 66.6 percent in 1983. It came down to 65.8 percent in 1987-88. But this went up to 70 percent in 1993-94. Comparing these two norms we notice an increasing gap (in 1983 the gap was 21.1 percent, in 1987-88 it was 26.7 and in 1993-94 it rose to 32.7 percent). As a measure to eradicating poverty Professor Sukhamoy Chakravarty (1987) opined that the landless and marginal farmers would be given access to land and other productive assets along with a programme of well-conceived public works. We have noticed a sharp decline in the poverty in India especially since opening up of the economy in favour of a more open and market oriented economy and also possible due to unprecedented average growth rate of over 8 percent from

1995-2007. The data on meal status have been collected on the basis of 'two square meals in three months', 'two square meals in six months', 'two square meals in nine months' and 'two square meals throughout the year'. On the basis of food intake (two square meals a day), we have estimated BPL population in Balurghat and Gangarampur rural areas. We have also calculated proportion of poor for both the areas. The proportion of poor is extremely high i.e., it is 0.803 in rural Balurghat and in rural Gangarampur it is 0.675. This may perhaps be due to the fact that there are more job opportunities in rural Gangarampur than Balurghat. The rural Gangarampur is agriculturally developed with the vast expansion of multiple cropping (three crops in a year) and larger productivity rate than agriculture in rural Balurghat. We have noticed a huge illiteracy among the rural masses, more than 45 percent. This is more among the women and girl children. A large number of child labour we have noticed in agricultural activities especially during the sowing and harvesting seasons. While comparing BPL population data (our data with official data) we particularly found a huge gap. Huge variation in poverty is found in Chakvarigu and Patiram, while the gap has been minimum in Uday and Sukdevpur GPs. Overall poverty gap is about 25 percent (our results : 67.54 percent, official results: 42.23 percent).

8.4: Policy Recommendations

On the basis of our observations we may make the following recommendations.

- a) The major issue in the analysis of poverty today is with the identification of 'poor' or identifying people below the poverty line. The identification suffers from two basic problems, i.e., 'inclusion problem' or 'exclusion problem'. In the first case, some people may be included in the list of BPL who are in fact not the poor. Naturally their names should not be in the list of BPL population. Also there might be 'exclusion

problem 'which states that some people have been excluded, i.e., their names should have been there in the BPL category. But unfortunately they have not been included in the list. These problems specifically create misuse of government aid aimed at to be spent on anti-poverty programmes. It is thus of utmost necessity to make the solid BPL population list which will be free from all sorts biasness (social, political, religious, racial etc).

- b) Many people living in the rural areas do not possess valid ration cards or voter identity cards. There are two concepts on census: one is the population census and the other one is the M.R. census. Here, we can see two different numbers of BPL populations. In West Bengal as a whole, a news came in a daily a few days back stating that there are more than 74 lakh excess ration cards issued in West Bengal and in Darjeeling district alone this number touches more than 4 lakh. This should be stopped and all the fake ration cards should be withdrawn.
- c) Impact of mid-day meal has been found encouraging especially in the rural areas. But the quality and the quantity need to be improved and enhanced to attract children more to the school. For this, additional allocation of funds is very much required.
- d) Vested land distribution and the registration of bargadars and pattaholders were thought of improving the economic conditions of the poor (landless day labourers, marginal farmers and workers engaged in informal sector). About 11 lakh people received vested land up to November, 2011. But the average size of the plots of agricultural land is very tiny which is not economically viable. Naturally, a tendency has been seen among the holders of small plots of land. They are either selling the land

or leasing it out. This system is known as 'reverse tenancy'. Thus, the system of distribution of vested agricultural land or registering the bargadars under 'Operation Barga' system could not improve the economic status of the poor in a substantial way.

- e) We plead for proper identification of poor and pooling them according to their socio-economic status. We also plead for distribution of funds to the poor through direct cash transfer from only one source. This means that all the channels through which poor people are targeted for improving their conditions should come under one umbrella. If that be done, this can reduce the leakage of funds to the minimum possible level. If everything goes on smoothly we can only then expect a '**World without Poor**' by 2025.

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