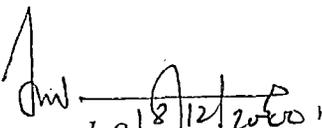


**SOCIAL WELFARE ADMINISTRATION OF SCHEDULED  
CASTES IN WEST BENGAL : A STUDY OF  
RAJBANSHIS OF COOCH BEHAR**

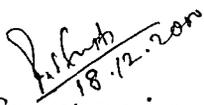
**A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (ARTS) OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

*By*

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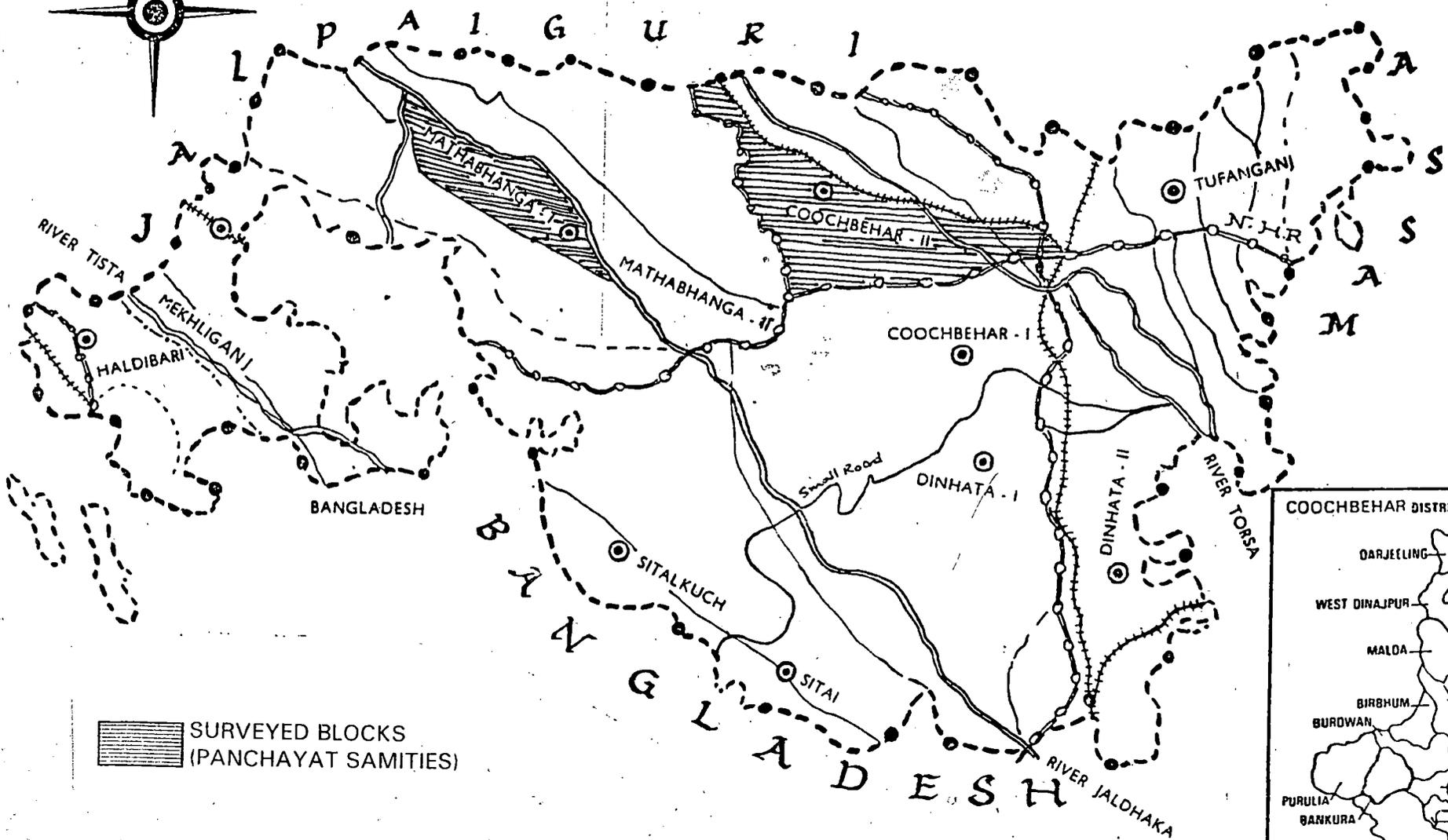
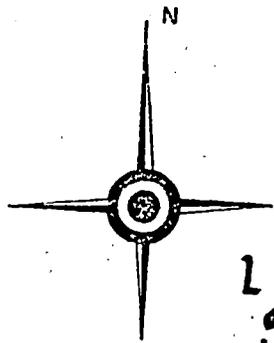
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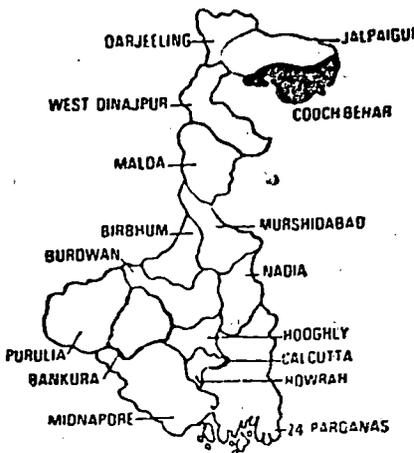
# MAP OF COOCHBEHAR DISTRICT



 SURVEYED BLOCKS  
(PANCHAYAT SAMITIES)

SCALE - 1" = 8 MILES

## COOCHBEHAR DISTRICT IN WEST BENGAL



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My interest in the study of Rajbanshis developed about two decades ago when I used to accompany my father during his visits to the remotest parts of the district of Cooch Behar as a responsible human being and as a committed social activist. Indeed, I have learnt from him my first lesson of history, society, economy and politics of the district and the region. My father provided me every possible congenial space to learn and understand the history of the region and the history of the people. Soon after my post graduation I was encouraged to take up a study on Rajbanshis by my teachers as well as by senior social activists and political leaders who happened to be the close friends of my late father. But for different reasons the interests never got translated into action. I had almost given up the idea when Professor Pradip Kumar Sengupta, presently, Dean, Faculty of Arts, North Bengal University, suggested that I apply for the Research Fellowship of a U.G.C. sponsored Major Research Project under Dr. Dilip Kumar Sarkar, Head of the Department of Political Science, Government College, Cooch Behar (there after joined in the faculty of Political Science, Presidency College, Calcutta). I was awarded the Research Fellowship and here is the work I did for three years of my tenure as a Research Fellow. I am most grateful to Dr. Dilip Kumar Sarkar who is at present the Controller of Examinations, North Bengal University, for the fellowship and to the University Grants Commission for necessary grants. The submission of this work in the form of a thesis would not have been possible without the active support, academic care and guidance of my research supervisors Dr. Dilip Kumar Sarkar and Dr. Pradip Kumar Sengupta. Infact they have provided me required enlightenments to understand the principal issues of my research studies both conceptually and operationally.

I am also indebted to my respected teachers of Political Science Faculty, North Bengal University. I should express my sincere indebtedness to the villagers of ten villages who made our (me along with my fellow investigators) stay in their village both memorable and educative. I should express my deep gratitude to the following in particular, Ajoy Roy, Sabhapati, Cooch Behar-II Panchayat Samity, Sunity Barman, Sabhapati, Mathabhanga-I Panchayat Samity. I am specially grateful to the Honourable Minister In Charge, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Welfare, Government of West Bengal for taking personal care and initiative by way of providing his long drawn experience and relevant official and non-official documents. I express my sincere thanks to the staff of North Bengal University Library, Cooch Behar State Library, Sahitya Sabha, Cooch Behar, National Library

Calcutta, Cultural Research Institute Library, Calcutta, Muzzaffar Ahmed Pathagar, Calcutta, State Institute of Rural Development Library, Kalyani, Indian Institute of Public Administration Library, New Delhi, Indian Institute of Advance Studies, Library, Shimla. I take this opportunity to thank my classmate Swapan Kumar Sarkar for translating this manuscript into computer version. I now thank my mother for her care and concern for me and my husband Aniruddha for taking personal interest in my work and for ungrudgingly facing the hard times with or without me and making this effort a success.

**MOUSUMI DE SARKER**

## PREFACE

This study originated in the major project proposal on Society-Economy and politics of Rajbanshis : A Development Study of Scheduled Castes In The District of Cooch Behar under Dr. Dilip Kumar Sarker, formerly Reader in Political Science, Presidency College, Calcutta and presently Controller of Examinations, North Bengal University, for which University Grants Commission, New Delhi, made the necessary funds available. This study has been an offshoot of the said major project submitted to the University Grants Commission. I would like to put on record my thanks and gratitude to University Grants Commission which has made this work possible.

Rajbanshis of the district of Cooch Behar have been a distinctive ethnic variety who have been termed as scheduled castes ever since the inception of the Constitution of India. In fact this social group had been included in the Schedule of the Government of India Act of 1935. Rajbanshis have a distinctive society and culture of their own who have been through ages experienced with both the processes of Hindunisation and Islamisation. This study has been a maiden attempt to understand the different aspects of social welfare administration of Rajbanshis of the District of Cooch Behar. Throughout this study attempt has been made to find out answers to the fundamental question whether the present administrative arrangement at the level of the District in the name of the social welfare administration is adequate enough to grapple with the problems of Rajbanshis of the district of Cooch Behar. Such a district level study on social welfare administration of Rajbanshi scheduled castes has been first of its kind ever attended by any scholar of the field.

While weaving social welfare of a distinctive scheduled castes community and social welfare administration together in frame-work the study on social welfare administration of scheduled castes in West Bengal, a study of Ranjbanshis of Cooch Behar is a novel one, not merely it probes into varied aspects of social welfare administration of Rajbanshi scheduled castes in the district of Cooch Behar but also examines society, economy, politics and existing administrative structure designed for the welfare of scheduled castes community in a multi-ethnic state of India. The study, being largely prescriptive in nature, may help in building up desired social welfare administrative structure for the scheduled castes in different parts, composing of six chapters the study includes some anexture as well.

The study based on the empirical research is intended to unravel the existing public policy of social welfare for Scheduled Castes and its implication to resolve the problem of rural poverty. The study looks primarily at the efficacy of social and economic assistance from the point of view of the under-privileged Rajbanshi Scheduled Caste of the district. To have clear understanding of poverty and backwardness, the present study addresses itself to the use of sociological knowledge in the policy arena. Various aspects of public policy such as policy planning, execution, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of welfare and development programmes for under-privileged community have been analysed with the help of micro-study conducted in ten selected villages of two Panchayet Samities of the district of Cooch Behar in the state of West Bengal. The study examines the social and economic assistance from the giver and user's perspectives. The study also highlights the necessity for both institutional and non-institutional changes and development to be induced in the action oriented programmes of distributive justice. The study examines the problem in depth in adopting welfare measures for Rajbanshi Scheduled Caste from the sociological and administrative angles. The study points out the crucial role of administration of welfare and development programmes for weaker sections. The micro-analysis and findings throw-up reflections and views on the problem of policy planning, administrative structure and functional aspects of implementation of welfare and development programmes for weaker sections in general and anti-poverty programmes, in particular. The importance of the study lies in the suggestion for creating a new public service delivery system in favour of weaker sections. Such a study will be helpful for policy makers, administrators and professionals of Social Welfare administration to ensure better understanding of the issues of welfare administration for the weaker sections and better implementation of Social Welfare and Development Programmes meant for them.

In Introduction, concepts, models, approaches, theories of social welfare administration, its operation both at the national, state and local level as well as studies under-taken by different scholars have been thoroughly examined. The Introduction starts with a brief sketch of Rajbanshis and includes objectives of the studies, study methodology and literature review. All these may be perceived as attempts at presenting the principal issue of the study at the outset. Chapter one

the study deals with the background of society-economy and politics of Rajbanshis and links this background with the present profile of Rajbanshis of the district of Cooch Behar. An elaborate attempt has been made to present the profile of the district, panchayat samities and ten villages under study. The second chapter relates to the profile of scheduled castes in India, West Bengal and the district of Cooch Behar. In this chapter a through investigation have been made to understand the morphology of the scheduled castes along with their socio-economic status. The third chapter concentrates on the different development programmes so far undertaken for bringing scheduled castes to the mainstream. The fourth chapter deals with a detailed case study of ten villages under two panchayat samities (Blocks) of the district of Cooch Behar: Operationalisation of the different development programmes and the constraints involve therein has been the central focus. This chapter attempts to analyse through micro level data, the factors and forces, issues and events associated with social welfare programme implementation process of the scheduled castes at the district level. The concluding chapter seeks to present certain concrete suggestions for arresting the problems at the grass root level and lays stress on redesigning the existing social welfare administrative structure for the development of the scheduled castes in the perspective of the existing limitations and constraints. Such suggestion would help building up good governance in India in general and success of scheduled caste welfare administration in particular.

**MOUSUMI DE SARKER**

## INTRODUCTION :

The history of the origin of the Rajbanshis is a mystery and there has been the absence of unanimity on this issue. The Rajbanshis constituting the most numerous group among the autochthons of the district went through the parallel processes of Hinduization and Islamization. It is, however, curious that usually Rajbanshis are only Hindus and all Muslims referred to as local Muslims are non-Rajbanshis. In this connection it is relevant to note that the Hinduized Rajbanshis form the single largest Hinduized social group in the population of the district of Cooch Behar. The Rajbanshis along with "Paliyas" and "Deshis" are found in the wide stretch of the country extending from the districts of Malda and Purnea (At present in Behar District) to Goalpara in Assam. Rajbanshis both Hinduized and Islamized speak a dialect which according to Grierson "is called Rajbanshi", and while undoubtedly belonging to the eastern range (of Bengali language), has still point of difference which entitle it to be called as a separate dialect.<sup>1</sup>

Rajbanshi *intelligentia*, political leaders and social reformers, however by and large strongly disagree with what has been stated above and emphatically deny any affinity between the Rajbanshis on the one hand and Koches, Paliyas and Bodos on the other. Difficulties arise because of the fact that though the Rajbanshis have a rich and complex history it is yet to be written and constructed properly. The history of this people of North Bengal Districts and also of part of Assam suggests that they were once a regionally dominant political power and founded several powerful kingdoms. Their *precise* origin, status and folk history remained mostly obscure. Existing history is largely based on the accounts left by the colonial administrators and colonial ethnographers and what follows below is drawn to a considerable extent from such accounts.

From the various accounts though not always consistent and very clear, it appears that when the British started intervening the Cooch Behar principality, the Rajbanshis belonged to a semi-tribal community who for a considerable period were settled agriculturalists, with regional diversity, raising crops mainly using a plough drawn by Bullock. At that point of time Rajbanshis formed a considerably differentiated peasant society. Buchanan Hamilton who visited Eastern India in the early 19th century considered the Rajbanshis to be the aboriginals of Kamrup and

be strongly categorised by their features belonging to the great eastern race of mankind.<sup>2</sup>

As a distinct ethnic variety Rajbanshi has been recognised as one of the major social groups belonging to Scheduled Caste category in West Bengal. Rajbanshis has registered as a major scheduled caste in the Northern districts of the state of West Bengal. As per 1991 Census near about 84% of the Rajbanshis of West Bengal live in this district. The reason behind this huge concentration is that the district of Cooch Behar, once a princely state has been the principal bastion of Rajbanshi population. In terms of caste identity nearly 13.5% people of the districts of the northern part of Bengal are happened to be Rajbanshis. Interestingly, there has been no such concentration of any other community or ethnic group which can be equated with the Rajbanshis both in the numerical sense and consolidation sense of the term. A brief analysis of the background of the Rajbanshis is relevant here.

The documented history of this region provides the fact that there had been an independent Rajya (State) named Pragjyotishpur which was formed composing of geography of present day Assam and a part of early Bengal. Different Regional Tribal groups such as Danaba, Kirat, Asur ruled either whole or part of this region. With the passage of time Pragjyotishpur became known as Kamrupa. At a latter stage Aham, Kshen, Coch and such other tribal groups dominated the region at different points of time. These tribal groups used to fight with each other to keep their political ~~whole~~ and had come to a relationship under dominant-dominated continuum. They had to experience with different kind of socio-political interactions and had to come across different stages of interrelations such as conquest, supreme position, assimilation and amalgamation. With this experiences the aboriginal tribal groups had transformed into civilized social groups. With the passage of time the eastern part of Kamrup had gone under the control of Aham tribes and the Western part of Kamrup came under the rule of Coch tribes. The Coch tribes could form a separate Coch Kingdom centering Cooch Behar and Baikunthapur Region.

The root of the Coch tribes lied in the influence of Astromongaloid Tribal groups. Some historians and Anthropologists have questioned the idea of Dravidian-Mongoloid admixture and have stressed the Mongoloid element. However the pre-history and mythology of the region indicate the existence of Aryans in this region

who used to live only river side of Karatoya. Infact there has been no definite information on Coch tribes before 16th Century. The initial identification of Coch tribe could have been made as a part of extended Bodo tribe. The noted Anthropologist and social Activist Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal, in his monumental work on the Rajbanshis of North Bengal has pointed out " Coches are non-Aryan in origin. Some of them adopted Hinduism and became Rajbanshis." A section of the local Rajbanshi intelligentsia, however, straight way defies the argument and as a counter argument they claim that Rajbanshis do have certainly a Kshatriya origin of Northern heartland of India.<sup>3</sup> While substantiating their arguments they take resort to old hindu scriptures and mythologies. Thus the ethnic origin of the Rajbanshis has been some-what uncertain amidst opposing arguments. The continuous process of assimilation and integration of Hindu religion gave rise to a new social group called Rajbanshi which was formed as a major breaking away group of the Coch tribes. Besides Coch and Rajbanshis, there have been some tribal groups which are still in existence such as Mech, Rava, Kachari and such others. The Coch Kings ruled Cooch Behar Kingdom for nearly 450 years. During the British rule, the principality of Cooch Behar became a subjugated feudatary state and after India's independence had been merged with India and became a district of the state of West Bengal. The Rajbanshis of the district of Cooch Behar have been the major ethnic group. This social group, over a long period of time has been living with other immigrant social groups. ,

The present study seeks to unravel the complex and tortuous process of metamorphoses that the district underwent in its social, economic and political aspects through-out a long stretch of time. The particularities of the district are that socially it has been a plural society marked by considerable socio-cultural differentiations with its large autochthonous population nearly out numbered by immigrants. Politically the district had been a princely state ruled by the indigenous Maharaja's of Cooch Behar and has been merged with India since 1950 and presently has been in existence as a district of the state of West Bengal. In the economic sphere the district has experienced a kind of colonial economic penetration and exploitation, together with the evolution of the Jotdar-Adhiar relationship marked by multiple forms of surplus extraction and dependency in agriculture marked the district off from the rest of colonial Bengal. Politically, the district was

distinguished by the articulation of three-fold socio-cultural reform and political protest movements i.e., social mobility movement among the Rajbanshis which has been full of peculiarities. The main stream Nationalist movement has been surprisingly absent in the district and particularities of the popular movements that the district witnessed in the closing decades of 20th Century.

In course of presenting the socio-demographic profile of the district, it has been attempted to understand how the initial colonial settlers stigmatized the autochthons as non-arean. With spar of immigration of caste Hindus, Bengalis, Beharis, and Marwaris as also of Muslims from the neighbouring districts such as Rangpur, Pabna, Noakhali and Comilla or East Bengal. The Rajbanshis underwent a process of cultural assimilation and transformation through both Hinduization and Islamization. The changed Rajbanshi hindu and muslims, however remain close up to each other in their socio-cultural moornings than to their respective peer groups represented by the immigrant hindus and muslims respectively. Under the new land ownership patterns introduced by the Cooch behar kings under the direction of Rayats they were reduced, by enlarge, to the status of poor tenants and share croppers (Adhiars). Immigrant Hindus and Muslims either became Jotdars or took to various services and professions in an around the town of Cooch Behar where they have mostly settled. Over the years, these immigrants developed entrepreneurships as junior partners of the colonial masters. The popular autochthonous culture of the district therefore remained syncretic, uncontaminated by communal vices through-out the colonial period and largely accounting for the absence of communal violence and riots erupting in other parts of Bengal off and on, remained confined among the large land owners, jotdars and better of peasants.

Social fragmentation of the district could not be cemented by an overarching nationalist ideology. Due to the absence of the basic ingredients and an all engulfing political platform with the inevitable result that the different social groups drifted into diverse political channels. Caste Hindus opted for the Congress and the hindu Mahasabha Muslims in most cases joined the Muslim leagues and the Hinduized Rajbanshis, though watering down their loyalism, failed to develop an anti British stance over-night. The leftist forces consolidating within the Congress intervened in such a fragmented political setting and sought to bring together the agriculture labourers and Adhiar peasants within the fold of its trade unions and Krishak

Samities. Thus hitherto unmobilized social forces could be brought to the political scene of the district during the 1940's escalating anticolonial militancy and taking on simultaneously the oppressed sections of the society.

The Rajbanshi Kshatriya movement in Cooch Behar was basically a movement for having a kind of elevation in the Hindu Social order or traditional Hindu caste hierarchy. The Rajbanshi Kshatriya Movement was emerged during the first decade of 20th Century and had been growing during the 1920's under the leadership of Sri Panchanan Barman. From the very beginning the Kshatriya Samity did not commit to any political opposition to the British Raj. Infact the Kshatriya Movement kept away from nationalist freedom struggle (which was indeed barred in the state of Cooch Behar), the movement representing the aspirations of the incipient Rajbanshi middle class and also Rajbanshi Jotdars had its beginning in striving for upward mobility and for recognition of a distinct socio-cultural identity. However the movement which in 1917 had asked for special representation in the legislatures, had been developing, during the 1920's also as a political movement and looking upon the British Government as the patron of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Movement.

In its annual conference held during the 1920's the Samity regularly reiterated its firm loyalty to the British Government. In its various resolutions the Samity concentrated on the demands for formation of a Rajbanshi-Kshatriya batallion, nomination of adequate number of Rajbanshi-Kshatriyas to the District Boards, Union Boards, Municipalities etc. that is, local self-Government institutions suitable measures for spread of education and increased job opportunities for the educated Rajbanshi-Kshatriya youth. Old issues like the importance of strict adherence to the rituals and rousing of social awerness against the introduction of dowry in the Rajbanshi society were also stressed.<sup>4</sup>

In a sense the Samity sought to enhance the social, economic and political position of the Rajbanshi community in general and of a counter elite in particular through greater patronage from the colonial regime. It is out of such an understanding that the Kshatriya Samity leaders pursued a loyalist political strategy. Three other important aspects of the movement deserved mentioned here. Firstly, it has already pointed out that as a part of the movement's quest for wider social recognition of a high caste status, the Samity had established contact with the

Bharatiya Kshatriya Mahasabha in 1920. Later on formal organisational links were forged and Sri Panchanan Barman was elected an office bearer of the All India body.

Secondly, the movement's appeal contained a mixture of evocations of the past glory of the Rajbanshi-Kshatriya and Hindu revivalism with at times explicit anti Muslim tones. The outrage of sexual priority of Rajbanshi and other Hindu women by Muslims became a recurrent issue. The ideal of "dangdhari-mao" or weapon wielding hindu women was put forward. The Samity developed a close relationship with the Hindu Sabha and sent representative to the provincial conferences of the Sabha. however, some native Muslims started taking part in the Samity's conferences. The 18th Conference even referred to the need for developing unity of Hindus and Muslims of local origin against the vatrias (aliens), that is immigrant Bengalis.

Thirdly, the agrarian perspective needs to be highlighted. Rajbanshi rank holders, jotdars and substantial peasants were among the supporters of the movement. Astonishingly the movement never raised any agrarian issues at its own initiative. But on two *occasions* the Samity had to take instant ~~on~~ moves to amend the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885. Sri Panchanan Barman was made a member of the Coommittee to consider such amendments. While on the question of relations between land lords and jotdars who were either tenure holders of Raiyates, he was keen to further the interests of these two groups against the zamindars, on the question of given recognition to the Adhjar or share cropper. His position was decidedly against the Adhjar. Such an attitude towards agrarian relations kept the potential of the movement considerably restricted.

An aspect deserving particular attention was that against the background of the Constitutional negotiation continuing since the appointment of Simon Commission, the Kshatriya Movement too became involved in the issue of political reforms and there was less stress on that of improvement of the ritual and social status of the Rajbanshis. Bangiya Jana Sangha, an organisation representing the Rajbanshis Kshatriya and several other backward but "non-untouchable" caste groups was formed.<sup>5</sup> It may be observed that in a move to have a united lobby against the

caste Hindus. Several low caste "Sabhas" formed the Bengal Depressed Classes Association which represented the Nama Sudras and other untouchable and depressed castes. Interestingly, Kshatriya Samity leaders because of their claimed higher ritual and social status were keen on demarcating themselves from the former and organised the Bangiya Jana Sangha.

• In the memorandum submitted to the Indian Franchise Commission (1932) on behalf of the Sangha Panchanan Barman stated that the Rajbanshis and other backward class "should be represented by reserved seats..... through Joint Electorate".<sup>6</sup> It is from this position that the Kshatriya movement supported both Government declaration of August 1932 with provisions for reserved seats and separate electorate for the depressed classes and later on its modified version that reserved seats but joint electorate under the Puna pact. It is worth while to note that this position differed from the position of several other caste movements, particularly the Nama Sudra movement which was agitating not only for seat reservation but also for separate electorate. To take advantage of job reservation, special educational facilities and electoral politics the Kshatriya Samity asked for the status of Scheduled Caste and this was granted.<sup>7</sup> There was some reservation within the Rajbanshis about this status, but the Samity leaders argued that the term "Scheduled" was not related with ritual and social status of a caste and that the category "Scheduled Caste" just referred to certain caste included in a Schedule for electoral purposes. Hence there was no ground for having any misgivings.

The policy of the Colonial Government was to encourage political aspirations of the lower caste including the Rajbanshis in a bid to keep the nation divided and weak. Thus, addressing the 15th and 16th conferences of the Kshatriya Samity held in July 18, 1935, F.W. Robertson, the Rajshahi Divisional Commissioner observed that "the Government had recognised ~~in~~ the Rajbanshis as one of the Scheduled Castes and would surely especially consider their claim for government services and also other matters of interest to them". The Govt. of India Act 1935 widened the franchise to a certain extent and provided for joint electroate in the case of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes. The first election under the Act was held in early 1937. Since Cooch Behar was feudatory

state, the election was held only in Jalpaiguri and Siliguri Constituency. The election outcome revealed the complex and fragmented features of society and politics in the districts of Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri and the failure of the Congress leadership to overcome disjunction between the nationalist forces and other social and political forces which was active in the district. The new Constitution of India of 1950 has retained the position of the Rajbanshis as one major Scheduled Caste social group.

The slow but steady process of migration of the caste Hindus from the neighbouring district of erst while East Pakistan has accelerated the process of syncretization in the district. The immigrant Bengalis — both Hindus and Muslims coming from outside the district came to be known in the local parlance as Bhatias (Outsiders) The district also came to be traversed by Marwari Merchants and Traders as well as some Behari Traders. Many of the Bhatias both Hindus and Muslims had been the officials in the princely state administration and few of them were lawyers, petty traders and jotdars. Thus follows that the district's population came to have an extra-ordinary admixture of diverse social collectivities. The society as it stood in the late 19th and early 20th Century was characterised by fragmentation into various castes, religious communities, ethnic groups and linguistic cultural groups. Amidst the presence of majority indigenous people called Rajbanshis, the society of Cooch Behar had been and still has been under a continuous process of interaction between the different social groups.

Economically the Rajbanshis of the districts are dependent on primary sector nearly 91% of the Rajbanshi Working Force are engaged in agricultural sector, mostly as cultivators, some as agricultural labourers. In service sector other social groups had relatively more workers than the Rajbanshi. A little more than 4% of the Rajbanshi workers are service holders. The Rajbanshi participation in household industries, manufacturing industries, construction works, trade and commerce, transport and communication has been on the rise but till date such participation is negligible. The relative proportion of Rajbanshi workers dependent on cultivation has been declining. Along with a sharp fall in the number of cultivators, there has been considerable increase in the proportion of agricultural labourers among the Rajbanshis. The decadal growth rate of agricultural labourers among the Rajbanshis

was more than 141%. This substantial increase of agricultural labourers among the Rajbanshis substantiates the fact that the increase is due to land alienation. However among the off farm employments, the participation of the Rajbanshis in manufacturing industries and services has not increased in any reasonable rate. However in services there has been a little rise. It has been amply proved that despite urbanisation and such other factors the Rajbanshis have not been experienced with any significant change in the employment pattern.

• By the end of the 19th Century, the Rajbanshis aspired to raise their social status by claiming Kshatriya status and wanted a promotion from a lower to a higher birth in the regional caste hierarchy there-by gaining greater prestige and respectability in terms of the conditions of caste system prevalent at the time. This has been a peculiar social mobility movement asking for a better placement at the hierarchically arranged Hindu Caste structure, while on the other, the caste movements of that contemporary period had been to defy Hindu Brahmanical Caste structure. In this respect the Rajbanshi Kshatriya movement has been a mismatch in comparison with the other caste movements in India. Such a social mobility movement within the immobile traditional Hindu Caste structure gave rise to a class of urban based gentry in the Rajbanshi society, while most unfortunately the majority of the poor Rajbanshi remained as they were. Thus the nature of socio-economic relationship between Rajbanshis and non-Rajbanshis of the area remained unaltered. While almost of the same time under the leadership of the educated Rajbanshi there had been the effort of getting the Rajbanshis included in the Schedule of the Constitution and to have Scheduled Caste status. Such an anomalous position of the Rajbanshi of being a Scheduled Caste on the one hand and member of Kshatriya Varna on the other, created considerable confusion about their real social identity.

Even after the introduction of various development programmes for the Scheduled Castes in five years plans, the overall socio economic condition of the Rajbanshi is no good at all. A sense of relative deprivation prevails in the minds of Rajbanshis that they are relatively backward than people belonging to other social groups. Such a feeling of deprivation and state of backwardness enuniated a kind of sensitization among the Rajabnshis. They become discontent with what they expect and what they get in the prevalent system. Kamtapuri - Uttarakhand movement

has been one of such manifestations of the discontent. Against this backdrop, a detailed study of Social Welfare Administration of the Rajbanshis of Cooch-Bihar is not out of place.

Social Welfare Administration as an area of research has been a new field warranting the attention of the policy planners, political practitioners and public administration professionals. As an area of study Social Welfare includes two fundamental attributes; (a) the utilization of welfare measures to support and strengthen the family as a basic social institution through which needs are met; (b) the intent to strengthen the individual capacity to cope with his life situation. Moreover social welfare encompasses the well-being and interest of large number of people, including their physical, mental emotional, spiritual and economic needs. In short, social welfare includes the basic institution and processes related to facing and solving social problems which affect large number of people and which require some kind of concerted group effort to resolve. In India, the term social welfare has come to be used in a restricted sense - provision of social welfare services for the socially underprivileged groups - scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, denotified communities, orphans, women, children, physically and mentally disabled and economically underprivileged such as destitutes and unemployed. Social Welfare programmes are directed to ameliorate their conditions.

While attempting to understand social welfare administration it has been rationally argued, "To achieve the aims and objectives of social welfare, the government formulates social policies and in pursuance thereof, enacts social legislation, delineates various projects, schemes and administrative apparatus in the form of ministries for the implementation of all the activities undertaken in the sphere of social services, social work, social legislation etc., would be considered to belong to the realm of social welfare administration."<sup>8</sup> Social Welfare Administration has been viewed as a "problem centered" discipline and "as an approach to solve social problems".<sup>9</sup> Indeed, social welfare is increasingly becoming a subject of importance in the life of a political system destined to become a welfare state. However social welfare administration encompassing every act, every technique and every consideration in the process necessary to transforming social policy into social services, the entire field of social welfare administration has not been well conceived and still it is in a formative stage.

Admittedly, it would be hardly an exaggeration to look to social welfare administration which makes use of finding of any of the social sciences which are relevant to its sphere, which includes the solving of social problems, the implementation of social policy and the promotion of Social Welfare. But its distinctive character is that it combines and benefits from any of the conclusions of the social sciences which assist it and uses them as tools in the performance of the functions which are its particular concern."<sup>10</sup>

The American Council of Social Work Education views, "administration is a process of transforming community's resources into programme of community service in accordance with goals, policies and standards which have been agreed by those involved in the enterprise. It is creative in that its structure and relationship in such a way so as to alter and enhance the total product. It involves the problem solving process of study, diagnosis and treatment."<sup>11</sup> Social Welfare Administration as a complex process of activity deals with the study of development, structure and practice of social service. It is broadly defined as the study of social services whose objective is to improvement of condition of life of individual in the setting of family and group. It concerns with basically social problems and primarily with the ways in which society responds to these problems. In short, Social Welfare Administration is concerned with action proceeding from social pathology to social legislation and social policy, continuing to the study of executive action and to appraise how the social welfare policies affect the citizenship need.<sup>12</sup>

Most of the scholastic writings on Social Welfare Administration differ from each other while conceptualising the subject matter, principles and content of Social Welfare Administration. However a generalization may seem inescapable on the scope, nature and principles of Social Welfare Administration from the realm of intellectual exercises so far made on the subject. Five broad categories of scope may be worked out : (a) Social problems - cause of social problem and remedy of it through social reform and legislation detect social evils and combat them through people consciousness; (b) For the public good various social services being adopted through the provision of education, health and upgrading backward people, women and handicapped; (c) Social security to compensate for the loss of income due to old age unemployment through social assistance; (d) to serve the individual, family and community people through social functioning by method of group work and

community organization; adopting social policy and formulating them to achieve welfare through social action. <sup>13</sup>

As an effective means of social transformation, welfare measures are undertaken to maintain the social order and to achieve social equilibrium and justice. Precisely, social welfare refers to those services which are designed for those weaker and vulnerable sections of community, who, due to some socio-economic backwardness, are unable to compete with main-stream of the society. Social Welfare encompasses services relating to socially disadvantaged section of the community. It is rightly observed, Social Welfare is the organized system of Social Welfare institutions designed to aid disadvantaged individual and group satisfying standard of life and health. It aims at personal and social relationships which pursue to develop their full capacities and the promotion of their being in harmony with the needs of the community. <sup>14</sup> Occasionally, Social Welfare Administration is viewed from a limited sense meaning executive function of management or the operationalisation of social welfare services. In a broader sense, it includes all gamut of welfare services from the determination of functions and policies, planning, supervision, accounting and keeping records or maintenance of services.

Although Social Welfare Administration is an offshoot of Public Administration, considerable differences exist between the two. Social Welfare Administration has been a late starter and via Economics and Political Science the subject has come to the fore in 1946. While Public Administration as an academic discipline has started its journey during early decade of the twentieth century, Social Welfare Administration has been a sub-discipline of Administration. It is a branch of modern Development Administration. As a sub-set of Public Administration Social Welfare Administration searches and identifies the social problems and tries to initiate measure to eradicate such problems. Its scope extends the provisions of social welfare services for the deprived sections of the society. The Study Team on Social Welfare and Welfare of backward classes suggested for a five-fold classification for the content of welfare services. These are (a) Socially underprivileged groups - (i) under-privileged groups; scheduled castes; scheduled tribes; and other marginal classes of the society; and (ii) orphans, widows, unmarried mothers, women in moral danger, aged and infirm; (b) women and children; (c)

socially mal-adjusted beggars, prostitutes, delinquents, newly discharged persons from correctional and non-correctional institutions; (d) physically and mentally handicapped persons - including blind, deaf, dumb, mentally disabled, diseased, temporarily handicapped, mentally retarded or ill; and (e) economically under-privileged such as destitutes and unemployed.

Irrespective of the nature of the civilised state systems, social policy has been a general characteristic feature. Some writings have tried to identify the degree of correlation between the economic development and social policy. Such studies suffer from demonstration of statistical association to development a causal explanation. Such studies suggest for weakness in other explanations such as the explanation of social policy growth in specific countries which rests heavily upon deeds of heroic individuals or pressures from specific ideological political parties. We may concentrate on the study to know how they together are related to the theme of growth of the welfare state following the explanations provided by theorists broadly under the liberal democratic tradition.

Broadly speaking, the idea of social welfare emanates from two basic premises : (a) Market liberals; (b) Political liberals. The concerns of market liberals has been to develop ways of distinguishing the a social effects of market processes in a way which will enable them to identify situations in which state intervention in society is necessary from those in which it will unnecessarily interfere with the working of market mechanisms. They recognise that the complex economics of industrial societies work in ways which produce disfunctions which may either destabilise market systems or produce social effects which will lead to political opposition. They believe that most social allocation issues are best handled by market mechanisms and their concern is to delimit the exceptions to that rule. The 'market liberals' identify, therefore, a necessary role for the state to prevent individual economic actors operting in restraint of free trade, to maintain law and order, and to solve social problems which arise when individual actions produce undesired collective effects which the market mechanism cannot control. Political liberals are of the view that democracy is seen to work as a process in which competing elites, leading political parties bid for mass support. The growth of economic institutions providing a mechanism for resolving conflict arising out of

the latter. The problematical aspect of these political process is that the political elites<sup>Went</sup> a political market place in which they bid for power and to capture the mind of the people. They offer benefits particularly social benefits. This leads to this rapid growth of social services and state expenditure.

Primarily social welfare encompasses two approaches such as residual and institutional. Residual approach includes welfare institutions such as family, group, voluntary and non-governmental organizations. They begin to emerge only when the usual structure of supply, the family and market breakdown. Institutional approach on the other, presupposes an organized system of social services and institution designed to aid individuals and groups to attain satisfying standard of life and health. It emphasises on personal and social relationships which permit individuals to the fullest development of their well-beings in harmony with the needs of the community. Social welfare administration is the mechanism of translating social policy into action. However the implications behind the operational isolation of policies are varied and many. Such differentiation and heterogeneity produce ambiguities and nonconformities in conceptualising and delimiting the nature and scope of social welfare administration. Admittedly, the structure of social welfare administration remains diversified and confused. The subject has been struggling hard to find out a suitable approach. One can search for the existing models to locate and identify the acceptable alternative approach to social welfare administration. The models are : a) Residual model (marginal respons<sup>ns</sup>ibility of state for the ease and well-being<sup>of</sup> citizens); b) Achievement Performance Model (Education, health, social insuarance and Public assistance); c) Redistributive Model (State provide the services of health, education, housing and welfare according to the needs of citizens).<sup>15</sup>

### **Social Welfare Administration in India :**

Independent India inherits the culture of social welfare which is intrinsically linked with her social dynamics. Being a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic India always stands on the principle of social, economic and political justice to her people. The Indian state is, therefore, supposed to seek for remedy the situations of inequalities, disequilibrium, disadvantages through regulation, distribution, subsidies etc.<sup>16</sup> Since independence, the government of India, has been

assuming ever expanding responsibility for welfare measures aimed at achieving a state of physical, mental, social and economic well-being of our people and not just at overcoming specific evils. Such welfare measures are being provided not merely to aid people but to enlist their help and cooperation in social welfare programmes in terms of recognition of the worth and dignity of the individual through the media of social policy. Social policy is the institutionalized control of services, agencies and organization to maintain or change social structure and value. Social policy is also a set of inter-related decisions of political actors for the achievement of means and goals within a given situation. In order to achieve the means and goals used to evolve, extend and stabilize a pattern of welfare services for weaker sections, there is a need for sound administrative infrastructure. In fact, welfare measure are the outcome of a well-defined system of public administration. In this context, it is worthwhile to study the minimum facilities and amenities provided by the welfare administrative agencies in rendering the social services.<sup>17</sup>

The preamble to the Constitution of India firmly declares that its aim is "to secure to all citizens justice, economic and political, equality of status and of opportunity". Evidently the Constitution has drawn up the chapter on Fundamental Rights in order to ensure that each citizen has these rights. Article 14 assures equality before law and equal protection of law. Article 16 (1) asserts "There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state. Article 38 lays down that "the state shall strive to promote the welfare of the people in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life. Article 335, however asserts, "The claims of the members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration in the making of appointment to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the union or of a state". Similarly Article 340 (1) provides for the appointment of a commission 'to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes and to take steps to remove such difficulties and to improve their condition. Thus, there is a conflict between the principle of equality of opportunity and right of freedom as enumerated in Article 16 (1) and the fact that millions of citizens are <sup>to</sup> socially and educationally improve their education so that they could utilize the equality of opportunity accorded by the Constitution.

Part IV of the Indian Constitution specifically indicates a detailed list of programme of action relating to social welfare and justice. The provisions ranging from Articles 36 to 51 relating to Directive Principles of State Policy; under this Chapter highlights the goal of social justice by providing responsibility to the state to translate that goal into reality by necessary legislative action. To improve the well-being of the people is the primary objective of the Directive Principles with an added notion to fulfill the social welfare objectives. Thus social welfare is increasingly being recognised as a subject of vital importance in the life of a nation destined to become a welfare state. Precisely, Art 41 of the Indian Constitution has been the primary source from which the Indian state has derived the authority of social welfare programme. The Act suggests "The state shall within the limits of its capacity and development, make effective provision for screening the right to work, to education and public assistance in case of unemployment, oldage, sickness, disablement and other case of unemployment, oldage, sickness, disablement and other cases of undeserved want". Art 46 of the Indian Constitution corroborates the notion that "the state shall promote with special case, education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of explanation."

The operationalisation of social welfare programmes in India calls for an elaborate system of administrative management encompassing both the centre, state and the local level administration. All these three levels constituting of three different branches give rise to the wider public administration structure of welfare administration. Ever since the beginning of our independent state craft, different committees and commissions have been constituted to judge the efficacy of the welfare administration in India. The study reports of these committees, in general, sought for a concerted programme of action of different departments on the basis of collaboration and cooperation. The Renuka Roy Committee<sup>18</sup> pointed out, the various social welfare subjects were dealt with in different Ministries and the Plan and Policies of social welfare could never be used as an integrated approach and direction. The Committee recommended for a setting up of department of social welfare. The study team suggested that administration of a social welfare policy initiating, reviewing and watching implementation of social welfare legislation and

bringing a uniform pattern in social welfare administration. The constitution and administration of a central cadre of welfare administration had also an important prescription of the Committee.<sup>19</sup> The study team appointed by the Administrative Reforms suggested in its reports that rehabilitation and welfare should be concerned with the single department and the department should then be grouped with a department of Labour and Employment.<sup>20</sup>

Social Welfare Administration connotes an all pervasive form which includes every aspect of social backwardness for promotion and development. The socially depressed, repressed and economically weaker sections of the society have been one of the principal facets of Social Welfare Administration in India. This deprived section has not shared the fruits of development but in relative terms they lay far behind. Thus people living at the bottom of social and economic hierarchy should be geared up and brought up to the main stream by way of realising the targeted welfare programmes made for them. In India both the centre and the state governments have their specific departments for the development of the socially backward and depressed sections of the people. The welfare programmes for this targetted group include programmes relating to education and training, economic uplift; health, housing and other programmes. There have been certain centrally sponsored schemes and certain state specific sponsored schemes for the development of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes community. Since the study seeks to view the socio-economic status of a scheduled caste group and the impact of welfare measure on this group, an analysis of the initiatives and measures for the development of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes undertaken by the Indian state craft would not be out of order here.

## **WELFARE OF THE SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES : A Brief Historical Outline**

Historically speaking, the first ever expression of a Backward Class consciousness came only after the reforms of 1919. The census of 1919 divided the Hindus into three categories : a) Hindus; b) Animists and Tribals and c) Depressed classes and the untouchables. Such a classification has ushered in a new political dimension to the problems of the depressed classes. The modern

systematic effort for the welfare of the depressed classed was, however, attempted with the introduction of Montague-Chelmsford Reforms 1919. Official efforts, afterwards were on towards improving the condition of depressed classes. In 1923, by issuing a resolution the government stipulated that no grants would be paid to any aided educational institution which refused admission to the children of the depressed classes.<sup>21</sup> Towards the close of 1927, a Statutory Commission was constituted to review the working of the Government of India Act of 1919 and make a fresh recommendation for Constitutional advancement of depressed classes. The Commission was headed by Sir John Simon. In its reports the Commission preferred to call depressed classes as scheduled castes. The Round Table conference (1930-32) reopened the question of separate electorate for the depressed classes. Being a delegate to the Round Table conference Dr. Ambedkar reasserted the claim for separate electorate for untouchables. However such opinion was strongly opposed by Gandhi. Ultimately a settlement was arrived at under the Pune Pact which led to the cancellation of Communal award made only a month before the Pune Pact was signed. The government of India Act of 1935 embodied the Provisions of the Pune Pact with certain modifications. Another feature of the Act was the substitution of the term depressed classes for scheduled castes.

A comprehensive review of the Act of 1935 reveals the fact that the British Indian States ~~intended~~ intended that the interests of the relatively backward communities should be safeguarded by a system of special protection. Thus the policy of protective discrimination became a passionate feature of British policy in India leaving aside the question of reservation of the seats in the legislature. Efforts have been made to improve the socio-economic conditions of the scheduled castes and tribes. The independent India followed altogether the same path for the development of scheduled caste and tribes set by the British Policies. Since independence India has been pursuing a novel as well as unique policy guided by the principle of protective discrimination towards the weaker section of the society. The Indian Constitution provides a strong number of provisions to enable the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes to catch up the process of mainstream national development. The Articles relating to the development of the weaker sections comprising of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are of both permanent and temporary implications. Some of the Articles may be mentioned to corroborate the statement.

Article 15(4) lays down that "the state to make special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Article 16(4) enables the state to make the provisions for the reservation of posts, in favour of any backward class of citizens which in the opinion of the state, is not adequately represented in the services under the state. It has been laid down specifically in Article 46, that 'th<sup>e</sup> state shall promote with special care, the education and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people and in particular, of the scheduled castes/scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all form of exploitation".

In order to fulfill the promise of Directive Principles of State Policy, specific provisions have been outlined in Articles - 164, 275, 330, 334 of Constitution of India. These Articles provide for the reservation of seats for scheduled castes in the state legislatures and in the Parliament. Under Article 335 of the Constitution requires the state to take into consideration, the claim of the member of scheduled castes in the appointment of various services. Article 17 of the Consitution declares that untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. "The enforcement of any disability arising out of untouchability shall be an offence, punishable in accordance with law."

