

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

8.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

We have summarized below from chapters 3 to 7 of the present study.

8.1.1 Economic Development in West Bengal since the British Period to the Late 1970s

1. In 1971 West Bengal comprised only 2.67 per cent of India's land area (12th among the states and territories), however, it ranked fourth in population size. The aggregate growth of population was high in the districts of 24 - Parganas and Kolkata as well as in Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Nadia and Howrah districts (*Appendix A 2.2*). Although there was a trend of positive growth, the percentage increase for the decade 1961-71 was lower than that of 1951-61. This was due to a lower birth rate and improvement in family planning, as well as the decreasing influx of refugees.
2. The rate of urbanization for West Bengal was only 28.4 per cent in 1971 (Table 2.2), whereas the national rate was 37.83 per cent. In 1961 and 1971 the proportion of urban population was above average only in the districts of 24 Parganas, Howrah, Kolkata and Hooghly. There was a decline of urbanization in the districts of Darjeeling, Cooch Behar, Midnapore and Murshidabad during the decade of 1961-71.
3. The percentage of literate people was more than average only in the districts of Kolkata, Howrah, Hooghly, 24 Parganas and Burdwan. Kolkata's literacy rate was over 60 per cent while the others ranged from 33% to 40% (Table 2.4).
4. There is a great disparity in the supply of surplus labor. In West Bengal 26.74 per cent of the entire labor force comprise surplus labor. In the districts of Hooghly, Jalpaiguri, 24 Parganas, Howrah, and Kolkata the surplus labor supply was above average. The proportion of male working

population in West Bengal is high while that of female is very low. Distribution of male workers was above average in the northern (except Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri), central and southeastern districts. On the other hand, the distribution of female workers was above average in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri and all of the south western districts (Table 2.5).

5. In 1971 per capita income of West Bengal was Rs. 524.00 in West Bengal out of the 16 districts, 6 districts had per capita income greater than the average of the state. These are Kolkata, Burdwan, Hooghly, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar. Per capita income was highest (Rs. 1,011.00) in Kolkata. The hill districts and the south – eastern districts are next to Kolkata in per capita income.
6. At the time of independence West Bengal was the most industrially developed State in India. But today, West Bengal is said to be one of the backward States in India. The Bengal Chambers of Commerce have also pinpointed some causes for the present situation of the economy of West Bengal.
7. In 1951, West Bengal had the highest number of registered factories—1493. She was followed by the composite state of Madras with 1473 factories and Bombay with 1426 factories. The number of persons employed in factories in that year was 475084 in West Bengal, 537969 in Bombay and 180629 in Madras.
8. The per capita income in West Bengal fell from Rs. 390 in 1960-61 (at 60-61 prices) to Rs. 385 in 1978-79. But the national average increased from Rs. 353 to Rs. 365 during that period. The index number of per capita net output (1970-71 base = 100) in West Bengal increased to 118 whereas all India figure was 126 in 1985-86.
9. The number of industries and value of output in West Bengal is relegated to the fifth and fourth position respectively. The number of industries in West Bengal is 6173 and the value of output is Rs. 2721.34 crores. Though West Bengal's position is second to Maharashtra in terms of the

value of output; the difference between the two State is wide — Maharashtra 24.3 per cent and West Bengal 10.9 per cent.

8.1.2 Disparities in Agricultural Development:

1. The average level of agricultural development of West Bengal shows, an increasing trend of agricultural development during 1980-81 to 2000-01. The ranking pattern of districts is similar in inter-district diversifications, the rank correlation coefficient being $R_{12} = -0.084$ to $R_{13} = +0.33$ for the period 1980-81 to 2000-01. This shows that the level of agricultural development is associated with resources endowment of the districts of the state and inter-district variations in levels of agricultural development demonstrate a declining trend in the reference years.
2. During 1980-81, the modernized agricultural development shows that in the beginning, Hooghly, Howrah, Burdwan, 24 Parganas (N), Birbhum and Nadia were the developed districts and remaining twelve districts are lagging behind. On the other hand, traditional agricultural development shows that, Dakshin Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Burdwan, Hooghly, Birbhum, Bankura, Darjeeling, Cooch Behar, Purulia and 24 Parganas (N) emerged as developed districts and the remaining eight districts remained in the backward category.
3. In the matter of first dimension, i.e., traditional agricultural development in 1990-91, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Birbhum, Malda, Nadia, Murshidabad, Hooghly, Burdwan, Midnapore, Cooch Behar and Bankura districts emerged as developed districts and the remaining seven districts were less developed. Alternatively, nine districts, namely Hooghly, Howrah, Nadia, 24 Parganas (N), Malda, Murshidabad, Cooch Behar, Burdwan and Birbhum were identified as developed districts in respect of modernized agricultural development and the remaining nine districts were backward.
4. Two dimensions namely overall agricultural development and modernized agricultural development were recognized during 2000-01. In respect of overall agricultural development, twelve districts namely Nadia, Howrah,