Article 338 (as ammended) by the Constitution Sixty-fifth Ammendment Act 1990) provides for the National Commission on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to investigate and monitor all matters relating to safe guards provided for persons belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, examines specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of their rights and safeguards, and presents an Annual Report to the Union on the working of these safeguards and make recommendation as to the measures to be taken by the union or any state for effective implementation of other safeguards. The Union and the state governments are to consult with the Commission on all major policy matters affecting scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In fact, such a Commission was first established in 1978<sup>22</sup> and that has been renamed in 1997.<sup>23</sup>

Keeping in view the Constitutional provisions different Committees, Commissions, working groups, Advisory Board and Panel were set up for the

accomplishment of the objectives contained in the Constitutional provisions. These are :

- a) Backward Classes Commission, January (1953), headed by Kaka Saheb Kalekar;
- b) Untouchability offence Act (Ammended in 1976) Protection of Civil Right Act, 1955;
- c) Centre Advisory Board for Harijan Welfare, Government of India, 1955 and 1969;
- d) Committee on Plan Project (1958) Report, 1959;
- e) A study group on Welfare for Weaker Sections, under the chairmanship of Jai Prakash Narain, 1960;
- f) Employment Committee (April 1966) Committee on untouchability of Schedueld Castes (Report 1969);
- g) Yarde Working Group - 1967, Ministry of Home Affairs;
- h) Three Parliamentary Committees (I-1968, II-1971 and III-1973) for the implementation of Constitutional safeguard for the welfare of scheduled castes;
- i) Centre Co-ordination Committee, 1974, chaired by Minister In-Charge, Home Affairs;
- j) Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976;
- k) Joint Committee of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, 1978.
- l) The Backward Classes Commission (1977), headed by B.P. Mandal
- m) A high Power Panel on Miniorities, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections, 1979.<sup>24</sup>

The Constitutional provisions and prescriptions provided for expanding responsibilities for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and lessons of last fifty years led us to review the operations of the plan process of development and welfare of weaker sections. The different Five Year Plans provided opportunity to work on certain specific programmes meant for the development of the said sections. The first Five Year Plan adopted major programmes for increasing educational facilities with an objective to percolate down to the weaker section of the community. In the second Five Year Plan measures were undertaken through centrally sponsored schemes for socio-economic upliftment of Harijans. The third Five Year Plan focussed on economic upliftment programmes through voluntary organizations. Greater emphasis was given to effectuate the institutionalised services such as schools, hospitals, housing, co-operatives, industrial centres for the welfare of scheduled castes. The fourth Five Year Plan involved in the curative and ameliorative Programme. This Plan proposed to lay emphasis on consolidation, improvement and

expansion of services so that the process initiated in the earlier plan is accelerated. The fifth Five Year Plan envisages that the main thrust for the development of these classes will come from the general sections, while the activities of backward classes welfare sector will be supplemented in future. In this plan, for the first time specific programmes were made for Scheduled Castes and the Tribes separately. In the Sixth Plan Special Component Plan, Special Central Assistance and Scheduled Castes Development Corporation were highlighted for bringing total development during this plan period. Specific schemes for the welfare and development of the Scheduled Caste were implemented. The eighth Five Year Plan took sincere initiative in the form of programmes for the promotion of educational and economic development of Scheduled caste. Necessary infrastructural support building had also been initiated for the cause. The thrust area of the ninth Five Year Plan has also been into streamline the mechanism of planning and implementation of programme covered under Special Component programme. The ninth Five Year Plan highlights on the following issues : a) to provide guidance with reference to employment opportunities; b) to improve the performance of educational development; c) to identify causes for inter-caste variation in availing benefits under the scheme and to chalkout the remedial action.

Social Welfare Administration relating to Scheduled Castes primarily concerns with three important strategies undertaken during different plan periods. These are : a) Special Component Plan, b) Special Central Assistance, c) Scheduled Caste Development Corporation. The Special Component Plan (SCP) was designed to channelise the flow of benefits and outlays from the general sectors of development in the plans of the state and central ministries for the development of the Scheduled Castes in the physical and financial terms. The Plans were envisaged to help the poor scheduled caste families through composite income generation programmes. Such family oriented programmes were expected to cover 52 per cent Scheduled Castes agricultural labourers, 28 per cent small and marginal farmers, share croppers, leather workers, weavers, fishermen, traditional artisans, sweepers and other like workers through composite income generating programmes.<sup>25</sup> Family development programme, educational upliftment, tangible improvement of living condition with an excess to service for a quality of life, to develop the human scheme, to promote the occupational mobility, to eliminate middle-man in the economic activity, to develop the women and the children of scheduled caste have been the major plan component of SCP.

Two national level institutions were set up for the economic development of scheduled castes and the tribes : a) Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation and b) National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Financial Development Corporation. Such financial institutions were created with an objective to enable them to act as a catalytic agent in developing schemes for employment generation of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Moreover, under the Poverty Alleviation Scheme it is presumed that 30 per cent of the beneficiaries would belong to Scheduled Caste and scheduled tribe categories under integrated rural development programme. Besides this programme under Jawhar Rojkar Yozana (JRY) scheme preference is being given to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes so far as the wage employment programme is concerned. At the grassroot level the village Panchayat 15 per cent of annual allocation is being spent on works relating directly to the benefits of Scheduled Caste and the diversion of fund made for Scheduled Caste is not foregotten.

Special Central Assistance (SCA) Programme was initiated by the government of India in March 1980 to accelerate the development of Scheduled Caste families. The special Central Assistance has given thrust to the development programmes for the Scheduled Caste, especially in core sector like animal husbandary, agricultural occupations and diversification of agricultural labourers. The SCA is specifically meant for the most vulnerable groups among the Scheduled Castes, namely sweeper, scavengers, bonded labourers etc.<sup>26</sup>

The Scheduled Castes Development Corporation has been set up by the government of India in different states having greater Scheduled Caste population to mobilise institutional credit for income generations scheme. The objective was to ensure optional returns from the investment made for the economic upliftment of the target groups. Such financial corporations play catalytic role in developing schemes for employment generations among the Scheduled Caste populations. The promotional role of the corporation has been in terms of identifying Scheduled Castes clusters through special surveys and motivating the Scheduled Caste beneficiaries, assessing their needs and financial requirement to formulate different remuneration schemes for different occupational groups.<sup>27</sup>

Besides the above general programmes, the centrally sponsored schemes include post matric scholarships for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students, pre-matric scholarship for the children of those engaged in unclean occupation, book banks for scheduled caste/tribe students studying in medical and engineering colleges, girls hostel scheme for scheduled caste, central aids to voluntary organizations for the development of scheduled castes and tribes. In addition to this centrally sponsored arrangements, the state governments do have their definite programmes for the development of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes both in actual basis and in virtual terms, the development programmes relating to scheduled caste and scheduled tribes are realised through the state government.

A sound social welfare administration machinery is urgently required for actualising the programmes and strategies undertaken for the amelioration of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The administrative agencies engaged in realising such programmes and policies are spreaded all over the country. Admittedly social welfare administration in India has been in action at three levels at our political system. The organizational and institutional framework may be delineated as under.

#### **The Central Level :**

The Ministry of Welfare is the Chief repository of Policy Planning and Co-ordination of the developmental programmes relating to Scheduled Castes and scheduled tribes. In the Ministry, there is a separate wing headed by the Joint Secretary assisted by three Directors, four Deputy Secretaries, six Under Secretaries and Research Staff, Desk and Section officers to perform various task and duties. The Ministry has also a Consultative Committee of the members of Parliament which relieves the policies, programmes and strategies. The Committee also advises on the matters relating to the general welfare of the scheduled castes. The Cabinet Secretariate has also a Secretary who looks after the work relating to Scheduled Castes and Tribes in various Ministries of the Government of India (Recently this post has been abolished). In addition to these, there is (i) National Commission of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (ii) Planning Commission (backward Classes Division) and (iii) National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Financial Development Corporation.

### **At the State Level :**

The Constitution of India has assigned the welfare of Scheduled Castes and tribes to the State List. State Governments have evolved some institutions (High Power Committee) to strengthen the status of Scheduled Castes and tribes specially in the state such as Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. State Planning Boards have been maintaining administrative linkages with the political support of the High Power Committee. But in the three states of Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala and Maharashtra, Planning Boards have been entrusted with the task of maintaining administrative linkages with the help of nodal department of social welfare, Scheduled Castes and tribes welfare. It was only in five states, Bihar, Goa, Punjab, Haryana and Orissa that nodal departments have been entrusted with the task of establishing administrative linkages with all the sectoral departments implementing the programmes for the development of scheduled castes.

### **At the Local Level :**

At the local level, implementation of SCP are supported by SCA and augmented by Scheduled Caste Development Corporation. District is considered as a unit of administration. The work of welfare and development of Scheduled Castes at the district level is taken up either by Zilla Parishad under the chairmanship of President under the overall supervision and control of the collector who operates through Additional District Magistrate or District Development Officers. In addition to the DRDA, nodal department of Social Welfare and sectoral departments also caters to the needs of weaker sections. The district technical officers are the main executive responsible for the implementation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes programmes. The District Social Welfare officer of the nodal department collaborates with the District Technical Officers to ensure the proper implementation of Scheduled Castes Schemes and related development programmes. At the Block level, the work relating to the development of weaker sections is looked after under the overall incharge of BDO. Each BDO is assisted by ADOs who cater to a particular area of activity of a group of villages. At the grassroot level, village Development officer/Panchayat secretary under the supervision of Gram (Village) Panchayat plays a prominent role in regard to the implementation of schemes/programmes for the welfare and development of weaker sections (SCs, STs and OBCs).<sup>28</sup>

The major institutional mechanisms evolved to safe-guard the interest of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are : a) Office of the commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; b) Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; c) National Commission for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes replacing the Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; d) National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes with enhanced power by virtue of Sixty-eighth Ammendment Act 1990; e) the backward class division of the Planning Commission; f) National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation.

### **Justification of the Study :**

A detailed discussion has been attempted so far to conceptualise social welfare administration welfare policies, institutional and administrative arrangement to provide a definite canvas to present the scheduled castes as the Principal Component of Social welfare administration. A brief note on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Welfare Administration has also been attempted. All these exercises have been made with a broader objective to understand Scheduled Caste Welfare Administration (in India at the micro level) both conceptually and empirically. Scheduled Caste studies in India remained for long preoccupied with the socio-political and economic cross currents manifest at the national level. A study of the community under diversified local regional ambience has been scarce. The *subaltern* sholars had attempted and have been attempting to dissect the variegated nature of colonial exploitation and resistance against the same under local setting. However, a composite study of social, economic and political dimensions of life of a specific scheduled caste community and its development perspectives at the micro scale, has, mostly, still been unattended. Admittedly a study based on micro level data and on the field experience on social welfare administration of Rajbansis (a definite and dominant variety of scheduled caste in West Bengal) of the district of Cooch Behar is relevant and timely.

Indeed social welfare in India have moved from traditional concept of care and rehabilitation of destitute and handicapped to ~~with~~ the development orientation. The development needs refer primarily to the needs of physical and material well being of these who are so far unattended and therefore becom<sup>e</sup> backward. The deprived sections of the society constituting of (in most of the cases) Scheduled Castes and

Scheduled Tribes should be taken much care of. Since they cannot share the fruits of development and in relative terms lag far behind, the sense of relative deprivation or some kind of alienation may spark off protest and dissent at the bottom of the social hierarchy. A thorough investigation of the development programmes so far undertaken for the scheduled castes in the district of Coochbehar and an impact study of welfare programmes on them would help us in understanding whether gaps remain between actuality and reality. The study has a definite social relevance with a potentiality to provide alternative strategies and alternative administrative machineries for realising the alternatives to be presented after thorough investigation.

### **Review of Literature :**

The subject like Social Welfare Administration dealing specifically with scheduled castes has been a recent intellectual phenomenon. Admittedly, there has been a dearth of literature on this specific area. However, the subject of weaker sections and backward classes has been more or less thoroughly investigated by sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, economists, for example Srinivash's study on "Social Change in Modern India" (1966), *Beteille's* study on "Society and Politics in India" (1977), Fuller's study on "Caste Today" (1968), Hanumantha Rao's study on "Poverty and Developed characteristics of less Development Regions in India" (1979), Yogendra Singh's study on "Indian sociology - social conditioning and Emerging concerns (1980).

From the above studies one can have a kind of introspection of the Indian development process. The studies concentrate on the issue that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have over a long period of time constituted the most exploited, poor and dependent section of Indian society. The scheduling of these sections in the Constitution has been the nation's commitment to raise their status to the level of other sections of population of the society. Some of the studies have attempted to analyse extensively the impacts of the steps taken for the development of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The changes in the status and aspirations of the scheduled castes have been studied by several scholars. Important issues arising from these studies during the 1970s and 1980s deal with theoretical and ideological changes in the paradigms of the studies (Omvedt : 1971, 1976; Patankar and Omvedt : 1979), the process of social mobility among the scheduled castes and social and cultural tensions in their relationship with other castes and their social and cultural

implications (Ommen : 1984 a, Y. Singh : 1978, 1985, Omvedt : 1980; Kulkarni : 1980 : Mencher : 1980, Reddy : 1973; Chauhan : 1980; Sengupta 1971; Sharma : 1976; I.P. Desai : 1976 ; Bose : 1981; Paranjpe : 1971 Agarwal : 1977). Studies of the problem of education and development among the scheduled castes have been made by scholars both individually and teams sponsored by ICSSR or the Home Ministry, Government of India (Chinis : 1972, 1979, 1979, 1981; Desai : 1974, 1976, 1978; Shah : 1973, 1982; Pimpley : 1976). Some studies have analysed the mobilization among the scheduled castes caused by their awareness of social inequalities that result in social movements.<sup>29</sup> There is hardly any study which focussed on the impact analysis of development measures undertaken so far for scheduled Castes and scheduled Tribes especially on the Rajbansis - a dominant Scheduled Caste variety in the northern zone of the state of West Bengal. However some studies on Rajbansis other than development studies have so far been undertaken.

Little research has been done so far on the subject under study. The classic printed monograph of Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal has well been acclaimed as a path breaker to understand the cultural perspective of Rajbansis. His book entitled "Rajbanshis of North Bengal" (1965) has been a unique of its kind which provides and indepth study of the Rajbansis including a study of their material culture and the background of their social organization and their language. The primary emphasis of this book was to provide a detailed survey of the dialect of the Rajbanshis. Obviously, this study has not touched upon the area on the process of socio-cultural and political transformation and problems of the Rajbanshis.

Another pioneering effort has been made by George Grierson on his "Linguistic Survey of India" (1932). In his study he has briefly touched upon the dialect of the Rajbanshi society of North Bengal. In fact, Grierson's study helps one to understand the nature of dialects of the area of our consideration. It has not shown the process of socio-cultural and political formation of the Rajbanshis of the district of Cooch-behar or of the region. In the recent past some writers have come out with their works to study and understand the society, economy and polity of Bengal with and eye to review the ethno-cultural histrycity of the local areas. The pioneering work to this direction is Ranjit Dasgupta's "Economy, society and politics in Bengal; Jalpaiguri " (1869 - 1947), 1992. In fact this is perhaps the maiden attempt to

understand with an analytical eye the society, economy and politics of Rajbanshis of the North Bengal region with special reference to Jalpaiguri.

The above study of Professor Dasgupta offers a historical cut-out of the district of Jalpaiguri right from the creation of the district by the colonial administration through amalgamation of parts of Rangpur with duars, annexed from Bhutan, in 1869 down to India's independence and partition in 1947. The author has sought to reveal the complex and varigated process of metamorphosis that the district underwent in the given time frame of the study. But the study has not touched upon the issue of Rajbanshis as Scheduled Castes and their socio-cultural transformation and assimilation down through history. Omkar Goswami's article on "Agriculture in Slump : the peasant economy of the East and North Bengal in 1930's" (1984) has been an attempt to understand the hystriocity of economy of the area under study. However, their works have not dealt with the area on which the researcher proposes to venture. Moreover, the article of Shekhar Bandopadhyay, "Towards a coporatePluralist society : caste and colonial policy of protective discrimination in Bengal 1911 - 1937" in the Calcutta Historical Journal 1986-87, is an eye opener to study the undercurrents of culturo-economic and politico-administrative trends and events behind the institutionalisation of the colonial policy on caste in the new historical situation. However, this is not a detailed study which intended to provide definite light on the issues and factors of a particular social group. Dr. Rajat Subhra Mukhopadhyaya's study on "Uttarakhand Movement : A sociological analysis" and the Rajbanshis of North Bengal : A comparative Demographic Profile 195 - 81 and Socio-economic Transformation of the Rajbanshis and Kamtapuri-Uttarkhand Movement in North Bengal (1995), has been an attempt to revisit the social-demographic profile of Rajbanshis and their socio-cultural assimilation and transformation. However, these studies are constrained by the lack of a kind of specific discourse on the subject proposed to be taken by the researcher.

In the light of above statements of different studies so far conducted by the scholars of the field, it can well be concluded that the problem specified of the proposed study has still been unattended. Precisely issues and implications involved in the social welfare administration of scheduled castes in the district of Coochbehar within a broad spectrum of the state of West Bengal has not been investigated by any scholar of the discipline. As there is hardly any study on Rajbanshis as Scheduled

Caste group focussing on administrative arrangement, implementation process and impact of welfare and development programmes, the present study has been of high order with a potentiality of both academic and administrative meaningfulness and would definitely logically find place.

**Objectives :**

To adumbrate, the study seeks to explore the present socio-economic conditions of the Rajbanshis (a scheduled castes variety largely prevalent in West Bengal) of the district of Coochbehar with a view to look to the development programme at the operational level and their impact on Rajbanshis and to suggest ways and means by way of attempting one conclusion. The objectives of the study may be specified as under :

- a) To study the Rajbanshis of the district of Coochbehar as a distinct social group having distinctive homogeneous characteristics;
- b) To examine the present socio-economic status of the Rajbanshis;
- c) To review the occupational structure, occupational mobility, nature of land holding, family income, expenditure and indebtedness of the Rajbanshis of Coochbehar;
- d) To examine the role performance of the specified government departments engaged in the betterment and development of the Rajbanshis of the district;
- e) To review the development programmes undertaken by the Centre/State operationalised through the Panchayat Raj institution and the rural banks, different rural development agencies, cooperatives in augmenting the benefits of the Rajbanshis of the district;
- f) To measure the different components of physical quality of life index, the level of political consciousness, awareness, extent of political participation and voting pattern of the Rajbanshis of the district;
- g) To review the development programmes and to seek opinion of Rajbanshis as beneficiaries within a time frame of ten years;
- h) To suggest suitable remedies and guidelines for improving the living condition of the Rajbanshis in the district of Coochbehar in the light of welfare administration efforts so far undertaken.

### **Study Methodology :**

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, a concerted plan of action has been drawn up for conducting an intensive field work of two Panchayat Samities (Coochbehar II and Mathabhanga I) of district Coochbehar of the state of West Bengal. Since the universe of the study is the district of Coochbehar sample selection should be restricted in order to meet the requirements of scientific investigation. Relevant tools and techniques of data collection and sampling plan in accordance with statistical guidelines have also been prepared. A suitable methodology has been evolved to facilitate the collection of information and data from various sources including consultation of official records directly connected with the scheduled castes (mostly Rajbanshis), discussions with the officials engaged in the task of development of scheduled castes both at the policy making and operational level. Thus the design of the study has been mostly observational and explanatory in nature.

In order to understand the problem of adoption of welfare measures for scheduled castes of the district certain interacting field level departments of the district administration responsible for the development of the resources, physical and institutional infrastructure, social services, welfare activities, district rural development agencies, department of social welfare, agriculture, three tiers of panchayat raj institution, scheduled caste development and financial corporation were consulted. With a view to identify the magnitude of the problem the role and functional responsibilities of officials at the micro level of the districts were evaluated. Thorough interviews have been made with these micro level institutions engaged in the task of development and implementation of welfare programmes for the scheduled castes and tribes of the district. Keeping in view the nature of the universe of investigation two Interview Schedules were prepared for officials and beneficiaries for the collection of data from five Gram Panchayats of each of the referred panchayat samities of the district of Coochbehar. For studying the organizational structure, administrative tasks and support system, necessary data have been collected from field administration.

The study has been conducted in 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000 (March) in ten Gram Panchayats of Panchayat Samities of Coochbehar II and Mathabhanga I. The selection of Gram Panchayat have been made on the basis of some criteria,

for example, concentration of Scheduled caste population, backwardness and advancement made so far necessary economic support system and infrastructural facilities provided to them under different development and welfare programme.

For conducting the study apart from interviewing the officials of different departments such as Collector, Additional Collector, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Development and Financial Corporation, District Planning Officer, District Panchayat Officer, District Agriculture Officer, Manager of Central Bank (lead bank of the district) Project Officer, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe Welfare Department of the District have also been interviewed. For collecting the necessary data, for this micro study a culturoanthropological approach has been adopted. In addition to this, a micro empirical method of analysis have been adopted in the preparation of different variable of adoption of welfare measures, specific question have been asked to the selevtive responsdents (officials, non-officials of different levels of the district and the beneficiaries of the selected village Panchayats under two specified Panchayat Samities of the District). With a view to deduct their emotional involvement in rendering and receiving welfare services, formal and informal discussions with the local functionary of the Panchayats in respect of practical implications of different ways of meeting social needs in general, and future strategy to be adopted in particular have also been observed and studied.

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# CHAPTER - I

## STUDY AREA

In order to understand the conceptual and operational perspective of the objectives laid down in the introduction, the present study has been conducted in the selected Gram Panchayats under two identified Panchayat Samities of Cooch Behar District of the State of West Bengal. A brief sketch of the district delineating the Socio-economic Profile is in order.

Cooch Behar, one of the eighteen districts of West Bengal, until January 1950, was feudatory State, first with the British Government and then with the government of India. The accession of Cooch Behar to India was made complete through a merger agreement which was signed on September 12, 1949 between the Maharaja of Cooch Behar and the representatives of Government of India. During 1947 to 1949 Cooch Behar was administered through a Chief Commissioner under the Government of India and was placed in Part - C of the First Schedule of the original Constitution of India. However entry relating to Cooch Behar was omitted by the Constitution (Amendment of the 1st and 4th Schedule).<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, however, Cooch Behar became one of the Districts of West Bengal through an Act known as 'Assimilation of State Laws' with effect from first day of January 1950.<sup>2</sup> In view of its distinctive cultural heritage and administrative system inherited from Maharajas' legacy, the district presents a case of "Suigeneris". The state of Cooch Behar before merger built a culture and administrative structure for the perpetuity of Maharaja's rule. Like in any other third world feudal states, ruler - subject relationship was marked by "my Baap" culture. In fact, highly centralised administrative structure was prevalent in the state under the aegis of Maharaja. Goal oriented development administration was completely a distant cry. The system of administration under-went some changes with the coming of Western educated liberal Maharaja Nripendra Narayan.<sup>3</sup>

The District of Cooch Behar, entrepot of North Eastern part of India and lulled in the lap of North Bengal is a district inhabited by a population of 21,71,145, among them 20,01,648 and 1,69,497 are distributed between rural and urban areas

respectively.<sup>4</sup> Evidently, rural population accounts for a little more than 92 per cent of the total population and the status of urbanization in the district is predominately low. The District of Cooch Behar in the State of West Bengal can be measured in terms of the percentage of urban population to total population which is only 8.85%. This is far below the percentage of urban population in West Bengal (27.39%). Another salient feature is that the scheduled caste population outnumbers the general caste population and its percentage to total population is represented by Scheduled Caste (51 per cent) and Scheduled Tribe (0.5 per cent) respectively. In the District, Hindu population (79 per cent) exceeds far more than Muslim population (20.78 per cent).<sup>5</sup> Cooch Behar which is the administrative head-quarters of the District of Cooch Behar consists of five Sub-Divisions, such as Sardar of Cooch Behar, Tufanganj, Dinhata, Mathabhanga, Mekhliganj; ten Police Stations, twelve Blocks; each of which has Panchayat Samity and 128 Gram Panchayats.<sup>6</sup> The District has six towns including Cooch Behar having municipal status. The District is predominately agricultural. Important components of the economy of the district are as follows : 92 per cent population are engaged in agricultural avocation while 8 percent in non-agricultural ones. Aus, Aman and Jute are three major agricultural crops. Tobacco grows in abundance. 23 percent of the total cultivable land is irrigated while the remaining 77 percent is non-irrigated.<sup>7</sup> It is estimated that agricultural production will increase manifold if larger area of cultivable land can be brought under irrigation facilities.

The district of Cooch Behar is situated between 26.32'20" North Latitude and 25.57'40" Southern Longitude, 89,54'35" East and 88.47'40" Western Longitudes. It is the remotest eastern part of the state. It is bounded on the East by the district of Goalpara of Assam State. South-East, North-East by Bangladesh and Bhutan and on the West by the District of Jalpaiguri. The total area covered by the District of Cooch Behar is (3,38,173 Hecteres) and 3387.13 sq. km. In addition to five subdivisions, ten police stations and twelve blocks, the district has 1165 Mauzas and 1139 inhabited villages.<sup>8</sup>

The topography of the District is level plain, gently sloping toward the South-East. The land situation of the District is divided into three categories : high, medium, and low. The district has 10,500 hectares of flood-prone-area, maximum flood area i.e. 8,000 hectares, is in Tufanganj and 900 hectares in Dinhata-II. The

highland consists of 29,765 hectares, medium level consists of 1,85,775 hectares and low level 14,857, hectares. The district has no experience of drought.<sup>9</sup>

The rivers and rivulets traverse the district from North-West to South of Eastern Himalayas, rivers have generally strong current, and during rains in the catchment areas, some of them spill over the banks, causing flash flood but recede very quickly after the rain. All the rivers join the Padma in Bangladesh, either directly or uniting among themselves in the upper streams.<sup>10</sup> Alluvial deposition of different river systems is the main soil texture in the District. The soil types, mainly, are sandy loam to loam, and heavy soil found in small pockets only. The depth ranges from 0.15 metre to 1.00 metre, and is super imposed on a deep bed of sand of the total cultivable area, 2,30,740 hectares, about 50 percent of the total area are sandy loam to loam, in some areas, the percentage varies from 50 percent to 70 percent.<sup>11</sup>

The soil texture of the District varies from Block to Block. The sandy texture of the District is about 51,148 hectares, to sandy loam, 1,48,444 hectares, to loam 34,511 hectares, to clay loam 11,537 hectares. In Tufanganj, coverage of sandy to sandy loam is about 32,496 hectares and loam to clay loam totalling 8,124 hectares. In Dinahata, Sandy to sandy loam coverage is 33,688 hectares, and loam to clay loam coverage is 8,428 hectares.<sup>12</sup> The soil classification of the District, referring to the available areas for cultivation, with Block wise break-up may be presented.

Sl. No.	Name of Block	Area available for cultivation	Predominant types	% of total area	Other types	% of total area
1.	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Cooch Behar - I	23,680	Sandy Loam	50%	Clay Loam, Sandy Loam	50%
2.	Cooch Behar - II	18,780	Sandy Loam	60%	Loam Sandy	40%
3.	Tufanganj	40,620	Laom	50%	Sandy Loam, Clay	50%
4.	Sub-Division Total	83,080	—	—	—	—
5.	Dinhata - I	23,490	Sandy Loam	70%	Loam	80%
6.	dinahata - II	18,620	Loam	60%	Sandy Loam	40%
7.	Sital	8,190	Sandy Loam	70%	Loam	30%
8.	Sub-Division Total	50,300	—	—	—	—
9.	Mathabhanga - I	22,960	Sandy Loam	55%	Sandy Loam	45%
10.	Mathabhanga - II	18,250	Loam	55%	Sandy Loam	45%

11. Sitalkuchi	22,570	Sandy Loam	58%	Loam	42%
12. Sub-Division Total	63,780	—	—	—	—
13. Mekhliganj	23,310	Sandy Loam	60%	Loam	40%
14. Haldibari	10,270	Loam	60%	Sandy Loam	40%
15. Sub-Division Total	33,580	—	60%	—	—

**Source :** Scheduled Castes in Mainstream. Action Evaluation Special Component Plan : Koch Behar, West Bengal. Presented by CADARS (Centre for Area Development and Action Research Study). New Delhi 1990.

The district experiences rainfall from February, and continues upto October. Early rainfall helps cultivation of Jute and Aus Paddy. The rainfall varies Eastern to Western Parts of the District having highest rainfall in the Eastern Part and decreases toward West-ward. The density of rainfall is maximum from May to August, but in some years September experiences heavy down pour. During 1991-92, September had normal average 502 mm rainfall but in 1994 it was 1131.6 mm the flood year. The intensity of rainfall is much higher in Tufanganj than that of other Sub-divisions. The ten years average rainfall in Tufanganj in July 836.8 mm, in 1993, Tufanganj had experienced 1065.4 mm.<sup>13</sup> Heavy rainfall, maximum alluvium soil texture and number of crisscross rivers systems in the District. support moisture retention capability of the soil. The peculiar system of rivers have also maintained continuous high water table. Land at the higher situation, has low moisture retainability. Fifteen per cent of the cultivable land falls under higher land situation, and five to seven per cent in low land rest in the middle land situation.<sup>14</sup>

The District of Cooch Behar, has flexible temperature as well as average humidity percentage differentiations, rain sets in February, but humidity percentage records in January 71.5, corresponding to 10.1 centigrade temperature, percentage of relative humidity falls with higher temperature centigrade 12.3 from February to maximum relative humidity percentage 87.5, 86.0, 81.0 and 86.0 in the months of June, July, August, September, while temperature varies highest in August 25.9 and in June 24.3 and July 25.4 centigrades, respectively.<sup>15</sup>

The land utilisation, have significant variations in the District having land under vegetation, barren uncultivable land, culturable waste, fallow and other than current, under non-agricultural use, forests and and area under plantations, and pastures leaves out net area for cultivation.

In the District, available net area for cultivation is 68.87 per cent from a geographical area of about 3,34,513 hectares, a very insignificant coverage under forest, about 1.57 per cent only, having 20.67 per cent under non-agricultural use, an insignificant 0.05 per cent of pasture land, and barren uncultivable 4.27 per cent, cultivable wastes being 0.99 per cent other than current fallow, 0.47 per cent, but area under plantation and miscellaneous terracing 3.09 per cent.<sup>16</sup>

The trend of land use pattern reveals increasing non-agricultural use, with increasing barren culturable waste and other than current fallow area on increase, with the denudation of forest and pasture land.

Tufanganj and Dinjata have no pasture land and the percentage of land under non-agricultural use are 11.86 per cent and 15.73 per cent respectively. Forest in Dinjata has only 0.37 per cent, coverage, Tufanganj, a healthier coverage of 41 per cent, barren and unculturable land, Tufanganj and Dinjata have no coverage. A coverage of 51.4 per cent other than current fallow in Dinjata, but culturable waste covers about 22.11 per cent, in Tufanganj the area is almost nil. Area under plantation and miscellaneous terracing, Tufanganj and Dinjata varies 60 per cent and 10.92 per cent respectively, whereas the net area available for cultivation in Tufanganj is 17.32 per cent Dinjata 18.4 per cent.<sup>17</sup>

Varied land utilisation substantiates the cultivation pattern vis-a-vis traditional cropping pattern of the district. Changing cropping patterns extending science and technology knowledge provides a contemporary orientation of developed agricultural production process. Consequently, land use pattern relating to the soil texture, climate, rainfall, moisture retainability of soil, have successfully generated hopes in multiple cropping in irrigated as well as non-irrigated areas.

The District Cooch Behar is predominantly agricultural. The Principal Crops grown in the district include Paddy, Wheat, Jute, Potato, Tobacco. The net area cropped has been 2,30,391 Hectares out of 4,59,184 hectares gross cropped area. The gross area sown more than once comprises of 2,28,793 hectares. The total quantum of area unsuitable for cultivation is 14, 277 hectares. There have been about 155 Primary market centers and 4 regulated market. Paddy is major crop

Aus and Aman Paddy are the traditional varieties. High yielding Boro Paddy is summer crop. Generally, in South Bengal Districts, Jute and Aus Paddy cropping start in middle of March, but since Cooch Behar experiences early rainfall in February, these croppings start in February. The harvesting of Jute and Aus Paddy falls by the end of May and early June facilitating increase in land area of Kharif Aman cultivation.

Sufficient soil moisture helps in raising of Rabi crops from April to December, Pulses, Rape and Mustard, Gram, Potato, Sugar Cane are the main crops during this season. Tobacco is one of the major commercial crops; Wheat cultivation is also gaining popularity. In 1990-91 12.6 thousand hectares of land were cultivated, with production of 20.1 thousand metric tones. In 1991-92, the area of cultivation had gone down to 8,000 hectares, with production of 14,000 M.T. In 1993-94, the coverage was 40,000 M.T. Aman paddy cultivation, area wise, as well as, production wise is progressing steadily. In 1990-91, 185.7, in 1991-92, 193.7 thousand hectares, with corresponding production 208.2 and 217.9 thousand M.T. respectively. In 1993-94, it was 2,15,000 MT. The Aus Paddy area coverage and production is next to Aman Paddy. In 1990-91, the production was 100.7 MT and 1991-92, 62.2 thousand MT, 86 and 69.2 thousand hectares were covered respectively during these years.<sup>18</sup>

In Tufanganj, and in Dinhata, the area coverage under Aus Paddy cultivation, and the production, shows low yield per hectare, the average production per hectare is 0.67 and 0.65 thousand MT respectively, whereas yield per hectare of Aman Paddy in the two Sub-Divisions is 1.18 and 1.19 thousand MT respectively. Capital intensive HYV Paddy cultivation has not picked up. The per centage of HYV cultivation, in case of Aman, is slightly more as against the local variety. Boro rice and wheat depends largely on measured irrigation and fertilizer, a capital intensive cultivation. In 1990-91 and 1991-92 both in terms of area under cultivation and Production of Boro Paddy, was insignificant. Only in 1993-94, it is observed, the total coverage was 2.21 thousand hectares, with a production of 4.42 thousand MT. In Tufanganj and in Dinhata its cultivation has not picked up. Wheat cultivation has marked progress in terms of area under cultivation and production, in both these Sub-Divisions. Mauza and other cereals cultivation is becoming popular. The area under cultivation of maize in 1993-94 was 0.5 thousand hectares, with an

estimated production of 0.6 thousand MT. Other cereals, having large varieties, covers 5.6 thousand hectares, with production of 5 thousand MT. In Tufanganj, 1.08 thousand hectares, and in Dinhatra 0.79 thousand hectares, produced maize and other cereal 1,000 MT and 0.76 thousand MT respectively. Rape and Mustard Oil are cooking Oils. From 1990-91 to 1993-94, area cultivated for Rape and Mustard Oil and production are not sufficient to meet the cooking oil demand of the District. In 1990-91, 7.8 thousand hectares was under cultivation, with production of 2.2 thousand MT. In 1991-92, 609 thousands hectares were covered with 2.8 thousand MT production in 1993-94, 15 thousand hectares with a production of 6 thousands MT (estimated). Tufanganj and Dinhatra, with the cultivation of 4.10 and 2.8 thousand hectares, estimated production 1.64 and 1.12 thousand MT respectively. Seamum, though have an estimated coverage of 10 thousand hectares, with production 0.4 thousand MT, it is not significantly cultivated in Tufanganj and Dinhatra. Linseed also cultivated in the District but its production and areas of cultivation is not much. Jute cultivation varies from about 75 thousand hectares to 54 thousands hectares, year to year, from 1990-91 onwards, varying production 542 to 338 thousands MT. Potato cultivation coverage varies from 1.5 to 2 thousand hectares, varying production 8 to 12 thousands MT. Tobacco mainly quality cigar wrapper and filter varies production from 15 thousand MT to 10 thousand MT varying cultivation in 14 to 10 thousand hectares. Rangpur, Bagura, Rajshahi, Pabna (presently in Bangladesh) mainly Rangpur tobacco famous for wrapper cigar tobacco which had international acclamation of fine cigar wrapper and filter filler. Independence and partition deprived the district of Coochbehar of these fine tobacco had demand of small scale cigar industries and international demand, as well.<sup>19</sup>

Indian Council of Agricultural Research did survey on reasearch potential spacificyng standard wrapper and filler tobacco cultivation in the adjoining Districts, Cooch Bihar having parallel soil textures fertility status and agroclimatic variables had intiatiated Research Centre from 1952, for similar cigar tobaccos filler and filter cultivation in Jati and Motihari varieties. The success of the Research and Development, and extension of cultivation produced quality wrapper Jati tobacco and Motihari tobacco fillers. Demonstration were conducted on about 3,000 hectares, for cultivating cigar wrapper tobacco, cigar wrapper and filler tobacco's cultivation demonstrated for encouraging the farmers on the lands.<sup>20</sup>

A Group of 20 farmers were trained initially in contemporary management of the farm inputs and improved methods of cultivation curing and etc.; gradually the number increased to 50 farmers by the end of 1992-93. Wrapper tobacco cultivation was limited till 1975 mainly because of no taker but after 1975 companies in Bombay, Nasik and Hyderabad were large scale purchasers of wrapper tobaccos. Cigar machine produced and hand made varieties have market choice variations. Personal touch of wrapping have commendable market price, others differ with fluctuation in price ranges. The Companies purchasing wrapper and filter tobaccos encouraged switching over to hand made caused sharp fall of sales reflected in the cultivation. A mechanised unit started producing cigars under the West Bengal Agro Industries Corporation fails to continue for months from inauguration and ultimately, has been closed.

A considerable progress in the cultivation of winter vegetables specially cauliflower and cabbage has been made in recent years. In Tufanganj and Dinhat, farmers have been successful in harvesting of two to three winter vegetables, Dooars areas of Jalpaiguri District Meghalaya and Assam, tea gardens are main markets. Coconut, arecanut and betel leaf, not only cultivated but local demand is so high that improved varieties cultivation have become popular. Arecanut betel leaf consumption is social custom of the Rajbanshis, the majority of the population. Cooch Behar known as "bamboo country", river banks, banks of the swamp lakes, have wild bamboo groves. Quality bamboo cultivation are mainly on high lands, banks of private ponds, and on the homestead backyard. Bamboo mainly helps in building of rural houses; furniture, and domestic containers as well as packaging containers. Cane furniture and artefact is speciality of the District. Highland and in many lowland areas, the cultivation of cane is traditional. Cane grown, fetch market, local as well as North Eastern States. Tripura Meghalaya, Assam, are also famous for cane and bamboo furniture and artefacts, have supply from Cooch Behar. Apart from favourable climate, successful cultivation depend on irrigation systems. In multiple cropping, timely irrigation helps plant management for good harvest, Efficiency of irrigation system largely depends on sources. Perennial irrigation sources help mixed cropping. In case on alternative cropping and in case of natural calamities, mixed cropping and alteranative cropping can help to support production losses. Development of irrigation system, and effective management of irrigational

operation in multiple cropping, creates more person-days requirement in agricultural operations. Multi cropping, creates more person-days requirement in agricultural operation. Multi cropping, mixed cropping and alternate cropping, solve unemployment.

Cooch Behar is rich in water resource. Irrigation potential is immense. In 1990-91, 82 deep tubewells, 69 river lift pumps, 8,200 shallow tubewells, 13,224 pump-sets were in operation in the irrigation system. Surface reservoirs, i.e. 890 tanks and 18,720 wells also used for irrigation. Other sources, numbering 10,680 were tapped for irrigation. All these minor irrigation systems irrigated about 37,620 hectares. In 1991-92, 1,400 tanks, 12,500 wells, 15 deep tubewells, 53 river lift pumps, 90 shallow tubewells were in operation in addition to 6,100 other sources of irrigation to irrigate 36,100 hectares.<sup>21</sup> Most of the irrigation installations in the District are private owned. State owned installations mainly centred around river lift irrigation and deep tubewells. There are only 15 state owned deep tubewells and 22 MT deep tubewells, river lift irrigation are only 73, and river lift minor irrigation cluster are only 2. In Tufangunj deep tubewell medium irrigation cluster, and state owned river lift irrigation are 4 and 10 respectively, where-as in private operation, 1,045 installations are operating. In Cooch-Behar I Block there are 11 deep tubewells, and eight deep tubewell medium irrigation clusters, two river lift irrigation clusters and 20 river lift irrigation systems, operation by the government. In private operation, 2,263 irrigation installations are operating under private ownership.

The number of systems installed created a potential to irrigate 33,065 hectares. In 1992-93, 42,830 hectares and in 1993-94, 35,900 hectares gross area irrigated by the irrigation systems but net area irrigated 34,800 hectares. The spill over of increase in irrigated hectares due to more capacity utilisation than installed potential in the river lift irrigation, shallow tubewells, both private and state owned. Irrigation utilisation fluctuates in deep tube wells. MIC, Dug wells, tanks SI schemes, and other sources, with the potential created, vis-a-vis gross area irrigated and net area irrigated.<sup>22</sup>

In the District, the normal area of cultivation under different crops, and so far, the irrigation potential created, has little support in extending irrigation. The normal

area under Boro Paddy is 0.9 thousand hectares, but irrigation facilities in 1992-93 and 1993-94 shows more area irrigated, means covered by Boro cultivation. In Tobacco cultivation cent percent cropped as against the normal cultivation area 9.1 thousand Hactares, Aus Paddy has very less irrigation facilities only 4% in 1992-94, of the total cropped area. The normal area under cultivation of wheat 30.9 thousand Hectares but 40% of the cropped area was irrigated in 1992-93 and 1993-94. Potato crop area had irrigation at about 95% in 1992-93, and 69% irrigation 1993-94. Winter vegetables, commercial cultivation has been a new dimension in agricultural economy having normal area of cultivation 8,000 hactares, and due to bad irrigation facilities in 1992-93 reduced to 3,000 hactares and 1993-94, 6000 hactares.<sup>23</sup>

During the Eighth Five Year Plan a good many programmes initiated to improve the agricultural economy of the District, extending small and medium irrigation facilities, demonstrating improved varieties of Paddy, Wheat, Oilseed, Potato, an Tobacco, divisible as well as special Central Assistance from plan utilised in extending agricultural infrastructural support to the scheduled castes and other weaker section. Improved seeds, mini kits, fertilizer mini kits, and scientific cultivation management in demonstration farm, have rendered faith in improved methods of cultivation.

Fish farming, an important occupation in Cooch Behar. Little over 6000 hectares water are available for pisciculture in the District. The major water area has become derelict in absence of proper re-exacavation and maintenance. The District is full of tanks and Ponds, most of them are vested. In villages ponds and tanks are mainly for drinking water. Also are in use for stock cum capture culture cum capture fisheries. A new variety, silver Fish is cultivated to keep water clean. natural swamps created either by changing river courses, or on dead river courses. The elephant grasses, a good habitat of natural fisheries, is a source of landless agricultural labourers subsidiary income. Irrigation tanks in the midst of paddy field, a source of winter fisheries, during raining season the flood prone and low areas are submerged by flash-flood which accrues numerous fish seed. Irrigation tank fisheries have been a subsidiary occupation to the scheduled caste landless agricultural laborers. Changing river courses forming Ox-bow lakes, during flash

flood river water submerged the two banks, and gingerlings flushed into these lakes, a continuous recycling process of natural fisheries, also provides subsidiary income to the fishermen. The majority of the fishermen are scheduled castes, i.e., Bagdi, Bauri, Malo, Malo-Kaibarta, Jhalo Malo, Rajbanshis, Polias and Namasudras.

Fishermen work on low wages in term of hours input and hazardous working conditions, apart from few days, labour to net out unwanted fishes in the off season. The harvesting seasons duration for a very limited period. Comparing to yearly preparation, maintenance, and upkeeping of nets and other accessories, for fishing operations proportion of wage is very low. In ponds and lakes, though the fishing operation in almost all the seasons, with limited operation in rainy season over exploitation and no scientific management of these water streams, day by day limiting the catches. Fisherman net income from this system is decreasing.

A large number of fishermen belong to the category of small, marginal and sub-marginal farmers, having very small water area in the home-stayed backyard, either owned individually or owned by inheritance with many shareholders. They are not in a position to organic scientific fish farming due to lack of fund. Fisherman cooperatives can actively initiate in developing the water area for fish cultivation mainly natural water areas. There are 64 registered cooperatives which 6545 share holders in the District, as recorded in 1991-92 but active and viable societies functioning, are only 47.<sup>24</sup>

Number of Programme initiated under plans to re-excavated water areas and 570 hectares of water area targeted to be developed within span of a year. Apart from Plan Development Fish Farmers Development Agency (FFDA) has been initiated with financial support of the World Bank for overall sustainable development. Under plans, number of schemes are initiated to popularise scientific farming. The schemes are : encouraging cooperatives. supporting with share capital, Demonstration Centres on composite Fish culture, improved farming in stock-cum-capture and culture-cum-capture techniques, construction breeding bunds distribution of seeds at subsidized rates, and mini kits, Institutional Fund arrangements, Womens training and continuous monitoring. Encouragements are also provided other than cooperatives to individual poor fish farmer under conditions

to develop their water area in a scientific manner for increased fish production under planned schemes as well as through FFDA schemes.

Animal Husbandry is a subsidiary income of the rural poor. House goaterly, dairy, backeard poultry and duckary mainly reared by women and children. Local variety of milch cow and goats, milk yield per hactor, is very low, even the source of milk supply in the villages. Seasonally goats and poultry gives subsidiary income through sales proceed in the local 'haats'. Small numbers of duckary and APoultry eggs also earn some money. The main hurdle of successful diary and Poultry is lack of proper feed. The pasture land which was mandatory in the Zamindari system, now almost nonexistant after the systems abolition. Most of the pasture land are under plough. Vested land distribution have little option to develop new pasture lands for successful diary in the villages. A small set up has been there in the district since 1952, to maintain mainly Public Relations distributing bulls of better progene in some pockets, for upgrading the local stock. The state government launched intensive Cattle Development Project from 1976 - 77. Practically, Animal Husbandry activities accelerated from the project.

The achievement of Animal Husbandry Schemes implementation, i.e., normal plan schemes and special component plant schemes from 1990 - 91 to 1994 - 95 was not worthy. The performance and achievement of intensive Cattle Development Project - IV under plan scheme, in 1980 - 81, - number of artificial inseminations were 9,652 and out of that crossbreed calves form 2301. Quality of fodder seeds and cuttings distributed 3,765 Kg. only. Fodder Minikits 1557 Kg. were distributed and 554 Kathas plot were subsidised only one cattle show was organised. In 1991 - 92, 12,517 artificial inseminations were done, and 2,578 cross breed calves born. Quality fodder seeds and cuttings of 5,166 Kg. were distributed. Minikits of 5,651 Kg. were distributed with varieties of su-babul seed. fodder seeds, urea, etc. fodder development plots of 574 katha were subsidised and only one cattle show was organised, in 1994 - 95. Out of 8,579 artificial inseminations, 2,190 cross breed calves born. Quality fodder seeds and cuttings of 1,000 Kgs. and 563 Kgs. of quality seeds of fodder and fertilizer were distributed. The percentage of corss breed cow born out of total artificial inseminations were on lower side in all the main centres and subcentres in the District. The Cooch Behar Main Centres with 10 sub-centre

has artificial insemination of 3,127 and 29.03 per cent were successful. Tufanganj Main Centre with nine sub-centres had 1,880 artificial insemination with 20.29 per cent success. Mathbhanga Main Centre with eight sub-centres had 119 A.I. with 18.85 success. Dinhata Main Centre with ten sub-centres had 1,404 artificial insemination with 21.72 per cent success.<sup>25</sup>

Under the Special Component Plan, 119 schemes were developed covering House Dairy 11, goatry 23, Farmers Training 49, Backyard Poultry 30, and Deep Litter 10 and the schemes implemented House dairy 8 goatery 23 Backyard Poultry 30, farmers Training 41 and Deep Litter only two.<sup>26</sup> Special Central Assistance implementation of Animal Husbandry and Fodder Development Schemes under special component plan had ten number of house dairy, backyard poultry twenty, farmers training centre 30, subsidised fodder development plot fifteen hundred kathas. The district has the facilities of two central semen collection station, six Artificial Insemination centres, and Fifty Artificial Insemination sub-centres out of 12 Blocks, eleven Blocks are covered by the Intensive Cattle Development Project, about 75,000 breed able cattle population through the artificial insemination Centres and Sub-centres. Fodder development is also going through the supply of fodder Seed Mine kits and cuttings and scientific demonstration of fodder farming on the cultivators' land. Group discussion, calf-ralley cum-cattle shows, are conducted to popularise scientific dairy and cattle maintenance in the villages. At present, the District has been brought under operation white. A project has been under implementation.

Rivers Teesta, Jaldhaka enter the District from Mekhliganj and Mathabhanga - II Blocks, the Jaldhaka flows through the Eastern part of Sitalkunchi Block, Sitai Block, and flowing through the southern part of Dinhata - I Block enters Bangladesh. Apart from these two major rivers, Dharala, Kaljani, Gadhahar, Raidhak - I and II river banks and on both sides, large low lying areas, once were covered with thick forest. The main species were high quality Himalaya foothills Sal, Khoir Teak, Mohaginy Sheshu, rain trees, Bamboos, and etc. Large number of wild mangoes, jack-fruits, bair and custard apple trees had been in these forests.

There is no Reserve forest in the District, Protected Forest areas and 4088.93 hectares. Unlasses state Forest 1 and 378-14 hectares and vested waste land covers

1162-14 hectares. Khas forest, covers only 16.50 hectares, the total forest area thus 5645.71 hectares only Protected and unclasses State Forest coverage are available on the banks of rivers flowing through Mathabhanga, Dinhata - 1 and Tufanganj Blocks. This forest coverage produce 0.86 and 1.92 thousand centemetres timber and fuel wood respectively. Khas Forest land coverage available in Cooch Behar Sadar, Dinhata - 1 and Mathabhanga Blocks. Area covered by social forestry in the district has been 56,700 hectares.<sup>27</sup>

Considerable progress has been made, creating infrastructural facilities, for upgrading educational standard for both male and female during the last Five Years Plan. In total, 4078 Educational Institutions are in the District during 1996 - 97, while the total number was 3265 during 1992 - 93. There are 1805 primary schools, with 274236 students. 88 Middle schools, with 21082 students, 114 secondary schools with 62140 students, 34 Higher Secondary, schools, with 34819 students 9 General Degree College, with 15049 students, 33 Technical Schools and Colleges with 2174 students. The adult literacy and mass literacy programmes have made sufficient awakening among rural masses, having centres, with 171060 participants Pilot Project to extend the scope of adult literacy with 6623 of trained teachers, have covered 10177 adults. The Primary schools employed 6453 teachers while middle schools hold 710, secondary schools hold 2114, H.S. schools employ 1146, colleges hold 2058 and others employees 905. The availability of teachers of one per 50 students, in Middle School, per thirty students, in Secondary School, per thrity students, in Higher Secondary Schools per twenty eight students, in General Degree Colleges, per thirty two students, in technical schools and colleges, per thirteen students. In the adult literacy Centres availability of teachers is one teacher for twenty five students. Public library and free Reading Rooms are mostly town-oriented with 68 public libraries and 40 free reading rooms are in service throughout the district.<sup>28</sup>

According to the Planning Commission of India, Cooch Behar is a no industry district. The district is predominantly agricultural, having very few industries, only few small scale industrial units are registered, apart from some traditional industries. Artistic mat making, i.e., Pati Shilpa khatia — a small scale industry based on Jute, carpentry, oil ghani, pottery basket making are known traditional Industries.

Handloom is popular in Dinhata - 1 Block. In 1991, there were 17 registered factories, with 820 workers. In 1991 - 92, there were 29611 small scale industries units employing 15,264 Workers for establishing small scale industry, village industry, cottage industry, the fund flow assistance provided through FRDP, special component plan etc. At present the district is having 3653 registered S.S.I. Units. Sericulture, an agro-based labour intensive cottage industry, though there is no traditional sericulture industrial base, the agro-climatic conditions have promising future for this industry. This programme is dovetailed with the on going sericultural programme of the sericulture Department, and Extension Officers working for popularising this industry.

The district has not properly covered with power grids to industry, agriculture and domestic consumptions. The average electricity scale in the district is about 6140 thousand K. Wtt. Hrs. So far, out of 12 Blocks including sadar, seven towns are electrified and 1053 villages having the facilities of electricity connections. In irrigation, power use has a declining tendency, in the years 1990 - 91 to 1991 - 92, 67,000 K. Wat. Hrs., to 38,000 K. Wtt. Hrs. Industrial power use also has trend from 1,536 t.K. Wtt. Hrs to 1037 T.K. Wtt. Hrs. Commercial light and power use has an increasing trend from 1351 T.K. Wtt. Hrs. Urbanization is on increase, consumption for Public Water works and sewerage pumping has increased from 35 T.K. Wtt. Hrs. to 53 T.K. wtt. Hrs. The district does not supply electricity or Railway Traction. Otherwise domestic Consumption is on increase from 1972 T.K. Wtt. Hrs. to 2542 T.K. Wtt. Hrs.<sup>29</sup> In production process, power use is on declining phase. But emerging minor and medium irrigation systems' economic operation needs cheap power availability, not reflected in the consumption figures, denotes dependence on petro-oil power.

Village electrified are far from the demand for domestic power consumption, as well as commercial light and power consumption. The proposed jaldhaka Hydraulic power plant as well as Farakka super thermal power generations, once properly transmitted in the North Bengal Districts power grid systems. Cooch Behar shall be benefited with more electricity available for the extension of irrigation, public lighting, industrial, commercial and domestic as well as residential use. At present 166 K.V. power substation and 433 K.V. substations are in the

district. The Public Works Department maintains and expands the maximum arteries of the Road systems. About 1032.97 K.M. metalled roads and 770-62 K.M. un-metalled roads covering the total road length of 1803.59 K.M., have been under the supervision of Public Works Departments of the district. The local Bodies maintain 29.12. K.M.S. metalled, 17.77 Kms un-metalled, the Municipalities maintain 77.79 Kms metalled and un-metalled and left without maintenance. There is only 10 Telegraph offices and 373 post offices in the District, combined Post Offices are only 34. The number of Post Offices and the road system are not adequate to meet the growing population and their increasing use of the systems. The Railway communication is not matching with the population growth. Broad Gauge line only 53 km and Mt. Gauge line of 60.00 km passes through the District, connecting Siliguri and Gauhati, and Via Siliguri Calcutta and Delhi in two separate lines, Air service for the district has been presently suspended.<sup>30</sup>

Health care facilities are not matching both with the growing rural urban population. Only 110 Doctors look after six Hospitals, 40 Health Centres, 27 Clinics, 8 Dispensaries, attending 1018 beds. Per ten beds one Doctor is available to attend, 474 indoor patients are attended by a Doctor, and about 18,664 outdoor patients are looked after by a Doctor. This is a partial statistics, for a year 1992, recorded by CMOH, Cooch Behar, Family Welfare facilities are also not adequate, having 20 public and 6 Private Family Planning centres, in the district. Intensive Child Development Service, a package programme, drawing similar programme from other schemes has been functioning in four rural Blocks, Tufangang, Mathabhanga-II, Cooch Behar-II, Dinhata-I. the programme has package which includes supplementary nutrition, immunization, Nutrition Education and Health Education and Non Formal Education. The rural project covers one lakh population in 100 villages, the break up of the rural Project covers one lakh population in 100 villages, the break-up of services in the scheme roughly; children 0-5 years, immunization, health checkup, supplementary nutrition cent percent coverage : children 3-5 years referral non-formal. Pre school education : 50 per cent coverage. Nursing of expected mothers up to six months of lactation supplementary nutrition, 40 pre cent coverage, and health check-up immunization against tetanus, cent percent coverage. Women between 15-45 years have been brought under nutrition and health education scheme with a cent percent coverage.<sup>31</sup>

The financial Institutions branches operating in the District are not adequate to handle a good number of action implementation projects', fund clearance from single window has been absent. The State Bank of India at Khagrabari has to cover 18 Gram Panchayats spread over four Blocks in three Sub-divisions. Some of these Gram Panchayats are 20 miles away from the Branch. There are 53 Branches of nine Commercial Banks. The branches are Central Bank of India : 13; State Bank of India : eight ; Allahabad Bank : one ; United Commercial Bank : One; United Bank Bank of India ; Thirty two; Uttar Bangal Kshetriya Grammin Bank : 29; Choch Behar Cooperative Land Development Bank Ltd. : one Apart from this, 617 cooperative societies with total membership of 1689, having working capital of Rs. 1345,00,000/- operating in the district. In addition, there has been the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Financial Development Corporation with its Head-Quarters at Cooch-Behar Town.<sup>32</sup>

The occupation profile of the district tilts heavily to the agricultural based occupation. As per 1991 census, out of the total workers nearly 8% engaged in non-agricultural avocations. Thus 92% population of the district is engaged in agricultural avocation. Out of total main workers cultivators occupied 49.5%, agricultural labourers occupied nearly 20% and the workers engaged in household manufacturing processings occupied 2.14%. Other workers hold 22% of the total working population, marginal workers constitute only 8.5% and the number of nonworkers in the district, covers nearly 1473263 in number; 2,66,400 agricultural families are in the district, 70,3000 families are small farmers, and 1,38,500 families being marginal farmers.

The status of farmers in the district may be explained from the land-man relationship as under.<sup>33</sup>

<u>Types of Agriculturists</u>	<u>Number</u>
Bargadars	77269
Pattadars	110992
Land-less Persons	40971
Small Farmers	703000
Marginal farmers	138500

Following conclusions from the above table seem discernable : (a) In the

District, small and marginal farmers are significantly high; (b) This is followed by the number of Bangadars and Landless peasants; (c) Although land reform in the name of "operation Barga" is undeniably a success, it claims to the necessity of pursuing it with vigour so as to eliminate landless and marginal farmers from rural scene.

One of the efforts to improve the nature of rural economy has been "operation Barga" intended to registering the bargadar and bestowing legal right of the landless peasant on the plot of land he tills. In 1993-94 while total number of 81029 bargadars have registered in the district, 51020.44 acre Khas and vested land distributed among the land less peasants. Total 11108 homeless peasants have been given 689.85 acre of excess land from Jotdar for homstead purpose however, compared to struggling figure of home less peasants, the number of beneficiaries under the programme is not high.

Since the district of Cooch Behar is a no industry district, manufactured goods exported out of the district are almost nil. The district is predominately agricultural. Agricultural produces like Paddy, Jute, Tobacco, Wheat, Potato, Bamboos are exported out of the district. The district is less viable in terms of trade and commerce. The Sadar Head-quarters and the Sub-Divisional towns are the trade and commercial centres of secondary and tertiary goods.

In order to fetch the agriculturist, a good price for their produce and efforts for proper marketing are being made with the establishment of regulated market societies. Presently the district has 115 branches of commercial banks and the regional rural bank, Uttarbanga Khatriya Gramin Bank has 45 branches in the remote part of the district. Besides 17 branches of Cooperative Bank have been functioning in the district.

#### Profile of Select Panchayat Samities :

The study covers ten villages of two Panchayat Samities out of total 12 Panchayat Samities of the district of Cooch Behar. These two Panchayat Samities are Cooch Behar No-II and Mathabhanga No-I Panchayat Samity. Cooch Behar No-II Panchayat Samity is situated at distance of 16 km towards North of the District Head-quarters.

This Panchayat Samity has 13 Gram Panchayats comprising of 116 Mauzas. The total geographical area of this Panchayat Samity is 368.05 sq. km covering a population (as per 1991 Census) of 256851 of which 124719 and 2746 belong to scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes population respectively. This Panchayat Samity has an available area of 18789 hectares of land for cultivation. The total number of agricultural labourers so far registered in this Panchayat Samity is 20221. The number of Patta holder is 9594, however specific numbers of bargadar for the Panchayat Samity have not been available. The number of A.I. centres for the samity is 5 Irrigation facilities available in this Panchayat Samity are RLI : 10; DTW : 7; STW : 718; DRDA Free Bore : 94 <sup>34</sup> In addition to 5 branches of register rural banks there are 8 branches of commercial banks working in the Panchayat Samity. The Panchayat Samity is predominantly agricultural contributing nearly 14.5% of the total agricultural production of the district. The major crops grown in the Panchayat Samity are Paddy, Jute, Potato, pulse and oilseed. The villages under this Panchayat Samity have been brought under different development programmes.<sup>34</sup>

Cooch-Bihar-II- Panchayat Samity is also one of the 12 Blocks Headquarters of the District. The Block Development Officer is the ex-officio executive officer of the Panchayat Samity. The administrative wing of Panchayat Samity consists of the Block Development Officer, Extension Officers, Two Joint Block Development Officers, two sub-assistant engineers, twelve village level workers and multipurpose trained nurses and such other staff.

The Panchayat Samity is comprised of 26 elected members of which the political executive is the elected Sabhapati of the Panchayat Samity. The Sabhapati is assisted by the chairmen (Karmadhakyas) of Standing committees. By virtue of the West Bengal Panchayat Act (as amended up to 1997) the Sabhapati of the Panchayat Samity has been the real Political head and the Block Development Officer is a subordinate Officer to the Sabhapati and performs duties of Executive Officer of the Panchayat Samity.

A Profile of five Selected village Panchayats under Cooch Bihar No-II Panchayat Samity in table form may be presented which shows the socioeconomic

characteristics of five selected village Panchayats namely Khagraboni, Madhupurdham, Banerwar, Khalta, Thanerwar Hat.

### Socio-economic Profile of Selected 5 Village Panchayats

Panchayat Samity	Cooch Bihar - II				
	1	2	3	4	5
Village Panchayats	Khagrabani	Madhupur	Banerwar	Ambari	Gopalpur
Details					
Area (in hectares)	1414.66	4436.40	3343.55	2690.22	3506.39
Households	4531.00	4185.00	4137.00	2951.00	3966.00
Population	23,110.00	20,818.00	15,424.00	14,876.00	19,522.00
Male	12,200.00	11,069.00	8,013.00	7666.00	10316.00
Female	10,910.00	9749.00	7411.00	7009.00	9206.00
SC. Population	7857.00	10072.00	7407.00	9669.00	16984.00
Male	4500.00	5934.00	3902.00	4877.00	8102.00
Female	3357.00	4138.00	3505.00	4792.00	8882.00
ST. Population					
Male					
Female					
Member of literates	5264.00	5741.00	4926.00	3480.00	6114.00
Males	3189.00	4580.00	2876.00	2400.00	4989.00
Females	2075.00	1161.00	2050.00	1080.00	1125.00
Main Works (Agri-labourer)	2124.00	1609.00	1123.00	1071.00	2321.00
Male	1956.00	1493.00	1020.00	982.00	2117.00
Female	168.00	116.00	103.00	89.00	204.00
Cultivators	3836.00	2410.00	2681.00	2584.00	2411.00
Male	3781.00	2301.00	2594.00	2400.00	2310.00
Female	55.00	109.00	87.00	184.00	110.00
Agricultural Industries	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	NIL
Other workers/ Marginal workers					
Non Workers					
Male					
Female					
Primary School	10	9	16	9	10
Middle School/High School	1 H.S.	1 H.S.2	H.S.+1	M.S.2	M.S. + 1 H.S.1 H.S.
Health Center	Nil	Nil	S.H.C.	NIL	NIL
Branch Post Office	1	1	1	1	1
Commercial Bank	S.B.I.	Nil	Nil	NIL	NIL
Co-Operative/Gram Bank	NIL	U.B.K.G.B.	U.B.K.G.B.	NIL	NIL
Veterinary Centre	1	Nil	1	NIL	1
Distance from Railway station	4km.	5km.	½K.M.	2km.	3km.
Distance from Panchayat Samity	5	2km.	4K.M.	5km.	3km.
Number of Villages	6	19	8	7	10

Source : Cooch Behar II Panchayat Samity Office. Data collected during field survey (1997-98).

### **Mathabhanga No.I Panchayat Samity :**

Mathabhanga No.I Panchayat Samity is situated 62 km off the district Headquarters of Cooch Behar. This Panchayat Samity is co-terminal with the Mathabhanga Block-I Head Quarters and is under the administrative Jurisdiction of Mathabhanga Sub-divisions. The Panchayat Samity is composed of twenty elected members who elect Chairman and members of different Standing Committees of the Panchayat Samities. The administrative staff of the Panchayat Samity consists of Block Development Officer one Joint Block Development Officer Seventeen Extension Officers, two Sub-assistant Engineers, Nineteen Village Level Workers, twenty-two multipurpose nurses and others office staff - eighteen, Ten Job Assistants and Sixteen Karmadakashas.

The Panchayat Samity consists of ten village Panchayats covering nearly twelve thousand households in hundred twenty five villages under village Panchayats. The total geographical area of the Panchayat Samity is 323.14sq.km and is having a population (as per 1991 census) of 162527 out of which 116463 belong to scheduled caste community. Only 82 person belong to scheduled tribe category live in this Panchayat Samity. The Samity has an area of 23509 hectare available for cultivation. The number of agricultural labourers is 13472 and the number of Patta holder 13709. Irrigation facilities available in this Panchayat Samity are : - RLI = 7, DDW = 2, STW = 90, DRADA free bound = 72.<sup>35</sup> There are nine commercial banks working in the Panchayat samity area out of which four belong to Uttarbanga Kshetriya Gramin Bank, One belongs to West Bengal State Cooperative Banks, two Central Banks, one Bank of Boroda and one State Bank of India branch are situated.

The Percentage of workers in the Panchayat Samity is nearly 42.30 including marginal worker. The number of cultivators under this Panchayat Samity are 24453 out of which 52% male and 48% female.<sup>36</sup> The major crops grown in the Panchayat Samity are Paddy, Tobacco, Wheat and Jute, Different development schemes for the development of Panchayats have been initiated under this Panchayat Samity. The Panchayat Samity from its demographic perspective is unique because of the fact that the total number of scheduled caste population has out numbered the general population in a way. Socio-economic characteristics of five selected village

Panchayats under Mathabhanga I Panchayat Samity namely, Hazrahat, Pachagarh, Sikarpur, Nayarhat, Gopalpur are shown in the following table :

### Socio-economic Profile of Selected five Village Panchayats

Panchayat Samity	Mathabhanga - I				
	1 Hazrahat	2 Pachagarh	3 Sikarpur	4 Kedererhat	5 Gopalpur
Details					
Area (in hectares)					
Households	2720.00	3727.00	3577.00	3414.00	4002.00
Population	14049.00	18350.00	17372.00	16900.00	19767.00
Male	7403.00	2415.00	8816.00	8719.00	10191.00
Female	6646.00	8935.00	8556.00	8181.00	9576.00
Se. Population	9060.00	4859.00	12476.00	15120.00	18267.00
Male	4733.00	4356.00	6830.00	7767.00	9410.00
Female	4327.00	4103.00	5646.00	7353.00	8857.00
ST. Population					
Male					
Female					
Member of literates	3202.00	5794.00	5306.00	3867.00	6090.00
Males	2343.00	3859.00	3785.00	2875.00	4395.00
Females	859.00	1935.00	1521.00	992.00	1695.00
Main Works (Agri-labourer)	879.00	1170.00	1574.00	1260.00	1759.00
Male	837.00	1059.00	1397.00	1222.00	1586.00
Female	42.00	111.00	177.00	138.00	173.00
Cultivators	3104.00	2241.00	3147.00	1574.00	1260.00
Male	3046.00	2228.00	3071.00	1397.00	1222.00
Female	0008.00	13.00	76.00	177.00	138.00
Agricultural Industries	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	NIL
Other workers / Marginal workers					
Non Workers					
Male					
Female					
Primary School	11	11	19	13	21
Middle School/High School	JH 1	Nil	1(Mad) 1(High)	1	1
Health Center	Nil	1 S.H.C.	Nil	Nil	Nil
Branch Post Office	1	1	1	1	1
Commercial Bank	Nil	—	—	Nil	Nil
Co-Operative/Gram Bank	Nil	1 U.B.K.G.B.	1 U.B.K.G.B.	Nil	Nil
Veterinary Centre	4	1	Nil	Nil	Nil
Distance from Railway station	30K.M.	19K.M.	25K.M.	51K.M.	51K.M.
Distance from Panchayat Samity	15K.M.	7K.M.	1K.M.	26K.M.	26K.M.
Number of Villages	8	8	12	13	18

Source : Mathabhanga - I Panchayat Samity Office. Data collected during field survey (1997-98).

The Panchayats under review of the two Panchayat Samitees are geographically pole apart from each other. Not only geographically but also from socio-economic view points the Panchayats under these Panchayat Samities differ from each other. The villages under five respective Gram Panchayats of these two Panchayat Samities represent both the development and under-development aspects of the rural society of the district in general. The Gram Panchayats under Mathabhanga Panchayat Samity - I represent a dominant figure of scheduled caste population. A comparative assessment of the scheduled caste population to the total population of each Gram Panchayat may substantiate this argument. Out of thirteen Gram Panchayats of Cooch Behar -II "Panchayat Samitee, five Gram Panchayats have been taken as points of reference. These five villages, more or less represent all the distinguishing socio-economic characteristic represented by Cooch Behar-II "Panchayat Samity. Simultaneously five "Gram-Panchayat out of total ten Gram Panchayats of Mathabhanga-I Panchayat Samity have been brought under study. These Panchayats represent all the distinguishing characteristics of Mathabhanga - I Panchayat Samity. The argument may be substantiated by the following tables.

Villages under Mathabhanga Block -I	Total No. of SC Population	Total Population	Percentage of SC Population to the total Population
Sikarpur	14884	17720	84
Panchagarh	9790	20830	47
Hazrahat	8728	15870	55
Gopalpur	12315	16870	73
Kedererhat	9152	10520	87
Villages under Cooch Behar-II Block			
Baneswar	7407	15424	48
Ambari	9669	14876	65
Madhupur	10072	17367	58
Gopalpur	16984	20522	87
Khagrabari	7857	23110	34

Source : Mathabhanga - I and Cooch Behar - II panchayat Samity Office.  
Field Survey 1997 - 1999.

The above table suggests that the Panchayats under study belonging to Mathabhanga Block - I are comparatively much more dominated by scheduled caste population. There has been only one Gram Panchayat which represents less than fifty per cent Scheduled Caste (Panchagarh) population to the total population. The reason behind the fact is that it is nearer to Mathabhanga Municipal area. The Table also suggests that the Panchayats under study of Cooch Behar - II Panchayat Samity, especially which are nearer to the Cooch Behar Municipal area (villages like Khagrabari and Baneswar) represent less number of Scheduled Caste Population. Thus, the presupposition is as one enters into the remote villages one can have the experience of having more Scheduled Caste Population. It has also been mentioned that in terms of population status the district is dominated by the Scheduled Caste, however, in comparison to the Urban area, the remote villages are predominantly populated by Scheduled Caste Population.

The educational status of the Scheduled Castes population of the Panchayats under study may be projected through the following tables.

Villages under Mathabhanga-I Block	Total No. of SC Population	S.C. Literates	S.C. Illiterates	Percentage of SC Literacy
Sikarpur	14884	4167	10717	28%
Panchagarh	9790	7342	2448	75%
Hazrahath	8728	3142	5586	36%
Gopalpur	12315	4926	7389	40%
Kederhat	9152	1921	7231	21%
Villages under Cooch Behar-II Block				
Baneswar	7407	4296	3111	58%
Ambari	9669	3480	6189	36%
Madhupur	10072	5741	4331	57%
Gopalpur	16984	6114	10870	33%
Khagrabari	7857	5264	2593	67%

\*Literates include education received either formal or through informal method.

Source : Mathabhanga - I and Cooch Behar - II Panchayat Samity Office.

The literacy rate of Scheduled Castes of the Panchayats under study varied from one another. It has been observed that the Panchayats nearer to town represents a good percentage Scheduled Caste literacy, while on the other Panchayats situated away from the town represent weak literacy percentage. Out of the ten Panchayats studied only four panchayats have crossed the Scheduled Castes literacy rate of the district. Where as six Panchayats remain far below the level of the Scheduled Castes literacy rate of the district. These suggests a weak educational status of the Panchayats under study in average.

The socio-economic profile of the Panchayats under study suggests that the Panchayats are essentially based on agriculture. This is in consonance with the prevalent nature of the economy of the district. however, during survey we found the names of some absentee industrial workers. These workers usually migrate them from their Panchayats and start working in industries situated in the big towns or cities of northern India. Barring these workers, inhabitants of the Panchayats are engaged in agriculture related production or remained as non-worker. Some villagers living in the out-skirt of the towns are taking rapidly the secondary sector of economy for earning livelihood. The technology so far applied for the development of agriculture are purely traditional, however attempts are going on to apply minimum technology for the increase of production. For example shallow, electric motor, H.P. Pumpset are now in the use. Investigation suggests that majority of the Scheduled Caste living in the Panchayats under study do not hold their own land. Barring few, most of them are bargardars or lease hold land owner or in most cases agricultural labourers. However few of them have occupied land on Patta basis. The agricultural produce is mostly traditional by nature. Paddy, Wheat, Tobacco, Jute have been the Principal crops. In some areas vegetables are grown. Most of the scheduled castes inhabitants in the Panchayats under study are economically backward. Experiencing with Financial stringencies have been their way of life. The Panchayats are not at all well connected by motorable roads. The number of metal roads has also been scarce. However Panchayats nearer to the town are connected with fiddler roads. Most of the Panchayat under study are not connected by the rail roads excepting Khagrabari and Madhupur.

In brief, agriculture has been the Primary source of livelihood of the majority of the population residing in the Gram panchayats under study. It has been observed

from our survey that nearly seventy percent of the total Scheduled Caste main workers in the Gram Panchayats have reported their main work as cultivation. On the basis of the economic activity, the Scheduled Caste population of the area under study can be classified into three categories. For example, main workers, marginal workers and non-workers.

The Panchayats under study have been brought under different development Schemes sponsored by the Central and State Governments and monitored by the Zilla Parishad or Panchayat Samity. The schemes are Indira Avas Yojana, Nehru Rajgar Yojana, IRDP, SCP, EAS, MSW etc. The entire district has been brought under District Primay Education Programme since 1996-97. The Panchayats under study have been under the literacy programme and post literacy programme. The village level center in each village has been created to materialise the DPEP Programme. Infrastructure created in the Panchayats under study may be projected in the following tables.

#### Infrastructure created by the Panchayats under Cooch Behar - II Panchayat Samity

	Baneswar	Ambari	Gopalpur	Khagrabari	Madhupur
1. Housing	2	7	NIL	4	2
2. Electricity	120	150	25	450	110
3. Water Supply	15	10	10	15	4
					(Tube Well)
4. Barriage	-	-	-	-	-
5. Schools	-	-	-	-	-
6. Indira Avas	6	16	4	17	7
7. Roads (Pucca) (in km.)	-	-	-	1	1
8. Roads (Kuccha) (in km)	12	7	10	3	3
9. Bridges (Culvert)	1	-	2	1	-
10. Primary School	2	7	1	1	1
11. PHC Primary Health Centre	-	-	-	-	-
12. Community Centre	-	-	-	-	-
13. Library	-	1	-	-	-
14. Any other (Gravel)	-	-	2	-	-
15. Market	1	1	-	1	-
16. Panchayat Bldgs.	1	1	2	1	1

Source : Field Survey (1997-1998)

## Infrastructure created by the Panchayats under Mathabhanga - I Panchayat Samity

	Sikarpur	Kedarhat	Hazrahat	Pachagorh	Gopalpur
1. Housing	5	5	4	4	2
2. Electricity	300	20	35	340	40
3. Water Supply	80	4	6	5	7
4. Barriage	-	-	-	-	-
5. Schools	4	2	1	2	1
6. Indira Avas	20	30	4	23	6
7. Roads (Pucca) (in km.)	1	½	-	-	½
8. Roads (Kuccha) (in km)	10	8	10	13	1
9. Bridges (Culvert)	-	-	1	2	-
10. Primary School	4	-	1	2	1
11. PHC Primary Health Centre	-	-	-	-	-
12. Community Centre	-	-	-	-	1
13. Library	-	-	-	-	1
14. Any other (Gravel)	x	4	-	-	1
15. Market	1	-	-	-	1
16. Panchayat Bldgs.	1	1	1	2	1

Source : Field Survey (1997-1998)

The Panchayats under survey have reported the amount and quantum of existing infrastructure which they created over the last five years. Most of the Gram Panchayats had been devoid of proper infrastructural facilities for availing of the minimum basic needs of life. Over the last two decades the abysmal scenario have started changing owing to the positive political will of the State Government as well as steady flow of fund for rural development flown both from Central and states exchequers. Presently, all the ten Gram Panchayats under study are having with Panchayat buildings made of concrete. It has been observed that four primary health centres have been working to cater to the services to the population of then Gram Panchayats under survey. Every Gram Panchayat under study is provided with two multipurpose health assistants and one 'dhatrima' (recruited locally). Nearly eighty Primary schools funded by the State Government and maintained by the Gram Panchayats have been funding in the Gram Panchayat under study. However this is highly inadequate in proportion to the population to be catered by the Primary schools. During the last ten years nearly twenty primary schools have been created by the Gram Panchayats to cater the needs of the rising population.

The Panchayats under study use to get grant at interval for materialising rural housing schemes. Thirty five rural housing schemes have so far been materialised in the last ten years in the Panchayats under study. The area under rural electrification through Panchayat has not been a happy picture. Nearly sixteen hundred house-holds have been brought under rural electrification in the Gram Panchayats under study. However the achievement level for all the Gram Panchayats has not been similar. Panchayat nearer to municipal towns are in a better position than that of the remote Panchayats in respect of rural electricity schemes. The villages under survey do not have drinking water facility maintained by the Public Health Engineering Department of the State Government. Moreover the Panchayats have been able to provide tubewells and wells for drinking water. The provision for the creation of water supply facility has not been uniform in the Panchayats under survey. The Panchayats have been provided with specific schemes of Indira Awas Yojana for the construction of housing for the homeless destitutes belonging to lower caste category. All the Panchayats under study have been able to create such housing under IAY, however performance varies from Panchayat to Panchayats. The Construction of metal road has been in a poor state for all the Panchayats under study, however, the Panchayats have been able to improve the non-metal road. The achievement performance to this direction has been healthy, however there has been variation among the Panchayats. The point which has been noteworthy here is that every Gram Panchayat under survey has constructed Panchayat buildings and two out of ten Panchayats have constructed more than one buildings. Besides the creation of the above infrastructures, Panchayats under survey are having with certain infrastructure already created and presently maintained by the Gram Panchayats; for example all the Panchayats are having with at least one and more rural library, market centre, community centre, primary schools, primary health centres, bridges and culverts, metal roads (certainly not more than two K.M.) within each Gram Panchayat area. Most of the Gram Panchayats have been provided with electricity, however some mouzas (small villages) of Kedarhat and Gopalpur Gram Panchayats under Mathabhanga - I Panchayat Samity and some Mouzas of Gopalpur, Madhupur Gram Panchayats of Cooch Behar - II Panchayat Samity have still been without electricity facilities.

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## CHAPTER - II

### PROFILE OF SCHEDULED CASTE :

Our Constitution remains silent in defining Scheduled Castes and Tribes, however, the Constitution has made adequate arrangement for providing safe-guards and protection of this category of population and prescribes for certain provisions for their socio-economic upliftment. To adumbrate, Scheduled castes-varieties of sub-castes, are castes tied with traditional caste based production relations, are at the low ladder of the caste hierarchy in the Hindu lineage. The Constitution of India categorically mentions the names of these sub-castes in specially drafted Schedule. The sub-castes having these features included in the Schedule of the Constitution are designated as scheduled castes. These sections of the people are not in a position to compete with the rest of the castes in the matter of social status, education and employment. The Government of India, ever since the inception of the Constitution, has taken it as a liability to give protection and concession both to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in a manner that their liability matched by the state's assistance and protection. These castes scheduled under Constitution, for centuries, held as depressed subjects. They were not given the right to live a honourable life both in pre-colonial and colonial India. They were separated from the main stream of the Indian social and political life.

The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes have been specified by the Presidential Orders issued under the provisions of Article 341 and 342 of the Constitution. Nearly thirty per cent of the country's population comprised the scheduled castes and the schedule tribes. In addition, the Constitution has also specified certain provisions for the protection of other backward classes. While the Constitution has prescribed certain protection measures and safeguards for these classes, the successive Five Year Plans have regarded their progress as major objective of the National Policy. India's concept of planned development has drawn comprehensive objective oriented welfare and development programmes for the scheduled castes. Years of planning have conceptualised the real problems of the production process and relation in the tradition-bound society.

Scheduled castes in India considerably play major role in the production

process in rural India, Agriculture, fishery, dairy, poultry, artisans, crafts, weaving and a good many of servicing sectors of the community, are substantially dependent on scheduled castes. The occupational relations of the scheduled castes made them backward-economically and socially, and segregated them culturally. The production relations of these people were based on feudal economic system. Transformation of the economic order from colonial period to the present marketing systems, oppressed them, since they remained under a system bonded in the caste - based traditional production process.<sup>1</sup> A Society with the hegemony of caste hierarchy has many socio-economic problems inherent in it. Material achievement of planned development, as a result, has hindered the percolation of intended benefits for the socio-economic development of the scheduled castes. With this short introduction we can have a brief picture of the demographic profile of the scheduled castes of India in general.

According to the 1991 Census, the population of scheduled castes stands at 104, 754, 623 which constitute 15.75 per cent of the country's total. Of the total scheduled caste population 84 per cent live in rural areas; only 16 per cent live in urban areas. The total population of the scheduled castes consists of 54,210,594 males and 50,544,029 females, the sex ratio being adversely 932 females per 100 males. The largest population of the scheduled castes to the total population in the state is found in Punjab, that is, 26.87 per cent followed by 24.62 per cent in Himachal Pradesh, 21.99 per cent in West Bengal; 21.16 percent in Uttar Pradesh, 19.07 per cent in Haryana, 18.35 per cent in Tamil Nadu, 17.03 per cent in Rajasthan and 15.12 per cent in Tripura. In the remaining states their proportion is less than the national average of 15.75 per cent.

Out of the total population of scheduled castes in the country, their longest concentration is in Uttar Pradesh (22.39 per cent), followed by West Bengal (11.46 per cent), Bihar (9.68 per cent), Tamil Nadu (8.48 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (7.60 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (7.02 per cent), Rajasthan (5.57 per cent), Karnataka (5.34 per cent), Maharashtra (4.28 per cent), Punjab (4.31 per cent), Orissa (3.69 per cent), Haryana (2.33 per cent), Delhi (1.07 per cent) and in the remaining state their proportion is comparatively less. The smallest number of scheduled castes population is found in Mizoram.

The Scheduled Castes community perceived themselves mostly as local and regional communities. 105 communities perceive their distribution at national level. 33.16 per cent of the scheduled caste in India are returned as workers. Of the total workers among the scheduled castes more than 73 per cent are engaged in primary sector of the economy of which majority are agricultural labourers followed by cultivators. While the Scheduled castes are primarily engaged in agricultural labour a considerable number has become cultivators by owing on basin land. Of the remaining workers 3.31 per cent are engaged in household industry, 4.95 per cent in other - than household industry. 2 per cent in live stock, forestry, fishing etc. nearly 2 per cent in construction, 2 per cent in trade and commerce, a little more than 2 per cent in transport, storage and communication and the remaining 7.59 per cent in other services. Nearly 97 per cent of the scheduled castes in India are Hindus by religion.<sup>2</sup> The others are reported to be amins. The scheduled castes in India are heterogenous category. Most of the sections of the scheduled castes are generally living in symbiosis with other section of general population.

Any extensive study of the assessment of the extent of poverty among scheduled castes in various occupation has been dearth. A detail study to cover indicators of poverty, like infant mortality rate, literacy rate, expectancy of life at birth, index of agricultural activity, per capita consumption expenditure, can reveal the extent of poverty of the scheduled castes. Scheduled castes, in general have remained below the level of subsistence. They being the small and marginal farmers, share-croppers farm return, even in multi-cropping, do not support adequately the whole year family expenses. Substitutional income is a common factor for almost all scheduled caste cultivators. Due to appreciably lower yield of calories per rupee of consumption expenditure the life expectancy in many scheduled castes and sub-castes families are lower. Most of the scheduled caste men, women also work in small trade fishery, artefact industry, handloom, and etc. An all India statistical average of scheduled castes population in different occupations can be presented to substantiate the occupational profile os scheduled castes. The 1991 Census prescribes the men, women worker's distribution of scheduled caste population. While 54.5 per cent main workers are male, 18.90 per cent female. While male cultivators occupy 18 per cent, 3 per cent for female cultivators. Nearly

24.5 per cent male and 14 percent female agricultural labourers, 2 per cent male and .90 percent female in household industry, manufacturing and processing etc. The category of other workers is represented through 14 percent male and 3 percent female, marginal workers' share is however 2 per cent for the male and 7 percent female. The non-workers percentage among the scheduled castes is very high, 48 per cent male and 78 per cent female.<sup>3</sup>

Owing to acute poverty scheduled castes male and female children are compelled to work from tender age. The all India experience suggests that they are engaged in agriculture, mining, quarrying, dairy, goatery, piggery to support their family income. The unfortunate picture is that India having the highest number of child labour and scheduled castes share the largest of it. Malnutrition and overwork in childhood census low life expectancy and deform the genetical structure which is inbuilt in the process of physiological development. A very large number of scheduled castes and sub-castes are at the mercy of the vagaries of society's uneven income and resource distribution.

The decadal Census records from 1931, in case of scheduled castes literacy rate returns, were not encouraging. The 1971 - 91 census decade, represents a marked improvement of scheduled castes male-female literacy rate. As against 14.67 per cent literates in 1971, the increase of literacy rate in 1991 is 24.5 per cent. The female literacy rate has also increased considerably. It was 6.44 per cent in 1971, it has been increased to 14.9 per cent in 1991. The percentage increase in the literacy, though note-worthy, but comparative analysis of school drop-outs and the new generation of literates, progressively harnessing the contemporary science and technology knowledge in the production process for creating self-employment, do not reveal encouraging educational awareness among the scheduled castes. About 10 million illiterate persons between the age group 15-35 years are in the country. With this heavy drop-out rate, the majority of the drop-outs are from the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.<sup>4</sup>

Education among the scheduled castes is one of the most important programmes of the Backward classes sector of the Central and State Plans. In the Backward Classes sectors of State Plans, provisions of schemes for pre-matric

stipends, re-imburement of tuition fees, hostels both for scheduled castes boys, girls and Tribes, Ashram Schools, etc. are included. Since the Fifth Five Year Plan, crores of rupees for various educational schemes for the scheduled castes and tribes under the sector were provided. The various State Governments spend in every year an average of 22 to 30 crores for giving incentive to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes for their education. The national target fixed by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) at the beginning of the Fifth Five Year Plan was Rs. 545 crores for the scheme under the Backward Classes sector. The provisional amount was made for universal and middle, school, primary education for all children within the age group of 6-14 years belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Under the Central sector, there were two educational schemes under the Backward Classes sector i.e. postmatric scholarship to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes students and construction of girls hostels. The Fifth Five Year Plan out lay for Post-matric scholarship to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes students was Rs. 100 crores and for the construction of girls hotels post-matric Scholarship was Rs. 10.09, Rs. 13.61, Rs. 15.50 and Rs. 15.75 crores in the years 1974-75, 1975-76, 1976-77 and 1977-78 respectively. In case of girls hostel construction Rs. 0.56, 0.68, 0.79, and 0.81 crores during the pre-First Five Year Plan, from 1944-45 to 1950-51, for seven years, annual per-head period, the Annual grant was reduced to Rs. 85.76 paise, though the number of scheduled castes covered was much more than the pre-First Five Year Plan period. During the Second Five Year Plan, average annual grant was further reduced to Rs. 77.47 paise, the number coverage was more than triple than First Five Year Plan, i.e. about 1.61, 470.

From the Third Plan onwards, the per head average grant increased from Plan to Plan, i.e. Third Plan-Rs. 93.36 paise, Fourth Plan Rs. 99.55 paise, Fifth Plan Rs. 220.05 paise.<sup>5</sup> The number coverage of post-matric scholarship was highest during the Fifth Plan i.e. Rs. 12,33,658. The Annual Plans from 1966-67 to 1968-69, three years average per head annual grant was Rs. 162.34 paise. The Annual Plans 1978-79 and 1979-80, yearly per head grant was Rs. 450.15 paise but 1979-80, expenses towards scholarship grants were shared 50-50 basis by the state and Central Government. The Sixth Plan, three years, per head yearly grants from 1980-81 to 1982-83 was Rs. 307. Pre Matric Scholarships for scheduled castes children studying in primary classes 1 -2 (age-group) has been planned for in planning period

1980-85. For the purpose of administrative convenience some states have clubbed the primary education I-IV or I-V and middle Schools IV-VII or V to VIII. According to the state statistics available in the Ministry of Education for the year 1978-79, the enrolment ratio for all the communities from classes I to V being 84.5 per cent, in the case of scheduled castes the ration was 79.9 per cent. The corresponding period for middle stage with classes VI to VIII were 38.1 per cent and 26.5 per cent for the middle stage with classes VI to VIII were 38.1 per cent and 26.5 per cent for the middle stage with classes VI to VIII were 38.1 per cent and 26.5 per cent for the general and scheduled caste students respectively.<sup>6</sup>

Premature withdrawal of children from the schools before completion of their courses may be termed as wastage and retaining a student for more than a year in a particular class can be termed as stagnation. Besides low enrolment rate, the indicator of education backwardness depends on wastage and stagnation. Causes are many for stagnation and wastage. Socio-economic and socio-cultural reasons may be the major factors of scheduled castes for Pre-matric wastage and stagnation. The working group of the Sixth Five Year Plan re-viewed the problems of drop-outs at the pre-matric stage in all the states and found that it is serious. It was estimated that out of 100 students enrolled in class I the drop-out rate at the end of class V was 40, at the end of class VII it was 75. The drop outs vary from 34 per cent in Kerala, 84.1 per cent in Orissa, 83.53 per cent in West Bengal and 33.58 per cent in Tripura at the primary stages. In the Sixth Plan the government of India proposed to cover all the children in the age group 6-11 years, and 57 per cent in the age group of 11-14 years under the enrolment programme of Universal Elementary Education (UEE). The programme also envisaged giving part-time education to children including drop-outs in formal and non-formal institutions. The extent of stagnation is not quantified at the all India level but it is quite alarming in the post-matric courses where the performance of scheduled castes poor students failure rates are quite high. Further, the reasons of frequent failure of the scheduled castes students causing stagnation may be lack of poor family orientation for studies, non-adoptability to school atmosphere, frequent absence of teachers in remote areas, especially in the single teacher schools. Moreover, employing school going children for family income are the major causes of poor performance and stagnation.

In India, for all habitations with 300 or more population, 78.96 per cent are served with primary schools within their habitations limits, and 94.93 per cent are served within 1 k.m. distance, for the scheduled castes 81.93 percentage are served with primary school within their habitations 96.39 per cent are served within 1 km. radius distance. For the middle Schools, 17.77 per cent habitations are served within their habitations, but 76.9 per cent are served within the radius of 3 km. But for the Scheduled Castes, 17.99 per cent are served with middle school facilities within their habitations and 74.67 per cent are reserved within a radius of 3 kms. from their habitations. The Eighth Five Year Plan suggested for district wise development of primary education with a new scheme called District Primary Education Programme. Nearly 140 districts of India have been brought under this programme and in West Bengal twelve districts have been screened out for the purpose, out of which the DPEP has been in operation in five districts of West Bengal.<sup>7</sup>

Planned development begins with scheduled castes welfare. From 1951-56 Fifth Plan period, expenditures for the scheduled castes welfare have successively increased from the 30 crores to Rs. 226 crores, reviewing the population increase, the progressive increase in expenditure, do not cope up with the scheduled castes sustainable economic growth. Table given below provides increasing expenditure from plan to Plan, except that there was a sharp decline of expenditure in 1966-69, Plan holi-days due to external aggression of India.

Plan	Year/Period	Outlay	Expenditure Rs. in Crores	Percentage of utilisation	
First Plan	1951-56		39.00	30.00	76.90%
Second Plan	1956-61		90.00	79.00	87.80%
Third Plan	1961-66		114.00	99.14	86.96%
Annual Plan	1966-69		62.00	68.49	110.46%
Fourth Plan	1969-74		171.00	141.00	99.30%
Fifth Plan	1974-78		227.89	226.00	100.85%
	1978-79		99.09	99.94	87.40%
	1979-80		88.84	86.40	98.00%
Sixth Plan	1980-85		290.50	285.50	95.50%
Seventh Plan	1985-90		715.85	680.00	96.50%
Eighth Plan	1991-96		815.50	790.50	
Ninth Plan	1996-2001		1015.00	565.00	

(Uptill March '98)

Source : Planning Commission, GOI, New Delhi.