Murshidabad, Cooch Behar, 24 Parganas (N), Malda, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Howrah, Burdwan and Darjeeling emerged as developed districts and remaining six districts lagged behind. On the other hand, in the case of modernized agricultural development, seven districts, namely Howrah, Hooghly, Darjeeling, 24 Parganas (N), Burdwan, Malda and Nadia emerged as developed districts and remaining eleven districts were less developed.

8.1.3 Disparities in Industrial Development:

1. From industrial sector, it may be observed that state level arithmetical mean of its composite indices for all the 18 districts has declined from 0.2349 in 1980-81 to 0.2285 in 1990-91 and has marginally decreased to 0.2258 during 2000-01. Therefore, inter-district variations of industrial development have shown rising trend in the consecutive reference years.
2. Because of agglomerative tendencies of industries, Howrah, Kolkata, 24 Parganas (N), 24 Parganas (S), Hooghly and Burdwan districts emerged as developed category districts in respect of industrial sector whereas remaining twelve districts were classified as backward districts during the reference years. It is noticed that concentration of all factories per thousand of Sq. Kms. of area is very high in Howrah followed by Kolkata, 24 Parganas (N) and Hooghly districts. Whereas, Cooch Behar, Malda, Bankura, Murshidabad, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Purulia districts have almost trifling possibility of modern industrial development. Thus these districts are placed in backward category. Nevertheless, there is enough possibility for traditional artisan-based industries in the backward districts.
3. In 1980-81, six districts namely Howrah, 24 Parganas (N), 24 Parganas (S), Hooghly, Kolkata and Burdwan emerged as developed districts in respect of modern industrial development and remaining twelve districts were categorized as backward due to their placement below the state average. On the other hand, in respect of overall industrial development, three districts, namely Kolkata, Howrah and 24 Parganas (N) districts fall

in the developed category and fifteen districts belonged to less developed category in industrial development. After one decade, in 1990-91, Howrah, 24 Parganas (N), 24 Parganas (S), Hooghly and Kolkata districts are developed districts in respect of first dimension index. On the other hand, Kolkata, Howrah, 24 Parganas (N), and Hooghly districts are developed category in respect of second dimension index and others belong to backward category in respect of industrial development.

4. In the matter of overall industrial development in 2000-01, Howrah, 24 Parganas (N), 24 Parganas (S), Hooghly, Kolkata and Burdwan appeared clearly as developed districts and two more districts, namely 24 Parganas (S) and Burdwan also came to be included in the developed category, as composite factor scores of these districts are nearer to the value of the state average and remaining twelve districts are identified as backward districts. In terms of small-scale industrial development, Kolkata achieved the top position, followed by Howrah, 24 Parganas (N) and Nadia. On the other hand, the least developed districts in this respect were Purulia preceded by Birbhum and Cooch Behar.

8.1.4 Disparities in Economic Infrastructure Development

1. In the above analysis it may be observed that, the state level arithmetic mean of its composite index for all the 18 districts has increased from 0.12 in 1980-81 to 0.15 in 1990-91 and further to 0.19 during 2000-01. It is important to mention at this point that increasing trend of state average can be translated as increasing of infrastructural development.
2. In 1980-81, it is noted that Kolkata achieved the top position, followed by Burdwan, Hooghly, Howrah and Nadia. On the other hand, the least developed district in respect of infrastructural facilities was Purulia preceded by Midnapore and Dakshin Dinajpur. In the year 1990-91, there has been significant change in the ranking of the districts of Kolkata, Hooghly, Howrah, Burdwan, 24 Parganas (N), Nadia and Murshidabad. Similarly, in the year 2000-01, there has not been any change in respect of ranking, but 24 Parganas (N) and Murshidabad are moved forward and