From the First, the actual expenditure compared to outlay is such less, the utilisation were, First Plan - 76.9 percent, Second Plan 87.8 percent, Third Plan 86.96, Fourth Plan 92.3 per cent except 1966 - 69. when expenditure exceeded outlay by 110.46 per cent. Since Fifth Five Year Plan the utilizations were almost balanced although the Plan outlays have been increased from every five Year Plan, however, progressive computation of scheduled castes population increase does not match with outlay. If enumerated progressively, will reveal that the development programmes for the scheduled caste were formulated and initiated in an ad-hoc manner without any perspective, and were more in the nature of welfare Schemes. An appraisal of the Eighth Five Year Plan reveals the fact, Plan outlays were meant to supplement sectoral programmes, never appreciated at the scheme formulation and implementation stage. Under this plan, substantial increase was made in the provision of fund for these programmes, 26 per cent of the amount were meant for economic development schemes, 48 per cent for educational development, without having a grass-root analysis of the problems of scheduled castes education in the schools meant for education for all castes students. Merely, 26 per cent of this provision was left for health housing, drinking water supply in the rural areas at all India level-leaving thousands of scheduled castes villages even today without any hygienic drinking water supply and health and family care.

Observation made that planned sectoral adjustment in the Five Year Plans, and Annual Plans, contained flexibility of readjustment in the budgetary process of development. In successive plans, programmes had no proper marketing linkages, and mostly welfare oriented. Understanding of the Fifth Five Year Plan's the sectoral development adjustment, for the benefit and upliftment of the scheduled castes, socially and socio-economically is to be taken into cognigence. A working process, presumably thought of, shal benefit the castes. Since the Fifth Year Plans special criteria were drawn to prepare schemes for schedules castes development, puling funds from the general sectors. But it was found that instead of the general sectors, funds supplementing the development efforts for the backward classes sector, were utilised in the general sectors.

An objective view was taken to review the entire policies and programmes of the scheduled castes to draw a comprehensive strategy of development within the shortest period of time in the Sixth Plan, 1980-85 and since then it has been

continuing. The Plans formulated following Sixth Plan identified the Schemes in each sector of development, directly benefiting the scheduled castes families. The schemes were identified after a marking provisions from the sectoral plans in proportion to the scheduled castes population with an arrangement of providing institution of credit and marketing facilities. Adequate social ammenities to the scheduled castes families were provided particularly to those below poverty line. There were various aspects of programmes aimed at the socio-economic development of the scheduled castes. The objective was to provide economic benefit and income generating assets and training to improve themselves which would minimise their dependence onthe exploiters.

Objectives were to provide minimum facilities like drinking water, drainage, health services, education, housing, vocational guidance etc. It has also been indicated that attention had particularly focused on the landless agricultural labourers, the largest occupational group among scheduled castes, Cultivators, specially marginal and sub-marginal, share croppers and artisans, like weavers and craftsmen, women in a variety of cottage and village industries. It has also been observed while drawing the Ninth Plan that unless the Plan has its core certain re-distributive policies, both in respect of existing resources like land and of new assets that can be generated specially with public funds, in the sectors like animal husbandry, cottage and village industry, fisheries etc. Sustainable economic benefits have not been accrued by the scheduled castes.

According to 1991 Census, the scheduled caste population constitutes 23.62 per cent of the total population of the state. Scheduled Caste population in West Bengal, numbering 1,60,80,611 compared to the Scheduled Caste population of India constitutes nearly 17 per cent of the total population of the country. The scheduled caste population of West Bengal shares 14 per cent of the total scheduled castes of India. Among all the scheduled castes there are 15 communities who have a population of 1 lakh in each case. these communities together constitute 82.75 per cent of the total scheduled caste population of the state. Of these 15 communities Rajabanshi appears with largest population (16.30 percent). Thus Rajbanshi being the largest share holder should be studied in a detail manner. However the 1991 census does not specifically mention the number of Rajbanshi population and other

scheduled castes community in particular. It has just provided district wise population total of scheduled castes in general. The socio-economic profile of scheduled castes in general and Rajbanshi in particular will be discussed else where with the help of data collected from 1971-1981 census reports. An attempt will be made also to provide a projected profile of the Rajbanshi in the contemporary years.

West Bengal is, at present, fourth populous state in India. In terms of Scheduled Caste population the state ranks second after Uttar Pradesh, however West Bengal ranks third in terms of per centage of scheduled caste population to the total population. The largest population of the scheduled caste to the total population of the state is found in Punjab, that, is 26.87 per cent, followed by 24.62 per cent in Himachal Pradesh, 23.62 per cent in West Bengal.<sup>9</sup>

The state of West Bengal has enlisted 59 sub-castes in the Schedule of the scheduled caste. The sub-castes included in the Schedule may be named such as Bagdi or Duley, Belder, Bhuimali, Bind, Baiti, Bauri, Bhogta, Bhuiya, Chammar, Char maker, Choupal, Mochi, Muchi, Rabidar, Ruidas, Rishi, Dabgar, Dhoba, Demai (Nepali) Doai, Dhibi, Dom, Dhangad, Ghasi, Halalkhor, Jalia Kai, Batta, Kadar, Kandra, Kaora, Kaur, Khaira, Koch, Konwar, Korariar, Kami (Nepali), Kanjar, Karenga, Koranga, Koot, Keyot, Khatik, Konai, Kotal, Lohar, Lalbegi, Mahar, Toshadh, Dushadh, Dhari, Dharli, Gourhi, Hari, Mahtar, Mehtor, Bhangi, Jhalomalo, Malo, Mal, Mallah, Musahar, Namasudra, Nat Nuriya, Paliya, Pan, Sawasi, Pasi, Patri, Pod, Poundra, Rajbanshi, Rajwar, Sarki(Nepali), Sundri, Tiyar, Turi.<sup>10</sup>

The above mentioned Scheduled Castes in West Bengal are supposed to be under the perview of the development programme, Sectoral Special Assistance, Special Component Plan and other development programmes to be undertaken by the centre and the states for their cultural and economic development. The state of West Bengal has been active in taking up programmes for the upliftment of the people belonging to scheduled castes and tribes. The scheduled castes accounts for more than twenty per cent of the total population. According to reports, the highest concentration of scheduled caste population is in the District of Cooch Behar, the lowest being in Darjeeling District. The population of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes is growing at a faster rate than the general population. Such tendency erodes the possibility to

improve their living conditions. The uncontrolled increase of population continues to handicap Planned efforts for their Socio-economic development.

. The district wise population total of scheduled castes with different kinds of percentage projection may be presented in the following table. An attempt has also been made to present census data of both 1981 and 1991 in order to have a comparative picture.

Sl No.	District	Total Population in 1981 (As per Census)	Total Population in 1991 (As per Census)	Total S.C. in 1981 (As per Census)	Total S.C. in 1991 (As per Census)	Percentage of Total S.C. Population of the district as against total population of district in 1981	Percentage of Total S.C. Population of the district against total population of the district in 1991	Percentage of S.C. Population of Dist. to the population of the state in 1981.	Percentage of S.C. population of Dist. to the population of the state in 1991
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
01.	Cooch Behar	17,71,643	21,71,145	8,83,084	11,23,719	49.85	51.76	7.36	6.90
02.	Jalpaiguri	22,14,871	28,00,543	7,66,498	10,35,871	34.69	36.99	6.39	6.44
03.	Darjeeling	10,24,269	12,99,919	1,45,942	2,09,876	14.16	16.15	1.22	1.31
04.	* West Bengal	24,04,947	*31,27,653	*6,87,094	9,03,557	28.57	58.07	5.73	5.64
05.	Malda	20,31,871	26,37,032	3,43,089	4,77,896	16.88	18.12	2.87	2.86
06.	Murshidabad	36,97,552	47,40,149	4,82,583	6,34,971	13.03	13.40	4.02	3.95
07.	Nadia	29,64,253	38,52,097	7,76,924	11,17,506	26.34	29.01	6.47	6.95
[57] 08.	**24Parganas	1,07,39,439	**1,29,96,911	26,88,623	35,33,503	25.03	45.94	22.40	21.97
09.	Howrah	29,66,861	37,29,644	4,52,322	5,88,907	15.23	15.79	3.77	3.66
10.	Calcutta	3,05,006	43,99,819	1,49,303	2,83,602	4.50	6.45	1.24	1.76
11.	Hooghly	35,57,306	43,55,230	7,67,502	10,50,280	21.56	24.12	6.39	6.53
12.	Burdwan	48,35,388	60,50,605	12,13,435	16,60,493	25.08	27.44	10.11	10.33
13.	Purulia	18,53,801	22,24,577	3,48,217	4,30,513	18.78	19.35	2.90	2.68
14.	Bankura	23,74,815	28,05,065	6,86,300	8,79,931	28.89	31.36	5.72	5.47
15.	Midnapur	67,42,796	83,31,912	9,84,731	13,61,828	14.59	16.34	8.21	8.47
16.	Birbhum	20,95,829	25,55,664	6,24,521	7,84,062	29.78	30.68	5.20	4.88
<b>Total</b>		<b>15,45,80,647</b>	<b>6,80,77,965</b>	<b>1,20,00,728</b>	<b>1,60,80,611</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23.62</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

\* The population total includes both South and North Dinajpur due to non-availability of Data.

\*\* The population total includes both South and North 24 Parganas owing to absence of separate data.

Among all the districts the largest number of scheduled caste population concentrates in 24 Parganas (including North and South 24 Parganas). The second in this category is Burdawn, Midnapur third, and Cooch Behar ranks fourth and Nadia ranks Fifth. In terms of percentage of scheduled caste population of the district to the total population of the state the ranks hardly vary. While two Parganas ranks first, Burdwan ranks second, Midnapur third, Cooch Behar fourth and Nadia fifth. However the picture becomes otherwise while estimating the percentage of schedules caste population of individual district to the total population of the district concern. Here, the district of Cooch Behar ranks first sharing 51.76 per cent of the total population of the district. This percentage was little less during 1981 Census (49.85 per cent). The second in this category comes the district of Jalpaiguri with 36.99 per cent in 1991 Census which was 34.69 per cent during 1981 Census. The third in this category is the district of Bankura with a percentage of 31.36 during 1991 Census which was 28.89 per cent during 1981 Census, the fourth in this category is Birbhum with 30.68 per cent (1991 Census), it was 29.78 per cent during 1981 Census. The composit percentage figures of two Parganas (both North and South 24 Parganas) exceeds all other districts excluding Cooch Behar. The figure is 24.45 and 29.01 constituting all together 45.94 per cent during 1991 Census which was 25.03 in undivided Parganas during 1981 Census.<sup>11</sup> The huge deviation arises out of the marger of the districts into a single district.

Population concentration of scheduled castes varies in the districts of West Bengal. Altogether, there are 59 scheduled castes 38 scheduled tribes in West Bengal representing 23.6 per cent and 5.6 per cent of the total populations of the state. The districts of the Northern part of the state that is, Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, South and north Dinajpur and Malda are having pre-dominant indigenous communities, such as Rajbanshi, Palliah and Koch sharing nearly 54 per cent of the total scheduled caste population in West Bengal. The South West and South Bengal districts such as Birbhum, Bankura, Purulia are having Schedule Castes population composing of bagdi, Bauri, Dom, Bhumali, Sunri, while both north and South 24 Parganas, Murshidabad, Midnapur, Nadia, Howrah, Hooghly are mostly having namasudra, Jalia-Kaibarta, Bagdi, Keora etc. There are mixed race scheduled caste understandably out of Hill Tribe origin of Darjeeling district. They are Damal, Kamai, Sarki etc. In the Purulia District, the scheduled castes inhabitants are having geneological leniage from Bihar and Uttar

Pradesh. An attempt may also be made to provide a general profile of scheduled castes in West Bengal after taking into consideration of different aspects.

The Scheduled castes in India, having strata of population, in many occupations, exposed to health hazards, have little social security to protect healthy sex ratio. The all India ratio of S.C. is 932 — a proportion in conformity with the sex ratio of general population. The rural urban sex ratio of scheduled castes population in India, differs substantially whereas rural sex ratio is 940 and urban 892. Rural, urban migration reflects an unfavourable sex ratio, which is subjected to many urban diseases, a factor, possibly contributing to the declining sex ratio among the industrial workers, unskilled in and around metropolis. West Bengal scheduled castes sex ratio is 925. Rural sex ratio in West Bengal is 937, and Urban 848, a sharp fall against all India, confirms the unhealthy of women and downward mobility in terms of sex ratio of scheduled castes population.<sup>12</sup> The declining sex ratio is reflected in high pregnancy rate and women's mortality. True to the culture of a traditional society, scheduled castes in Primary agricultural, and in majority of rural industry production relation, mostly dependent on family labour. The family labour unaccounted, but a productive support, sex ratio determines the equality not only in productive support, but also, demographic health of a population. Scientifically declining sex ratio computes to over-burden female sex in terms of more fertility, still or live. Progressively declining, and/or static sex ratio, denotes a point of unhealthy demography, a feature of birth and death ratio, during the age group of 0-6, 5-16, 15-25, and 25 and above ages. Universally, male children prone to incidence of death between the age of 0-6 and 5-14. Unfortunately the death ratio curve of female children goes high from the age of 5-14 and 15-25. Mainly iron deficiency, and high frequency of pregnancy.<sup>13</sup> Modern medical clinical accessibilities have reduced, or arrested the frequency of death ratio from the diseases at maternity and afterwards.

The total population of the scheduled castes in West Bengal is little over one crore and sixty lakhs, of which, 42.66 per cent are agricultural labourers, 30.18 per cent are cultivators including marginal workers, and 2.95 per cent are engaged in household industry, manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs, and 24.21 per cents are engaged in livestock, forestry, fishing, mining, and quarrying, trade and commerce, transport, storage and communication and engaged in other

services.<sup>14</sup> The state has no existence of denotified Scheduled Castes communities moreover, as per the State Government report, there is no existence of Scheduled Castes bonded labour in the state. Low level of education kept away the scheduled castes and tribes from obtaining jobs in the organised skilled market. Bulk of this community, therefore, continue to depend on primary sector and on physical labour. Around 25 per cent of Scheduled Castes in the state are cultivators and 42 per cent are agricultural labourers.<sup>15</sup> It is, therefore, required to increase agricultural production and to enhance gainful employment opportunities, including opportunities for self-help in the primary sector, secondary sector and in the rural areas.

The occupational mobility of the scheduled castes in the state is prominent from the high order of artefact rural industries, weaving, sericulture, tassar and mulberry dokra images, decorative mat weaving, clay modelling metal cutting tools, traditional metallurgy in developing armoury, coppabell metal and brass utensils and industries related to religious rituals; conch shell artefacts, musical instruments, wind instruments, string instruments, leather crafts and etc. Despite this, the occupational mobility has been down-ward in agriculture which has shown the percentage increase in agricultural labourers in 1971 it was 42.57 per cent and in 1981, 42.66 per cent<sup>16</sup> Whereas the all India figure of agricultural labourers has declined from 51.75 per cent to 48.22 per cent. In the state, the census decade 1971 - 1981 and 1981 - 1991 experienced the success of operation Barga, and a considerable number of share croppers, landless labourers, acquired, vested land and pattas. Even then, the increasing trend of agricultural labourers signifies shift in occupation from artisan industry to agricultural labourers. The presence of large number of non-workers in the scheduled castes also denotes the occupation vagaries and hazards in the occupational strata of the scheduled castes. Child labour, male and female has been a commonality of the scheduled castes families. They are cowherds, shepherds, weeder in agriculture. As such, the state government has introduced laws to enhance daily wages, in agriculture, brick kiln, and other areas of daily wages. Child labour are virtually on increase to avoid these laws in agriculture and in industry practising daily wages.

In comparison to all India male female literacy rate, which is 31.12 per cent and 10.93 per cent respectively. In 1981, the status of West Bengal scheduled castes

literacy is much better, male literacy is 34.26 per cent and female is 30.70 per cents, even then, it is much lower than the literacy rate of all communities other than scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, which is 57.82 per cent in the state. The enrolments in schools for scheduled castes and non-scheduled castes is near parallel, but the drop-out rate in the Primary and middle school level is higher for scheduled castes. The enrolment ratio of scheduled castes boys and girls between classes I to V is 79.7 per cent and 43.7 per cent respectively, and in classes VI to VIII, 27.0 per cent and 11.5 per cent respectively, shows a definite socio-economic pressure, for which the scheduled caste boys and girls withdraw themselves from the classes.<sup>17</sup>

The basic human needs of the scheduled castes in India in general, and West Bengal in particular, has yet to be attended. An exercise has been made in the following chapter to understand the quality of life of the scheduled castes in a particular district. Even after 50 years of independence there has been hardly any improvement in the quality of life of the scheduled castes and tribes. It is also reflected from the initiatives taken by the Central Government to extend the facilities to be fostered to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes even after a half century of independence. The major development indicator used by the U.N. agencies has been the physical quality of life Index (PQLI). PQLI is measured on the basis of literacy rate, provision for health, life expectancy and the infant mortality. The different development programmes taken so far specifically designed for the scheduled castes have yet to be realised in fuller scale. It has been attempted to understand how far the Scheduled accrued benefits of planned assistance for their socio-economic upliftment and how far have they been able to alleviate their paucities of life. With this study one can have a possible guide line for future development strategy for the upliftment of the scheduled castes as a backward community.

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## CHAPTER - III

### **BRINGING SCHEDULED CASTES TO THE MAIN-STREAM : A District Level Experience**

A concerted action programme for the overall development of the scheduled caste community has been in high order. Such a programme should evolve out from a policy to provide a frame-work of planning for the development and management of welfare measures for the scheduled castes to percolate the specific services such as health, education, shelter, rehabilitation, employment generation and other measures for eradication of miseries of scheduled castes. Thus an adequate infrastructure for planning programming, administering along with resource mobilisation is urgently called for. In the State of West Bengal, a considerable number of programmes has been undertaken for hastening the pace of development. These programmes for the development of scheduled castes may be typified : (a) Family based Economic Development Schemes, (b) Infrastructure based Schemes; (c) Social Services based Schemes ; (d) Social Welfare based Schemes. Under the first category of schemes, the specific target oriented programmes are : (a) Integrated Rural Development Programmes (IRDP); (b) Antyadya - Bhangi Mukti (Liberation of Scavengers); (c) Training of Rural Youths for Self-Employment (TRYSEM). The second category of schemes covers Jawhar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) and (b) Modified Area Development Approach (MADA); The third category of schemes include programmes related to health, education, electrification etc. which have been undertaken in a concerted manner by the Twenty Point Programmes launched by District Rural Development Agency. The fourth category of schemes cover Oldage Pension, Development of Women and Children in Rural Area (DWCRA), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarships for scheduled caste and scheduled tribes; Students, Nutrition and Sanitation.

In addition to these programmes, there are programmes of allotment of Free Plots, Subsidy for Rural Housing, Rural Sanitation and Improved Chullah, Family Planning Programmes etc.

The welfare programmes stated above are considered as an integral part of development. The Programmes are scheduled under both Special Component Plan and Special Central Assistance for scheduled castes. The target and achievement of these programmes operating for weaker sections in the district of Cooch Behar shall be dealt with elsewhere of the study. The operational responses regarding the utilisation of the programmes shall also be highlighted by analysing data collected from the respondents (officials, non officials, community leaders and beneficiaries).

In order to accrue sustainable economic assistance to the scheduled castes in West Bengal, quantum of investment are regularly laid out. While laying out the amount to be invested, due consideration is given to ensure that scheduled castes living outside the fifty percent concentration Mouzas, which comprise more than sixty percent scheduled caste population of the state is to be equally benefitted. The flow of funds for need-based sectoral programmes for the scheduled castes is determined on the basis of the target fixed by the government of India. Despite efforts on planned development for the scheduled castes, it has been envisaged that like all India status, the economic development of scheduled castes in West Bengal has not been praise worthy, However, in West Bengal, an improvement in the field of education for the scheduled castes has been discernable while one compares the all India average of educational status of scheduled castes.

Since Sixth Five Year Plan, concerted action programmes have been undertaken for the overall development of the scheduled castes in West Bengal and keeping in conformity with the political will of the State Government, approaches were formulated articulating the objectives of the development of scheduled castes. The fundamental approach so undertaken was growth with equity enabling the scheduled castes to be endowed and empowered to act as effective agent of development. It was targeted that at-least fifty percent of scheduled caste families in al blocks to be enabled to cross the poverty line by undertaking through comprehensive family oriented integrated programmes. Stagnation and wastage in education to be minimised with more school teachers and educational assistances so that literacy rate increases. Drawing of plans and programmes for scheduled castes human development for occupational mobility and schemes at primary, secondary and tertiary sectors, elimination of unorganised money market and the money lenders who deprived the scheduled castes of real income.

Further more special attention has been given in the development effort for the women and children of the scheduled castes.

The Annual Plan outlay for the development of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes normally occupies a mere six to nine per cent of the total Annual Plan Outlay. In 1991 - 92, Annual Plan Outlay, the percentage of Special Component Plan was 6.17 per cent, 1991 - 92, the share was slightly increased to 8.67 per cent. The flow of State Plan Outlay to Special Component Plan, during the eighth Five year Plan, the agriculture and allied services have, in 1993 - 94 Rs. 1,247.97 lakhs, in 1991 - 92 Rs. 1,275.11 lakhs, and in 1994 - 95 Rs. 946.52 lakhs, and in 1993-94 the agreed outlay was Rs. 1,060.03 lakhs, and provisional outlay for the years 1980-81, 1981-82, and 1982 - 83, were Rs. 2.51 lakhs, Rs. 74.11 lakhs, and Rs. 30.72 lakhs respectively, and in 1993-94 the agreed outlay was Rs. 114.28 lakhs, and proposed outlay for 1994-95 was Rs. 119.55 lakhs. Water and Power Development Sector, the outlay for the years 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93 were Rs. 757.23 lakhs, Rs. 979.27 lakhs, and Rs. 8333.33 lakhs respectively, in 1993-94, the agreed outlay was Rs. 722.80 lakhs, and for 1994-95, proposed revised outlay was Rs. 892.78 lakhs.<sup>1</sup>

In the village Industries sector, for the three years 1980-81 to 1982-83, the outlay was Rs. 45.86 lakhs, Rs. 109.38 lakhs, and Rs. 46.87 lakhs respectively, agreed outlay in 1993-94 was Rs. 62.27 lakhs, and proposed revised outlay in 1994-95 was Rs. 106.09 lakhs. In construction of roads and bridges under Transport and Communication Sector, in 1993-94, the agreed outlay was Rs. 30 lakhs, and proposed revised outlay for 1984-85 was Rs. 30 lakhs. Further, the outlay under social and Community Services Sector from 1980-81 to 1982-83, for three years, yearly Rs. 1,365.56 lakhs, Rs. 1,352.10 lakhs, and Rs. 1,744.16 lakhs respectively, and agreed outlay for 1993-94 was Rs. 1,653.57, and proposed outlay for the last years of the plan, 1994-95, was Rs. 2,428 lakhs.<sup>2</sup>

The Special Component Plan Sectoral outlay was given weightage in accordance with the District's Sectoral Plans of the State. The Sixth Plan sectorwise, divisible outlay and flow of special Component Plan of the State plan and flow to special Component Plan expenses is at the lower side.

The actual expenses, with the flow of State Plan outlay during the Sixth Plan period, had declined further than the proposed outlay, in the year 1990-91, the expenses Rs.3,442.13 lakhs only, 1981-82 Rs. 3,789.97 lakhs only, 1992-93 Rs. 3,602.23 lakhs, and 1993-94 Rs. 3,643.65 lakhs, and 1994-95, the proposed outlay was Rs. 5,672.81 lakhs and for the year 1995-96, the proposed outlay was Rs. 7,517.36 lakhs.<sup>3</sup> The Special Central Assistance for the Special Component Plan, released according to the sources of the Home Ministry, SCBCD, in 1989-90 Rs. 45 lakhs, 1980-91 Rs. 1.003lakhs, 1991-92 Rs. 944.42 lakhs, 1992-93 Rs. 1,093.31 lakhs, and 1993-94 Rs. 1,170.80 lakhs.

The actual expenditure made by the state under different heads under special Central Assistance, under Special Component Plan, yearwise during the eighth plan, 1990-91 Rs. 1,043.18 lakhs, 1991-92 Rs. 943.20 lakhs, 1992-93 Rs. 928.76 lakhs, 1993-94 Rs. 1,224.36 lakhs and proposed outlay for expenditure during 1994-95 Rs. 1,870 lakhs the Special Central Assistance received yearwise by the state in 1980-81 Rs. 1,002 lakhs, 1991-92 Rs. 944 lakhs, 1992-93 Rs Rs. 1,093 lakhs, and in 1993-94 Rs. 1,170.80 lakhs,<sup>4</sup> but the Planning Commission agreed to the expenses upto Rs. 1,325 lakhs. There is a marked difference of state proposed outlay under Special Central Assistance for Special Component Plan and the tentative allocation by the Union Home Ministry.

In West Bengal, 10,45,425 Scheduled Castes families were targeted to be elevated above the poverty line during the Seventh and Eighth Five year plan. A package of income generating, family oriented schemes were formulated for the purpose. The year-wise target and achievements may be shown in the following table :

Year	Target	Achievement
1990-91	2,07,850	6,403
1991-92	1,63,643	1,41,722
1992-93	2,27,200	2,41,572
1993-94	2,78,470	1,41,572
1994-95	73,17,439	( in Rs. )

Source : Bulletin of the Schedule Caste and Scheduled Tribe Welfare Department, govt. of West Bengal, 1997-98.

The year-wise achievement falls far short of targets. To cover the backlogs, year to year, the maximum pressure is on the last year of the plan, which requires a steady management, implementation, and monitoring machinery to achieve the target.”

Despite limitations and non-achievement of targets, a minimum acceleration has been taken place in the life status of scheduled castes in the state. During 1990-91, 16,97,323 scheduled caste people of the state have been benefited from Special Component Plan allocation. The total quantum of money invested including subsidy Margin money and Bank Loan for the scheduled caste during 1990-1996 was Rs. 558,66,88000. Reforming lands for scheduled castes has been an important area of achievement for the state. 8.32 lakhs scheduled caste Peasants of the State have received Government land and ownerships have been recorded. Under NSFDC schemes, the quantum of money invested during 1992-93 was 68,29,8,660. For the infrastructural development of Education such as road construction, culverts and hostels for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, buildings for schools and colleges and hostels for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, rupees 409,266,000 have been invested during 1990-95.<sup>5</sup>

To bring momentum in the development efforts, the Government of West Bengal has set up the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation in 1976, however the Corporation had started operating with effect from December, 1980. The Corporation's endeavour has been to organise the institutional fund and special component finances on the one hand, and subsidy fund from different departments for funding the implementation of income generating programmes for uplifting the scheduled caste and tribe beneficiaries on the other. The role of the Corporation has been that of a catalyst. It provides Margin money loan assistance to the entrepreneurs in income generating schemes in the areas of agriculture, animal husbandry, fishery, cottage and small-scale industries, transport, trade and business and other occupational areas where scheduled castes are predominant. The share money of the Corporations is divisible, 51:49, between the State Government and Government of India, respectively. Ever since its inception both the Centre and the State Governments have been contributing their respective shares on a regular basis. The achievement of this corporation at the district level will be analysed elsewhere

of the study. In a nut-shell, one may argue that the fund flow management in proportion to the total fund required to initiate the development programmes in a comprehensive manner may not be sufficient but in view of the previous performance of the financial institution, especially lending to the Scheduled Castes beneficiaries, the performance of the corporation in the state has been noteworthy.

A note on lead Bank survey and District wise credit Bank in West Bengal is important to mention. The Reserve Bank of India instructed the nationalised banks to prepare district credit plans for their lead Districts in the state. In order to achieve uniformity the Reserve Bank of India advised the lead Banks to prepare new District Credit Plans too. Since 1980 lead Banks of each district in West Bengal undertook surveys to have resemblances with the salient features of the district economy. On the basis of these surveys, the lead Banks prepared development plan consisting of technically feasible and economically viable schemes to be financed by the banks within the given infrastructural facilities. The objective of the District Credit Plan has been to identify credit gaps and to finance schemes of economic and technical viabilities to accelerate the economic growth of the district. Apart from schemes developed by the lead banks, the Programmes and schemes formulated by the state Government requiring financial support are also incorporated in the District Credit Plans.<sup>6</sup>

In West Bengal, District Level Consultative Committee (DLCC) operating as the co-ordinating committee for the implementation of schemes and programmes has been constituted during mid 1980's. At the beginning DLCC was chaired by the District Magistrate. Now, the Sabhadhipati, Zilla Parishad has been the chair person. The multifaceted programmes undertaken by the State Government for the development of Scheduled Castes are operationalised and implemented by both political and administrative agencies at the grass-root level. In accordance with the Sectoral Plan and Special Component Plan of the district, the fund flow management, of the Special Component Plan and Special Central Assistance are made. At the districts, the three tier Panchayati Raj system has been vested with the primary responsibility along with Government departments for action implementation of programmes and schemes for the scheduled castes. The performance of the Panchayat Raj structure and the other Governmental departments engaged in realising the development programmes shall also be dealt with.

### Schedule Caste Profile of the District :

The population status of the district of Cooch Behar has been unique. The total number of scheduled caste population has out-numbered the general population of the district. The total number of the scheduled caste population of the district is 11,23,719 among them 10,91,093 and 32,626 are distributed between rural and urban areas respectively. Evidently, scheduled caste rural population of the district accounts for more than 97 per cent of the total scheduled castes population and a little less of 3 per cent scheduled caste population live in the urban areas. Scheduled caste population in Cooch Behar represents 7.54 per cent as against the total scheduled caste population of West Bengal.<sup>7</sup> The percentage is considerably higher than that of most of the districts of West Bengal. Out of the total scheduled caste population, the Rajbanshis - a typical scheduled caste variety holds the largest shares. Thus the dominant scheduled caste population in the district are Rajbanshis having a share of 72.37 per cent, namasudras 10.10 per cent, Jalia Kaibartas 1.47 per cent and 16.06 percent share of the total scheduled caste population of the district goes to other scheduled caste such as Duby or Bagdi, Bhumali, Dhoba, Jhalomalo, Bahelia, Bauri, Paliah, lohar, Pasi etc. Thus in respect of scheduled caste population status of urbanisation is extremely low and this section of the Population dominantly represents the rural society of the district. The distribution of scheduled caste population in five sub-divisions, twelve blocks and six municipalities may be presented in the following table.

Subdivision/Blocks & Municipalities	Scheduled Castes Population total
1. Mekhliganj Sub-Division	138777
Mekhliganj	81992
Haldibari	49012
Mekhliganj (M)	4084
Haldibari (M)	3689
2. Mathabhanga Sub-Division	318567
Mathabhanga - I	116463
Mathabhanga - II	110891
Mathabhanga (M)	3362
Sitalkunchi	87851
3. Cooch Behar Sub-Division	242409
Cooch Behar - I	106913
Cooch Behar - II	124719
Cooch Behar (M)	10777

4.	Tufanganj Sub-Division	173712
	Tufanganj - I	92112
	Tufanganj - II	77794
	Tufanganj (M)	3806
5.	Dinhata Sub-Division	250254
	Dinhata - I	103080
	Dinhata - II	85731
	Dinhata (M)	2240
	Sitai	59203
<b>District Total</b>		<b>1123719</b>

M = Municipality.

Source : Census of India, District Provisional Total, Cooch Behar, 1191

An overview of the table sharply suggests that Mathabhanga Sub-Division of the District of Cooch Behar occupies the highest number of scheduled caste population (318567) and Mekhliganj being the lowest (138777). Mathabhanga - I Panchayat Samity, a Block under Mathabhanga Sub-Division holds the highest number of Scheduled Caste population out of all other Blocks and Municipalities under Mathabhanga Sub-Division. Indeed Mathabhanga - I - Panchayat Samity and its selected Gram Panchayats has been one of the Principal fields of our study. Cooch Behar Sub-Division being the holder of second highest scheduled castes population of the district (242409) and Cooch behar - II being the holder of highest number of scheduled caste population out of two Blocks and one Municipality under Cooch Behar Sub-Division has been brought under the perview of our study. The Gram Panchayats of Cooch Behar - II Panchayat Samity - a principal Block of Cooch Behar sub-division has been thoroughly studied.

Out of the total scheduled castes population of the district about 49 percent are male rural and 45 per cent are female rural and 3.58 Per cent are male urban and 3.31 per cent are female urban. Out of the total scheduled castes population of the district 50.72 per cent are male rural and 47.51 per cent are female rural; and 0.89 per cent are male urban and 0.86 per cent are female urban. Thus the scheduled caste demography of the district has been primarily rural and predominantly primordial by content. The following analysis would be a probe to the argument that the scheduled castes rural sex ratio shows a decline (936) in the district, as

against West Bengal and all India figures. The scheduled castes urban sex-ratio is 964, having much better sex-ratio than all-India and West Bengal; shows that the effect of urbanisation has not made much in-roads among the scheduled caste population in the district. This is perhaps because the pace of urbanisation in the district is very slow. Higher sex-ratio in urban areas possibly balances the trend of general sex-ratio and total scheduled caste sex-ratio in the district.

The occupational profile of the scheduled castes of the district is predominantly based on agricultural avocations. The following table representing the percentage distribution of scheduled castes population according to different categories of workers may provide an overview on the occupational pattern.

*Please see over leaf*

Sl No.	Sub-division Block/Municipalities	Total Scheduled Castes Population	Total Main Workers	Cultivators	Agriculture Labourers	Household Industry Manufacturing processing servicing and repairing	Other Workers	Marginal workers	Non-Workers
01.	Mekliganj sub- division	13877	31.24	18.37	6.92	0.31	5.64	1.72	67.04
	Melahliganj	81992	31.98	21.68	6.29	0.12	3.89	2.03	65.99
	Haldibari	49012	30.96	17.49	8.56	0.38	4.52	1.64	67.40
	Mekhleganj(M)	4084	26.88	3.96	4.12	0.03	18.77	0.03	73.08
	Haldibari(M)	3689	28.99	1.94	3.62	1.92	21.51	0.51	70.51
02.	Mathabhanga sub- division	318567	31.27	17.97	8.77	0.39	4.12	1.18	67.55
	Mathabhanga-I	116463	30.19	18.97	8.28	0.12	2.81	0.31	69.50
	Mathabhanga-II	110891	32.17	17.20	9.33	0.85	4.78	2.04	65.79
	Mathabhanga(M)	3362	27.27	0.79	1.54	0.44	24.50	0.40	72.33
	Sitalkuchi	87851	31.88	19.78	9.30	0.15	2.45	1.25	66.87
03.	Cooch Behar Sub- Division	242409	29.99	11.24	6.74	0.91	11.10	2.10	67.87
	Cooch Behar-I	106913	29.32	12.89	6.08	1.20	7.75	2.30	68.38
	Cooch Behar -II	124719	31.21	12.74	7.87	0.82	9.78	2.50	66.29
	Cooch Behar - (M)	10777	27.89	0.05	0.10	0.22	27.52	0.30	71.81
04.	Tufanganj Sub- division	173712	29.62	13.67	7.56	1.31	7.08	1.79	68.59
	Tufanganj-I	92112	29.88	13.61	8.19	1.47	6.61	1.63	68.49
	Tufanganj-II	77794	29.40	15.13	7.55	1.18	5.54	2.13	68.47
	Tufanganj (M)	3806	28.57	1.22	0.43	0.90	26.02	0.60	70.83
05.	Dinhata Sub- division	250254	30.86	14.70	9.17	0.53	6.46	1.18	67.96
	Dinhata-I	103080	30.49	14.32	8.09	0.77	7.31	1.13	68.32
	Dinhata - II	85731	30.73	14.92	10.56	0.36	4.88	1.24	68.03
	Dinhata (M)	2240	29.33	0.31	0.05	0.45	28.52	0.12	70.50
	Sitai	59203	30.52	18.25	11.03	0.25	2.99	1.36	66.12
District Total		1123719	30.55	15.12	8.34	0.71	7.16	1.6	67.90

Source : Census of India, District Provisional Total, Cooch Behar, 1991.

Data provided for having a distinct picture on occupational profile of the scheduled castes suggest that the principal population of scheduled castes category is engaged in agriculture and agriculture related production process. The percentage for non agricultural avocation has been marginal. In fact non workers category represents the highest percentage. There has been no considerable variations in subdivision wise distribution of scheduled caste population representing different occupations. The average of the total main workers among scheduled castes is nearly 31 per cent. The percentage is comparatively higher while we compare scheduled castes main workers of the other district of West Bengal. Since Cooch Behar is a 'no industry district' as per classification of the Planning Commission, the percentage of industrial workers among scheduled castes has been barely minimum. As education, technological innovation and economic capacity of the scheduled castes population of the district have been low, the representation of this community to the trade, industry, commerce and service fields has also been considerably low. Culturally speaking, majority Rajbanshi scheduled castes living in rural areas has been purely agriculturist. They relate themselves with agriculture in different capacities, either as cultivator or as agricultural labourers or as marginal farmers. Since nearly on an average 68 per cent of the total scheduled castes population belonging to non-workers category, it is impossible to extract the potential human resource from this category of people. In order to enhance the capacity of the scheduled castes non-workers and to elevate them to workers category, efforts have been made for their initial endowment. Out of nearly 1,30,000 scheduled castes families having agricultures as primary occupation, nearly 35 per cent are as small farmers and 65 per cent families belong to marginal farmers category. Through out the last two decades nearly 25 per cent scheduled castes families have been the assignees of vested agricultural land under Estate Acquisition Act and Land Reforms. Act. The recorded bargadars under Operation Barga has been nearly 30 per cent of the total scheduled castes families of the districts. From the detailed data presented in the table one can hardly see any upward occupational mobility among the scheduled castes of the district.

With regard to the status of literacy rate in Cooch Behar, it is 45.78 per cent which is much below than the state average. It is also noticeable that while the urban literacy level is at 77.2 per cent which is little more higher than the state average, this same for the rural area is 48.89 per cent, a little more less than state average. The scheduled castes populace of the district in terms of literacy rate represents much

below the district average, it is 42.7 per cent for the district. The scheduled castes urban literacy rate is 49 per cent while the rural literacy rate has been much below to the level of 24 per cent only.<sup>8</sup> Again, within the same populace the difference between male and female literacy has been much wider. The most important aspect of the district's scheduled castes literacy scenario is abysmally low literacy status of the rural scheduled castes women which is only 12.5 per cent and is contrastingly poor against the urban scheduled castes female. Thus the literacy rate of scheduled caste women in the district of Cooch Behar has been very much marginal.

The total number of Primary Schools is 1,706 of which 838 schools are having one room, 418 with two rooms and 137 with three rooms as well as 313 schools are having four rooms, 1,632 schools are situated in own buildings, 10 in rented buildings, 33 in the pucca buildings, 1,187 in pucca - kancha buildings, 412 in the Kancha buildings and 10 schools have no buildings at all. Most of the schools are running without lavatory facility. 1,618 schools, in fact, do not have any lavatory facility. At present, only 88 schools are having lavatory facility. While 661 schools do not have drinking water facility, 1,025 schools are running without drinking water facility. At present the district is having 6,047 teachers, 2:7 in 1995, the requirement of teacher ratio (40 : 1) was 7,065 while the existing teachers number is 6,041 which is 85.5 percent of the total requirement. From the data, it is observed that the district is not in a position to provide facilities by way of universalising the provisions meant for thorough development of primary education in the district.<sup>9</sup>

Since Cooch Behar is a scheduled castes dominated district and rapid initiatives have been undertaken for universalising elementary education, the abismal literacy status of the scheduled castes have been first changing by way of additional drives for enrolment. The enrolment in schools of the district for scheduled castes and non scheduled castes has been almost parallel. However experience suggest that the drop-out rate is higher for scheduled castes. The enrolment ratio of the scheduled castes boys and girls is also nearly similar, however there has been a steady drop-outs experience for the scheduled castes girls. This is because of the multipronged socio-economic compulsions faced by the scheduled castes population in general. The block wise literacy percentage suggests that female literacy has been very poor. Female literacy is mostly town oriented and the over all female literacy rate is not more than 15 per cent during 1991 census, which was 12.5 Per Cent during 1981 census. Cooch

Behar I block occupies the highest percentage of literacy rate which is nearly 42.5 per cent in 1991 with increase of nearly 5 per cent from 1981 census period. The weakest among all the block in terms of literacy has been Haldibari followed by Mekhliganj, Sitalkuchi, Mathabhanga - I and Mathabhanga - II. The percentages of female literacy in this blocks have been marginal.<sup>10</sup> The following tables would help us to understand the additional initiatives taken by the district under the District Primary Education Programme for the overall development of the elementary education and literacy status of the scheduled castes populace of the district.

### Enrolment by Age Group

District : Cooch Behar

Year : 1998-99

Primary School	6	6-10	11-13	13	Total
Total Students	33034	283165	20135	749	337083
Boys	17045	146290	10144	334	173813
Girls	15989	136875	9991	415	163270
S.C. Student	17714	155683	11309	427	185133
S.C. Boys	9097	80894	5764	216	95971
S.C. Girls	8617	74789	5545	211	89162
ST. Students	231	2236	149	6	2622
S.T. Boys	123	1170	86	2	1381
S.T. Girls	108	1066	63	4	1241

Source : A Report on DPEP, DISE, Cooch-Behar, 1997-98

### Primary School Age Group Population and Enrolment

District : Cooch Behar

Year : 1998-99

Classification	Population (6-11)			Enrolment (6-11)		
	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
Total	314978	135222	179756	296238	152911	143327
Scheduled Caste	189211	69640	119571	163029	84712	78317
Scheduled Tribe	1919	959	960	2316	1218	1098
Other Backward Class	0	0	0	1763	915	848
Others	123848	64623	59225	129130	66066	63064
% S.C.	60.07	51.50	66.52	55.03	55.40	56.64
% S.T.	0.61	0.71	0.53	0.78	0.80	0.77
% O.B.C.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.60	0.60	0.59
% Others	39.32	47.79	32.95	43.59	43.21	44.00

Source : A Report on DPEP, DISE, Cooch-Behar, 1997-98

The tables indicate a rapid rise in the enrolment of scheduled castes children in the age group between 6 to 11 years. There is hardly any difference in the enrolment status between scheduled castes boys and girls. The enrolment percentage of the children in the age group between 6 to 11 years has been less than the percentage of enrolment of scheduled castes boys and girls. This has been a unique feature for a district of Cooch Behar because the majority of the populace especially living in the rural areas belong to scheduled castes category. The number of enrolment for the scheduled tribes boys and girls and of other backward classes are minimum because of the ignorable number of populace belong to this category. If one looks to the status of enrolment by age group one can hardly find any quantitative difference between the general castes students and scheduled castes students. However with the increase in the age group one can find the increasing decay in enrolment for scheduled castes student especially for the scheduled castes girls. The economic incapacity and such other social constraints help the process of dropping out for the scheduled castes students especially girls students in an accelerated form.

The economic status of the scheduled caste in the district proves beyond doubt that they have been in a state of disadvantage and economic disablement, keeping in view the weak economic status of the scheduled castes populace both the government of India and the Government of West Bengal are deeply concerned. The Government of India has set-up a corporation called National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation. Like wise the State Government has objectively created West Bengal Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation with its branches at every district. The District of Cooch Behar is having with such a corporation committed to the cause of development of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes populace of the district. The Corporation is held responsible to play catalytic role in developing scheme for employment generation and financing pilot programmes. The corporation works with the district's lead Bank (for Cooch Behar, it is the Central Bank of India) and with such other commercial banks in providing the flow of financial assistance to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The objective has been to innovate experiment and promote rather than replicate the work of the existing agencies. The district branch of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes Finance and Development Corporation serves as an apex institution for financing schemes for the economic development of scheduled castes and tribes to bring them into the main-stream by improving the flow of financial

assistance to them. The Corporation plans, promotes the schemes or projects for the welfare of scheduled castes and tribes and generate employment oppoutunities and provides entrepreneurial assistance to them. The Corporation functions through a net-work of hierarchy. The district level branch of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe Corporation provides short term and mid-term loans on various schemes. The following tables would provide us an overview of performance appraisal of the Corporation.

**Performance of Medium Term Loan over a Decade (1985-86-1993-94)**

Item	No of Beneficiaries		Margin money		Bank loan		Subsidy		Total	
	1985	1993	1985	1993	1985	1993	1985	1993	1985	1993
Agriculture and Small Irrigation	368	1280	29,5640.20	7,42,948.00	445303.80	13,76,883.00	737304.00	16,82,580.00	1478246.00	38,02,411.00
Animal Husbandry	682	512	393972.60	12,01,213.00	543280.90	19,36,003.00	1217121.50	29,16,992.00	2154375.00	60,54,208.00
Fisheries	239	512	157314.20	1,30,540.00	414225.05	2,42,988.00	513882.75	3,10,112.00	1160102.00	6,83,560.00
Cottage and Small Scale Industries	822 <sub>9</sub>	584	691405.00	16,44,870.00	1095253.50	25,19,111.00	1720366.50	40,85,771.00	3457025.00	82,49,752.00
Trade and Business	1155	—	531261.40	15,20,780.00	1795397.13	23,31,115.00	1408466.47	37,46,450.00	3735125.00	75,98,845.00
Rural Transport and others	—	584	—	3,02,561.00	—	3,02,561.00	—	7,58,316.00	—	15,16,708.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,266</b>	<b>3,596</b>	<b>21,44,273.00</b>	<b>55,42,912.00</b>	<b>40,90,460.00</b>	<b>55,42,912.00</b>	<b>55,97,141.00</b>	<b>135,00,221</b>	<b>1,19,84,877.00</b>	<b>2,79,05,484.00</b>

Source : Yearly Administrative Reports, 1984 - 1993, SCDC Office, Cooch-Behar.

## Performance of Short and Medium Term Loan from 1985 to 1993

Financial year	No of Cases		Margin Money			Subsidy
	Short	Medium	Short	Medium	Short	Medium
1985-86	3,958	3266	___	21,44,273.40	6,48,777.00	5597141.22
1986-87	___	723	___	4,53,868.34	___	9,07,735.66
1987-88	3,498	4189	___	35,76,953.00	5,93,400.15	92,25,897.00
1988-89	1,808	___	___	___	2,83501.85	___
1989-90	1420	6432	___	50,55,649.00	7,04374.00	1,02,84,675.00
1990-91	816	___	___	___	1,43,688.75	___
1991-92	627	3131	___	43,98,734.00	1,01,325.95	1,07,44,134.00
1992-93	308	___	___	37,80,152.00	56,184.50	92,62,624.00

**Source :** Yearly Administrative Reports, 1984 - 93, SCDC Office, Cooch-Bihar.

For providing finance through a single window for realising the development programmes, the Reserve Bank of India initiated the idea of lead Bank in every district. The district of Cooch Behar is also assisted by a lead Bank with its branches spreaded over the district. The lead Bank of Cooch Behar is the Central Bank of India. The lead Bank is held responsible to formulate the district credit plan for every year. Such credit plan is drawn by the bank for its service area specially covering targeted group for micro level users for uplifting their economic position in phased manner. Credit agencies are composed of the branches of the lead Bank, other commercial Banks and the Co-operative Banks. These credit agencies in co-ordination with the panchayat functionaries and associated government mechinaries are supposed to ensure the implementation of the plan within stipulated time frame by way of identification of qualitative entrepreneur with activity, timely disbursal of the loan, creation of assets and their proper utilisation, close monitoring and repayment of bank dues. In fact the district of Cooch Behar has experienced with ten consecutive credit plans during the last ten years, such as from 1988-89 to 1998-99. The district credit plan includes the physical target and financial outlay for upliftment of economic position of micro-level populace and creation of job in a phased manner and ensure to achieve the target within the year for rapid development in the district both in the farm sector and non-farm sector. The target and achievement of the credit plan

specially for I.R.D.P. for atleast last two years may be provided in the following table.

Year	Plan Target Achievement	Agriculture and Allied	M.F.S.	OPS	Percentage in Lakhs
1996-97	Target	1540.04	17.67	642.88	—
1996-97	Achievement	933.02	361.45	393.73	63.45
1997-98	Target	2943.06	510.92	510.19	—
1997-98	Achievement	524.17	116.69	191.75	21.00

Source : Balletin of District Credit Plan (Annual Report, Central Bank of India, Cooch Behar, 1998

The non-achievement of targets may be of different reasons such as absence of qualitative entrepreneur and difficulty in identifying them, application of individual cases instead of group or cluster with considerable project cost, non-creation of assets in most cases, diversification of loan funds, absence of close monitoring etc.

The Scheduled Castes and Tribes of the district usually get a share of the different areas of development planning meant for the entitlement of general public of the district. In accordance with the Constitutional stipulations and the directives of the state government the different governmental organisations and agencies distribute a portion of the share of development efforts for the scheduled castes and tribes. The different development departments normally keep a portion of their budgetary expenditure for the development of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in accordance with the stipulated percentage. Such budget separation is kept under Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan. In fact, it is obligatory on the part of the different development department to keep a separate budget for Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub-plan. For this purpose the development agencies make separate plan for the development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The plan projects are so made that they can cover at least fifty per cent of this targetted population. Persons benefitted from those Projects covering more than fifty Per Cent scheduled castes population may be categorised as projects under Special Component Plan and if the project benefits covered more than fifty per cent tribal population may be included in tribal sub-plan.

Planning of the different development agencies is made either at the block level or at the district level. The Projects to be included in Special Component Plan or Tribal Sub-Plan are determined either at the district or at the block level. The district of Cooch Behar is having with the District Welfare Committee and Block Welfare Committees for the development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. These Committees usually get reconstructed soon after the completion of every Panchayat election. For bringing a project under Special Component Plan and Tribal sub-plan Category requires the approval of the respective Block Welfare Committee and the District Welfare Committee. At the block level, Sabhapati, Panchayat Samity and at the district level Sabhadhipati, Zilla Parishad preside over the respective Block Welfare Committee and District Welfare Committee. In fact the district Plan document is composed of two kinds of planning : general and specific. The specific component of the district plan is the aggregation of block level Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan duly recommended and approved both by the Block Welfare Committee and District Welfare Committee.

One point is relevant here to mention that the specified planning for the development of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes has been the additional effort and has never been the alternative effort of development meant for general population. For this reason, the district plan formulation effort should not consider the number of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes population living in different parts of the district. The scheduled castes and scheduled tribes population are equally entitled to enjoy the share of benefits to be accrued from district general plan efforts. The additional efforts are there with an objective purpose to equalise the status of the scheduled castes and tribes with the general population of the district. The scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes welfare officials of the district co-ordinate the total specific plan efforts meant for this backward population. The Department of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Welfare through its monitoring cell control and co-ordinates the Special Component Plan and the Tribal Sub-Plan of the district.

In addition to the specified budget included in Special Component Plan and the Tribal sub-plan, there has been the urgent need for the additional expenditure in certain specified areas. For mitigating the expenditure of the additionally taken specified schemes, the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes welfare Department has been endowed with a budget. The district level office of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled

Tribes performs its responsibilities in specific ten functional areas. These are : (a) Students Welfare Scheme complementary to education; (b) Management of Pre-examination Training Centre for preparation of Civil Service Examination and other Competitive Service Examination; (c) Establishment of Training cum Production on Centre for training in different professional activities; (d) Realisation of family based financial schemes sponsored by IRDP and funded through district Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Financial Development and Finance Corporation; (e) Actualisation of family based economic Programmes sponsored by West Bengal Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Development and Finance Corporation; (f) Realisation of the family based projects, establishment of industry, Construction of roads, Wire house and proper distribution system and the realisation of the group based economic projects meant for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes; (g) Provision of support and financial help in extending cultural activities and sports activities; (h) Conversion of Kuccha latrines into sanitary latrines and re-habilitation of the scavengers by way of providing them alternative means of life; (i) Application of anti-untouchability provisions and taking measures for immediate liquidation of untouchability; (j) To provide authentic certificate to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes populace.

The discussion so far made provides an understanding that a concerted action programme in consonance with the directives of the state government has been undertaken combining different areas of development for the over all development of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes population of the district. A thorough examination may be attempted to identity the ground realities of development programmes of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe populace.

The State Government has laid detailed schemes in coloboration with Central Government for the overall development of the scheduled castes of the district of Cooch Behar. It has been prescribed that majority of the scheduled castes population should be brought under Special Component Plan and extension of benefits to this Community should be made in a targetive manner. The State Government has drawn annual action plan to cover nearly thirty-two thousand scheduled castes families under Special Component Plan with a matching subsidy through Integrated Rural Development Programme. It was decided that the Scheduled Castes families to be benefited from Special Component Plant will comprise of Agriculture - 25 per cent,

Industry - 20 per cent, Trade and Business - 20 per cent, Animal Husbandry - 15 per cent, Minor Irrigation - 10 per cent, Fishery - 8 per cent, Cereculture - 2 per cent. On the other hand, Trade and Business, Industry and Animal Husbandry for the urban areas was separately considered with a target of 40 per cent, 40 per cent and 20 respectively.<sup>11</sup>

Uptill the mid 80's the target group beneficiaries of the scheduled castes used to be covered by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Welfare Department with its field offices at the district and also by the Departments like Agriculture, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, Small and Cottage Industry, Relief and Welfare, Education, Health etc. Such a multiplicities of institutions and agencies for distribution benefit for scheduled castes experienced lack of co-ordination and provided bottle necks for achieving the planned target. It was also a problem of fixing the responsibility of scheduled castes development on a particular department or agency. Passing of the responsibilities of failures and non-achievement from one department to another had been the experience. Ultimately, however, a nodal agency has been created to disburse multifacated benefits to the scheduled castes from one window — the West Bengal scheduled castes Development Finance Corporation has been provided with the responsibility to fund the scheduled castes populace from a single window. The Corporation has a District branch at Cooch Behar with the District Majistrate as its Chairman. The Corporation acts under the executive direction of a District Manager. The Corporation has built tie-up arrangement for linking its margin money loan with Bank loans and Government subsidy. In fact, the margin money loan varies from 20 per cent to 25 per cent of the project cost and the balance bourne by by government subsidy. In fact the margin money loan varies from 20 per cent to 25 percent of the project cost and the balance bourne by government subsidy and loans from commercial and co-operative banks. The Corporation sponsore schemes through the Panchayat Samity and other District level agencies are now being financed by the financial institutions from one window that is from banks and other financial institutions. The guidelines of the tie-up arrangements with the Corporation and Banks, Government agencies for short term and mid term loan are circulated at all levels that is upto the level of Gram Panchayats.<sup>12</sup>

The different programmes for scheduled castes development may be broadly categorised as under.

### **Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme [ RLEGP]**

The Principal objective of this fully centrally sponsored Programme is to provide the guarantee of employment for atleast 1 per cent for each landless labourers' household for at least 100 days in a year during lin agricultural season. The programe aims at creating durable public assets through this employment scheme. The Zilla Parishad, Cooch Behar has been at the apex of planning and execution of this project. The programme has to derive assistance from Panchayat Samities. The 12 Panchayat Samity's of the District are vested with the responsibility to draw up action plans for their own jurisdiction and execute the plans through their respective Standing Committees. However the ultimate responsibility of total planning and execution of RLEGP lies with the Zilla Parishad, which is accountable to the Government.

Another important feature of RLEGP operating in the district of Cooch Behar is while implementing the project, no contractor can be employed for construction or any other work. It has been conditioned that the wage component is 50 percent of the budgeted expenses, and 50 percent of non-wage component. However the State Government can exceed non-wage component provided they arrange for extra fund. It is however stipulated for the whole state that the mean average of agricultural wage would be fixed at Rs. 6 in cash and 1 kg. of wheat. The labour input would be about 4 hours per day.<sup>13</sup>

### **National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)**

The NREP has been a replacement of the food for work programme and has been in operation from December 5, 1980, on proportionate central and state share 50 : 50 basis. This programe was included in the Sixth Five Year Plans and had been pursued by the Seventh, Eighth and even included in the Ninth Five Year Plan. The objective of the programme was to strengthen and improve rural infrastructures, create durable assets and improve the rural economy. The functional areas are : (a) Aforestation and Social Forestry on Government, Community land, Plantation along with Canal banks, road side and in the denuded forest; (b) Drinking water, wells, community Irrigation wells, group housing and land development project for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; (c) Construction, renovation, deepening of existing tanks

for human use or for cattle, for developing irrigation; (d) Minor irrigation works including those for flood protection, field channel, drainage and anti-water-logging; (e) Soil and Water conservation and land reclamation; (f) Rural link road with hard surfacing; cross drainage structure etc. (g) Construction and repair of community buildings like schools, library, Panchayat Office and also community toilets, passenger sheds, community biogas plant etc. (h) Any other scheme creating durable assets benefiting rural poor can be initiated under this project.<sup>14</sup>

The functional areas corroborate the fact that the NREP has been a highly labour oriented scheme utilising local resources as much as possible for implementing the scheme. The project preparation and implementation has been vested in the Gram Panchayats. The Gram Panchayats are to be prepared local level NREP Scheme with the help of technical guide-line and schedule of works circulated by the Development and Planning Department of the State Government. Under this project, expenditure upto Rs. 500 needs no technical vetting and upto Rs. 20000 vetting of concerned Sub-Assistant Engineer at Panchayat Samity level is required. But above Rs. 20000 vetting authority lies with District level Technical Officer or the District Engineer. Although the primary responsibility for implementing all the NREP schemes are provided to the Gram Panchayats, for Cooch Behar, big schemes are implemented by the Zilla Parishad and small schemes are left to the Panchayats.<sup>15</sup>

It has been stipulated that the schemes under NREP shall have to be prepared keeping in view to set aside 10 per cent of the Annual outlay for afforestation on Social Forestry and 10 per cent for other schemes which directly benefit the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes of the districts, 50 per cent of the estimated cost is restricted to the material component. The minimum wages would be Rs. 6 in cash plus 1 kg. of food grain. No contractors are allowed to implement the work. The supervision of the implementation will be done by the Gram Panchayats, however, the Zilla Parishad and the Panchayat Samities will exercise the powers of supervision. In addition to it a District level Special Committee, under the aegis of the District Rural Development Agency, will monitor and supervise the implementation of NREP Projects.<sup>16</sup>

### **Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) :**

This important Programme has been initiated in West Bengal during 1978-79. The Programme extends to all Blocks of the State from 1980 and the District of Cooch Behar is no exception. The primary objectives of the programme are to extend the assistance of the individual family specially the Scheduled Castes and Tribes family with government subsidy and supporting loan from financial institution. This programme, objectively speaking, is meant for those living below poverty level.

The criteria of selection of the families to be brought under this programme are families whose yearly income is less than Rs. 3500. The proportionate division of the project is small farmers should have a share of 25 per cent of the total project cost; One-third of the project cost is shared by marginal farmers, land less labourers; the scheduled castes will have the privilege of having the 50 per cent of the project cost. The Schedule castes small farmers are to be benefited with 50 per cent subsidy in cash. Of land less labourers, whose income does not exceed 200 per month and 50 per cent of the income from the Non-agricultural sources having no homestead to be identified in this programme.<sup>17</sup>

The objectives of the programme have been to evolve a functionally integrated strategy for increasing production and productivity in agricultural and other allied sector and also to derive benefits for secondary and tertiary sectors. Adequate support in terms of raw materials, marketing facility, training and upgradation of skills have been the other areas of considerations of the programme. The Programme, in short, ensures optimum utilisation of the ground and surface water, dairy, animal husbandry, fisheries, village industries etc. The programme is committed to enhance income of the identified target group specially for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Plans for the Programmes are to be formulated at the block level keeping in view the stipulations of the governments. The Project Officer of the District Rural Development Agency will co-ordinate the District level functional agencies for the formulation and implementation of the programme.<sup>18</sup> On the basis of the plans so formulated and after analysing the district resources the Central bank of India, the lead Bank of the district of Cooch Behar is to develop a credit plan for the five years terms. The Credit Plan indicates the areas of operation of each Bank Branch and cluster of Villages allotted to the Branch, and the quantum of credit support likely to be available to each branch for the allotted villages for various sectors of activities.

The beneficiaries have been phased out annually to cover targeted 3000 beneficiaries in each block in every five years.

Another important area of IRDP is fish farming. The scheme has been drawn with twin objectives : a) increase of fish production; b) improvement of socio-economic conditions of fishermen. The Department of Fishery has designed implementation of programme with active involvement and co-operation of the Panchayat Samities and the concerned government agencies such as DRDA, FFDA, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Welfare Department, West Bengal Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Financial Corporation. The scheme provided for the 50 per cent subsidy of the project cost. The design is as under :

Source of Fund	Scheduled Castes Groups	Non-Scheduled Castes groups
Subsidy from Fisheries Department	25%	25%
Subsidy from DRDA	-	25%
Subsidy under Special Component Plan	25%	-
Margin Money loan from West Bengal Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Development Finance Corporation	20%	-
Bank Loan	30%	50%
	100%	100%

Source : SCSTFDC, Annual Report, 1997-98, Cooch Behar.

Under this Scheme, small farmers are also provided with Mini Kits Demonstration and Nuresry Management Training are mainly conducted at the beneficiaries tank or pond or water area. The individual farmer is entitled to Rs. 12.50 subsidy for 300 fry, raised from the ponds. The maximum limit of such subsidy is Rs. 2,5000/-. The Fisherman Co-operatives are entitled to a higher rate of subsidy Rs. 20/- for every 300 fry raised to a maximum of Rs. 80,000.<sup>19</sup> The development schemes or programmes specifically made for the scheduled castes and the general development programmes from which the scheduled castes enjoy a specific portion of share have been many. The programmes are mostly initiated by the District Rural Development Agency and the Zilla Parishad through the Panchayat Samities under the sponsorship of the state government and the Central government. Thus there have been programmes meant for the scheduled castes operating at the village level

are materialised by the multiprone development agencies. The fundamental purpose of social welfare administration has been to make a balance between growth and equity in a greater context of equality and social justice. The study of welfare programmes specially designed and provided separately to the scheduled castes and tribes has been urgent to know how this backward target group has been attempted to bring to the main stream of development process of the District. In Cooch Behar District, the Programmes of JRY, IAY, IRDP, TRYSEM, Development of Women and Children in Rural Area (DWCRA) RLEGP, NREP, Massive Programmes for Small and Marginal Farmers and Programmes for Scheduled Tribes under Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) etc. have been launched by the District Rural Development Agency. The programmes of allotment of free plots, subsidy for rural housing, rural sanitation and improved Chullah has been sponsored by zilla parishad. Other welfare measures such as scholarship for physically handicapped, old age Pensions, Pre Matric and Post Matric scholarship, Health and Family planning programmes for Scheduled Castes and Rural electrification, Fishermen's Development schemes, Cottage and small scale Industries, Khadi and village Industries schemes, Relief and welfare works, Millions Wells scheme for them have been covered by other departments engaged in development administration of the District. There have been a steady subsidy of funds for certain demarcated development programmes under special component plan and some of the programmes formulated engineered and implemented by the DRDA through the assistance of three tier District Panchayati Raj structure. The programmes projects schemes as directed above are considered as an integral part of development. In Cooch Behar district, under the Special Component Plan (SCP) for Scheduled Castes, MADA for Scheduled Tribes and certain other general and specific programmes have been under taken to cater the needs and requirement of rural populace belonging to scheduled caste category.

### **Programmes Implementation :**

The present working of NREP and RLEGP, sometime raise doubts of actual implementation and the employment of landless agricultural labourers. Suggestive alternatives are : The experience at the operation level of different development programmes suggests for certain new alternatives. In the agroclusters, Public Works Standing Committees, Development, Planning and Land Refarms Standing Committees are to conduct family survey to record the names and income of the landless agricultural labourers, and also, from the record of Bargadar and Patta Holders, shall

sort out names of the farmers owning less than 1 acre of land. Action plans are to be drawn for five years of a given agro-cluster, mentioning the works to be taken up for implementation in every year, man days required, fund requirement, time involvement, etc. so that man power available in a cluster can be systematically used. Plans are to be made known to the public, so that any deviation from the Action Plan, or bifurcation of fund can be looked after by the public.

IRDP fund flows through DRDA and IRDP Special Component Plan tie-up fund flows through WBSCSTDFC, and SCST Welfare Department fund flow authorities, according to the schemes, disburse fund to the respective implementing Agencies. The suggestive alternatives for IRDP Schemes are : (i) To complete the Family Survey in each agro-cluster to find out the sincerity of the entrepreneurs in different IRDP schemes, in different sectors. Need-based selection of the entrepreneurs is almost necessary; (ii) To develop a Block level Plan and to follow the list of activities to formulate Family Plans. On the basis of Family Plans, the respective funding Agencies will release money to the respective sthayee samitis and Bank. Strict monitoring and co-ordination is necessary, in the line discussed in the above mentioned section short interval meetings, at least once in a month, with the DLCC, BLCC and implementing Agency officials are required to coordinate action implementation and to review the causes of delay; (iii) Government should come forward in cattle breeding in the District, to supply quality cattle at a reasonable price. Gram Panchayats and Fisheries and Animal Husbandry Standing Committee should monitor the beneficiaries, so that they do not sell out in normal financial distress. Selling of cattle by way of loan, must be discouraged at all levels. Block Plan formulation, and District level Plan formulation; (iv) Joint follow up after loan disbursement, is required by the Banks and government Extension Agencies, to monitor the problems of the beneficiaries in maintaining the cattle and other equipments. The joint monitoring body should be also help the beneficiaries in marketing the products. <sup>20</sup>

Functioning of Government Department and three tier Panchayati Raj is described in previous sections. The Standing Committees formulated with different government officials and people's representatives supposed to function well in implementing developmental programmes. Communication gap leading to co-ordination gap is a major technical problem in understanding schemes and programmes. Socio-Political differences in certain cases leads to clashes of understanding. The objective of total

development and to elevate scheduled castes, socio-economically, from the poverty line, should be the objective, which will minimise the socio-political differences. The suggestive guidelines should be : (i) Training of government officials, and people's representatives at the District level, as well as State level, with specific case studies in all areas i.e., from village survey, Family survey, Family plan formulation, Block Plan formulation, and District level Plan formulation ; (ii) Clear guidelines of plan formulation and budget formulation, to understand fund flow in different schemes, from different Agencies. Formulation of Agencies, like DRDA, FFDA, and WBSCSTDFC, to understand their budgetary pattern responsibility and functioning. Functioning of Agencies other than funding Agencies, and also, the role and function of Bank with the funding and non funding Agencies. Understanding the functioning of Agencies, the joint responsibility of scheme formulation according to government order, central government guidelines, and monitoring required as per Central and state government guidelines; (iii) Training regarding report writing, coordination in report writing, data assimilation, and understanding of information system, record keeping both to the peoples' representatives and government officials; (iv) Batch by batch training and its functioning, from the District level to village level, and further co-ordination through monthly BLCC and DLCC meeting, will review the action implementation progress; (v) The Gram Panchayats and Panchayats are also to be trained in developmental security i.e., to guard the plan benefit, so that the benefit do not smuggle out to neighbouring countries. Migration from neighbouring countries, are to be checked in accordance with the Gram Panchayat Register, and also, through periodic check of the Sub-registrars office.

Eight Standing Committees are formulated at the District as well as at the Block level, for action implementation of various programmes Mahila Samiti, Khadi and Village Industry, Health and Family Welfare, Social Housing, Agro-Forestry, Relief and Welfare Works are to be attached with respective Standing Committee. Mahila Samitis are not attached to any Standing Committee at Present Mahila. Samitis' activities are to be broadened, attaching their activities and representatives with Public Health Standing Committees, Agri-Irrigation and Cooperative Standing Committee, Education, Small Scale Industry, Relief, Public Welfare, Development Planning and Land Reforms, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry Standing Committees. In all these activities, women are socially engaged their activities, once officially recognised, the implementation performances would be faster and better. In respective cases,

training are to be extended through TRYSEM schemes, and in Relief and Welfare schemes, at the agro-cluster level. A special officer senior state cadre, or all India cadre, should be in charge in the District, to activate the role of women in respective Standing Committees, imparting training to the village literate and educated girls. Checking the downward mobility of women through training and alternative employment like in hand role cigar, animal husbandry, artisan crafts and industry, will be ideal to activate the Mahila Samitis to bring them closer in the Standing Committees activities.

Successful recovery checks slipping back and establish promises of development. From the field survey data, few aspects have become prominent, that all the loan camps were not tied up with monitoring and marketing. Good plans turn bad since the funding agencies raised doubt of the willingness of repayment. Understanding of short term and medium term loan schemes working were theoretically framed, without considering the practical workability. Standing Committees and Gram Panchayats initially had monitoring, but they had never seen to the success of marketing. Fresh flow of Bank finance is on the lower side due to bad recovery. The reasons of such bad recovery are mainly because of adverse propaganda by a section of influential people in the rural areas, under-financing by some of the Bank branches, shorter repayment schedule, awareness among the beneficiaries about the necessities of loan repayment, and poor manpower position in the Banks and sub-divisional offices, effecting poor follow-ups and hampering disposal of certificate cases. Funding agencies also, to an extent, did monitoring, but both the government agencies and peoples representatives, had not made coordinated efforts as regular routine work, to monitor the functioning of various loans, and to work out marketing of products. Comprehensive effort, typing up with marketing and loan recovery, could have given expected result of recovery. The suggestive methods of recovery and checking of slipping back are ;- (i) Target of credit flow should be tagged with target of recovery, as suggested, from pre-kharif to Rabi crop loan, supported, from pre-kharif to Rabi crop loan, supportive price mechanism in crop marketing can be tagged up with recovery. But, in cases of Kharif and vegetables, monitoring should be tagged up with cropping, harvest and recovery. Respective Sthayee Samitis must arrange small batch by batch credit camps, linking with monitoring and harvesting. At the Gram Panchayat level, and also at the Sthayee Samitis level, regular functional monitoring and marketing cells are to be opened ; (ii)

facilities that is availability of primary, secondary, and higher educational institutions, drinking water facilities, health care facilities, should be stratified according to all facilities available, partly available, not at all available and stratification of these villages will be clubbed with stratified clusters; (v) Villages having no irrigation facilities, but having demography of high concentration, medium and low concentration of scheduled castes, with water are facilities like tanks, bils, canals, rivers, swamps, marshy lands, shall be stratified with the irrigated clusters, since these areas will have preferential fund flow arrangement to have quick irrigation facilities.

Further, according to the socio-cultural norms, cluster formation should be contiguous and homogeneous to form 'Agricultural Societies' in agro-clusters, either registered societies under societies Registration Act, or cooperative societies under cooperative societies Act, which will benefit the fund flow from the National Cooperative Development Corporation and NABARD and further, will ensure achievements of the plan benefits and recovery of loans.<sup>23</sup>

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## CHAPTER - IV

### SCHEDULED CASTE WELFARE : An Experience at the Grass-root

While undertaking the field level survey some selected mauzas (small villages) under five gram panchayats of each Panchayat Samity have been taken into account. The villages chosen for survey have been considered on certain parameters, such as, the density of the scheduled caste population, distance from the town, socio economic status of the village. While undertaking the village survey the criteria were observed both from negative and positive stand points. Villages often selected Gram Panchayats, five each from Mathabhanga-I and Cooch Behar - II Panchayat Samity respectively, have been brought under survey. The gram panchayats chosen under Mathabhanga-I Panchayat Samity are Sikarpur, Panchagarh, Hazrahat, Gopalpur, Kedererhat. One village of each gram panchayat has been studied thoroughly to understand the different trends and events, factors and forces operating at the grass root level for the realisation of the scheduled castes development programmes. These villages are Bharogharia Gharkuta under Sikarpur Gram Panchayat, Barokaudara under Panchagarh Gram Panchayat, Dhaibhangi Balasi under Hazrahat Gram Panchayat, Kharija Gopalpur under Gopalpur Gram Panchayat and Keshribari under Kedererhat Gram Panchayat. Simultaneously the Gram Panchayats chosen under Cooch Behar - II Panchayat Samity are Madhupur, Ambari, Gopalpur, Banerwar and Khagrabari. One village of each gram panchayat has been studied thoroughly to understand the different trend and events, factors, and forces operating at the grass root level for the realisation of the scheduled caste development programme.

These villages are Haripur under Madhupur Gram Panchayat, Bokalirmoth under Ambari Gram Panchayat, Harinmara under Gopalpur Gram Panchayat, Hatidoba under Banerwar Gram Panchayat and Banchukamari under Khagrabari Gram Panchayat. It is obvious to mention that the entire field research is based on the scheduled castes beneficiaries. Beneficiaries, hundred in number have been identified on the basis of data supplied by the gram panchayats and compared with the voter list available from the District election office.

The areas which have been thoroughly surveyed are : (a) age status of scheduled castes respondents; (b) household status of the scheduled caste respondents; (c) educational status; (d) pattern of land holding; (e) economic and occupational status; (f) benefit provided under different development programmes; (g) human development status; (h) impact on development programmes on scheduled castes; (i) perception of the respondents on the development programmes so far implemented; (j) perception of the respondents on the development of their own family; (k) perception on village development and gram panchayat; (l) political awareness of the respondents. While attempting to unravel the different facts as depicted above, following tables would provide us an understanding on the issues.

#### Age Status of Beneficiaries (in Per Cent) under Cooch Behar- II

G.P.	Mouza	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Baneswar	Hatidoba	25	Nil	55	5	10	Nil	5	Nil	100
Ambari	Bokalmath	15	5	45	5	15	5	Nil	Nil	100
Madhupur	Haripur	15	5	65	10	5	Nil	Nil	Nil	100
Gopalpur	Harinmara	15	Nil	65	15	5	Nil	Nil	Nil	100
Khagrabari	Bonchukamari	20	Nil	45	10	15	5	5	Nil	100

Source : *Field Data*

Explanation :

1. Upto 30 years of age (Male);
2. Upto 30 years of age (Female);
3. 31 to 50 years age (Male);
4. 31 to 50 years age (Female);
5. 51 to 64 years age (Male);
6. 51 to 64 years age (Female);
7. 65 and above years (Male);
8. 65 and above years (Female);
9. Total 100 respondents

#### Age Status of Beneficiaries (in Per Cent) under Mathabhanga-I

G.P.	Mouza	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Sikarpur	Barogharia	10	5	60	Nil	15	Nil	Nil	Nil	100
	Gharkuta									
Panchagarh	Barokauardaga	15	5	45	5	20	5	Nil	5	100
Hazrahath	Dhaibhangi Balasi	Nil	5	60	5	20	5	5	Nil	100
Gopalpur	Kharija	20	10	40	15	5	Nil	10	Nil	100
	Gopalpur									
Kedarerhat	Keshribari	15	5	35	20	20	5	Nil	Nil	100

Source : *Field Data*

Explanation :

1. Upto 30 Yrs. of age (Male);
2. Upto 30 Yrs. of age (Female);
3. 31 to 50 Yrs. of age (Male);
4. 31 to 50 Yrs. of age (Female);
5. 51 to 64 Yrs. of age (Male);
6. 51 to 64 Yrs. of age (Female);
7. 65 Yrs. and above age (Male);
8. 65 Yrs. and above age (Female)
9. Total 100 respondents.

From the above table it can be observed that out of total scheduled castes beneficiaries the age group of more than thirty one to fifty enjoyed the largest share of benefits. However there has been a tremendous sex bias while we compare scheduled castes male beneficiaries and scheduled castes female beneficiaries of the same age group. There has also been village wise variation on the issue of providing benefits to the male members and the female members of the same age group. Beneficiaries in the age group of fifty one to sixty four years enjoyed the second largest share of benefits and the male bias in providing benefit is also seen discernable. Beneficiaries below the age group of thirty years enjoyed more or less eighteen per cent of the benefits provided to the scheduled castes. The gender bias is comparatively lesser in this age group in getting benefits. This is presumably because of the growing consciousness of the female member of the society as well as the general consensus on the liquidation of heavily loaded long cherished culture of gender bias tilted heavily towards male. The lowest in the rung is the age of sixty five years. Such age group category could well be treated if there was scheme on oldage benefits. In the recent past a scheme on oldage pension has been launched, but no such beneficiary has been found in the survey.

#### Particulars of Household Population

Panchayat Samity	Gram Panchayat	Mouza	1	2	3
Mathabhanga - I	Sikarpur	Baragharia Gharkuta	100	84	16
Mathabhanga - I	Panchagarh	Barokauardaga	100	76	24
Mathabhanga - I	Hazrahath	Dhaibhangi Balasi	100	82	18
Mathabhanga - I	Gopalpur	Kharija Gopalpur	100	84	16
Mathabhanga - I	Kedererhat	Keshribari	100	92	8
Cooch Behar - II	Baneswar	Hatidaba	100	81	19
Cooch Behar - II	Ambari	Bokalirmath	100	89	11
Cooch Behar - II	Madhupur	Haripur	100	87	13
Cooch Behar - II	Gopalpur	Harinmara	100	92	8
Cooch Behar - II	Khagrabari	Banchukamari	100	76	24

Source : Field Data

Explanation :

1. Respondents; 2. Household having more than five family members; 3. Household having at least five or less than five family members.

The table presents the household status of hundred scheduled castes beneficiaries of each village under study. For the convenience of the study two categories of household have been identified such as household having at least five or less than five family members and house hold having more than five family members. A little more than 87 per cent of the total families of the scheduled castes beneficiaries surveyed belong to the categories of families having more than five members, while the families belonging to less than five members category share only 12.7 per cent. However, there has been village wise variation in the percentage. Villages nearer to urban area shows a little more rise in the category of family having five or less than five members, for example, the village Panchagarh Panchayat under Mathabhanga - I Panchayat Samity and the village of Khagrabari Panchayat under Cooch Behar - II Panchayat Samity are having a little more percentage of families belonging to five members or less than five members category compared to the other villages surveyed. The reason is Panchagarh is nearer to Mathabhanga Municipal town and Khagrabari is almost attached to the Municipal area of Cooch Behar town, the District Headquarters. The impact of urbanisation and the message of family planning has some bearings on the villages nearer to urban areas. Another important factor of the presence of big families has been the predominance of the traditional agronomic culture. The agriculture based rural society of Cooch Behar still cherishes the survival of extended family either as an option or as a compulsion. The option comes out of the realisation of belonging together and the compulsion emerges from the fear of fragmentation of land. A common feeling among the respondents has been the increase in the number of family member means the potential increase of units of income in the family. For this simple reason the number of child labours has been on the rise, counter producing literacy mission a success. Moreover, measures on population control have not been found effective. Lack of awareness, education and paucity of the avenues of recreations have been some of the important reasons behind the growing size of families. Such big size of families has a negative bearing on the benefits to be accrued by a single member of the family. The benefits do have little impact on the quality of support services for catering of a growing quantum of family population.

Such large numbers of family size is essentially linked to the level of the education of the house hold of the scheduled castes beneficiaries. The following table provides the weak level of literacy status of the households of the scheduled castes beneficiaries.

## Status of Literacy of the Households of the Scheduled Castes Beneficiaries

Panchayat Samity	Gram Panchayat	Mouza	1	2	3	4
Mathabhanga - I	Sikarpur	Banagharia Gharkuta	100	15	10	75
Mathabhanga - I	Panchagarh	Barokauardaga	100	20	8	82
Mathabhanga - I	Hazrahat	Dhaibhangi Balasi	100	5	18	77
Mathabhanga - I	Gopalpur	Kharija Gopalpur	100	10	10	80
Mathabhanga - I	Kedererhat	Keshribari	100	8	15	77
Cooch Behar - II	Baneswar	Hatidoba	100	15	7	78
Cooch Behar - II	Ambari	Bokalirmath	100	10	7	83
Cooch Behar - II	Madhupur	Haripur	100	14	5	81
Cooch Behar - II	Gopalpur	Harinmara	100	12	8	80
Cooch Behar - II	Khagrabari	Banchukamari	100	20	5	75

Source : Field Data

Explanations :

1. Total number of households studied;
2. Family with complete literate member (in per cent)
3. Family with complete illeterate member (in per cent);
4. Family with both literate & illeterate member (in per cent)

The households of the scheduled castes beneficiaries of the villages under survey represent a little more than 9 per cent state of complete illeteracy that is out of one thousand families studied, 93 families remain still complete illeterate. Despite sincere drives made by the district literacy mission some families have still remained unattended. This situation does not, however, mean that total literacy drive has been a failure in Cooch Behar. On the other hand one can well observe the impact of literacy movement while viewing 88 per cent of the one thousand families studied remains in the category of families with both literate and illeterate members and it has been observed that there has been a steady increase of percentage of these category of households. On the contrary nearly 13 per cent of the total households studied belongs to the first category that is families with complete literate member. It has also been observed that villages attached to the urban areas share a better percentage of families having complete literate members. Another point to be mentioned is that the percentage of illeterate member in the households under the mixed category that is families with both literate and illeterate member, has been low. Such a lowering tendency suggests that even among the

most backward scheduled castes families the awareness of being literate has been growing.

A survey of the educational status of the scheduled castes beneficiaries may be presented in the following table.

Educational Status of Beneficiaries ( in Per Cent)

Panchayat Samity	Gram Panchayat	Mouza	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Mathabhanga - I	Sikarpur	Banaghoria	10	30	30	5	15	Nil	10	Nil	Nil	Nil	100
		Gharkuta											
Mathabhanga - I	Panchagarh	Barokavardaga		10	20	30	15	10	Nil	15	Nil	Nil	100
Mathabhanga - I	Hazrahat	Dhaibhangi	15	35	20	Nil	15	Nil	15	Nil	Nil	Nil	100
		Balasi											
Mathabhanga - I	Gopalpur	Kharija	15	30	10	Nil	20	5	15	Nil	Nil	Nil	100
		Gopalpur											
Mathabhanga - I	Ledererhat	Keshribari	20	15	15	15	15	5	15	Nil	Nil	Nil	100
Cooch Behar - II	Baneswar	Hatidaba	5	30	35	Nil	10	Nil	15	Nil	5	Nil	100
Cooch Behar - II	Ambari	Bokalirmath	5	25	25	5	20	5	10	Nil	5	Nil	100
Cooch Behar - II	Madhupur	Haripur	10	30	30	Nil	15	5	10	Nil	Nil	Nil	100
Cooch Behar - II	Gopalpur	Harinmara	5	30	30	5	20	Nil	10	Nil	Nil	Nil	100
Cooch Behar - II	Khagrabari	Banchukamari	10	35	30	5	15	Nil	5	Nil	Nil	Nil	100

Source : Field Data

EXPLANATIONS:

1. Illeterate male; 2. Illeterate female; 3. Literate male; 4. Literate female; 5. Upto Class V male; 6. Upto Class V female; 7. From VI to X male; 8. From VI to x female; 9. XI to above male; 10. XI to above female; 11. Total respondants

The above table presents extremely pitiable state of educational status of the scheduled castes beneficiaries. Illiteracy of the respondents occupies the most dominant position. On an average 35 per cent of the total beneficiaries are completely illiterate. In most of the villages women's illiteracy has out numbered male's illiteracy. The beneficiaries in most of the villages are literate males. The number of literate females has also been low than that of the literate males. Most of the female beneficiaries have not seen the upper primary school and even not a single female beneficiary was found who graduated from higher secondary schools. Such a state of educational status repudiates any claim on the part of the government of success in spreading education at the grass root. The economic and occupational status of the scheduled castes beneficiaries of the villages under study may be presented in the following table.

## Occupational Status of Beneficiaries ( in Per Cent )

Panchayat Samity	Gram Panchayat	Primary Occupation			Secondary Occupation
		1	2	3	4
Cooch Behar - II	Baneswar	35	48	1	16
Cooch Behar - II	Ambari	30	46	4	20
Cooch Behar - II	Madhupur	35	36	1	28
Cooch Behar - II	Gopalpur	30	50	Nil	20
Cooch Behar - II	Khagrabari	30	40	2	28
Mathabhanga - I	Sikarpur	30	49	1	20
Mathabhanga - I	Panchagarh	25	45	1	29
Mathabhanga - I	Hazrahat	20	60	1	19
Mathabhanga - I	Gopalpur	15	65	2	18
Mathabhanga - I	Kedererhat	16	68	Nil	16

Source : Field Data

### EXPLANATIONS :

1. Cultivation; 2. Daily Labour in Agriculture; 3. Other Job; 4. Jobs other than agriculture (Mason, Construction workers, Business)

The occupational profile of the respondents substantiates the argument that the rural society of Cooch behar is predominantly agricultural scheduled caste population comprising of the majority of the total population resembles in terms of their economic status with the rural populace of the district. It is heartening to note that the land man ratio of the scheduled castes population has been very much weak. The primary occupation of the scheduled castes beneficiaries under study has been that of cultivation. Out of one thousands scheduled castes respondents interviewed 26 per cent of them possess own cultivable land, however the quantum of land varies from respondent to respondent. Most of the respondents are of the opinion that they have land of their own but they have to loose land owing to different financial compulsions. The rapidly held marginalisation process has been the most fundamental factor behind the growing agony among them regimented and reflected through various social and political assertions. Moreover out of one thousand respondents interviewed majority of them (nearly 52 per cent) have been under compulsion to work as daily labourers in agricultural lands occupied by the dominant section of the rural society. Only nearly 2 per cent of the

respondents are engaged in rural agriculture related activities other than joining in field cultivation.

Since the district of Cooch Behar is a no industry district and an 'A' category backward district, there has been negligible number of population engaged in small and medium scale industries. However a little more than 20 per cent of the respondents is engaged in tertiary sector activities such as small scale trade, business, mason, construction workers etc. An important issue which has been identified during field survey is that there has been a rapidly growing tendency for having inter regional and interstate migration to search for a handsome wage for the people living in the remotest part of the district. A good number of relatives and relations of the respondents have been migrated to the different cities of northern and western India to search for a better livelihood. Such migrations are taking place because of the intrinsic financial compulsion of the poor families, most of them belonging to scheduled caste category. Because of the growing size of the family and the rapidly losing size of land, ablebodied adults and children of more than ten years age are pushed out from agriculture and a recent perception on the glossy feature in the cities and industrial areas pulled them out and made them attracted. Such a picture is not always wanted, however the compulsions compelled them to migrate. A pattern of landholding of the respondents may corroborate the abysmal financial status.

Pattern of Land Holding (in Per Cent)

Panchayat Samity	Gram Panchayat	Mouza	1	2	3	4
Cooch Behar - II	Madhupur	Haripur	30	15	35	20
"	Ambari	Bokalimath	30	20	30	20
"	Gopalpur	Harimara	40	15	25	20
"	Baneswar	Hatidoba	50	10	25	15
"	Khagrabari	Banchukamari	45	15	15	25
Mathabhanga - I	Sikarpur	Baroghoria Gharkuta	50	15	20	15
"	Panchagarh	Barokauardaga	55	10	20	15
"	Hazrahath	Dhaibhangi Balasi	40	10	20	30
"	Gopalpur	Khariza Gopalpur	40	10	30	20
"	Kedererhat	Keshribari	50	5	35	20

Source : Field Data

EXPLANATION :

1. Own unirrigated land; 2. Own irrigated land; 3. Land occupied through Operation Barga;  
4. Non registered occupied vested land.

From the pattern of the land held by the respondents following points may be deduced : a) land owned by the respondent, in most of the cases is unirrigated; land. b) The total quantum of land under irrigated variety has been marginal; c) occupied by the scheduled castes respondents through operation barga has been considerable; d) A good number of percentage of the respondents occupies vested land.

The land-man ratio has been highly disproportionate which imposes acute financial constraints and provides a gloomy picture of the financial profile of the respondents of different villages under study. It has also been found that respondents living nearby to the town are financially better off than that of the respondents living in remotest villages.

The respondents interviewed, in most cases do not have any regular monthly income. It varies tremendously from crop seasons to non-crop seasons. In the absence of any data of permanent income or monthly income data on expenditure incurred by the respondents' families may be projected.

#### Economic Status of Respondents through Pattern of Expenditure ( in Per Cent)

Panchayat Samity	Gram Panchayat	1	2	3	4
Mathabhanga - I	Sikarpur	55	30	10	5
"	Panchagarh	60	30	6	4
"	Hazrahath	75	25	Nil	Nil
"	Gopalpur	55	30	10	5
"	Kedererhat	75	20	5	Nil
Cooch Behar	Baneswar	50	35	10	5
"	Ambari	50	35	10	5
"	Madhupur	45	40	10	5
"	Gopalpur	65	30	5	Nil
"	Khagrabari	46	40	5	7

Source : Field Data

#### EXPLANATIONS :

1. Less than rupees one thousand per month; 2. More than rupees one thousand per month; 3. Between rupees two to three thousand per month; 4. Above rupees three thousand per month.

The pattern of expenditure has been in most of the cases, in consonance with the income of the family of the respondents. However, for sometimes expenditure

may exceed income. In such situation, borrowings take place. Thus expenditure profile does not accurately suggest monthly income profile of the respondents of Primarily two reasons : a) the physical amount of borrowings or loans; b) the amount of savings if any of the respondents. Both such data could not be collected. Despite limitations data on the pattern of expenditure may provide a general assumption on the pattern of income and the economic capacity of the respondents. Out of one thousand respondents interviewed 53.8 percent of them belong to the category of less than rupees one thousand per month. Even out of this category respondents living in the remotest villages do have the largest share. The percentage within this category varies from 45 to 75 percent. Out of total respondents belonging to different villages 31 percent belongs to the category of having an expenditure capacity of rupees one thousand but below rupees two thousand per month. While a little more than 7 percent of the total respondents belongs to the category between two to three thousand per month, 3.6 per cent only belongs to the category of more than rupees three thousand per month. It is in order to mention that majority of the respondents does have households comprising of more than five members. Thus, in an age of rapidly rising price for all commodities, it has always been impossible for the families to maintain their livelihood with this sorry state of expenditure capacity. Consequently majority of the population has to face extreme hardship to arrange for their minimum food, clothings and shelter.

The table presented above clearly shows that the villages under survey have been brought under almost all rural development schemes and specified schemes meant for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. However, it is understandable that despite the existence of the schemes in the villages under survey there has been operational problems at the implementational level and the benefits to be accrued fall far short of reality.

*Please see over leaf*

**The following Table Provides in Details the Schemes/Projects for Scheduled Castes Development Operation at the Villages under Study**

Cooch Behar-II P.S.

G.P.	Mouza	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Baneswar	Batidoba	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
Ambari	Bokalirmath	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	x
Madhupur	Haripur	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gopalpur	Harinmara	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓	x
Khagrabari	Banchukamari	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Mathabhanga-I G.P

Sikarpur	Barogharia Jharkuta	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Panchagarh	BaroKauar- daga	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
Hazrahat	Dhaibhangi Balasi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x
Gopalpur	Kharija Gopalpur	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kedererhat	Keshribari	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x

Source : Field Data

**EXPLANATIONS :**

1. IRDP/DRD 2. RLEGP 3. NREP 4. IAY 5. JRY; 6. TRYSEM 7.DWCR 8. Rural Low Cost Housing, 9. Fish Farmers Development Agencies  
10. Cottage and Small Scale Industries 11. Health and Family Welfare 12. Pre Matric/Post Matric Schemeship 13. Relief and Welfare Works  
14. Wido/Oldage Pension 15. Rural Electrifications.

[ Right marks indicates scheme in operation. Cross mark indicate scheme not available]

## Benefit Provided under Different Development Programme

Cooch Behar-II		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
G.P.	Mouza																	
Baneswar	Batidoba	45	50	55	45	20	80	30	70	95	30	70	35	65	50	40	50	90
Ambari	Bokalirmath	80	20	55	45	20	80	20	80	90	80	20	30	70	60	30	40	80
Gopalpur	Harinmara	35	50	70	30	30	70	20	80	100	65	35	35	65	65	40	35	90
Madhupur	Haripur	55	45	60	40	40	60	5	95	100	60	40	10	90	60	20	40	60
Khagrabari	Banchukamari	90	10	60	40	30	70	30	70	95	50	50	30	70	55	35	45	85
Mathabhanga-I G.P																		
Sikarpur	Barogharia	80	20	75	25	30	70	20	70	90	40	60	25	75	60	50	40	95
	Jharkuta																	
Panchagarh	BaroKauardaga	65	35	85	15	20	80	20	80	95	60	40	15	85	35	35	65	80
Gopalpur	Kharija	60	40	80	20	35	65	25	75	90	55	45	25	75	50	40	50	85
	Gopalpur																	
Hazrahat	Dhaibhangi	80	20	70	30	30	70	40	50	100	35	65	45	55	60	50	40	90
	Balasi																	
Kedererhat	Keshribari	40	60	85	15	20	80	35	65	95	50	50	40	60	60	55	40	90

Source : Field Data

### EXPLANATION:

1. DRDA +IAY (Name of the Programme) 2.S.C.P. + IRDP (Name of the Progamme) 3. Poverty (Reason for taking loan) 4.Need (Reason for taking loan) 5. Year of Receiving loan (80-90) 6. Year of Receiving Loan (90-97) 7. Terms and Condition (Not refundable) 8. Terms and Condition (50% Subsidy) 9. Selective Authority (Panchayat) 10. Actual amount received (Amount below Rs. 8000)11.Actual Amount received (Amount above Rs. 8000) 12. House and Land (in terms of utilisation) 13. Others (in terms of utilization) 14.Assets maintained. 15. Possessed at present 16.Defaulter 17. Compulsion of family for being default.