- got placed from developing to developed category with respect to 1980-81.
3. Inter-district disparities in the levels of economic infrastructural development have also been reduced evidently from 100.50 per cent in 1980-81 to 81.84 per cent in 1990-91 and further to 83.77 per cent during 2000-01. However, the ranking pattern of districts was different in inter-district diversities. The Rank Correlation Coefficient (R_{12}) for the year 1980-81 and 1990-91 was +0.96 and it was +0.72 for the second subsequent decade (R_{23}) i.e. 1990-91 to 2000-01.
 4. It may be observed that during 1980-81, Kolkata, Howrah, Darjeeling and 24 Parganas (N) appeared as developed districts in respect of the first dimension of infrastructure development whereas the remaining districts fell in the less developed category. On the other hand, in the matter of second dimension of infrastructure development, Burdwan, Hooghly, Birbhum, 24 Parganas (N) and Howrah districts are developed category in respect of second dimension index and remaining districts are less developed, perhaps, due to anomalous size of the geographical area of these districts with very low density of population.
 5. During 1990-91 Kolkata district again emerged as developed district followed by Darjeeling and Howrah in respect of first dimension of infrastructure development. Alternatively, Malda district was most backward in respect of first dimension, preceded by 24 Parganas (S) and Uttar Dinajpur. In the matter of second dimension of infrastructure development, Hooghly attained the first position, closely followed by Burdwan, Howrah, Birbhum, Nadia, Murshidabad and Cooch Behar. On the other hand, Kolkata was the least developed, preceded by Purulia in this dimension of infrastructure development.
 6. It would be found that, Purulia, Hooghly, Midnapore, Uttar Dinajpur and Malda emerged as developed districts in 2000-01 in respect of first dimension of infrastructure development while Hooghly, Burdwan, Howrah, Birbhum, 24 Parganas (N), Nadia and Murshidabad appeared as

developed districts in respect of second dimension of infrastructure development. Therefore, eight districts — Bankura, 24 Parganas (S), Malda, Dakshin Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Cooch Behar and Kolkata were not placed in the developed category in both the dimensions of infrastructure development.

8.1.5 Disparities in Social Sector Development

1. On the basis of the above analysis, it is observed that there has been marginal decrease in inter-district disparities in the indicators pertaining to availability of educational institutions. On the other hand, disparities in respect of percentage of literacy, along with female literacy, availability of medical institutions, sex ratio and percentage of urban population to total population have considerably fallen during the reference point of time. Similarly, in respect of hospital beds and provision of drinking water, disparities have increased in the three points of time.
2. After comparing the value of composite indices of different districts with the arithmetic mean or the state average, it is observed (in Table 6.12) that in 1980-81 and 1990-91, seven districts, namely Kolkata, Howrah, Darjeeling, 24 Parganas (N), Burdwan, Hooghly and Nadia were in the category of developed districts. In the year 2000-01 did not show any significant change. It could also be found that all the developed category districts retained their position but minor changes occurred in their ranking within this category in the reference years. It could clearly be observed that in 1990-91, the comparative level of social development moved in favour of agglomeration in Kolkata district rather than backward districts. This is probably due to concerted efforts through area specific programmes.
3. Social sector development has been divided into two dimensions. In the year 1980-81, *first dimension* represents *quantitative* expansion of social sector whereas *second dimension* exhibits *qualitative* expansion of the social sector. During 1980-81, Kolkata, 24 Parganas (N), Howrah, and Darjeeling were developed category districts in the matter of quantitative

social development. Conversely, nine districts, namely Kolkata, Birbhum, Howrah, Hooghly, Nadia, Burdwan, Darjeeling, Midnapore and 24 Parganas (N) are categorized as developed districts in respect of qualitative social development.

4. Dimension of social development, during 1990-91 reveals that Kolkata, Howrah, 24 Parganas (N), Burdwan, Hooghly, Nadia and Darjeeling were fairly developed in quantitative social development. On the other hand, four districts, namely Kolkata, Howrah, Hooghly and Burdwan emerged as developed districts in the matter of qualitative social development.
5. During 2000-01, six districts, viz. Kolkata, Howrah, 24 Parganas (N), Burdwan, Hooghly and Darjeeling emerged as developed districts in respect of quantitative social development whereas ten districts, Kolkata, 24 Parganas (N), Howrah, Nadia, Murshidabad, Hooghly, Burdwan, 24 Parganas (S), Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling emerged as developed districts in respect of qualitative social development. Therefore, Birbhum, Bankura, Midnapore, Malda, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Cooch Behar and Purulia districts can be considered as socially backward as these districts are less developed in respect of both the dimensions of social development.