A concerted survey had been undertaken to avail of an idea on the nature and quantum of benefits derived by the scheduled castes populace of the villages under study from the different development programmes operated and initiated at the village level. Attempt has been made to project the percentage of beneficiaries benefitted or derived benefits from the different development schemes on a specific scale. One hundred respondents from each village had been thoroughly interviewed for the purpose. The tables presented here have been self content in nature.

#### Benefits Accrued by Beneficiaries under Different Development Programmes

Panchayat Samity	Gram Panchayat	Mauza	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cooch Behar-II	Baneswar	Hatibba	24	99	16	14	12	2	Nil	Nil	Nil
Cooch Behar-II	Ambari	Bokalirmath	18	84	14	12	12	12	Nil	Nil	Nil
Cooch Behar-II	Madhupur	Haripur	20	86	12	12	14	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Cooch Behar-II	Gopalpur	Hrinmara	10	74	10	7	15	3	Nil	Nil	Nil
Cooch Behar-II	Khagrabari	Banchukhamari	21	75	16	18	12	4	Nil	2	Nil
Mathabhanga-I	Sikarpur	Bharogharia Gharkuta	22	75	14	16	12	Nil	Nil	1	Nil
Mathabhanga-I	Panchagarh	Brokauardaga	14	70	12	6	10	4	Nil	2	Nil
Mathabhanga-I	Hazrahath	Dhaibhangi Balasi	8	74	10	7	12	2	Nil	1	Nil
Mathabhanga-I	Gopalpur	Kharija Gopalpur	21	74	9	6	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	Nil
Mathabhanga-I	Kedererhat	Keshribari	7	84	10	1	Nil	2	Nil	1	Nil

Source : Field Data

N.B. Total Respondents = 100 in each village (Number of Persons)

#### EXPLANATIONS

1. Loans and subsidies on schemes under Special Component Plan; 2. National Rural Employment Programme; 3. Development schemes launched by District Rural Development Agency's Assistance (TRYSEM, IRDP, IAY); 4. West Bengal Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Development Finance Corporation's loan; 5. Fish Farmers Development Agency's Assistance; 6. Cottage and small scale Industry's Assistance; 7. Health and Family Welfare; 8. Rural low cost Housing; 9. Social and Agro Forestry

A comparative assesment of the above tables suggests clearly that scheduled castes populace of the villages under study has been deriving maximum benefits from the NREP. Indeed, National Rural Employment Programme has been a replacement of Food For Work Programme and has added some new aveneues to provide assistance to the rural poor. All the villages under study have been covered by this particular programme and the marginalised poor scheduled caste people

have been enjoying, although occasionally, bare minimum assistance for the maintenance of their livelihood. However, NREP objective in most of the villages has not been fully realised. The reason behind it has been that NREP as a programme sometime proved to be a halt owing to the irregular flow of fund. After NREP, the programme which has attracted the attention has been those schemes for providing loans and subsidies under special component plan. However these self employment generation schemes have not produced effective results due to the lack of identification of the scheme, absence of technical knowledge in project formulation, absence of strong monitoring agency at the implementation level and the incapacity to fix responsibility and improper institutional arrangement for loan repayment system.

The villages under study have been brought under the purview of West Bengal scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes Development and Finance Corporation. Such a Corporation has been constituted at the district level to provide loans and subsidies to the scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes populace. However getting of such development assistance has been an arduous task. The process requires a complex combination of stages for having loans, subsidies and aids. For this simple reason the illiterate scheduled castes mass with a weak socio-economic background has been in most cases is not in a position to utilise such a corporation specifically meant for their support and help. Sometimes officials associate themselves in identifying projects and formulating the project draft. The most weakest aspect has been the stage of monitoring evaluation and feed back.

In most of the villages (seven out of ten) Fish Farmers Development Agency has been operating. This Agency does not provide support to the individual fish farmer rather it inspires fish farmers co-operatives. Thus, the number of persons deriving benefit under this programme has been sizeably low because they constitute fisherman co-operatives. The other development Programmes operating in villages have not been able to create much impact and the number of scheduled castes beneficiaries deriving benefits from this programmes has been negligible.

With a view to ascertain the opinions in regard to utilisation of programmes, views of 100 officials and non officials/community leaders at the District, Block and village levels, were gathered to highlight the relative importance or different

programmes and schemes for the fulfilment of basic needs of scheduled castes. Respondents were asked specifically to indicate the programmes and schemes mostly utilized by the scheduled castes. The survey shows that rarely one third respondents gave their opinion exclusively in favour of the programmes like IRDP, TRYSEM, Programmes connected with eradication of poverty. Nearly twenty per cent respondents favoured programmes of eradication of poverty, education and employment generation line JRY, Pre-Matric and post Matric Scholarship for scheduled castes students and Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA). Nearly majority of the respondents (48.5 per cent) have been of the opinion that beside the programmes of eradication of poverty, education and employment generation and such other related objectives should be utilized. These are related to health, housing electrification, family welfare, health and individual family welfare.

Any attempt at measuring such value-loaded term 'awareness' has been extremely difficult. Similarly, social scientists have been in difficulty to quantify the value-loaded term, 'political awareness'. However, application of scientific procedure of investigation enables the social scientists to quantify such concepts like 'awareness' or 'political awareness' within a given situation subject to the condition of space and time. In short, efforts have always been there to understand both conceptually and operationally the different related elements, issues and events, factors and forces which all together constitute the bases of the concretization of the value-loaded assumptions such as awareness or political awareness. These include level of education, level of political culture, level of political socialisation, role played in political communication, role played in political mobilisation, level of participation and non participation in politics and such other factors.

While quantifying the political awareness of the scheduled castes beneficiaries of the villages under study, techniques used and methodology followed had not been without fally. However serious attempts have been made by the investigator to have an insight on identifying an explaining the issues through the following tables.

### Political Status of Beneficiaries (in Per Cent)

Panchayat Samity	Gram Panchayat	Mouza	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cooch Behar -II	Baneswar	* Batidaba	15	5	45	Nil	10	Nil	20	5	100
"	Madhupur	Haripur	10	5	30	10	5	Nil	35	5	100
"	Ambari	Bokalirmath	10	Nil	15	Nil	60	Nil	5	5	100
"	Gopalpur	Harinmara	15	Nil	45	5	15	Nil	15	5	100
"	Khagrabari	Banchukamari	15	Nil	40	15	10	Nil	20	Nil	100
Mathabhanga-I											
"	Sikarpur	Baroghoria gharkuta	35	5	25	5	15	Nil	5	10	100
"	Panchagarh	Barokauardaga	50	10	15	Nil	25	Nil	Nil	Nil	100
"	Hazrahath	Dhaibhangi Balasi	40	Nil	30	5	10	5	5	Nil	100
"	Gopalpur	Kharija Gopalpur	55	5	30	Nil	10	Nil	Nil	Nil	100
"	Kedererhat	Keshribari	50	5	20	5	20	Nil	Nil	Nil	100

Source : Field Data

**EXPLANATIONS:**

1. Politically Active Male; 2. Politically Active Female; 3. Left party Supporter Male; 4. Left party Supporter Female; 5. Anti Left Party Supporter Male; 6. Anti Left Party Supporter Female; 7. Male Percentage of no comments; 8. Female Percentage of no comments; 9. Total respondents.

### Perception of the Beneficiaries about Political Activities

Panchayat Samity	Gram Panchayat	Mouza	1	2	3	4	5
Cooch Behar-II	Baneswar	Batibaba	20	55	15	10	100
"	Madhupur	Haripur	15	40	10	35	100
"	Ambari	Bokalirmath	10	70	15	5	100
"	Gopalpur	Harinmara	15	60	5	20	100
"	Khagrabari	Banchukamari	15	65	10	10	100
Mathabhanga-I							
"	Sikarpur						
"	Jharkuta	Barogharia	40	45	Nil	15	100
"	Panchayat	Barokaurdaga	60	25	Nil	15	100
"	Hazrahath	Dhaibhangi Balasi	45	35	10	10	100
"	Gopalpur	Kharija Gopalpur	60	25	Nil	15	100
"	Kedererhat	Keshribari	55	25	5	15	100

Source : Field Data

**EXPLANATIONS**

1. Involvement in Political Activities; 2. Non-involvement in Political Activities; 3. No idea about Politics; 4. No comments; 5. Total respondents.

## Consciousness of the Beneficiaries about Politics and Political Event

Panchayat Samity	Gram Panchayat	Mouza	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Cooch Behar-II	Baneswar	Hatibaba	20	50	10	10	10	100	
	"	Ambari	Bokalirmath	10	65	5	10	10	100
	"	Madhupur	Haripur	10	40	25	10	10	100
	"	Gopalpur	Harinmara	15	45	20	5	15	100
	"	Khagrabari	Banchukamari	15	60	10	5	10	100
	"	Sikarpur	Barogharia gharkuta	30	40	10	10	10	100
	"	Panchagarh	Barokauardaga	50	20	10	10	10	100
Mathabhanga-I	Hazrahat	Dhaibhangi Balasi	30	40	5	10	15	100	
	"	Gopalpur	Kharija	50	20	10	5	15	100
	"	"	Gopalpur						
	"	Kedererhat	Keshribari	45	25	10	5	15	100

Source : Field Data

**EXPLANATIONS :** 1. Direct Participation in Politics 2. Indirect Participation in Politics 3. No Comments on Politics 4. Reaction to political event. 5. No reaction to political event 6. Total respondents.

It has been observed that scheduled castes beneficiaries of the remotest villages do have a strong sense of political awareness despite the absence of positive issues and events, factors and forces behind the formation of a kind of positive political awareness. Thus, before coming to a surprising conclusion, one can well perceive by observing the table stated above that the status of education of the respondents of the villages has been low, there exists a very weak political culture and at a low pace of political socialisation. The rate of participation in politics has been much lower than that of the non participation in politics. Here politics would mean participation in any of the level of elected panchayat structure or participation in village level politics by way of taking membership of different political parties and their frontal mass organisations at the grass root level. Throughout investigatin it has been observed that while a good number of respondents are politically aware to understand that participation in politics has been important for their survival as such participation would help them in availing the fruits of development meant for the rural poor and certainly percolated down through the panchayat structure. Thus despite the low level

rate of political education the urgency or the need of participating in politics has been high. On the other hand, the rapidly growing marginalisation of people at the grass root both in terms of politics and economics of scale, there has been the growing rise of discontent, dissensions and dismays among the marginalised rural people. Such discontent has given birth to a negative consciousness emanating from deprivation, maldevelopment, uneven process of growth and such other symbolic incapacities what Michael Hechter (1975) argued as attributes of internal "Colonialism". Such a state of awareness helps the rise of hectic political activities by way of regimentation of marginalised people suffering from the sense of relative deprivation. Such activities have provided a kind of political perception and awareness which have been developed without the presence of the issues and events, elements and attributes, factors and forces behind the formation of political awareness and perception.

The tables suggest that the males are much more politically active than that of the females. The male respondents have a greater lineage towards left parties than that of the females. While a negligible percentage of both male and female respondents preferred to remained silent on the question of their lineage to a political party, comparing to female a good proportion of male members have objectively shown their discontent against the left party in power of the state. The respondents living in the villages nearer to town have greater participation in politics and they have been much more vocal about their lineage to their political parties. However, the percentage of politically active respondents for villages of Mathabhanga-I Panchayat Samity have been much lower than that of Cooch- Behar -II Panchayat Samity. Non involvement in politics has been a common feature in the Mathabhanga - I Panchayat Samity which has out numbered the percentages of people involved in direct politics however for Cooch- Behar - II Panchayat Samity. The data collected from the respondents provide a contrasting conclusions. But the villages under both the Panchayat Samities have provided an interesting data which provide that is all these villages the total number of politically non-active people have out numbered the total number of people active in politics. It has also been observed that the rate of indirect participation in politics has out-numbered the rate of direct participation in politics. A considerable number of people had preferred not to comment about their involvement and participation. However

largest share of the respondents is of the opinion that they directly react to any political event which goes against their interest. Majority of the respondents have been of the view that they preferred in engaging in economic activities for their sufficiency rather than doing active politics.

The respondents interviewed have a low level of political participation. Barring few, majority of the respondents did not contest in the election and do not have political portfolio. However most of the respondents do have membership of political parties or of interest groups of the peasants such as Krishak Sabha, Agragami Krishak Sabha etc. Majority of the respondents do not participates in direct politics, however in some occassions they are mobilised by the local political party leaders. Neither, they have the political education, nor they have the political ideology. Such a state of participation in politics has created a kind of floating vote bank and in most of the cases this floating votebank joins hand with the political party in power of the state. During the recent past a new type of assertions have been cropped in the name of asseraining 'Kamtapuri' as a seperate language distinctively different from Bengali language and for a separate autonomous state for the Rajbanshi people. In the name of this new from of regional movement for statehood, hectic political activities have been going on and the rural innocent poor marginalised Rajbanshi people have been attracted in a considerable manner by the sentimental upserge of the movement. Such a new trend of hectic political operation has also geared up the respondents under survey and as a consequence the level of political participation of the respondents has become little more high.

#### Perception of Beneficiaries about Gram Panchayat( in Percentage)

Panchayat	Gram Panchayat		1	2	3	4	5	6
Samity								
Cooch Behar-II	Baneswar	Batidoba	50	15	15	10	10	100
"	Ambari	Bokalirmath	40	40	Nil	10	10	100
"	Madhupur	Haripur	50	30	Nil	5	15	100
"	Gopalpur	Harinmara	60	20	5	10	5	100
"	Khagrabari	Banchukamari	50	40	5	Nil	5	100
Mathabhanga -I								
"	Sikarpur	Barogharia gharkuta	60	15	5	5	15	100

"	Panchagarh	Barokauardaga	55	25	5	5	10	100
"	Hazrahath	Dhaibhangi Balasi	40	30	10	15	5	100
"	Gopalpur	Kharija Gopalpur	50	20	10	10	10	100
"	Kedererhat	Keshribari	40	40	5	10	5	100

Source : Field Data

**EXPLANATIONS :** 1. In favour of Gram Panchayat as an active body 2. Not in favour of Gram Panchayat as an active body 3. In favour of Pro-people as an active body 4. In favour of Pro-party in power. 5. No comments. 6. Total respondents.

### Perception of Beneficiaries about the Idea of Village

Panchayat Samity	Gram Panchayat	Mouza	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cooch Behar-II	Baneswar	Batidoba	5	60	15	10	10	100
"	Ambari	Bokalirmath	Nil	45	45	5	5	100
"	Madhupur	Haripur	Nil	55	30	10	5	100
"	Gopalpur	Harinmara	10	55	15	15	5	100
"	Khagrabari	Banchukamari	Nil	70	20	10	Nil	100
Mathabhanga -I								
"	Sikarpur	Barogharia gharkuta	Nil	65	20	15	Nil	100
"	Panchagarh	BaroKauardaga	Nil	60	25	5	5	100
"	Hazrahath	Dhaibhangi Balasi	Nil	40	30	15	10	100
"	Gopalpur	Kharija Gopalpur	Nil	70	20	10	Nil	100
"	Kedererhat	Keshribari	Nil	40	45	20	5	100

Source : Field Data

**EXPLANATIONS :** 1. Developed 2. Developing 3. Static 4. No Idea 5. No comments 6. Total respondents.

## Perception of Beneficiaries about Village Development

Panchayat Samity	Gram Mouza Panchayat	Mouza	1	2	3	4	5
Cooch Behar	Baneswar	Batidoba	55	20	10	15	100
"	Ambari	Bokalirmath	30	45	15	10	100
"	Madhupur	Haripur	60	20	15	5	100
"	Gopalpur	Harinmara	60	15	15	10	100
"	Khagrabari	Banchukamari	65	20	15	5	100
Mathabhanga -I							
"	Sikarpur	Barogharia gharkuta	70	10	20	Nil	100
"	Panchagarh	Barokavardaga	70	20	10	Nil	100
"	Hazrahath	Dhaibhangi Balasi	40	20	20	15	100
"	Gopalpur	Kharija Gopalpur	65	15	15	5	100
"	Kedererhat	Keshribari	35	30	20	15	100

**Source :** Field Data

**EXPLANATIONS :** 1. In favour of the idea that the 'village is developing' 2. Not in favour of the idea that the 'village is developing' 3. No idea about village development. 4. No comments about village development 5. Total respondents

The beneficiaries interviewed have been mostly remained unanswered on the question of the development of Gram Panchayat of their own. Most of the respondents has the idea about the existence of Gram Panchayat. Most of them had been of the view that the Gram Panchayat was a kind of an agency of the government at the village level for the realisation of different rural development programmes. Panchayat as a unit of local self government and as a third stratum government has never been considered by them. Most of the respondents recognised the existence of a concrete structure of panchayat building and they never think the panchayat could able to solve the miseries of their life. Thus the perception of panchayat as the form of development oriented democratically decentralised local structure has been absent.

About the nature and status of development of the village, respondents' opinions sharply differed. While some respondents responded in an unequivocal term that there has been a massive socio-economic transformation taken place in the village owing to various factors such as honest political will of the political masters at the state level to realise the avowed objective of growth with equity, positive steps taken towards land reform, enhancement of people's participation in the development of the village, extension of the social base of the organised political force and liquidation of poverty such others. On the contrary, some respondents reacted sharply negatively on the issue of village development. Some floated the idea that despite certain structural changes no qualitative improvement has so far been made in the village economy, society and politics. The existence of enhancing rate of population growth, massive illiteracy, non availability of basic needs of life have been some of the examples. One should conclude with the argument that certainly there have been both quantitative and qualitative changes in the village economy society and politics. With the acceptance of the vary fact that there are multifaceted scope for development after lessering the limitations and bottle necks.

Such perceptions can also be assumed by the following table .

#### Perception of Beneficiaries about the Development of the Family

Panchayat Samity	Gram Panchayat	Mouza	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cooch Behar-II	Baneswar	Batidoba	Nil	55	30	10	5	100
"	Ambari	Bokalirmath	Nil	30	60	5	10	100
"	Madhupur	Haripur	Nil	45	40	5	10	100
"	Gopalpur	Harinmara	Nil	50	40	5	5	100
"	Khagrabari	Banchukamari	Nil	45	50	5	Nil	100
Mathabhanga-I								
"	Sikarpur	Barogharia	Nil	35	50	15	Nil	100
"	Panchagar	Barokavardaga	Nil	50	45	5	Nil	100
"	Hazrahat	Dhaibhangi	Nil	40	50	5	Nil	100
		Balasi						

"	Gopalpur	Kharija Gopalpur	Nil	50	45	5	Nil	100
"	Kedererhat	Keshribari	Nil	45	45	10	Nil	100

Source : Field Data

**EXPLANATIONS :** 1. Uplifted family 2. Uplifting family 3. Static family 4. No idea about family development 5. No comments.

While interviewed, the respondents did not deny the benefits that they received from the Panchayat. Such benefits were directed primarily towards the improvement of the socio-economic condition of the individual beneficiary family. Unfortunately, however, most of the beneficiaries could not sustain the pace of development because of certain non-money factors. The growing size of family population, lack of awareness, absence of planning to run the family, illiteracy are some of the negative points which produce hindrances to the general upliftment of the family. Most of the respondents could not repay loan assistance what they have received for their upliftment. The absence of congenial atmosphere, lack of motivation, absence of trained man power and non commitment have been some of the factors behind the non fulfilment of development effort at the family level.

Measurement of human development status to understand and identify the basic needs of a target population has been a recent tendency in social science research, the techniques and methods of techniques which have been borrowed from the equalisation and theorisation made by the welfare economists. It should be mention at the out set that weighing of the indicators of human development in quantifiable terms even based on a sound assessment after following the methodologies of scientific social research has become a matter of chance and hence fallible. Keeping this limitation into consideration one may venture to analyse and assess the human development status of Rajbanshis of the selected villages under survey. Following table showing the achievement of human development is highly relevant.

## Basic Human Development Indicators

(Numbers indicate respondents brought under different development indicators)

Panchayat Samity	Gram Panchayat	Mouza	1	2	3**	4	5	6	7	8
Cooch Behar	Madhupur	Haripur	45	30	15	35	60	25	10	50
"	Ambari	Bokalirmoth	30	30	15	25	35	30	30	40
"	Gopalpur	Harinmara	30	20	20	10	45	30	20	35
"	Baneswar	Hatidoba	40	20	15	25	50	25	20	45
"	Khagrabari	Banchukamari	55	20	35	30	55	20	30	45
Mathabhanga - I										
"	Sikarpur	Bbharogharia Jhakuta	35	30	25	30	45	30	25	45
"	Panchagarh	Barokavardaga	50	20	30	30	55	30	20	60
"	Hazrahath	Dhaibhangi Balasi	25	15	20	Nil	30	20	30	25
"	Gopalpur	Kharija Gopalpur	30	20	20	25	40	40	20	30
"	Kedererhat	Kesharibari	30	25	25	Nil	35	20	25	25

Source : Field Data

### EXPLANATION :

1. Health [including health, Family Welfare, Child Care, Neutron]; 2. Child Mortality's Prevention; 3. Sanitation; 4. Electricity; 5. Education [including literacy / formal/non-formal/adult/distance]; 6. Drinking water; 7. Housing; 8. Communication support [ including roads and Bus ]

N.B. One hundred persons of each village (Mouza) were asked separately about each of the indicators.

It is heartening to note that while the Rajbanshi Population of the North Bengal districts has been declining, there has been a continuous rise of Rajbanshi population in the district of Cooch Behar. The villages under survey have witnessed a steady rise of population growth over the years. The birth rate is normally high while compared to mortality rate. Despite the existence of abnormal high rate of child mortality population explosion has become a common feature. Child mortality has been very high in the villages under survey which has been well ahead of the all India percentage of child mortality rate.

The survey identified the average age of life expectancy which is within the age limit of fifty five to sixty a far below rate of life expectancy on the state of West Bengal or the all India rate of life expectancy which is sixty to sixty five. The nutritional facilities both for the mother at the pre natal and post natal stage and for the child have been abysmally low. The villages under survey do not have even a primary health center, even sub-centers located in some gram panchayat are not equipped with doctor and basic medicinal facilities. The entire population has to depend either on quack doctors, or non trained homeopaths and local indigeneous doctor called Kabiraj. Such a pitiable status of health facilities objectively ignores all consideration of human development. Likewise health, housing and drinking water facilities has been in a sorry state. Out of ten villages surveyed, only two villages are given drinking water facilities through pipe line administered by Public Health Engineering Department of the State government, however other villages under survey have been provided with deep tubewell. The respondents surveyed are mostly of the opinion that availability of drinking water through P.H.E. pipe line has been irregular and most of the tubewells remain non-functional throughout the year. Such a situation compells the inhabitants to use the local ponds, wells mostly unclean for drinking water purpose. like drinking water, electricity facilities have not reached all the villages under survey. However the lok deep yojona has improved the electricity status of the district. Out of ten villages surveyed eight villages have been connected with electricity and two still remain unattended. The responses of the respondents suggests that the power supply system has been extremely irregular which has made the rural electrification movement almost meaningless. A good number of respondents' households has not been brought under rural electrification.

The educational status of the Rajbanshis of the districts has been dealt with elsewhere in the study. The villages surveyed reflect all most low educational status of the Rajbanshi Scheduled Castes. Although the villages under survey do have primary school most of them do not have any middle, high, higher-secondary schools. Students are to move daily from one to three km. for attaining further education after primary education. Such a kind of constrains results into tremendous number of dropouts, especially, the girls dropout. The weak financial status, the existing prejudices and practices debar the girl child from attending schools. Thus educational status of the poor Rajbanshis has been extremely low and has fallen far

short of all India or West Bengal rate of literacy and rate of middle school, high school or higher secondary school going children.

The occupational openings of the respondents have been sterile in the sense that they are all most destined to be involved in cultivation and such other agricultural avocations. The weak financial status of the Rajbanshis restricts them to engage in any occupations none other than agriculture. This does not mean that as agriculturists they are a success. The incapacity to purchase standard variety of seeds and fertilizer and incapability of using technology in agriculture have been the principal limitations. In addition to these limitations, the low size of lands, the ill balanced over populated land man ratio and the non-land factors are the principal draw backs behind the dismal state of agriculture in the villages under study. Despite efforts made by the government through different target oriented projects to accelerate and enhance the scope of occupational openings, the operational incapacities have made the projects, in most of the cases, a failure. The stringencies in getting bank loans, the impersonal and mechanical attitudes of the government offices engaged in different wings of development at the grass root levels, the inexperience and manipulations of the local political leaders are some of the frontal incapacities of the systems on whom the development of the rural poor depends. The differentiated pattern of lands such as small ownership, bargadari ownership, lease hold and patta hold lands has been a principal problem to establish a definite linkage of men over land.

## CONCLUSION

'Social Welfare Administration' as an important area of New Public Administration has attracted the attention of the scholars, public policy makers, bureaucrats as well as entrepreneurs and voluntary organisations. To understand the term both conceptually and operationally one may logically argue that the operationalisation of social welfare administration varies from country to country because of the variation of the nature of politics, political ideologies, culture, human values, social factors, financial abilities and more specifically, the stage of their social and economic development. The more developed countries consider social welfare as an insurance of minimum standards of living for their subjects. While low developed countries regard social welfare as providing basic needs to their population. In fact social welfare means making well-being of the people, the ultimate aim is to bring about development of human beings and the arrangements of providing the basic necessities of life. Unfortunately, however, in India, social welfare is used in restricted sense to provide services to the under privileged, disadvantaged and backward sections of the society. Social Welfare as a universal tool has been pursued by the countries irrespective of their stages of development to alleviate the sufferings of mankind in every part of our globe.

To adumbrate, the quantum and quality of social welfare programmes have not been uniform and vary from government to government. However, all governments irrespective of their ideologies are wedded to provide minimum welfare services to their people through certain objective oriented programmes which include child and women welfare, family welfare, youth welfare, welfare of the handicapped, welfare of the minorities and weaker sections of the society etc. However, this list is by no means exhaustive. Additional burden of social welfare services has always been inevitable due to the increasing areas of responsibilities emerging out of the complexities of the new millennium.

The Government Agencies, Non-Government Organisations and Voluntary Organisations engaged in the delivery of welfare services determined the methods and techniques to be employed according to the needs of their clients and the situations and the shapings of their problems. Generally these organisations use

the recognised social work methods of case work, group work and community organisation for social welfare and research and evaluation and administration to appoint themselves about the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of their programmes and bring about necessary modification in their policies for rendering better services for the development and welfare of the concerned section of the society. However such method and approaches to welfare services are likely to be modified in the light of experience gained over the years. Social welfare services as provided and implemented in different parts of the globe can be classified on the basis of the emphasis they lay on certain particular aspects and the beneficiaries they cover into the familial, the residual, the mixed economy and the controlled economy models. However, these models are likely to under go changes with the shifts in the structure of Governments, the political and economic ideologies and the thinking about the better utilisation of financial resources. Great Britain had been and steel has been playing the pioneering role model of a welfare state. Despite heavy reductions of welfare programmes by Thatcher's administration, the more developed countries such as, the U.S.A., Canada, Sweden and other Scandinavian countries have the distinction of being the ideal models for providing the welfare services and security measures to their citizens. The erst-while Soviet Union and even the present Peoples Republic of China experiencing socialist open economy model had been and steel has been obliging to restructure the welfare services to strengthen the edifice of socialist construction.

Social Welfare in the name of the Public Welfare Development had been pusued by the benevolent kings and the emperors in the Pre colonial India. The colonial India also witnessed development activities, may be in the restricted sense to liquidate illiteracy, ignorance, prejudiced customs and religious superstitions. However both in pre colonial and colonial India did experience little efforts in the excution of welfare programmes. The development of social welfare in the post independent period has been phenomenal in terms of provision of administrative machinery, financial outlays and expansions of social Welfare programmes for numerous sections of disadvantaged, downtrodden and under privileged people. Despite efforts under taken by the Indian State one may logically urgue that these are far short of emmerging requirements. Ideologically argued, the defficiencies and adequacies afflicting the social welfare to be given a higher planning priority, the planning machinery for welfare services at the state and district level are to be

strengthen and the administrative infrastructure at the state, district and the local level are to be streamlined. The decentralised grass-roots structure should have to be equipped in order to promote capacity building and there should be strong sense of co-ordination of partnership between different structure laying at different tiers both at the governmental and non-governmental level. If the welfare strategies, policies and programmes are structured and implemented under a collaborative and public participatory scheme the development of social welfare would certainly contribute to the upliftment of the weaker section of the society. Centre, state and local governments would thus play their respective roles in carrying out their on going welfare programmes more effectively to the maximum benefits of the population concerned and devise and design more programmes for the disadvantaged and under privileged section of the society to achieve the goals of welfare State.

Indian polity is wedded to the concept of welfare state as is reflected in the Preamble to her Constitution, constitutional provisions relating to directive principle of state policy and such other provisions. Thus, ever since her inception, the Indian state has launched multitude of welfare programmes for the development and well being of weaker section of society. But it took quite long to establish an independent ministry of welfare to formulate policy and over see the implementation of programmes contained therein and to co-ordinate the welfare activities of other segments of the government and those of voluntary organisation. The initial initiative to set-up an administrative structure for social welfare was beginning in 1964 with the establishment of department of social security as a sequence to the Renuka Ray committee. It was redesignated as Department of Social Welfare in 1972 and put under the control of Ministry Of Education and Social Welfare. The status of the department of social welfare was raised to that of a separate Ministry in 1979. Its nomenclature was changed that of Ministry of Social and Women Welfare in 1983 and the Ministry of Welfare as such specially dealing with welfare was created on 25th September, 1985. The Ministry of Welfare does not encompass every considerable welfare activity due to the multifaceted and multi-dimensional complexity of welfare concern. The Ministry of Welfare has to contend itself with the administration of welfare programmes of other ministries relating to different aspect of welfare. It is not out of place to mention that the welfare needs of a multi-cultural multi religious, multi-lingual, multi-national and multi-regional polity like

India must bound to differ in the context of backgrounds, aspirations, reflexes and responses resulting in the creation of intricacies of procedures, processes, methods, techniques and administrative structures and also in the recruitment of the man power employed in dealing with the formulation and execution of welfare policies and programmes. Certain discrepancies, inconsistencies and lacunae are inescapable in such an intricate and complex administrative apparatus and mechanism.

Like central government, the state government also has the department of social welfare under different nomenclatures for reasons of their creations at a particular point of time. The needs and aspirations of the clientele to be served by them. Welfare being a state subject has attracted attention by the state governments. The social welfare departments in the various steps are organised in different division to cater to the development and welfare needs of the particular sections of the society such as scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, backward classes, the handi-capped, women and children and such other dis-advantaged group. They had their field offices at the district and tehsil levels out of but not at the block level. This welfare related offices are located in different places at the district head-quarters causing inconvenience and hardship to those who are to approach more than one office for their different needs. It is therefore suggested that all district level offices connected with the welfare of the scheduled castes and backwards classes and other economically weaker section should be located in a close proximity for the convenience of beneficiaries. Mechanism below the level of the state government for administration of social welfare has been unfortunately poor. Although both the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts and the Rural and the Urban Acts of the state legislature provide for welfare programmes to be undertaken by local government. They have not been taken up except by a couple of municipal corporation for the lack of financial capacity. The local government are to be empowered so that they can play an effective partnership role along with the central and state department and agencies. Strategies so far taken by both Union and state governments and programmes so far adopted for the welfare and development of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes have been apparently proved encouraging, however programmes at the implementational level get stumbled due to lack of sincerity on the part of the political mandarins, bureaucracy at various levels, lack of participation at the grass root level and the inability to identify the basic issues involved in the programmed implementation level. The inadequencies of

innovative schemes and planning have been the principal reasons for which the entire development issues relating to schedule castes and scheduled tribes get stranded. The suggestion is that the development needs should be identified according to the order of priorities. This is important and urgent because that the condition of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes continues to be pathetic inspite of numerous constitutional safeguard and exclusive programmes for their welfare. For millions of those belonging to weaker sections either with small land holding or without land escape from the vicious cycle of poverty is still a distant dream turning to be reality. The over-all degradation has been on the rise and gets accentuated despite claims to the contrary and both the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes in different region of the country are simmering with discontent. This is evident from the demand for a separate Kamtapur state initiated by a section of Rajbanshi scheduled castes of the area under study. In fact the claims of the state, in utter disgrace of their traditional rise and virtual forced displacement for making room for the so called developmental projects have made. The scheduled castes of the area has become restive. The assertions of considerable sect of Rajbanshis for a claim of their own state and the rationality of their demand, if any, would be dealt with in the closing paragraphs of the conclusion.

Some general suggestions may be made for improvement of the present impasse and alleviating miseries of these backward communities in general. Primarily, a positive development culture has to be evolved out and the building up of a strong public opinion to work as custodian of the protection of interests of the scheduled castes and tribes has been essential. Some broad suggestions may be put as under. a) The governmental agencies and the public institutions should be made more responsive and accountable while dealing with the implementation of the development programmes for the scheduled castes and the tribes; b) Voluntary agencies and the non-governmental organisations who worked at the field level should be tied with the governmental agencies to make the operational part of the programme as such; c) It has been urgently a necessity of bringing about a change in the general psyche and social attitude of the people on the issue that attempt at improving the general condition of the scheduled castes and tribes is a responsibility and certainly not a concession to be provided to these communities. It is not simply a kind of generosity rather it is definitely a question of entitlement from which, over the years the scheduled castes and tribes have been deprived of;

d) Another important issue arising out of some of the developmental schemes aim that ameliorating the lot of the scheduled castes in so far as some such schemes tend to further segregate them from the rest of the population. For example, under Indira Awas Yojana, houses or house - sites being provided to the scheduled castes under various schemes are generally located away from the main village which impedes their coming closer to people belonging to other caste. Similarly hostels that are being opened exclusively for scheduled caste boys or girls tend to keep them away from students belonging to general castes. It is suggested that the programme meant for social and economic advancement of the scheduled castes be implemented in such a manner that they in the process, also ensure the absorption of the scheduled castes into the main stream of the society; e) Adequate legal measures and existing enacted, laws meant to control the alienation of land from scheduled caste and scheduled tribes should be enforced; f) Distribution of lands to the landless scheduled castes populace under the auspicious of the government and other nonland subsidies to be provided in an even manner to the scheduled castes community; g) Adequate arrangement should be made for ensuring basic education of the scheduled castes; h) Local innovative measures are to be initiated to plug the leakage in delivering the benefits to the scheduled castes; I) The functioning of the financial and development corporation for the benefit of the scheduled castes should have to be much more transparent and made active; j) The National Commission for scheduled castes and tribes and the Commissioner should under take a comprehensive evaluation of development programmes for scheduled castes and tribes to effect mid-term corrections.

Nearly sixteen percent of the total population of India constitutes scheduled castes population. The concentration of scheduled castes population varies from state to state. A little more than sixteen percent of the scheduled castes population in the country reside in the urban areas and bulk of the urban scheduled castes population reside in the slums without basic amenities such as drinking water, links roads, sanitation, electricity and such other basic needs of life. The scheduled castes in India are basically ruralites. The bulk of them are agricultural labourers, partly or wholly of 'bargadars' (share croppers) or other type of insecured tenants. The scheduled castes agricultural labourers constitute nearly 49 percent of the total scheduled caste workers. For the scheduled castes cultivator, the all India percentage

is nearly 29 percent, of the total scheduled caste workers 28.17 percent are cultivators. The Majority if not almost all of them are only marginal landless and naturally are in the poverty group along with the land less agricultural labourers. They together form about 77 percent of the total scheduled castes workers. In addition there are traditional occupations such as handicrafts specially bamboo, cane and dokra, weaving and fishing. A considerable portion of the population are engaged in the occupation of daily wage labour, riksha and van-puller as well as serving in domestic household works. These occupations are all in the unorganised sector providing a kind of alternative employment to the scheduled castes. However, such occupational profile of scheduled castes is linked with very low economic and social status. While doing this job a considerable portion of workforce has to commute to the nearer urban centers. These working people are still far below the general population in educational accomplishments. It has to be considered that mere expansions of educational institution have been found insufficient. Economic distress and compulsion to rely on school age children to earn income or look after younger children discourages many parents for enrolling their children in schools. There has been a strong correlation between social status and possibility to stay in the school. Thus the economic aspect has preceeded all other factors in identifying the reasons behind wastage and stagnation. It has also been observed that in every state the literacy level of scheduled castes lacks behind the literacy level of the non-scheduled castes and non-scheduled tribes population. Thus it shows that the educational backwardness of scheduled castes is on account of their peculiar socio-economic conditions and its solution requires a systematic efforts directed towards the scheduled castes and cannot come about through educational development and they are to suffer from the dual handicap of social disability and economic deprivation - social disabilities arising out of the stigma of being low caste and the economic deprivation arising out of exploitation and denial of opportunities for centuries.

As regards literacy level of the scheduled castes it has been noticed that the literacy rate among the scheduled castes is much below the all India average. The rate of literacy among scheduled castes is at present nearly 22 percent while the all India average is nearly 46 percent (excluding scheduled castes and scheduled tribes). Among the scheduled castes populace there are some communities who have hardly any literate among them. The percentage of literacy among scheduled castes women, at present

is a little more than 11 percent as against nearly 31 per cent among other women (excluding the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes women). Education has been treated as one of the prime instrument for improving the condition of the people. Despite efforts the level of education of the scheduled castes has not been satisfactory till date.

Most of the scheduled castes families have still been much below the poverty line. Their percentage in the over all poverty groups in the country is very high. Majority of them are engaged in low wage and even obnoxious and degraded occupations. Their skill base is rather weak. While reviewing the present arrangement for formulating a strategy for the welfare of this deprived section of population one can well observe that even after the celebration of the golden jubilee of independence this disadvantaged section of the population remained segregated socially and exploited economically and is looked down upon by the advanced sections of the Indian society. Notwithstanding this extremely adverse situation, the scheduled castes contribute significantly to the sustenance and growth of the production systems of the country, for example the largest single group amongst agricultural groups are the scheduled castes. The scheduled castes women occupy a large share of agricultural labourers. Handicrafts are mostly the contribution of the scheduled castes. They have a considerable share in the fishing activities and such others activities of social needs. It has, therefore, been a sorry state of affairs that these people who give so much to society gets so little in return. In fact, they are the last rung in the production ladder and invariably adds the maximum value of the final products, however, that is always forgotten. To be precise, they constitute the main the bed-rock on which our society and economy rest.

In spite of the Constitutional directives and a number of legislative and executive measures taken by the government, the conditions of the scheduled castes have not improved much till Sixth Five Year Plan. The only funds available for the development of scheduled castes were under the backward classes sector of Annual Plans. During Sixth Plan a new approach was evolved to ensure flow of benefits from the general sector to these people. The central Ministries and the state governments were required to quantify funds from the identifiable programmes and orient them as far as necessary to the needs of the scheduled castes communities. Relaxations were allowed in the

norms of minimum needs programmes and a concerted strategy of Special Component Plan was drafted. Such plan is designed to channelise the flow of benefits and outlays from the general sectors in the plans of states and central Ministries for the development of scheduled castes both in physical and financial terms. In other words, the Special Component Plan aims at identification of schemes in the general sectors of development which would be of benefit of scheduled castes. Accordingly, the scheduled castes development corporation in the states were envisaged to interface between poor scheduled castes entrepreneurs and financial institutions in respect of the schemes of economic development. The main function of these Corporation was mobilisation of institutional credit for economic development of schemes for scheduled castes entrepreneurs by functioning as catalyst, promoters and guarantors. The strategy of Special Component Plan was made more intensified during Seventh Five Year Plan. These include assignment of specific responsibilities to collectors in the implementation of Special Component Plan programme, communication of disaggregated physical and financial targets to district and block level authorities.

In order to bring the scheduled castes to the general level of the population it is necessary that they have higher per - capita expenditure earmarked for them in the Special Component Plan by the state. In addition to Special Component Plan, Special Central Assistance and Scheduled Castes Development Corporation there are central and centrally sponsored schemes being implemented by the Ministry of Welfare. The needs of the day is for special thrust on certain important areas from the point of view of scheduled castes employment Economic development, literacy and social development emerge as the areas of thrust considering the conditions of scheduled castes economic development. Economic support to scheduled caste along with the positive social attitude towards them should be given due consideration. Special attention has to be paid to realise the policy of growth with equity. It is matter of concern that despite strategies and programmes no positive infrastructure has so far been created and made operational to materialise the principle of equality and opportunity to the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes.

In the present study the adoption of welfare measures for Rajbanshis (a dominant variety of scheduled castes in West Bengal) has been viewed under perview of public policy in the planned process of social change and development. In order to sustain growth with equity and justice as well as maintainance of social order in the society,

public policy has been framed in accordance with the needs and basic requirements of the people and the area under study. The primary objective of the welfare measures is to achieve a state of physical, psychological, social and economic wellbeing of the people. In both the Public Policy and welfare measures emphasis is being given to protect the rights of the community and the study through the creation of distributive justice. The principle of such justice is based on the preservation and maintainance of happiness, want satisfaction through resource allocation to the individual and community. In order to achieve : "equal social worth" (Marshall, 1950, p. 101), it is necessary that citizens may be guaranteed certain social rights as well as the traditional civil and political rights. Indeed the emmergence of welfare measures in the society is a manifestation of social justice. The phenomenon of social justice demands a holistic reality in the distribution of benefits among the members of society. It deals with the regulation of wages, profits, protection of personal rights through a legal system of allocation of housing, medical, educational facilities and such other basic amenities of life. These welfare benefits and measures are considered as the "natural extensions of traditional liberal values" ( Rawls, 1971, p. 204) and being provided not merely to aid people but to enlist their health and co-operation in social welfare programmes in terms of recognition of the worth and the dignity of the individual through the media of social policy.

The social policy of the institutionalised control of the service, agencies and organisations to maintain or change social structure and value. Social policy is concerned with the public administration of welfare, development and management of social welfare social services and social problems connected with poverty and backwardness. Welfare measures include the steps towards relief or measures for the prevention, or avert a crisis or a contingency like ensuring civil right, prevention and control of atrocities, payment of minimum wages to poor or the measures indicated for the amelioration of the conditions of the aged and other disadvantages sections of the people. These measures are generally parmanent image. The development measures on the other hand are those aimed at the enhancement of the economic status through a variety of measures for improving the social economic condition of weaker sections. Both welfare and development measure are complementary to each other.

Thus it should be logically stated that policies and programmes for the welfare and development of a scheduled castes community of a district cannot be considered in isolation from the policies and programmes for social development. In the conceptual framework of social development, there is a dichotomy between 'right of freedom' and 'right of equality'. The sovereign, secular, socialist democratic republic like ours symbolises, by amenities, a finest example of welfare state tending to emphasize individual freedom. The Indian state however, also protects private property and freedom of private economic enterprises, therefore, it tends to be characterised by gross inequalities on income distribution or even equal opportunity. In such a society, the goals of freedom and equality can never be achieved in absolute sense. There have always been a conflict between the principle of equality of opportunity enumerated in Art. 16 (a) and the fact that millions of citizens are socially and educationally backward and the duty of the state is to provide them facilities to improve their education so that they could utilise the equality of opportunity accorded in the constitution of India. Under such circumstances, for protective discrimination towards weaker section, government is committed to fulfil the promise of Directive Principles Of State Policy of Art. 46 which specially laid down that "states are protect with special care; the education and economic interest of the weaker section of the people and in particular of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe and shall protect them from social injustice and all from of exploitation.

As it has been stated that the basic purpose of the welfare measures is maintainance of social order and achievement of equality with social justice. Social welfare as a concept may be viewed from two angles : a) social problems; b) the way in which society responses to this problems. The provisions of welfare rights involves a corresponding obligation on the part of the society as a whole and of its various members to provide the necessary goods and services or to support those institutions which can provide them (Plant, 1998, P. 73). In the main body of the thesis it has already been stated that there is hardly any study which focussed on the administration and implementation process of the welfare and development of scheduled caste at a micro scale. The different Commissions on weaker sections have pointed out that the overall progress in social policy was not commensurate with the expenditure. The existing policies for providing services to the scheduled castes on the basis of constitutional provisions is not satisfactory. The Indian Council of Social Welfare

(1981) recommended for a scientific approach in the planning and implementation of services to scheduled castes and tribes. Thus, in order to achieve the means and goals with a given situation and to evolve, extent and stabilise the pattern of welfare service for weaker sections. There is a need for sound administrative infrastructure for proper implementation of plans and programmes related to social policies.

The present study has objectively shown the emerging issues of social policy implementation for Rajbanshi scheduled caste and implementation of different ways of meeting social needs and resolving social problems through a sound mechanism of social administration. The study has identified the progress of welfare measures in the area of eradication of poverty and generation of social service and facilities for scheduled castes in the district. With a view to find out the gap between policy predicament and policy implementation, an attempt has been made to screen the theoretical model and practical approach of welfare and development of the scheduled castes of the district. The study concentrated on the implementation of administration of scheduled castes welfare services at the local level. Such study suggests that despite attempts no suitable framework of action of social welfare and social policy was framed. Therefore, to identify the gap between policy predicament and policy implementation process, the present study brings out the final results of the problem relating to adoption of welfare measures for weaker section and related development programmes connected with policy planning and programming administration of welfare measures, and implementation of strategic delivery system, monitoring and evaluation of anti poverty programmes along with the reaction of target groups (beneficiaries) on specific issues of poverty and backwardness. The general findings of the study may be delineated as under.