8.1.6 Regional Disparities in Overall Development

1. From the above analyses, it can be seen from the ranking of Backward districts (Birbhum, Midnapore, 24 Parganas (S), Nadia, Murshidabad and Malda), which were at the bottom in the initial reference year (1980-81), but have shifted upwards and registered above ranking position during 1990-91 and 2000-01.
2. Socio-economic development of remaining districts shows a mixed picture. Burdwan district, which was placed in the backward category during 1980-81 and 1990-91 shifted to the developed category during 2000-01. Similarly, Nadia district, which was placed in the backward category district during 1980-81 shifted to the developed category during 1990-91 and retained its position in 2000-01. Darjeeling district, which was

initially in the developed category 1980-81 but could not retain its position and slipped to the backward category during 1990-91 and 2000-01.

3. It is a matter of grave concern that districts Kolkata, Howrah and 24 Parganas (N), which retained their position in developed category districts during 1980-81, 1990-91 and 2000-01, but remaining districts retained their position in developing category and no improvements in their socio-economic conditions have been realized during 2000-01.

8.2 CONCLUSIONS

In the present study we analyzed district-wise spatial dimensions of socio-economic development in West Bengal for the selected points of time i.e. 1980-81, 1990-91 and 2000-01. The main objective of the study was to examine as to what extent the revised strategy of development of *Bottom-up Approach* adopted during eighties and nineties has gone in favour of bringing about improvement in balanced district-wise pattern of socio-economic development as against the previous development strategy based on *Top-Down Approach*. Impact of various Area Specific Development Programmes, which were initiated especially after Third Five Year Plan under revised strategy of *Bottom-up Approach*, has shown positive results on the economy as a whole. Correspondingly, it is realized that West Bengal benefited most in various fronts of socio-economic development at macro level. Even so, it is crucial to understand whether the fruits of the various development programmes are being distributed equitably and objectively among districts. Balanced Regional Development being one of the major objectives of planning in India, thereby to achieve this avowed goal, a variety of developmental programmes were implemented after exploring the nature and extent of backwardness of districts of West Bengal.

According to findings of present study, the following conclusions may be drawn:

A statistical procedure has been used to identify some of the characteristics and causes of disparities. In addition, this study examined the causal relationship between economic development and certain explanatory demographic and socioeconomic factors. The indicators of economic development have been selected after reviewing past research efforts,

availability of data, and their relevance in regional development planning. In short, both economic and non-economic factors appear to be important in our analysis of regional disparities.

The problems of regional disparities and economic development are so complex that it is difficult to suggest what combination of techniques can best be used to analyze certain problems. Therefore, an integration of the results of the various analyses can only serve as a guideline for development of the backward regions. The resulting recommendations must be supplemented with first hand knowledge of political, institutional and cultural factors.

Urbanization, labour force participation and in the long-run agricultural productivity affect the level of economic development. Labor force participation becomes highly significant in the absence of urbanization and it becomes less significant when considered in conjunction with urbanization. Three major factors of economic development were identified in this study: demographic and socio-cultural changes, extent of industrialization and modernization.

Two types of regions were delineated based on the degree of factor scores: developed and developing (or backward) districts. Developed regions include Kolkata, Howrah, 24 Parganas (N), Hooghly, 24 Parganas (S) and Burdwan, while Nadia, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Murshidabad, Birbhum, Malda, Midnapore, Cooch Behar, Dakshin Dinajpur, Uttar Dinajpur, Bankura and Purulia are identified as backward regions. Thus, our finding indicates that the regional pattern of development in West Bengal is in line with the popular perception in this regard.

8.3 SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of above analysis, the following policy prescriptions we can suggested to reducing regional disparities in West Bengal development:

Twenty years of planned development in India have not yet been able to reduce regional disparities to an appreciable extent. How to devise regional policies which will maximize the growth in real gross regional product and how to improve the well-being of the backward districts are important questions. It is to be expected that policy tools which are effective in one region may not be

appropriate in another. A deliberate measure is needed for the removal of disabilities from which the backward regions suffer.