In accordance with the operationalisation of policy objectives, strategies and approaches for the welfare and development of Rajbanshis, a dominant scheduled caste variety, the district administration of Cooch Behar is engaged in administering family based economic development programmes such as IRDP, TRYSEM etc. and infrastructure based scheme like TRYSEM, IAY, MWS and some other social service based programmes. These welfare measures along with certain others specific schemes are covered under different general and specific schemes and programmes sponsored by District Rural Development Agency, Zilla Parishad, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled

Tribes Financial and Development Corporation and other field level governmental agencies. The present study reveals that both the beneficiaries and the government officials have recognised the urgency of the proper implementation of the programmes of eradication of poverty, education, employment generation. In this context a little less than the majority of the respondents have supported and acknowledged the importance of programmes of the individual welfare as well as community welfare covered under SCP and SCA. The present study shows that the official have been associated in planning, programming and implementation while community political leaders were engaged in identification of beneficiaries and helping them in getting assistance of welfare and development programmes. ✓

The principal objective of the special Component Plan has not been simply to uplift the scheduled-castes population from poverty line, it has also given emphasis on the total human resource development by way of uplifting the different aspect of socio-economic levels of the life of the scheduled castes. The district of Cooch Behar has a tremendous potential if the different schemes and programmes such as IRDP, NREP, RLEGP, TRYSEM, different self employment Programmes are implemented in a proper manner. An integrated functioning to draw action plan in action implementation can relief the scheduled castes from tradition ridden society. The above programmes are to be treated as comprehensive socio-political efforts rather than segmented welfare efforts. In all these sectors, honest political will, active participation of the society, dedicated public administrative machinery can only make the programmes a success and can satisfy the aspiration of the scheduled castes. However, the programmes and schemes to be drafted for a society like Cooch Behar should be in congruence with the socio-economic necessities of the district while making and implementing the development programmes a culture friendly and history tested approach must be taken into account. Such an approach has been urgently called for to solve the present problem and to plan for the future. The so called target achievement oriented planning may serve the interest of the present, but has little bearing on the future. This has been shown in the chapter - IV of our study. Thus, experience suggest the lack of proper perception has created understanding gaps with the peoples representatives and public mechinaries cells of coordination are to be created through the popularly represented three tier structure of Panchayat Raj, District Scheduled Castes Welfare Committee along with representatives of development oriented new bureaucracy can only catter the interest

of the scheduled castes in an integrated decentralized manner. A proper match between the political executive and the non-political executive can act faster with more responsibility and accountability. The programmes and the schemes should have to be made clear to the people and the necessary papers relating those programmes and schemes should have to be drafted in vernacular such an arrangement will dispell doubts of non functionings and pin-point responsibility and accountability.

A base line survey for identification of problems and formulation of data banks on scheduled castes and other backward classes has been important and essential and it should be reflected in the annual District Census Handbook. Regarding the different policy options, the experience of the study indicates that credit policy, housing policy and employment policy have received the importance in order of priorities over other policy options utilise for the development of backward classes. No single strategy for the welfare and development of Rajbanshi scheduled castes was found predominantly important. Majority of the respondents among local politicians, representatives of different tiers of Panchayat Raj structure and government officials engaged in development activities at the micro level have recognised the importance of SCA and SCDC and SCP and multiple strategy for the development of weaker sections. The importance of economic development as a strategic approach has frequently been recognised by the above mentioned respondents. It has also been recognised that the respondents among the beneficiaries (Rajbanshi scheduled castes) preferred both land based and non-land based activities for their socio-economic upliftment.

With the introduction of Special Component Plan (1980), greater allocation of fund and corresponding increase of Rajbanshi population, the need and importance to strengthen the administration was felt. The study reveals that allocation of funds and expenditure incurred on different anti poverty programmes have been increasing over the years. Corresponding with magnitude of poverty and backwardness, the total grant of central government and state government have also increased. It has been found that highest expenditure has been incurred on the infrastructure based schemes (JRY, IAY and MWS). It is very striking to note that welfare and development programmes for weaker sections have been covered under the expenditure of anti poverty programme. The allocation of financial outlay of different schemes of welfare

measures of backward classes and scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is generally made on the basis of criteria of population of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes and backwardness of the state. Regarding the timely availability, adequacy and proper utilisation of funds, it was found that most of the officials, politicians had shown their ignorance and unawareness regarding the matter of financial allocation and utilisation of funds for the welfare and development of Rajbanshis in particular and scheduled castes in general of the district. This may be perhaps due to non involvement, non availability of information in the reasonable period or due to dispersed worked of organisation in the formulation and implementation of welfare measures for target groups. The study observes the lack of the delegation of power and authority to the lower level functionaries. In some cases there have been clashes of conflict in power of authority. Consequently lower level officials have to face many difficulties in the implementation process of welfare programmes for the target groups. The field survey suggests that due to dominant role of political power structure, paucity of field track and lack of communication regarding the schemes and programmes, fruits of development have not been percolated to the weaker sections of the society. Some lower level officials reported that there is power without responsibility and responsibility without power creating role conflicts in the matter of policy and plan. Sectoral planning and project approach have failed to generate the desired impact on the programmes on scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and such other backward classes. Such a situation calls for a sound administrative structure of welfare measures in favour of rural poor.

Since independence, government of India has been assuming responsibility of welfare measures aimed at achieving a state of physical, mental, social and economic well-being of our people. In order to achieve social justice, equality and freedom from wants, state has taken the responsibility for providing special benefits, prevelages and protections to scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and other backward classes of the society. The fulfilment of policy objectives and translating the policy, strategies and approaches into action, administrative system plays a vital role in accelerating the process of welfare and development of weaker sections. Thus, the common understanding is that in the operation of welfare measure, the structure and process of welfare administration are struggling hard due to the multiplicity of organisation and their role (protective, treatment and rehabilitation) and dual approaches such as static approach based on the classical theory of administration (Bennis, 1960) and

community participation approach, management by objectives (Drucker, 1954). Therefore, based on this premises and approaches of social welfare administration, it has to be investigated factors and forces which are in operation in the structure of administrative process in the welfare and development of Rajbanshis - a scheduled caste variety in Cooch Behar.

The study reveals that despite theoretical assurances of decentralisation of administration, district Cooch Behar has been engaged in the task of development administration under the indirect control and supervision of the district level bureaucrats such as District Magistrate, Additional District Magistrate (Development), Project Director, DRDA, District Planning Officer, Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad, Project Manager SCDC, District Panchayat Officer, Head of Sectoral Departments responsible for Anti-poverty Programmes. For development administration at local level in each Panchayat Samity (coterminous of block) is headed by Block Development Officer (BDO). The BDO is assisted by Assistant Block Development Officer and other Extension officers engaged in different fields to carry out the welfare and development of weaker sections. At the village level, panchayat secretary - the government representative at the lowest rung of state administrative ladder - provides assistance to the grass-root level people representatives in the implementation of rural development programmes.

The study reveals that identification of beneficiaries and programme implementation have received the highest impetus to the administrative tasks of the department and organisation. Monitoring and reviewing the programmes were also considered as the second most important task of the organisation. The study shows that officials were more engaged in regulatory work of administration of anti-poverty programmes and political leaders remain engrossed in campaigning works of the programmes for weaker sectors. Communication and co-ordination have to play a key link in administrative process. Due to complex nature of administrative organisation, the problem of communication and co-ordination is increasing day by day. The study reveals that the arrangements had been made to communicate the weaker sections about the programmes of welfare about the development and welfare through group meetings, gram sabha and village committees. Besides this, BDO, ADOs and Panchayat Secretary are expected to communicate and help the weaker communities

to take advantage from different schemes or programmes. Formal meetings is most commonly used methods by officials and informal meetings are the means adopted by non-officials/community leaders. The study reveals that majority of officials provide information, about plan, programme, scheme either through correspondence or holding the formal meetings. The community leaders or the people representatives sort out the difficulties of beneficiaries through personal contact. The present study considers the district planning and co-ordination committee as a forum of co-ordination. Co-ordination is also done through other institutions and agencies such as DRDA, ZP, SCDC and District level Review Committee, Tribal Development Authority and twenty point programme committee. Co-ordination at the top is done by the District Magistrate on behalf of the Sabhadhipati of Zilla Parisad, who gives instruction to all the departmental heads and calls up meetings to maintain operational links between DRDA and other departmental agencies and institutions. Thus officials have equally recognised four methods of co-ordination such as district level meetings, DRDA meetings, Panchayat Samity meetings and informal cordial meetings. The study reveals that nearly fifty per cent of the officials at the district level and less than twenty percent officials at the block level have faced certain problem in controlling and supervision due to lack of horizontal coordination with different departments and non cooperation of financial institutions. ADOs supervise the works of Panchayet Secretaries, officials of DRDA also supervise the work of anti poverty programmes through inspection and visit. Additional District Magistrate (Development) is supposed to take responsibility of supervising, the problems relating to development programmes for weaker sections. State Planning Board has been entrusted the task of mantaining the administrative linkages with different departments, agencies, institutions and cooperations. The study reveals that officials often maintained linkages through departmental meetings, commissioner of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes Welfare Deapartment and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Development Authority and Planning cell. At the local level, District Magistrate Additional District Magistrate, Additional Project Directors, DRDA, Project Director, SCDC and Deputy Director, Social Welfare maintain the administrative linkages through quarterly and monthly review meetings and personal contacts. During field study, it had been found that in the operation of certain schemes or programmes at grass root level, no direct organisational linkages were reported amongst social welfare Department, Directorate of Women and Child Development, DWCRA and SCDC for the Welfare and Development of backward classes and weaker sections.

Local representatives and political manderins have shown their poor knowledge and critical views relating to the problem of administrative system in the existing organisational structure.

The role of the Non-government organisation and the voluntary agencies has been scarce at the grass root level dedicated to the welfare and development of scheduled castes. Most of the respondents viewed them as extremely limited in scope and coverage. Majority of the respondents have viewed the involvement of elected representatives and community leaders in the policy formulations and programme implementation for the development programmes. One fifth of respondents were found critical about the role of elected members and community leaders in the welfare and development of weaker section and backward classes. In fact peoples' representatives at the micro level have been given little role to play in formulating plans and implementing programmes. Since there is no effective coordination principle and the existence of continuous intervention of the state and district administration, the work of Panchayat Raj Structure at its different tiers proved meaningless. Most of the elected panchayats are found to be critical about the cooperation between the officials and non-officials. This lack of co-operation is perhaps due to lack of delegation. For more distribution and devolution of power to local institutions it may be suggested that beside creating consciousness, awareness, education and motivation the political leaders at the grass root belonging to scheduled castes and tribes should be invited to Panchayat Samity in different forums of planning, programming and execution of various welfare and development schemes.

The study reveals that illiteracy and unawareness on the part of the target groups, administrative factors in programmes execution apathy of officials and non officials in the follow of programme as well as poverty - low per capita invesment in the anti-poverty programmes were the main reasons for the slow progress of the programmes of welfare measures for backward classes. The cumulative importance of other factors such as lack of coordination between different departments, agencies and institutions, political interference, role of middle man, have also found empediment in rapid growth and developmentof the programmes of welfare measures for scheduled caste in the areas under study.

Implementation strategy provides a frame of reference and general guide line.

to policy makers for achieving specific objectives. A suitable strategy for the welfare and development of weaker sections proves to be helpful in identification of constraints, in administering the plan and programmes of the target groups. In the district of Cooch Behar, for the implementation of welfare measures quantification of Special Component Plan (SCP), Scheduled Caste Development Corporation (SCDC) and Special Central Assistance was done by District Rural Development Agency, Zilla Parishad and the various sectoral departments keeping in view the objectives laid down by government of India. Regarding the administrative functioning of the district, the field level experience reveals that majority of respondents have expressed the inadequacy of organisation in terms of effective administrative structure, inadequate role performance of field officials and mode of coordination and control mechanism. Whereas thirty five per cent respondents expressed that the existing administrative structure was not conducive for planning, coordinating and implementing welfare programmes and were of the view that with the corresponding increase in financial outlay and due to introduction of new strategies the administrative staff at field level for implementation of the programme have not been increased in proportion to the increasing needs and requirements for effective utilisation of resources. It may also be suggested that there is an acute need for restructuring of district administration and micro level planning at block level.

The study reveals that role performance of the functionaries proves to be favourable to eighty per cent officials and critical to forty-nine per cent non officials. This shows that the positive role of officials was greater than non-officials or local political manderins. Despite the promise of the implementation of the mechanism of development from below such as rural empowerment and decentralisation, the reality is that the local representatives are yet to be empowered in the practical sense of the term. The officials in many of the cases were found to be apathetic towards welfare programmes specifically meant for scheduled castes. The study also shows that administrative role of officials has been confirmed as coordinator, supervisor and controller. But in the performance of executive role non-officials were confined only to attending meetings, articulate officials by their leadership role whereas officials performs their activities in the preparatory work of the execution of schemes covered under anti poverty programmes for weaker sections. The study reveals that thirty five per cent of the officials were really engaged in the actual work of implementation after generating peoples participation and reviewing the welfare and

development programmes for weaker sections. During field survey, it was found that there is a wide gap between the role performance and role achievements on the part of officials and non officials (local, political representatives) due to variety of factors. In this context, the present study reveals that lack of coordination and procedural rigidity are the two major administrative factors responsible for non-implementation of development programmes for scheduled caste of the district.

While Public delivery system is considered as one of the important strategies to combat rural poverty, the basic objective of the delivery system is to percolate the benefits to the weaker sections of the society through different development programmes. Our study reveals that more officials (fourty per cent) as compared to non-officials (eighteen per cent) have evaluated the prevailing delivery strategy as effective. As such, the major focus of welfare service delivery system should be on how to enhance the delivery systems for the target groups. In this connection thirty five per cent respondents are of the view that in the new frame-work of the social welfare policy for target group, a sound mechanised delivery system should be evolved while one fifth of respondents supported for better linkages and structural changes in policy direction. On the other hand twenty two percent respondents have been of the view that a concerted effort and integrated action by a number of functionaries is required for proper management of the delivery system. As, such, every effort should be made to strengthen block level planning by imparting training for field staff in the democratic decnetralisation process as envisaged in the 73rd Constitutional Ammendment Act, 1992. Twenty five per cent of the respondents have been found to be very emphatic towards reorganisation of work system and changing attitude of public service officers and community leaders to make sure that delivery system truly respond to the major concern of the scheduled castes population. They have been on the view that amount of loan should be increased and portion of subsidy should be sanctioned at the time of repayment of loan for the betterment of the weaker and socially backward people of the district and to check the malpractice or to prevent exploitation by the middlemen.

Regarding the effectiveness of organisation dealing with the welfare and development of the scheduled castes this study lays stress on for strengthening block level administration for proper implementation and modification in monitoring strategy. A Special Development Officer at the block level and a special Assistant at

the village level for looking after the work for the development of scheduled castes and tribes should be appointed. As regards the problems and constraints faced by the officials and non-officials (political leaders as peoples representatives) in the implementation of plan and programme for scheduled castes and tribes of the district, the study shows that the attitude and aptitude of field staff and lack of co-ordination between different departments have been the major problems. Delayed sanction of funds as well as managerial capacity of field staff have also affected the policy implementation of development programmes for weaker sections. The study has identified manifold administrative bottlenecks highlighted both by officials and non-officials. These are : a) political interference; (b) lack of peoples participation; c) no follow up programmes; d) frequent transfer of field staff and lack of administrative vigilance; e) no direct control of the Zilla Parishad on the field level departments of the government and f) vested interest. It is suggested that political support, administrative vigilance and intervention are the potential factors to overcome administrative bottlenecks altogether and to improve the socio-economic conditions of scheduled castes and tribes of the district.

In the present study, monitoring and evaluation have been viewed to lessen the gap between the target fixed and the result achieved. Monitoring is an essential concern of administration in planning and implementation of project and programmes; where as evaluation, i.e., post implementation is concerned with impact, assessment and accomplishment of objectives of the programme. The study reveals that the general and specific machinery of sectoral departments are engaged in planning, implementation, review and evaluation of programmes for the development of the weaker sections. At the district level, District Magistrate, Additional District Magistrate responsible to act as Project Director DRDA and different departmental heads are directly responsible for programme evaluation. With the help of Block Development Officer and Additional Development Officer at the block, the varification of physical and financial targets have been made in accordance with the budgetary provision sanctioned for block administration. For physical varification, the reports of the Panchayat secretary are discussed in the monthly meeting of the block. A monthly progress report is also placed before the district level committee. In this appraisal, the physical and financial targets are fixed.

With the canvas of the present study, problems of poverty and backwardness

have been viewed under the domain of public policy operated in the stratified Indian society through action and interaction of target groups. The main components involved in action are actors and objectives of organisation. After examining the organisational structure, support system and infrastructural facilities for implementation for monitoring and evaluation of different schemes and programmes, it is necessary to look into the operative mechanism at grass roots level after ascertaining the reaction of the scheduled caste people about local administration, role of village politics and participation of officials and non officials including the community leaders in the development programmes for weaker sections.

Our experience suggests that majority of the rural population of the district of Cooch Behar belong to scheduled caste, one third of them are remained below the poverty line, thirty four per cent are small farmers, fifteen per cent are agricultural labourers and rural artisans, nearly twenty per cent are marginal farmers. Thus the scheduled castes (most of them belonging to Rajbanshi community) in the villages of the district of Cooch Behar may be considered as poorest among poor. Based on the survey of two Panchayat Samities (Cooch Behar - II and Mathabhanga - I) of the district of Cooch Behar, thirty six per cent of the scheduled caste families have been identified below the poverty line. They belong to the category of small farmers, marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, non agricultural labourers and rural artisans. Nearly thirty five per cent of the scheduled caste families of these two Panchayat Samities have been brought under different development programmes essentially meant for weaker sections. The over all picture of target and achievement (at least in paper and pencil) reveals a progressive trends from the late 80s till date. In certain schemes/programmes sponsored by the Central and state government and carried through Zilla Parishad, nearly ninety per cent targets have been achieved while in area development schemes such as JRY, IAY and schemes for small and Marginal Farmers sponsored by DRDA. The achievement of targets has been lagging behind as scheduled. The study carefully observed that in most of the schemes/programmes, more emphasis has been laid on their formulation and execution with a view to achieve quantitative rather than qualitative results. Even at the time of desired quantitative achievements, great difficulties were felt by field agencies in receiving credit support from financial institutions. The infrastructural facilities have been found totally lacking in the village for generating self employment programmes. In the socio-cultural set up of the district, the target and achievement approach seems to be not conducive for

change and development. There has been an urgent need for reviewing and apprising the different development programmes and there should be a proper harmony and consistency with regard to economic and social upliftment for weaker section.

The socio-economic ingredients of the Rajbanshi families have been found to be weak. Illiterate small marginal farmers and labourers belonging to this category of families have been living in poor conditions with small assets at their disposal as experienced. The average size of the family so studied has been not less than five per cent. The study reveals that despite efforts, the socio-economic status of the majority of the scheduled caste has not improved. Most of the respondents have been found under debt. It is striking that inspite of institutional credit system, one third of the respondents of the two Panchayat Samities often borrow money from money lenders, framers and relatives for productive and social purposes. Regarding the administration of anti-poverty programme the study reveals that target groups have a little information and knowledge about the variety of development programmes exclusively implemented for the benefit of weaker sections. It has also been found that the illiterate populace of the weaker section often come into the clutches of agents (middle men) who for the sake of self interest would serve the interests of officials in the fulfilment of physical and financial targets. During the whole course of the field study, it has been observed that while giving helps to the target groups, hardly any care was considered whether the incumbent was worthy to it or able to earn substantial income. Majority of the respondents pointed out that benefits derived by them are inadequate, quality of assistance is substandard and quantum of benefit has been less than their requirement. Thus inadequacy of resource and low per capita investment are some of the principal bottlenecks behind the non-achievement of target to provide welfare service to the weaker sections.

The Present Study shows that the affiliation of the respondents in different social organisation and association has been extremely limited. Most of the respondents do not have complete faith in political parties, but they conceded political parties as powerful factor in contesting panchayat election. It has been observed that lack of communication and procedural rigidity are the principal hindrances in the policy implementation of the scheduled castes of the district of Cooch Behar. In the absence of follow up the programmes and physical varification of assets, it has become

difficult to assess the impact of the anti-poverty programme. Thus adequate systems of social assistance and such other social help measures to be extended to the weaker section under arrangement should be so designed to meet subsistence needs for food, clothing, fuel, light and house-hold sundries.

A decentralised planning and development policy is urgently called for the successful operation of schemes and projects of welfare for scheduled castes in the district. The programme operation must be target oriented rather than so called 'people oriented'. The theory of relative deprivation of poverty has not yield good results, however it has succeeded in encroaching the derived benefit of poorest among poor to other relative poverty groups. The so called 'dependency syndrome' has crushed the aspirations of rural poor and their motivation to work. They have been still struggling hard for their substantial living. Moreover legislation by way of enactment for the protection and safeguard of the scheduled castes in general seems to be symbolic. Lessons of the last half century shows that legislative support to act as a liver for the upward mobility for backward classes without sensitive political and sympathetic administrative support failed to achieve the desired result. The so called commitment of eradication of poverty by the end of 20th century has still remained unattended. However the micro level experience of this study reports that poverty level among the the weaker sections and backward classes are increasing but basic requirements are still denied to the deprived sections of the rural masses.

The recent trends of liberalisation and the advent of open economic model as well the underline pressure capitalism have raised doubt and put question as how far the economic/capital growth may influence in improving the socio-economic conditions of the scheduled castes and other weaker section of the society. While reporting on the deliberation of the G - 15 Nations, (The Times of India argued November 8, 1995) that " while globalisation has benefited some countries, extreme poverty and the creation of a burgeoning underclass of unemployed with no prospect for promise for the future has emerged as a great challenge in the developing world. Under the first changing perspective of political economy, there has always been the possibility to increase the rates of poverty and alter the distribution of national resources. All this will go against the spirit of much avowed distributive justice". This further, in long run will compell the government to create a link between power structure and social order arising due to globalisation of the economy and privatisation

of public enterprises in the changing social and cultural milieu. In order to restore social justice and to perpetuate a common link in the society, polity and economy, the operation of institutionalised mechanism has to ensure a fair play of redistribution of surplus resources towards the well being of the poor.

The power structure has also been accentuated under the influence of new economic policy. Under such circumstances the new technological innovation and emerging changes between the forces and relation of production result the possibility of the birth of a new hierarchy. Manifestation of power relations may lead to exploitation and further force the governmental control over the expectations and commitment of the general mass. In such a situation a dual power structure may evolve and may be operated in the dynamic inter-relationship of successful implementation of radical changes affected by the new economic policy. Such a dual power structure does not only create contradictions but also help in weakening of power incongruity, generating inequality and exploitation. This in turn will inject interventions in the society by enforcing the rules and regulations based on social equity and sustainable social order. Under this new circumstances influence by new economic policy and policy of democratic decentralisation (affected to 73rd and 74th Amendment Act, 1992, 1993), the primary responsibility has been befallen upon the policy makers, planners and administrators and as how to erect the internal mechanism of social structure and to modify the basic structure of delivery service system. The structural and contextual factor to achieve the objectives of distributive justice call for a process of institutionalised action of utilisation of rural economy, natural resources and human resource development. Besides this, it has also forced the power structure either to modify the basic structure of delivery system or to rebuild a progressive broad based social structure for accelerating the goals of welfare. Under this circumstances active effort has been warranted. To establish a more comprehensive and integrated system of administration leading towards active involvement of scheduled castes and other weaker sections and making them self dependent through sustained efforts of development.

Keeping in consonance the depiction made above, an attempt may be made to place some suggestions for the use of policy makers, planners, administrators and grass root level workers for future restructuring the welfare and development programmes in changing circumstances. These suggestions are mostly based on the

field observations and gathered through participant observation method. It is hoped that the suggestions and recommendations brought fourth by the micro study in planning, programming and implementation of welfare and development programmes for weaker sections, specifically for the scheduled castes Rajbanshis of the district, may also be applicable in identical situations in other parts of the state.

Primarily, for the successful policy formulation and implementation of development oriented welfare programmes, it is necessary that a sound social administrative system must work with commitment. The existing administrative set up at the district, block and village levels should be strengthen in accordance with this pattern - a) different departments in the district should be grouped into three broad heads : (i) development of resources and production activities; (ii) social services and welfare activities; (iii) physical and infrastructural activities; (b) the post of social welfare officer for scheduled caste of the district should be created along with the existing district project officer for scheduled caste and tribes; (c) there should be an additional block development officer at the block level to look after the welfare of the scheduled castes; (d) a new post of village development officer for weaker sections should be created.

An effective and efficient administrative structure has been of high order to support the public service delivery system for weaker sections. In view of structural deficiencies, the bureaucratic system should be organised on functional lines to facilitate proper command and co-ordination. The major structural defect has been the non existence of effective peoples participation. The local community leaders, elected representatives belonging to weaker section should be invited in different forums of planning, programming and execution of various welfare and development programmes schemes. Such a participatory management policy, if persued, people of the weaker sections can well be motivated. Thus it seems necessary that for better implementation of welfare and development programmes, some effective linkages and structural changes in policy directions are required to reorient the district administration in the light of work load owing to varieties of schemes and programmes covered under SCP, SCA and SCDC etc. In short, for proper management of delivery system, every effort should be made to strengthen block level planning. There has also been the urgency for preparing a separate district area plan in which programmes for welfare and development are being carried out for weaker sections and backward

classes. The authority responsibility of project planning, implementation and monitoring should be decentralised as much as possible and linkages with village, block, district level, panchayat and voluntary organisation should be strengthened. The need for conducting Base-Line Survey for identification of weaker section and it should be reflected in the Annual District Census Hand book.

With the constitutionalisation of both rural and urban local government (73rd Amendment Act, 1992) the development and upliftment of weaker section should be a special agendum in different forum of Panchayat Raj institutions to enable them fullest participation in the process of nation building. The principle of devolution of power in its actual sense that is administrative, legislative and financial devolution should be directed to Zilla Parishad and the process of decentralisation ought to be viewed in a right perspective for the safeguard of rights and privileges of weaker sections and backward classes. The multiplicity of programmes and diversified agencies should have to be restructured in the field administration to fulfil the policy objectives of welfarism. There has been an urgent need for unification of the extension set up/field staff working at grass root level under different agencies/departments. The unified structure so set-up should be provided proper incentive and infrastructural facilities for co-ordinating the work of different programmes such a unified organisation committed to bring desirable change should play a role effectively in generating a conducive climate of social development so as to achieve the goals of distributive justice. In the back drop of social dynamics, the demand of social justice and equal social worth of individual on the stratified Indian society has to be inculcated in the minds of policy makers, administrators and political mandarins. To realise the goals, it is urgent that the weaker section be guaranteed social rights, civil and political rights and above all economic empowerment.

Suggestions for improving the basic quality of life and protection of weaker sections based on universal principle of human rights demand a holistic reality in the improvement of action oriented plans and programmes which include, adequate and timely financial resources, creation of infrastructure for communication, employment generation, extension of formal, non formal, vocational education, necessary support of social services and welfare relief through co-operative venture. Since co-operative society, specifically the development oriented credit co-operative society has been

proved to be most relevant organisation, such societies be created to organise the rural poor specially weaker section. This disadvantaged marginally placed an excluded groups have to be oriented towards conscientisation so as to enable to participate in the building from below the local organisations for expressing and pressing their demands. The 'Street Level Bureaucracy' should come forward for strengthening such organisation. What is urgently needed is to develop group of people of sacrificing type in each village accountable to the marginally placed people at the micro level. This can well be characterised that " Neighbourhood Decentralisation." Above all, the weaker section of the society should have to be politically strengthened to establish their leadership in a society like ours where the hegemony of dominant economic class has been established and has been more concretised even after the golden jubilee celebration of Indias independence.

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## Annexture - I

### Area, Population and density of population of the District Cooch Behar, 1991

Sub-Division and sq. km. C.D. Block/ Municipality (1)	Area in sq. km. (2)	Population (3)	Density per (4)
1. Mekhliganj Sub-division :	-	207927	-
1. Mekhliganj	290.23	111019	383
2. Haldibari	152.35	77833	511
3. Mekhliganj (M)	-	8205	-
4. Haldibari (M)	-	10870	-
2. Mathabhanga Sub-divn.	-	500527	-
1. Mathabhanga-I	323.14	162527	503
2. Mathabhanga-II	301.91	168731	559
3. Mathabhanga(M)	-	17336	-
4. Sitalkuchi	262.51	151933	579
3. Cooch Behar Sub-divn.	-	575959	-
1. Cooch Behar-I	352.36	247893	704
2. Cooch Behar-II	385.38	256851	366
3. Cooch Behar(M)	-	71215	-
4. Tufanganj sub-divn :	-	355262	-
1. Tufanganj-I	319.86	191455	599
2. Tufanganj-II	265.70	147389	555
3. Tafanganj -(M)	-	16418	-
5. Dinhata sub-divn.	-	531470	-
1. Dinhata-I	278.22	239962	862
2. Dinhata-II	246.98	187612	760
3. Dinhata(M)	-	17697	-
4. Sitai	160.81	96199	536
District :	3387.00	2171145	641

Sources : 1. Census of India, 1991

## Annexture - II

### Growth of population by sex and year in the district of Cooch Behar

Year (1)	Total Population (2)	Index with 1901 as base (3)	Male (4)	Female (5)	No. of 'F' per 100 males (6)	Urban (7)	Rural (8)	P.C. of rural Population to Total Population (9)
1901	565116	100	303413	264703	88	14060	55156	97.51
1911	591012	105	315436	275476	87	15794	575218	97.33
1921	592489	105	315628	276861	88	17261	575228	97.40
1931	589053	104	312265	276788	89	18030	571023	96.94
1941	638703	113	39845	298858	88	26821	621882	95.80
1951	668949	118	360670	308279	85	50180	618769	92.50
1961	1019806	180	539694	480112	89	71446	948360	92.99
1971	1414183	250	737931	676252	92	96652	1317531	93.17
1981	1771643	313	915461	856182	94	122260	1649383	93.10
1991	2171145	384	1122306	1048839	93	169497	2001648	92.19

Source : Census of India

## Annexure - II

### Distribution of rural and urban population by sex in the district of Cooch Behar

Su-division C.D. Block/ Municipality (1)	Male (2)	<u>Rural</u> Female (3)	Total (4)	Male (5)	<u>Urban</u> Female (6)	Total (7)
1. Mekhliganj	98457	90395	188852	9806	9269	19075
sub-divn. :				-	-	-
1. Mekhliganj	57899	53120	111019	-	-	-
2. Haldibari	40558	37275	77833	4209	3996	8205
3. Mekhliganj(M)	-	-	-	5597	5273	10870
4. Haldibari(M)	-	-	-	9074	8262	17336
2. Mathabhanga Sub-Divn. :	2504411	232780	483191	-	-	-
1. Mathabhanga-I	84308	78219	162527	-	-	-
2. Mathabhanga-II	87630	81101	168731	-	-	-
3. Sitalkuchi	78473	73460	151933	9074	8262	17336
4. Mathabhanga(M)	-	-	-	47305	45515	92820
3. Cooch Behar sub-divn. :	25110	232029	483139	11014	10591	21605
1. Cooch Behar-I	116698	109590	226288	-	-	-
2. Cooch Behar-II	134412	122439	256851	36291	34924	71215
3. Cooch Behar (M)	-	-	-	8389	8029	16418
4. Tufanganj sub-divn. :	174274	164570	338844	-	-	-
1. Tufanganj-I	98504	92951	191455	-	-	-
2. Tufanganj -II	75770	71619	147389	8389	8029	16418
3. Tufanganj(M)	-	-	-	12314	11534	23848
5. Dinhata Sub-divn. :	261166	246456	507622	3249	2902	6151
1. Dinhata-I	120433	113378	233811	-	-	-
2. Dinhata-II	96556	91056	187612	-	-	-
3. Sitai	44177	42022	86199	9065	8632	17697
4. Dinhata(M)	-	-	-	-	-	-

Sources : Census of India, 1991.

## Annexure - II

### Percentage distribution of population according to different categories of workers and non-workers in the district of Cooch Behar, 1991\*

Subdivision/C.D. Block municipalities	Household Industry Manufacturing Processing Servicing and repairing	Other Workers	Marginal Workers	Non-Workers
(1)	(2)	(7)	(8)	(9)
1. Mekhliganj sub-div.	0.31	5.64	1.72	67.04
Mekhliganj	0.12	3.89	2.03	65.99
Haldibari	6.38	4.52	1.64	67.40
Mekhliganj(M)	0.03	18.77	0.03	73.08
Haldibari(M)	1.92	21.51	0.51	70.51
2. Mathabhanga sub-divn. :	0.39	4.12	1.18	67.55
Mathabhanga-I	0.12	2.81	0.31	69.50
Mathabhanga-II	0.85	4.78	2.04	65.79
Mathabhanga(M)	0.44	24.50	0.40	72.33
Sitalkuchi	0.15	2.45	1.25	66.87
3. Cooch Behar sub-divn. :	0.91	11.10	2.10	67.87
Cooch Behar-I	1.20	7.75	2.30	68.38
Cooch Behar-II	0.82	9.78	2.50	66.29
Cooch Behar (M)	0.22	27.52	0.30	71.81
4. Tufanganj sub-divn. :	1.31	7.08	1.79	68.59
Tufanganj-I	1.47	6.61	1.63	68.49
Tufanganj-II	1.18	5.54	2.13	68.47
Tufanganj(M)	0.90	26.02	0.60	70.83
5. Dinhata sub-div. :	0.53	6.46	1.18	67.96
Dinhata -I	0.77	7.31	1.13	68.38
Dinhata-II	0.36	4.88	1.24	68.03
Dinhata(M)	0.45	28.52	0.12	70.55
Sitai	0.25	2.99	1.36	66.12
District :	0.71	7.16	1.59	67.86

Sources : 1. Census of India, 1991.

## Annexture - II

### Percentage distribution of population according to different categories of workers and non-workers in the district of Cooch Behar, 1991

Subdivision/C.D. Block municipalities labourers (1)	Total Population (2)	Total main (3)	Cultivators Worker (4)	Agriculture (5)
Percent				
1. Mekhliganj Sub-division :	207927	31.24	18.37	6.92
Mekhliganj	111019	31.98	21.68	6.29
Haldibari	77833	30.96	17.49	8.56
Mekhliganj (M)	8205	26.88	3.96	4.12
Haldibari (M)	10870	28.99	1.94	3.62
2. Mathabhanga sub-divn. :	5000527	31.27	17.97	8.77
Mathabhanga-I	162527	30.19	18.97	8.28
Mathabhanga-II	168731	32.17	17.20	9.33
Mathabhanga(M)	17336	27.27	0.79	1.54
Sitalkuchi	151933	31.88	19.78	9.50
3. Cooch Behar sub-divn. :	575959	29.99	11.24	6.74
Cooch Behar-I	247893	29.32	12.89	6.08
Cooch Behar-II	256851	31.21	12.74	7.87
Cooch Behar (M)	71215	27.89	0.05	0.10
4. Tufanganj sub-divn. :	355262	29.62	13.67	7.56
Tufanganj-I	191455	29.88	13.61	8.19
Tufanganj-II	147389	29.40	15.13	7.55
Tufanganj(M)	16418	28.57	1.22	0.43
5. Dinhata sub-div. :	531470	30.86	14.70	9.17
Dinhata -I	239962	30.49	14.32	8.09
Dinhata-II	187612	30.73	14.92	10.57
Dinhata(M)	17697	29.33	0.31	0.05
Sitai	86199	32.25	18.25	11.03
District :	2171145	30.55	14.72	7.96

Sources : 1. Census of India, 1991.

## Annexure - II

### Percentage distribution of population according to different categories of workers and non-workers by sex in the district of Cooch Behar, 1991

Industrial Categories (1)	Male (2)	No Female (7)	Total (8)	P.C. to to Population (9)
a. Total main workers :				
Total	597823	65601	663424	30.56
Rural	557071	58943	616014	30.78
Urban	40752	6658	47410	27.97
1. cultivators :				
Total	306789	12853	319642	14.72
Rural	305360	12774	318134	15.89
Urban	1429	79	1508	0.89
2. Agricultural labourers:				
Total	142934	292829	172764	7.96
Rural	141580	29652	171232	8.56
Urban	1355	177	1532	0.90
3. Household and other than Household (manufacturing processing)				
Total	10374	4945	15319	0.71
Rural	9459	4626	14085	0.70
Urban	915	319	1234	0.73
4. Other workers :				
Total	137725	17974	155699	7.17
Rural	100672	11891	112563	5.63
Urban	37053	6083	43126	25.45
b. Marginal workers :				
Total	3444	31014	34458	1.59
Rural	3153	30558	33711	1.68
Urban	291	456	747	0.44
c. Non-workers:				
Total	521039	952224	1473263	67.85
Rural	475194	876729	1351923	67.54
Urban	45845	75495	121340	71.59
Total Population :				
(a + b + c)				
Total	1122306	1048839	2171145	100.00
Rural	1035418	966230	2001648	100.00
Urban	86888	82609	169497	100.00

Sources : 1. Census of India, 1991.

## Annexure - III

### Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes population by sex in the district of Cooch Behar 1991

Sub-division Block and Municipalities (1)	Male (2)	Female (3)	Total S.C. Population (4)	Male (5)	Female (6)	Total S.T. Population (7)
1. Mekhliganj sub-division :	72232	66545	138777	849	818	1667
Mekhliganj	42714	39278	81992	607	603	1210
Haldibari	25567	23445	49012	141	122	263
Mekhliganj (M)	2070	2014	4084	15	10	25
Haldibari (M)	1881	1808	3689	86	83	169
2. Mathabhanga sub-div.	164874	153693	318567	81	64	145
Mathabhanga-I	60368	56095	116463	45	37	82
Mathabhanga-II	57534	53357	110891	0	0	0
Mathabhanga(M)	1716	1646	3362	33	16	49
Sitalkuchi	45256	42595	87851	3	11	14
3. Cooch Behar sub-div.	125250	117159	242409	2165	1736	3901
Cooch Behar-I	55113	51800	106913	477	427	904
Cooch Behar-II	64839	59880	124719	1558	1188	2746
Cooch Behar (M)	5298	5479	10777	130	121	251
4. Tufanganj sub-div.	89203	84509	173712	1858	1763	3621
Tufanganj-I	47284	44828	92112	77	78	155
Tufanganj-II	39999	37795	77794	1758	1666	3424
Tufanganj (M)	1920	1886	3806	23	19	42
5. Dinhata sub-div.	128825	121429	250254	833	755	1488
Dinhata-I	53188	49892	103080	316	292	608
Dinhata-II	44264	41467	85731	496	445	941
Dinhata(M)	1105	1135	2240	16	15	31
Sitai	30268	28935	59203	5	3	8
<b>District Total</b>	<b>580384</b>	<b>543335</b>		<b>6957</b>	<b>6318</b>	<b>13275</b>

Sources : 1. Census of India, 1991

## Annexure - IV

### Population by religion in the district of Cooch Behar

Religion	Population Number	P.C. total population of the district	Population number	P.C. to Total Population of the district
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Hindus	1399844	79.01	1659733	76.44
Muslims	368176	20.78	506278	23.34
Christians	1333	0.08	1467	0.07
Sikhs	14	0.00	215	0.01
Buddhists	273	0.02	353	0.02
Jains	2000	0.11	2093	0.10
Others	3	0.00	556	0.02
<b>Total</b> Population	1771643	100.00	2171145	100.00

Sources : 1. Census of India, 1981 & 1991

## Annexure - V

### Area and Population Administrative Units of the district of Cooch Behar

Number

Sub-Division and Police Station (1)	C. D. Block (2)	Panchayat Samity (1991) (3)	Gram (4)	Mouza (1991) (5)	Inhabited Villages (1991) (6)
Mekhliganj Sub-division :		2	14	214	195
Haldibari	Haldibari	1	6	62	56
Mekhliganj	Mekhliganj	1	8	152	139
Kuchlibari	Kuchlibari	0	0	0	0
Mathabhanga Sub-division :		3	28	265	260
Mathabhanga	Mathabhanga-I	1	10	102	101
Ghoskardanga	Mathabhanga -II	1	10	93	92
Sitalkuchi	Sitalkuchi	1	8	70	67
Sadar Sub-division :		2	28	260	259
Cooch Behar	Cooch Behar-I	1	15	149	143
Cooch Behar	Cooch Behar-II	1	13	116	116
Tufanganj Sub-division :		2	25	127	126
Tufanganj	Tufanganj-I	1	14	73	72
Tufanganj	Tufanganj-II	1	11	54	54
Dinhata Sub-division :		3	33	302	298
Dinhata	Dinhata-I	1	16	130	127
Dinhata	Dinhata-II	1	12	119	118
Sitai	Sitai	1	5	53	53
<b>District</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>1168</b>	<b>1138</b>

Source : 1) Census of India, 1991

2) District Panchayat Office, Govt. of W.B.

## Annexture - V

### Area and Population Administrative Units of the district of Cooch Behar

Sub-Division and Police Station  (1)	Contd.	Number		
	C. D. Block	Town		
	(2)	Municipal (7)	Non Municipal (8)	Municipal Corporation (9)
Mekhliganj Sub-division :		2	-	-
Haldibari	Haldibari			
Mekhliganj	Mekhliganj 1	-	-	
Mathabhanga Sub-division :		1	-	-
Mathabhanga	Mathabhanga-I	1	-	-
Ghoskardanga	Mathabhanga -II	-	-	-
Sitalkuchi	Sitalkuchi	-	-	-
Sadar Sub-division :		1	1	-
Cooch Behar	Cooch Behar-I	1	1	-
Cooch Behar	Cooch Behar-II	-	-	-
Tufanganj Sub-division :		1	-	-
Tufanganj	Tufanganj-I 1	-	-	
Tufanganj	Tufanganj-II	-	-	-
Dinhata Sub-division :		1	-	-
Dinhata	Dinhata-I	1	-	-
Dinhata	Dinhata-II	-	-	-
Sitai	Sitai	-	-	-
		6	1	-

Sources : 1. Census of India, 1991  
2. District Panchayat Office, Govt. of W.B.

## Annexture - VI

### Public Health Medical facilities available in the District of Cooch Behar

Year Sub-division C.D. Block and Municipalities (1)	Hospital (2)	Health Centre (3)	Medical Clinic (4)	Dispen- saries (5)	Total (6)	Total beds (7)
1992	10	393	25	8	436	1243
1993	10	393	25	8	436	1379
1994	10	393	25	8	436	1433
1995	10	393	25	8	436	1433
1996	10	393	25	8	436	1433
1996						
Mekhliganj sub-division :	2	42	5	-	49	168
Haldibari	1	19	-	-	20	36
Mekhliganj	1	23	1	-	25	132
Haldibari(M)	-	-	1	-	1	-
Mekhliganj(M)	-	-	3	-	3	-
Mathabhanga sub-div.	1	91	5	4	101	183
Mathabhanga -I	-	41	1	1	43	24
Mathabhanga-II	-	34	1	-	35	26
Mathabhanga(M)	1	1	2	2	9	108
Sitalkuchi	-	15	1	1	17	25
Cooch Behar sub-div.:	5	93	7	2	107	688
Cooch Behar-I	2	48	2	-	52	286
Cooch Behar-II	-	45	1	1	47	24
Cooch Behar(M)	3	-	2	1	6	378
Guriahati(NM)	-	-	1	-	1	-
Kharimala						
Khagrabari(OG)	-	-	1	-	1	-
Tufanganj sub-div. :	-1	69	3	1	74	125
Tufanganj-I	-	40	1	-	41	24
Tufanganj-II	-	29	1	-	30	14
Tufanganj(M)	1	-	1	1	3	87
Dinhata sub-div. :	1	98	5	1	105	269
Dinhata-I	-	48	1	-	49	16
Dinhata -II	-	39	-	1	40	39
Dinhata(M)	1	-	2	-	3	181
Bhagai part-I (OG)	-	-	1	-	1	-
Sitai	-	1	1	-	12	33

Sources : Dy. Chief Medical Officer of Health-II, Cooch Behar

## Annexure - VII

### Number of Family Welfare centre in the District of Cooch Behar

Year sub-division, c.d. block Municipalities, notified area, out-growth	<u>Family welfare centre</u>		
	Public	Private	Total
(1)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1992	16	3	19
1993	17	3	20
1994	17	5	22
1995	17	5	22
1996	17	7	24
1996			
1. Mekhliganj sub-div. :	3	-	3
Mekhliganj	1	-	1
Haldibari	1	-	1
Mekhliganj (M)	1	-	1
Haldibari (M)	-	-	-
2. Mathabhanga sub-div. :	4	-	4
Mathabhanga -I	1	-	1
Mathabhanga-II	1	-	1
Mathabhanga(M)	1	-	1
Sitalkuchi	1	-	1
3. Cooch Behar Sadar sub-div.	3	4	7
Cooch Behar-I	1	-	1
Cooch Behar-II	1	-	1
Cooch Behar(M)	1	4	5
Guriahaiti (NM)	-	-	-
Kharimala Khagrabari(OG)	-	-	-
4. Tufanganj sub-div.	3	1	4
Tufanganj -I	1	-	2
Tufanganj-II	1	-	1
Tufanganj(M)	1	1	2
5. Dinhata sub-div.	4	2	6
Dinhata-I	1	-	1
Dinhata-II	1	-	1
Dinhata(M)	1	2	3
Bhangi part-I(OG)	-	-	-
Sitai	1	-	1

M = Municipality, NM = Non-municipality, OG = Out-growth

Source : Dey. C. M. O. H. - III, Cooch Behar.

## Annexture - VIII

### Education & Culture Educational Institutions by types in the district of Cooch Behar.

Type of Institution (1)	Number				
	1992-93 (2)	1993-94 (3)	1994-95 (4)	1995-96 (5)	1996-97 (6)
a. General education	1962	1962	1962	1962	2049
1) School	1954	1954	1954	1954	2041
i) Primary	1722	1722	1722	1722	1805
ii) Middle	96	95	94	92	88
iii) High	110	111	111	112	114
iv) Higher Secondary multipurpose	26	26	27	28	34
2. College	8	8	8	8	8
b. Professional & Technical education	15	15	16	16	16
1. School	10	10	11	11	11
i) Engineering/ technical	2	2	2	2	2
ii) Teachers training	3	3	4	4	4
iii) Others	5	5	5	5	5
2. College	5	5	5	5	5
i) Engineering	-	-	-	-	-
ii) Teachers training	-	-	-	-	-
iii) Others	5	5	5	5	5
c. Special education	1288	1288	1820	1941	2013
1. School	1288	1288	1820	1941	2013
2. College	-	-	-	-	-
3. Total Literacy Centre	-	-	-	-	-
All Institution (a + b + c)	3265	3265	3798	3919	4078

Sources : 1. D. I. of Schools (P.E.) + (S.E.) W.B., Cooch Behar.  
2. Colleges, Cooch Behar  
3. District School Board, COD.