8.3.1 Socio-Economic Policies

The preceding analysis points to a number of directions which might be taken to improve the level of development and to decrease sub-regional disparities in West Bengal. In our findings we have indicated that the labor force participation has a direct influence on economic development. The proportion of surplus labor supply is high in almost all the districts. Investment must be based on this surplus labor force. It has been claimed that regional economic planners will tend to stress investment in human resources. It would be reasonable to use a labor cost subsidy to encourage hiring of more workers or the location of new labor intensive firms. Reserves of labor which exist in the peripheral regions represent a valuable resource which if drawn into employment could mark a substantial contribution to regional employment and regional output.

Results from the composite index model shows that the lesser the number of dependent population the higher will be the level of development in the region. Therefore it is necessary to reduce the size of the non-earning dependent population, by drawing part of that group into gainful employment. This also points out that emphasis should be given to labor intensive programs in the agro-based sector. In addition to small scale irrigation, land reclamation, reforestation and other local projects with immediate effects on the local economy, investments must be made on human resources. Therefore, maximum gainful employment opportunities in all possible activities should be created for solving the unemployment problem of the area. The surplus labor should be diverted from agriculture to other agro-based activities like livestock and weaving for diversifying the economy. In the long run, another important means for reducing the size of dependent population is through birth control, improvement in medical care and social services.

Since agriculture supports the majority (62.5 percent) of the population of the region it should be given a high priority from the point of view of investment efforts and endeavor. Agricultural operation in India is still by and large

dependent on the vagaries of nature. Development objectives should be to: (i) increase the productivity, (ii) expand and diversify the employment opportunities, (iii) maintain a smooth flow of credit and other inputs, such as, improved seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. A greater effort must be made by way of developing agricultural infrastructure like irrigation and application of modern technology to farming. The land and water resources should be utilized more efficiently to maximize production in the agricultural sector. The existing socio-economic institutions should be modified so that the small and marginal farmers are able to adopt modernized agricultural practices. Therefore, a package programme of improved agricultural practices like the use of improved seeds, fertilizers, implements, etc., and a provision of package of services consisting of competent technical advice, availability of credit and production supplies and storage should be adopted in the backward districts.

From our study we find that developed regions are related with the level of literacy: the higher the literacy, the greater the degree of development. Thus expansion of education facilities should be done at a faster rate in the backward regions. Now vocational schools and technical training facilities should be opened. Higher literacy and increased skills will have a positive effect on productivity and consumption.

In the principal component analysis model it was shown that the industrially developed districts are Howrah, Kolkata, 24-Parganas (N), 24 Parganas (S) Hooghly, and Burdwan. Local or regional industries (small scale and agro-based) instead of large projects have to be developed in northern regions (Darjeeling, Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri) north-central regions (Nadia, Murshidabad, Malda and West Dinajpur) and south-western regions (Midnapore, Purulia, Bankura and Birbhum) of the state. Handloom weaving, carpentry, shoe making, tanning, pottery, bricks, wheat grinding and oil ghani (factories) should be developed in the backward areas. Such activities will not require massive capital investments but yet will provide numerous employment opportunities for the existing labor supply. Such enterprises should receive public support to assist

in setting them up in these regions which are underdeveloped and where local resources are not adequate.

In this study it has been shown that the disadvantaged population has a negative impact on economic development. The disadvantaged people of India, especially the tribal people are significantly backward economically and the terms of modernization. They do not have any medical facilities. Social restructuring must be done slowly through persuasion and education. The following policies for the disadvantaged groups may help to address some of the problems highlighted in the analysis. :

- (1) Develop effective adult education and vocational training.
- (2) Create incentives for education through gainful employment.
- (3) Equip the workers properly through extension of health facilities.
- (4) Establish community development programs within the townships.
- (5) Encourage higher agricultural productivity through improved methods of cultivation.
- (6) Reduce the dependent population by introducing gainful employment opportunities.

8.3.2 Regional Development Policies

The principal component analysis model as well as the composite index models shows that urbanization is an important factor for economic development. Development of small towns is less expensive, especially for infrastructure, and their growth will be more benefit to those in the surrounding country side. If growth centers are identified for each economic region they can act as "counter-weights" to urban centers of more developed regions. These now growth centers should take up investments in small and agro-based industries and use local labor and available raw materials as much as possible. Provision of requisite socio-economic infrastructure (viz., credit facilities, market network, bus service, communication system, health and education facilities) is considered crucial for the development of those centers.

The research has shown that the rural areas are backward socially and economically, and as a result there is a rural urban disequilibrium. The country

side and urban areas should be brought into closer socio-economic integration, and the unstable economic condition in villages might be improved through a regional planning approach. There should be a coordinated regional development in which both the rural and urban, local bodies through panchayet system, approach the problems from a common perspective. Every effort should be made to prepare comprehensive and integrated development plans.

Detailed district area development must be done since the districts are considered as planning unit. In other words, planning at the sub-regional level is essential. The area unit might vary from a single village or a group of villages to an entire district. Socio-economic overhead will be an important issue. Important development which has taken place in India during the Fifth plan is the preparation of sub-plans for selected areas, namely, hill areas, drought prone areas and the areas where the disadvantaged population dominates. Similar approaches to planning should be done in the sub-regions. The focus of attention in the sub-plans should be done in to sub-regions. The focus of attention in the sub-plans should be to minimize the gap between the developed regions by optimum utilization of human resources. Hill area development programs should emphasize exploitation of the resources of the whole areas (Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling districts). Objectives of development programs of the areas where the disadvantaged population dominates should be:

- (1) To narrow the gap between the levels of development of these areas and the other areas and
- (2) To improve the quality of life of the tribal communities.

In the drought prone areas employment to the rural people should be provided. Special projects or pilot projects for particular problems in a backward region should be taken up immediately. A comprehensive area development program has been advocated by the West Bengal state planning board. Agricultural modernization, economic infrastructure, rapid industrialization and organization and provision of educational and medical facilities are all integral part of the required overall development. It is expected that proper regional development will create scope for the development of all regions. This will stop the one directional

flow of men material and money to the large urban areas. This will also enable the regions to develop as partners of progress.

The North Bengal Development Council, Paschimanchal Development Council and Sunderbans Development Council are to be revitalized so that they can perform its catalytic role in socio-economic development for which they have been constituted. More funds need to be allocated to these Councils both by the State and the Centre to enable it to undertake and implement special plans and programmes of development for the region. The *Panchayati Raj* institutions and municipal bodies at the grassroots level are to be effectively involved in the implementation of various projects undertaken by the Councils. These efforts are to be combined with the provision of adequate resources for the Development Councils to perform developmental activities properly and to attract outside investments.

Despite all these handicaps there is still much prospects of industrial development in the State. The future is not bleak. In spite of various problems, West Bengal continues to enjoy easy access to ready and adequate supply of skilled labour and cheap unskilled workers. Proximity to sources of supply of raw materials as well as coal and nearness to organized market for intermediate and finished goods are other advantages. The State has within its territory roughly 25 per cent of industrial assets of the whole of the country and about 15 per cent of the total number of registered factories. Kolkata still serves a large hinterland and this city continues to be the nerve-centre of the Eastern Region. With the completion of Metro-Rail project and the Second Hooghly Bridge and other developmental works undertaken by the KMDA, Kolkata will be attractive to all again. Haldia port with its modern equipment and latest handling devices would provide unique opportunities for intensification of commercial relations with countries in South West Asia and Australia. With the existing infrastructural facilities, Kolkata and its suburbs, Durgapur, Asansol and Haldia are more attractive than other parts of the country for setting up industries.

In the present context of high and rising prices of petroleum, there is enormous scope for development of coal-based industries like chemicals,

fertilizers, extraction of petroleum from coal and so on in the coal-bearing areas in the State.

The jute industry can regain its earlier position and compete with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka if the obsolete machineries are replaced and modernized. There is ample scope to revitalize jute industry.

The engineering industry can be rejuvenated if this industry is supplied with steel, credit and power. West Bengal still is more advanced in technical know-how especially in this sector. The activities of the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation, West Bengal Infrastructure Development Corporation, State Finance Corporation be geared up to develop the growth centers and industrial estates. In every district there should be a growth centre.

In our view, there is no reason for despair. West Bengal has a strong industrial base. It is not very difficult to revitalize the economy of the State if the problems standing in the way of rapid industrial development are removed. If we know the nature of the disease, it is not very difficult to cure it.