## Annexure - IX

### Students by sex in different types of educational institutions in the District of Cooch Behar

Type of Institution (1)	Number					
	1992-93		1993-94		1994-95	
	Male (2)	Female (3)	Male (4)	Female (5)	Male (6)	Female (7)
a. General education	236649	165008	238970	166190	240271	167055
1. School	227171	159791	229388	160874	230611	161666
i) Primary	148726	122838	149510	123531	150209	124027
ii) Middle	12913	8133	13011	8217	12917	8165
iii) High	39783	20673	40889	20915	41096	21044
iv) Higher Secondary						
multipurpose	25749	8147	25978	8211	26389	8430
2. College	9478	521	9582	5216	9660	5389
b. Professional & Technical education	1561	634	1569	634	1576	658
1. School	1077	467	1084	466	1094	489
i) Engineering/ technical		743	5	745	3	747
4						
ii) Teachers training	242	65	245	62	246	87
iii) Others	92	397	94	401	101	398
2. College	484	167	485	168	482	169
i) Engineering	-	-	-	-	-	-
ii) Teachers training	-	-	-	-	-	-
iii) Others	484	167	485	168	482	169
c. Special education	51860	1179	51865	1162	26978	9422
1. School	51860	1179	51865	1162	26978	9422
2. College	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Total Literacy Centre	-	-	-	-	-	-
All Institution (a + b + c)	290070	166821	292404	167986	268825	177135

**Sources :** 1. D. I. of Schools (P.E.) + (S.E.) W.B., Cooch Behar.  
2. Colleges, Cooch Behar  
3. District School Board, Cooch Behar

## Annexure - X

### Education & Culture Educational Institutions by types in the District of Cooch Behar

Number

Type of Institution (1)	1995-96		1996-97	
	Male (8)	Female (9)	Male (10)	Female (11)
a. General education	242554	168382	249198	172729
1) School	232823	162985	239352	167265
i) Primary	151837	125349	155553	127965
ii) Middle	12284	7760	13107	8671
iii) High	41500	21329	42769	21817
iv) Higher Secondary multipurpose	27202	8547	27923	8812
2. College	9731	5397	9846	5464
b. Professional & Technical education	1580	660	1595	664
1. School	1098	491	1110	494
i) Engineering/ technical	749	5	750	6
ii) Teachers training	246	88	246	88
iii) Others	103	398	104	400
2. College	482	169	485	170
i) Engineering	-	-	-	-
ii) Teachers training	-	-	-	-
iii) Others	482	169	485	170
c. Special education	29017	9803	30083	10177
1. School	29017	9803	30083	10177
2. College	-	-	-	-
3. Total Literacy Centre	-	-	-	-
 All Institution (a + b + c)	 273151	 178845	 280876	 183570

Sources : 1. D. I. of Schools (P.E.) + (S.E.) W.B., Cooch Behar.  
2. Colleges, Cooch Behar  
3. District School Board, COD.

## Annexure - X

### Teachers in different types of educational institutions in the district Cooch Behar

Type of Institution (1)	Number					
	1991-92 (2)	1992-93 (3)	1993-94 (4)	1994-95 (5)	1995-96 (6)	1996-97 (7)
a. General education	9951	9945	10089	10140	10160	1634
1. School	9754	9747	9891	9939	9957	10423
i) Primary	6031	6029	6159	6176	6167	6453
ii) Middle	734	752	754	746	712	710
iii) High	2092	2049	2057	2060	2094	2114
iv) Higher Secondary multipurpose	897	917	921	957	984	1146
2. College	197	198	198	201	203	211
b. Professional & Technical education	174	174	172	180	182	193
1. School	136	136	126	134	135	144
i) Engineering/ technical	64	64	57	59	59	62
ii) Teachers training	24	24	21	26	26	28
iii) Others	48	48	48	49	47	49
2. College	38	38	46	46	47	49
i) Engineering	-	-	-	-	-	-
ii) Teachers training	-	-	-	-	-	-
iii) Others	38	38	46	46	47	49
c. Special education	1288	1288	1288	1820	1941	2013
1. School	1288	1288	1288	1820	1941	2013
2. College	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Total Literacy Centre	-	-	-	-	-	-
All Institution (a + b + c)	11413	11407	11549	12140	12283	12840

Sources : 1. D. I. of Schools (P.E.) + (S.E.) W.B., Cooch Behar.  
2. Colleges, Cooch Behar  
3. District School Board, W. B., Cooch Behar

## Annexure - X

### Number of institutions and students in the primary education by c.d. block in the District of Cooch Behar

Number

Year Sub-division C.D. Block and Municipalities (1)	Male (2)	Institutions Female (3)	Total (4)	Male (5)	Female (6)	Students Total (7)
1992-93	1713	9	1722	148726	122838	271564
1993-94	1713	9	1722	149510	123531	273041
1994-95	1713	9	1722	150209	124027	274236
1995-96	1713	9	1722	151837	12549	277186
1996-97	1796	9	1805	155553	127965	283518
Mekhliganj sub-division :	211	2	213	16411	12929	29340
c.d. block total	194	-	194	13124	10240	23364
Haldibari	86	-	86	5816	5329	11145
Mekhliganj	108	-	108	7308	4911	12219
Haldibari(M)	10	1	11	1086	994	2080
Mekhliganj(M)	7	1	8	2201	1695	3896
Mathbhanga sub-div.	398	2	400	35056	24132	59188
c.d. block total	383	-	383	33330	227707	56037
Mathabhanga -I	132	-	132	11610	7715	19325
Mathabhanga-II	140	-	140	11927	7784	19711
Sitalkuchi	111	-	111	9793	7208	17001
Mathabhanga (M)	15	2	17	1726	1425	3151
Cooch Behar sub-div.:	467	3	470	44985	49992	94977
c.d. block total	400	-	400	25766	35193	60959
Cooch Behar-I	194	-	194	10349	6906	17255
Cooch Behar-II	206	-	206	15417	28287	43704
Cooch Behar(M)	38	2	40	10258	8326	18584
Guriahati(NM)	18	-	18	5242	3689	8931
Kharimala						
Khagrabari(OG)	11	11	12	3719	2784	6503
Tufanganj sub-div. :	299	1	300	17528	13983	31511
c.d. block total	284	-	284	15820	12643	28463
Tufanganj-I	148	-	148	9417	8463	17880
Tufanganj-II	136	-	136	6403	4180	10583
Tufanganj(M)	15	1	16	1708	1340	3048
Dinhata sub-div. :	421	1	422	41573	26929	68502
c.d. block total	397	-	397	39066	24924	63990
Dinhata-I	170	-	170	16783	13815	30598
Dinhata -II	168	-	168	16599	6762	23361
Sitai	59	-	59	5684	4347	16031
Dinhata (M)	16	1	17	2184	1789	3973
Bhangi part-I (OG)	8	-	8	323	216	539
District :	179	9	1805	155553	127965	283518

Sources : District School Board, Cooch Behar

## Annexure - X

### Percentage of literacy in rural and urban areas of the district of Cooch Behar by sex

Sub-division/ c.d. block/ Municipalities (1)	Percentage			
	Total (8)	Male (9)	Total Female (10)	Total (11)
I. Mekhliganj sub-div.	38.11	53.45	26.60	40.65
1. Mekhliganj	39.07	52.98	23.75	39.07
2. Haldibari	36.73	49.29	22.90	36.73
3. Mekhliganj(M)	-	69.10	51.73	60.71
4. (Haldibari(M)	-	74.79	59.26	67.26
II. Mathabhanga sub-div. :	37.46	51.54	25.45	39.03
1. Mathabhanga-I	36.08	49.26	21.66	36.08
2. Mathabhanga-II	40.43	53.54	26.41	40.43
3. Sitalkuchi	35.64	47.72	22.69	35.64
4. Mathabhanga(M)	-	85.47	72.28	79.20
III. Cooch Behar sub-div. :	51.92	63.80	42.38	53.51
1. Cooch Behar-I	46.70	81.87	64.83	73.51
2. Cooch Behar-II	56.45	68.14	43.46	56.45
3. Cooch Behar (M)	-	81.50	76.68	79.13
IV. Tufanganj sub-div. :	43.64	57.70	32.76	45.62
1. Tufanganj -I	44.61	56.68	31.74	44.61
2. Tufanganj -II	42.38	55.03	28.93	42.38
3. Tufanganj (M)	-	90.91	74.72	82.98
V. Dinhata sub-div. :	40.62	53.49	30.75	42.51
1. Dinhata-I	43.53	79.48	59.95	70.28
2. Dinhata-II	41.42	52.71	29.33	41.42
3. Sitai	30.77	41.93	18.71	82.29
4. Dinhata(M)	-	89.37	74.77	82.29
All Institution	42.89	57.36	33.31	45.78

Sources : Census of India, 1991.

## Annexure - XI

### AGRICULTURE Some classification of land utilisation statistics of the District of Cooch Behar

in thousand hectares

Year  (1)	Total area according to village papers (2)	Forest according to state forest deptt. (3)	Current follow (4)	Other follow land other (5)	Net cropped area than current follow (6)
1992-93	-	-	-	-	-
1993-94	-	-	-	-	-
1994-95	341.5	8.8	3.4	0.32	248.9
1995-96	341.5	8.8	2.9	0.32	259.0
1996-97	341.5	8.8	2.9	0.34	246.70

Sources : Directorate of Agriculture, Govt. of W.B.

## Annexure - XI

### Distribution of operational holding according to size class in the District of Cooch Behar

(area in hectares)

Year  (1)	Size		Class			
	no of holdings (2)	Marginal area of holdings (3)	no of holdings (4)	Small area of holdings (5)	Semi-medium no. of holdings (6)	area of holdings (7)
1985-86	160974	70121	66853	92506	31295	79702
1990-91	320266	159886	81013	120827	35983	105948

Note : Marginal : below 1.0 acre.

Small : 1.0 acre & above but less than 2.0 acres.

Semi-medium : 2.0 acres & above but less than 4.0 acres.

Medium : 4.0 acres & above but less than 10.0 acres.

Large : 10.0 acres & above.

Source : Agricultural Census, West Bengal.

## Annexure - XI

### Distribution of operational holding according to size class in the district of Cooch Behar

( are in hectares)

Year (1)	Medium		Large		Total		Size of holdings in hectare (14)
	No of hold-ings (8)	Area of hold-ings (9)	No. of hold-ings (10)	Area of hold-ings (11)	No. of hold-ings (12)	Area of hold-ings (3)	
1985-86	5240	25141	-	-	264362	2677470	1.01
1990-91	7900	43566	50	1558	445212	431785	0.96

Source : Agricultural Census, West Bengal

Note : Marginal : below 1.0 acres

Small : 1.0 acres and above but less than 2.0 acres

Semi-medium : 2.0 acres and above but less than 10.0 acres.

Medium : 4.0 acres and above but less than 10.0 acres

Large : 10.0 acres and above.

## Annexure - XI

### Area of vested agricultural land available for distribution of beneficiaries of Cooch Behar

Year as on 30th June (1)	Area of land distributed (in hectares) (2)	Scheduled Castes (3)	Number of beneficiaries		Total (6)
			Scheduled Tribes (4)	Others (5)	
1992	22042.44	67592	3681	28560	99833
1993	22042.44	67592	3681	28560	99833
1994	22042.44	67592	3681	28560	99833
1995	21639.64	79536	4690	34310	118536
1996	21774.32	80007	4723	34594	119324

Sources : Board of Revenue, West Bengal.

## Annexure - XII

### Distribution of Rajbansi population in North Bengal by census year and district *Census Year*

<i>District</i>	1951		1961		1971		1981	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>						
Darjeeling	15894	3.00	31472	3.50	31505	3.06	62770	3.60
Jalpaiguri	172710	32.68	316020	35.19	329191	32.03	514177	29.49
Cooch Behar	252069	47.70	418693	46.63	481304	46.84	714221	40.96
West Dinajpur	67489	12.78	93371	10.40	134976	13.13	369015	21.16
Malda	20294	3.84	38443	4.28	50,693	4.94	83462	4.79
North Bengal	528456	100.00	897999	100.00	1027669	100.00	1743645	100.00

(Total)

### Proportion of the Rajbansis to total and Scheduled Caste population by census year and district

<i>District</i>	<i>Census Year</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Total SC Population</i>	<i>Percentage of SCs to total population</i>	<i>Percentage of the Rajbansis to total Population</i>	<i>Percentage of the Rajbansis to total SC population</i>
Darjeeling	a	445260	26080	5.85	3.57	60.94
	b	624640	82381	13.19	5.04	32.20
	c	781777	98277	12.57	4.03	32.05
	d	1024269	145942	14.25	6.12	43.91
Jalpaiguri	a	914,538	2,35,203	25.71	18.88	73.43
	b	1,359,292	418,655	30.80	23.25	75.48
	c	1,750,159	595,424	34.02	18.81	55.28
	d	2,214,871	766,498	34.61	23.21	67.08
Cooch Behar	a	671,158	269,464	40.15	37.56	93.54
	b	1,019,806	478,313	46.90	41.06	87.26
	c	1,414,183	665,020	47.02	34.04	72.37
	d	1,771,643	883,084	49.85	40.31	80.87
West Dinajpur	a	720573	123118	17.08	9.37	54.81
	b	1323797	286453	21.64	7.05	32.59
	c	1859887	429578	23.09	7.26	31.42
	d	2404947	687094	28.57	15.34	53.70
Malda	a	937580	136379	14.54	2.16	14.88
	b	1221923	163433	13.37	3.15	23.52
	c	1612657	265697	16.47	3.14	19.07
	d	2031871	343089	16.89	4.10	24.32
North Bengal (Total)	a	3689109	790244	21.42	14.32	66.87
	b	5549458	1429253	25.75	16.19	62.83
	c	7418663	2053996	27.67	13.85	50.03
	d	9447601	2825707	29.91	18.46	61.70

N.B. : a = 1951, b = 1961, c = 1971, d = 1981

## Annexure - XI

### Trend in population growth of the Rajbansis ( Growth rate in percentage )

<i>District</i>	<i>Population growth rate during</i>			
	<i>1951-61</i> **	<i>1961-71</i>	<i>1971-81</i>	<i>1981-91</i>
Darjeeling	98.01	0.10	99.23	294.92
Jalpaiguri	82.97	4.16	56.19	197.71
Cooch Behar	65.59	14.95	48.39	183.34
West Dinajpur	38.34	44.55	173.39	446.77
Malda	89.43	31.86	64.64	311.26
North Bengal (Total)	69.92	14.43	69.66	229.95

NB. : Growth rate is positive otherwise indicated by '-' sign.

### Percentage of the Rajbansis of rural and urban areas

<i>District</i>	<i>Population growth rate during</i>							
	<i>1951</i>		<i>1961</i>		<i>1971</i>		<i>1981</i>	
	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U
Darjeeling	98.51	1.49	99.06	0.94	99.48	0.52	98.20	1.80
Jalpaiguri	99.51	0.49	97.50	2.50	97.20	2.80	94.95	5.05
Cooch Behar	99.23	0.77	99.69	0.31	99.37	0.63	98.90	0.10
West Dinajpur	99.14	0.86	98.75	1.25	99.51	0.49	98.24	1.76
Malda	97.87	2.13	99.78	0.22	99.73	0.27	99.12	0.88
North Bengal (Total)	99.24	0.76	98.80	1.20	98.72	1.28	97.58	2.42

### Trend in population growth of the Rajbansis for rural and urban areas *Growth of Population ( per cent ) during*

	<i>1951-61</i>		<i>1961-71</i>		<i>1971-81</i>	
	R	U	R	U	R	U
Darjeeling	99.11	25.31	0.53	44.78	96.66	585.36
Jalpaiguri	79.28	828.20	3.85	16.39	52.57	182.30
Cooch Behar	66.87	-33.35	14.58	135.84	47.69	157.69
West Dinajpur	37.80	100.86	45.66	-43.10	169.92	873.94
Malda	93.13	-80.78	31.79	62.65	63.62	443.70
North Bengal (Total)	69.18	166.04	14.33	22.93	67.72	219.11

### Trend in sex ration of the Rajbansis by district

<i>District</i>	<i>Sex Ratio by Census year</i>			
	1951	1961	1971	1981
Darjeeling	859	807	978	903
Jalpaiguri	848	872	1036	920
Cooch Behar	882	911	935	941
West Dinajpur	875	867	825	937
Malda	1077	954	941	937
North Bengal (Total)	876	980	952	932

### Literacy rate of the Rajbansis by sex

<i>District</i>	<i>Literacy (%)</i>								
	1961			1971			1981		
<i>District</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Darjeeling	24.66	40.05	5.59	22.13	37.84	6.06	27.21	40.39	12.60
Jalpaiguri	9.23	14.67	3.00	15.62	23.81	7.71	23.18	33.55	11.91
Cooch Behar	17.52	28.71	5.23	16.93	24.07	9.28	25.90	37.50	13.57
West Dinajpur	13.05	22.44	2.21	12.10	19.44	3.20	20.47	32.14	8.03
Malda	11.29	20.06	2.10	13.11	21.23	4.49	19.42	30.76	7.31
North Bengal (Total)	12.83	23.12	4.01	15.85	23.62	7.68	23.68	34.98	11.57

N.B. Per cent of literates to total population.

**Table - 8 : Percentage of literates among the Rajbansis for rural and urban areas**  
*Growth of Population (per cent) during*

<i>District</i>	1961		1971		1981	
	R	U	R	U	R	U
Darjeeling	24.68	22.56	22.10	27.44	26.89	44.39
Jalpaiguri	9.13	12.87	15.24	28.64	22.93	27.80
Cooch Behar	17.42	50.97	16.70	35.13	25.57	55.62
West Dinajpur	13.01	15.77	11.98	36.90	20.15	38.47
Malda	11.26	22.89	13.05	36.30	19.24	39.50
North Bengal (Total)	14.07	18.10	15.60	34.70	23.40	35.26

**Percentage distribution of Rajbansi literates in various levels of education by Sex**

<i>District</i>		<i>Literates without educational levels</i>			<i>Level of education Primary/Junior Basic/Middle</i>			<i>Matriculate and above*</i>		
		<i>Person</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Darjeeling	a.	77.78	78.84	68.32	20.90	19.72	31.30	1.32	1.44	0.38
	b.	26.53	30.51	2.22	23.27	63.75	96.40	5.30	5.74	1.38
	c.	43.67	41.33	51.94	50.26	51.96	44.22	6.07	6.71	3.84
Jalpaiguri	a.	68.68	68.47	69.83	29.46	29.53	29.01	1.86	2.00	1.16
	b.	12.27	12.37	11.97	82.60	81.72	85.22	5.13	5.91	2.81
	c.	39.60	38.14	44.09	53.98	54.72	51.69	6.42	7.14	4.22
Cooch Behar	a.	65.35	64.14	72.68	33.48	34.52	27.22	1.17	1.34	0.10
	b.	25.14	33.60	1.70	72.91	63.92	97.85	1.95	2.48	0.45
	c.	37.53	35.27	44.17	55.68	57.00	51.80	6.69	7.73	4.03
West Dinajpur	a.	66.36	67.30	55.37	32.70	31.70	44.32	0.94	1.00	0.31
	b.	14.78	14.11	19.68	82.12	82.55	79.45	3.10	3.34	0.87
	c.	40.48	38.70	48.06	53.46	54.56	48.77	6.06	6.74	3.17
Malda	a.	68.52	68.26	71.06	30.07	30.21	28.68	1.41	1.53	0.26
	b.	24.73	26.45	16.10	72.00	69.96	82.26	3.27	3.59	1.64
	c.	38.05	36.06	46.97	55.55	56.71	50.36	6.40	7.23	2.67
North Bengal (Total)	a.	67.03	66.52	70.72	31.59	32.01	28.87	1.33	1.47	0.41
	b.	20.08	24.29	6.48	76.66	71.85	92.20	3.26	3.86	1.32
	c.	38.94	37.04	45.10	54.55	55.65	50.99	6.51	7.31	3.91

N.B. : a = 1961; b = 1971; c = 1981 Censuses.

\* For easy comprehension, the figures of literates in all other levels of education above matriculation in urban areas have been merged in to this category

**Percentage of the Rajbansis workers by Sex**

<i>District</i>	<i>1961</i>			<i>1971</i>			<i>1981</i>		
	<i>Person</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Darjeeling	38.09	61.21	11.22	22.96	39.78	5.76	33.20	55.25	8.78
Jalpaiguri	34.96	57.21	9.45	26.56	50.79	3.16	31.01	55.52	6.37
Cooch Behar	32.45	57.85	4.57	25.99	48.94	1.45	30.05	55.09	3.45
West Dinajpur	35.54	63.59	3.51	34.40	58.08	3.51	30.11	54.69	3.88
Malda	32.45	55.71	8.08	26.02	46.14	4.65	30.07	53.25	5.34
North Bengal (Total)	33.88	58.26	6.50	27.06	50.39	2.56	30.46	55.05	4.09

**Decennial growth rate of working population among the Rajbansis by Sex**

District	1961-71		1971-81	
	R	U	R	U
Darjeeling	-40.89	-40.57	-40.06	188.07
Jalpaiguri	-20.84	-14.92	-61.87	82.33
Cooch Behar	-7.92	-3.95	-63.04	78.55
West Dinajpur	35.90	35.02	56.43	146.44
Malda	5.75	9.97	-24.78	86.50
North Bengal (Total)	-8.60	-4.16	-53.25	90.83

**Percentage of Rajbansis workers for rural and urban areas**

District	Decadal Growth Rate (%)								
	1961		1971		1981		1961-71		1971-81
District	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U
Darjeeling	39.10	16.83	22.91	32.93	33.22	32.29	-49.41	8.00	185.18
Jalpaiguri	35.15	19.41	26.49	29.06	31.06	30.07	-22.17	74.30	78.87
Cooch Behar	32.48	24.04	26.00	25.23	30.08	27.80	-8.27	147.42	70.86
West Dinajpur	35.69	23.73	33.44	25.90	30.17	27.02	36.52	-37.91	143.50
Malda	32.51	1.20	26.00	31.85	30.08	28.88	5.41	42.00	85.50
North Bengal (Total)	35.04	20.22	27.04	28.09	30.49	29.22	-9.16	70.79	88.92

**Percentage of Rajbansis workers for rural and urban areas**

District	Census	Occupational Categories								
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Darjeeling	a.	87.77	6.42	0.23	0.85	0.23	0.07	1.17	0.16	3.10
	b.	55.13	23.75	12.83	0.40	0.51	0.20	2.24	0.88	4.06
	c.	47.30	39.09	0.67	0.30	1.89	1.13	2.16	1.58	5.88
Jalpaiguri	a.	89.40	4.09	0.98	0.86	0.39	0.15	1.03	0.43	2.61
	b.	68.85	13.05	9.97	0.86	0.81	0.20	0.08	0.90	5.28
	c.	57.06	32.77	0.84	0.41	1.37	0.29	1.35	1.93	3.98
Cooch Behar	a.	89.89	5.81	0.06	1.09	0.23	0.02	0.57	0.12	2.21
	b.	78.58	16.77	0.17	0.53	0.44	0.03	0.56	0.27	2.65
	c.	59.89	32.21	0.25	0.74	1.50	0.10	1.13	0.88	3.26
West Dinajpur	a.	73.64	19.63	0.84	1.71	0.39	0.11	1.05	0.14	2.49
	b.	64.50	29.64	0.86	0.37	0.74	0.06	0.83	0.32	2.68
	c.	56.27	36.17	0.84	0.83	1.45	0.11	1.44	0.58	2.31
Malda	a.	69.88	13.78	1.16	6.62	0.96	0.05	0.67	0.47	6.41
	b.	39.45	30.19	6.68	5.85	3.93	0.58	3.63	1.26	8.43
	c.	59.13	27.96	1.55	2.18	4.68	0.16	1.25	0.92	2.18
North Bengal (Total)	a.	87.03	7.04	0.53	1.29	0.34	0.08	0.82	0.25	2.62
	b.	70.73	18.57	4.01	0.85	0.78	0.12	0.65	0.53	3.76
	c.	57.76	33.27	0.63	0.71	1.61	0.22	1.31	1.16	3.33

N.B. a = 1961, b = 1971, c = 1981 Census

Occupational categories : (I) Cultivators; (II) Agricultural Labourers; (III) Mining, quarrying, livestock, fishing, plantation etc; (IV) Household industry; (V) Manufacturing other than household industry; (VI) Construction; (VII) Trade and Commerce; (VIII) Transport, storage and communication; (IX) Other services.

**Percentage of Rajbansis workers for rural and urban areas**

District	Census	Occupational Categories								
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Darjeeling	a.	-62.87	118.58	3214.28	-71.84	32.14	66.67	13.29	220.00	-22.89
	b.	147.10	374.33	-85.02	113.79	964.86	1473.33	178.39	412.50	318.43
Jalpaiguri	a.	-39.03	152.62	706.94	-20.72	36.19	8.42	-93.61	65.34	56.19
	b.	51.12	-84.61	-12.47	2.07	166.47	2843.83	290.85	37.55	-
Cooch Behar	a.	-19.51	165.91	149.43	-54.80	75.32	29.03	-10.12	111.39	10.54
	b.	30.75	299.53	153.91	139.10	482.31	632.50	245.15	467.36	110.80
West Dinajpur	a.	19.03	105.17	38.71	-70.72	158.14	-16.17	8.67	200.00	45.95
	b.	115.01	200.76	142.63	454.21	2783.78	700.00	887.03	907.81	775.76
Malda	a.	-41.77	143.16	525.00	-10.17	352.94	1250.00	490.48	162.72	27.75
	b.	192.43	67.89	-56.77	-26.41	118.18	-51.85	-36.69	48.38	-46.57
North Bengal (Total)	a.	-25.72	141.08	588.94	-39.90	111.72	40.16	-27.52	95.01	31.30
	b.	55.98	242.18	-69.86	60.46	295.29	238.30	232.41	316.03	69.09

N.B. a = Growth rate during 1961 - 71, b = Growth rate during 1971-81.

Occupational categories : (I) Cultivator; (II) Agricultural Labourers; (III) Mining, quarrying, livestock, fishing, plantation etc; (IV) Household industry; (V) Manufacturing other than household industry; (VI) Construction; (VII) Trade and Commerce; (VIII) Transport, storage and communication; (IX) Other services.

**Percentage distribution of Rajbansis workers into different occupational categories by sex**

District	Census	Sex	Occupational Categories								
			I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Darjeeling	a.	M	88.28	6.90	0.17	0.02	0.21	0.08	0.83	0.19	3.30
		F	84.34	3.04	0.63	6.40	0.32	0.00	3.49	0.00	1.78
	b.	M	57.14	22.85	12.26	0.33	0.55	0.21	2.40	0.87	3.39
		F	40.98	30.07	16.82	0.89	0.22	0.22	1.11	1.00	8.69
	c.	M	49.90	36.32	0.60	0.21	1.17	1.20	2.23	1.79	6.00
		F	29.10	58.45	1.10	0.88	2.90	0.73	1.72	0.07	5.05
Jalpaiguri	a.	M	89.92	4.54	0.44	0.39	0.29	0.17	0.95	0.49	2.81
		F	85.73	0.94	4.69	4.16	1.11	0.01	1.62	0.00	1.74
	b.	M	72.78	13.54	6.00	0.78	0.72	0.20	0.08	0.93	4.97
		F	8.12	5.45	71.23	2.11	2.13	0.21	0.02	0.49	10.24
	c.	M	59.74	20.94	0.73	0.23	1.12	1.29	1.30	2.06	3.59
		F	20.20	57.93	2.30	2.92	4.74	0.32	2.03	0.14	9.42
Cooch Behar	a.	M	90.84	6.02	0.06	0.23	0.13	0.02	0.44	0.12	2.14
		F	76.67	2.77	0.09	13.15	1.61	0.02	2.62	0.00	3.07
	b.	M	79.53	16.53	0.16	0.29	0.26	0.03	0.43	0.26	2.51
		F	44.11	25.54	0.74	9.23	6.88	0.00	5.34	0.47	7.69
	c.	M	62.40	30.98	0.24	0.30	1.00	0.13	1.05	0.93	2.96
		F	17.70	52.96	0.11	8.21	9.96	0.17	2.36	0.16	8.37
West Dinajpur	a.	M	75.36	19.90	0.87	0.37	0.18	0.08	0.78	0.15	2.31
		F	33.77	13.38	0.07	33.04	5.34	0.66	7.09	0.00	6.65
	b.	M	66.90	28.12	0.81	0.27	0.46	0.05	0.79	0.33	2.27
		F	16.21	60.19	1.73	2.38	6.36	0.33	1.78	0.09	10.93
	c.	M	58.92	34.60	0.86	0.32	1.00	0.11	1.36	0.61	2.22
		F	16.64	59.77	0.59	8.56	8.03	0.01	2.65	0.08	3.67
Malda	a.	M	71.44	14.33	1.27	4.17	1.00	0.05	0.62	0.54	6.58
		F	58.60	9.82	0.33	24.33	0.66	0.00	1.05	0.00	5.21
	b.	M	41.08	29.67	7.09	5.58	3.76	0.60	3.59	1.23	7.40
		F	11.04	53.02	4.03	6.13	7.54	0.70	5.52	0.61	11.41
	c.	M	63.24	25.37	1.68	1.64	3.67	0.16	1.24	1.00	2.00
		F	15.66	55.51	0.13	7.92	15.46	0.00	1.34	0.04	3.94
North Bengal (Total)	a.	M	87.87	7.47	0.34	0.45	0.23	0.08	0.67	0.27	2.62
		F	78.56	2.78	2.46	9.82	1.41	0.04	2.30	0.00	2.63
	b.	M	73.11	18.22	2.68	0.68	0.60	0.12	0.57	0.54	3.48
		F	21.46	25.77	31.41	4.29	4.43	0.22	2.27	0.47	9.68
	c.	M	60.45	31.66	0.61	0.34	1.19	0.23	1.24	1.23	3.05
		F	19.00	56.46	0.97	6.06	7.75	0.22	2.20	0.12	7.22

N.B. a = 1961, b = 1971, c = 1981 Census.

Occupational categories : Same as Table 13

**Percentage distribution of Rajbansis workers into different occupational categories  
for rural and urban areas.**

District	Census	Sex	Occupational Categories								
			I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Darjeeling	a.	R	88.06	6.37	0.22	0.84	0.16	0.07	1.15	0.15	2.89
		U	16.00	18.00	2.00	2.00	16.00	0.00	6.00	4.00	36.00
	b.	R	55.49	23.81	12.92	0.36	0.38	0.17	2.23	0.74	3.90
		U	7.41	14.81	0.00	5.56	18.52	5.56	3.70	20.74	24.07
	c.	R	48.11	39.74	0.65	0.29	1.70	1.02	1.92	1.18	5.39
		U	1.38	3.58	1.38	0.82	12.40	7.71	15.43	23.97	33.33
Jalpaiguri	a.	R	89.22	4.05	0.98	0.86	0.26	0.14	0.92	0.38	2.59
		U	59.62	6.78	0.98	0.85	9.46	0.65	9.00	4.37	8.36
	b.	R	69.04	13.17	10.25	0.76	0.77	0.17	0.00	0.75	5.09
		U	62.84	9.28	0.82	4.04	2.02	1.27	2.73	5.69	11.31
	c.	R	58.42	33.09	0.85	0.38	1.10	0.22	1.13	1.47	3.34
		U	30.81	26.43	0.86	0.92	6.23	1.97	5.42	10.82	16.54
Cooch Behar	a.	R	90.07	5.82	0.06	1.09	0.20	0.02	0.55	0.08	2.11
		U	10.00	1.29	0.97	10.97	13.87	2.90	11.29	16.77	41.94
	b.	R	78.94	16.84	0.16	0.53	0.39	0.03	0.50	0.22	2.39
		U	18.90	4.43	1.56	1.83	9.39	1.04	9.65	9.00	44.20
	c.	R	60.43	32.44	0.25	0.76	1.44	0.12	1.03	0.77	2.76
		U	7.22	8.22	0.87	1.83	7.48	1.24	10.29	11.47	51.38
West Dinajpur	a.	R	74.17	19.75	0.76	1.70	0.39	0.06	0.80	0.08	2.29
		U	10.83	5.78	10.47	3.25	0.36	5.78	28.88	8.30	26.35
	b.	R	62.62	29.71	0.86	0.31	0.72	0.07	0.81	0.30	2.60
		U	33.72	9.89	0.58	15.70	5.81	0.00	5.81	6.40	22.09
	c.	R	56.96	36.58	0.75	0.81	1.24	0.08	1.21	0.39	1.98
		U	13.10	10.42	7.09	2.17	14.47	1.71	15.62	12.30	23.12
Malda	a.	R	69.89	13.78	1.15	6.62	0.95	0.05	0.67	0.47	6.42
		U	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
	b.	R	38.60	31.78	6.85	5.60	4.05	0.60	3.73	1.15	7.64
		U	2.33	4.65	0.00	13.95	16.28	2.33	11.63	9.30	39.53
	c.	R	59.60	28.16	1.53	2.14	4.61	0.08	1.12	0.80	2.00
		U	8.96	2.36	3.30	6.13	13.68	8.49	17.45	15.57	24.06
North Bengal (Total)	a.	R	87.33	7.05	0.52	1.29	0.28	0.07	0.74	0.20	2.52
		U	45.28	6.13	2.21	1.20	9.07	1.61	11.79	6.59	16.12
	b.	R	71.00	18.71	4.05	0.80	0.73	0.11	0.60	0.45	3.55
		U	50.89	8.33	0.94	4.26	4.13	1.22	4.42	6.67	19.12
	c.	R	58.59	33.60	0.60	0.70	1.46	0.17	1.14	0.91	2.83
		U	22.87	1.85	1.80	1.35	7.93	2.09	8.23	11.62	24.26

N.B. a = 1961, b = 1971, c = 1981 Census.

Occupational categories : Same as Table 13

## Annexture - XIII

### A Comparative Statement showing Different Estimates of Rural Poverty in India

Year	Organisation/ Researcher	Estd. Number of Poor (millions)	% of Rural Popula- tion below poverty line	Definition of poverty based on
1	2	3	4	5
1960 - 61	Dandekar & Rath	135.00	40.0	Rs. 180 p.c., c.e., p.a. at 1360-61 prices. Yielding a minimum of 2250 calories per day
	Ahluwalia	152.0	42.0	Rs. 180 p.c., c.e., p.a. at 1360-61 prices.
	Vaidyanathan	213.5	59.5	Rs. 240 p.c., c.e., p.a. at 1360-61 prices.
	Ojha	184.2	51.8	Rs. 216 p.c., c.e., p.a. at 1360-61 prices.
1961 - 62	Ahluwalia	157.0	42.3	Rs. 180 p.c., c.e., p.a. at 1360-61 prices.
1962 - 63	N.I.R.D.	166.0	44.9	The regression equation between NDP from agriculture and Ahluwalia's time-series estimates of incidence of poverty.
1963 - 64	EPW Decosta	161.8	34.6	Three types of classification on destitutes, Severe Destitutes and the Poor based on minimum per capita expenditure per annum.
	BS Minhas	221.0	57.8	Two alternative Levels of Rs. 240 and Rs. 200 per capita annual consumption expenditure at 1960-61 prices.
	Ahluwalia	189.0	49.1	Above mentioned criterion.
1964-65	Vaidyanathan	235.7	60.0	As mentioned above (Rs. 240 p.c., p.a., c.e.)
	Bardhan	174.4	51.6	Rs. 180 p.c., c.e., p.a. at 1360-61 prices.
	Ahluwalia	198.0	50.4	Above mentioned criterion
1965-66	Ahluwalia	205.0	51.1	Above mentioned criterion

1966-67	Ahluwalia	235.0	57.4	Above mentioned criterion
1967-68	Ahluwalia	241.0	57.9	Above mentioned criterion
	Dandekar & Rath	166.4	40.0	Above mentioned criterion
	Vaidyanathan	--	67.8	Above mentioned criterion
	Minhas	210.0	50.6	Rs. 240 p.c., c.e., p.a.
	Ojha	289.0	70.0	Estimates of minimum desirable income i.e. Rs. 216 to Rs. 480 per annum.
1968-69	Ahluwalia	227.0	53.5	Above mentioned criterion
1969-70	AFICCI	218.3	41.2	Rs. 240 p.c., c.e., p.a., at 1960-61 prices Rs. 444 p.c., c.e., p.a., at 1969-70 prices
	N.I.R.D.	196.0	46.2	Earlier mentioned criterion
1970-71	Ahluwalia	217.0	49.1	Earlier mentioned criterion
	IIPO*	198.9	45.0	Rs. 336 p.c., c.e., p.a.
1971-72	NIRD	183.0	41.5	Earlier mentioned criterion
1972-73	NIRD	212.0	47.2	Earlier mentioned criterion
	** Planning Commission (Draft Five Year Plan)	200.0	35.6	Rs. 480 p.c., c.e., p.a., at 1972-73 prices.
1973-74	Ahluwalia	221.0	47.6	Earlier mentioned criterion
	IIPO	208.0	44.8	Rs. 516 p.c., c.e., p.a.
1974-75	NIRD	232.0	50.1	Earlier mentioned criterion
1975-76	NIRD	225.0	47.7	Earlier mentioned criterion
1976-77	NIRD	216.0	45.2	Earlier mentioned criterion
1977-78	Planning Commission	251.7	50.8	Rs. 741.60 p.c., c.e., (2400 calories p.c. per day)
	IIPO	246.4	50.8	Rs. 780 p.c., c.e., p.a. (2400 calories p.c. per day)
1979-80	Planning Commission	259.6	50.7	Rs. 76 per person/month at current prices (2400 calories p.c., per day)

\* Refers to 1971 \* Refers to 1973

P.C. = Per capita C.E. = consumer expenditure P.A. = per annum

## ANNEXTURE - XIV

### **Eighth Plan Approach to Welfare and Development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes :**

#### **Background**

In 1981, India had 105 million people belonging to Scheduled Castes, which constituted 15.75 per cent of the total population of the country. To this number should be added about 4.1 million neo-Buddhists specified as Scheduled Castes during 1990. The projected figure for 1991, assuming the same decadal increase as for the general population. Would be 134.74 million. More than twenty per cent of the population in Punjab (26.87 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (24.62 per cent), West Bengal (21.99 per cent) and Uttar Pradesh (21.62 per cent) belonged to the Scheduled Castes. Eight states, viz., Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Karnataka, accounted for 77.5 per cent of the total Scheduled Caste population of the country in 1981.

The population of Scheduled Tribals was 53.8 million in 1981, Constituting 7.8 per cent of the total population of the country. In Jammu & Kashmir, Scheduled Tribes were notified in October. 1989, their estimated population being about 0.8 million. The projected figure for 1991, assuming the same decadal increase as for the general population, would be 67.4 million. Majority of the population of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Lakshadweep are tribals. Madhya Pradesh (11.99m). Orissa (5.92m) and Bihar (5.81m) accounted for about 46 per cent of the total tribal population of the country in 1981.

A number of Constitutional provisions of the interests of these weaker sections. In conformity with the Directive Principles of State Policy, social justice has been an avowed goal of development. During the four decades of planning, a variety of programmes were launched with the objective of improving the socio-economic condition of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. These measures have, no doubt, yielded results but not commensurate with the efforts or the needs of the target groups.

A specific sector of Backward Classes was included from the First Plan to cater to the special needs of Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes/Other Backward Classes. It was visualised that the general development programmes should be so designed as to take care of the needs of Backward Classes as well and the special provisions in the backward Classes Sector would be additive, to be used, as far as possible, for meeting the special developmental needs of these groups. Unfortunately, this expectation was belied in most cases and the Backward Classes Sector provisions, instead of supplementing the general sectors of development, tended to supplant the general sector provisions. It was, in this context, that the concept of Tribal Sub-Plan was introduced during the Fifth Plan and Special Component Plan for Scheduled Caste during the Sixth Plan to facilitate monitoring of development programmes for the benefit of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

### **Review of Seventh Plan and 1990-92 Plans**

In the Seventh Plan, Special Component Plans for Scheduled Castes, Tribal Sub-Plans for Scheduled Tribes and specific schemes for the welfare and development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were implemented. At the end of the plan, the Tribal Sub-Plan strategy was being implemented through 191 Integrated Tribal Development Projects, 268 pockets of tribal concentration (Modified Area Development Approach - MADA), 74 clusters and 74 primitive tribal group projects. There was substantial increase in the flow of funds for the development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, resulting in expansion of infrastructural facilities and enlargement of coverage. There substantial increase in the flow of funds for the development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, resulting in expansion of infrastructural facilities and enlargement of coverage. There was limited involvement of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes in the formulation and execution of programmes resulting in non-adaptability of schemes/policies to cater to their specific needs.

Emphasis was laid in the Seventh Plan on the educational development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Pre-matric stipends and scholarships were given by the State Governments to 190 lakhs, Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/ Other Backward Class students. Other educational incentives included free supply of uniform, stationery and text-books to about 100 lakh students. Post-matric scholarships were given to about 15 lakh Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes students in 1991-92 as against 9.75 lakh scholarships in 1985-86 and only 1.56 lakh scholarships in 1968-

cent. In the wage employment programme of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, preference is given to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and freed bonded labourers. It has also been provided that at the village panchayat level, 15 per cent of the annual allocation must be spent on items of work which directly benefit the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. Diversion of funds meant for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is not permitted.

**TABLE - I**  
**Percentage of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes representation**  
**in Central Government Services**

<i>Category</i>	<i>Scheduled Castes</i>		<i>Scheduled Tribes</i>	
	<i>1-1-71</i>	<i>1-1-91</i>	<i>1-1-71</i>	<i>1-1-91</i>
Class -I	2.58	9.09	0.41	2.53
Class -II	4.06	11.82	0.43	2.35
Class -III	9.59	15.65	1.70	4.98
Class-IV (excluding Sweepers)	18.37	21.24	3.65	6.82

**Percentage of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe representation**  
**in Central Government Services**

<i>Category</i>	<i>Scheduled Castes</i>		<i>Scheduled Tribes</i>	
	<i>1-1-71</i>	<i>1-1-91</i>	<i>1-1-71</i>	<i>1-1-91</i>
Class -I	2.58	9.09	0.41	2.53
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Class-IV (excluding Sweepers)	18.37	21.24	3.65	6.82

(Separately for CI. III & IV not available)

To enhance the competitive ability of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students, about 8,000 seats were created in 101 pre-examination training centres where coaching was given to candidates appearing in competitive examinations for entry into public services. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates have been able to increase their representation in Central Government Services and Public Sector Undertakings over the years, as seen from the Table 1, due mainly to implementation of reservation policy coupled with educational and coaching facilities.

For elimination of scavenging, about 10 lakh service latrines in 490 towns in 19 States were taken up for conversion into pour flush latrines. Reports indicate that by

the end of the Seventh Plan, 9.63 lakh dry latrines were converted, 14,529 scavengers rehabilitated and scavenging was eliminated from 40 towns.

The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 are the two important legislations to deal with untouchability offences and check commission of crimes on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Fifty seven special courts for trial of offences under the Protection of Civil Rights act have been set up in eight States Similarly, for implementation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, State Government and Union Territory Administrations have specified existing District and Session's Courts as special courts for trial of offences under this Act. Exclusive special courts have also been set up in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh. Monetary relief and rehabilitation assistance were given to the victims of atrocities. Schemes to encourage inter-caste marriages and legal aid were implemented. Programmes were developed through the media, both formal and non-formal, against the evil practice of untouchability.

Details of outlays and expenditure for Special Component Plan/Tribal Sub-Plan and Backward Classes Sector during the Seventh Plan are given in Table 2.

### Current Status

A very large number of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes continue to be socially and educationally backward and are languishing at the bottom of the social and economic pyramid. In rural areas, in 1987-88, the percentage of Scheduled Caste population below the poverty line was 44.7 and of Scheduled Tribe population 52.6, as compared to the All-India percentage of 33.4.

TABLE - 2

(Rs. in crores)

Sl. No.	Item	Seventh Plan	
		Quality	Expenditure
A.	Scheduled Castes		
	(1) Flow from States Plan to SCP*	7385.42	6916.92
	(2) Special Central Assistance	930.00	876.00
B.	Scheduled Tribes		
	(1) Flow from States Plan to TSP*	6216.76	7074.50
	(2) Special Central Assistance	756.00	8747.00
C.	Backward Classes Sector - SCs/STs/OBCs		
	(1) Centre/CSS	281.22	388.42**
	(2) States Sector	1239.33	1456.13

- \* Include outlay/expand. under backward classes sector. Excluding share capital contribution of Rs. 50 crores to National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation.
- \*\* Includes grant-in-aid of Rs. 10 crores to Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation.

Comparative picture in the incidence of poverty during the period 1977-78 to 1987-88 is given below.

TABLE 3

(in percentage)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Sch. Castes</i>	<i>Sch. Tribes</i>
1977-78	51.2	64.6	72.4
1983-84	40.4	53.1	58.4
1987-88	33.4	44.7	52.6

Thus, while there has been a reduction in the percentage of population below the poverty line in the case of both Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the incidence of poverty is still very high. Most of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe families do not land or other productive assets. They constitute bulk of agricultural landless workers, construction workers and workers in the unorganised sector. They suffer from long periods of unemployment and under-employment. They are also handicapped due to non-enforcement of protective laws such as the Minimum Wages Act and Prevention of Land Alienation Acts. Inequality and exploitation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, particularly in the rural areas, whether in the form of bonded labour or in other forms, both latent and manifest, still continue. Poverty, ignorance, lack of options in employment opportunities and non-existence of organisations which can fight for their rights, facilitate the continuance of age old exploitation. Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe families have often not been able to derive the full benefit of development programmes. Wrong identification of beneficiaries, poor selection of projects, unrealistic and simplistic assumptions in regard to their viability, administrative costs, and leakages have been other problems which have been further compounded by a largely unresponsive administrative structure.

The dwindling resource base of the tribal people in the shape of loss of land, restriction on access to forest produce, and lack of opportunities for reasonable ways employment and usurious money lending have caused hardships to tribal people.

Consequently, developmental inputs for the benefit of these people have had little impact. Significantly, development processes have interfered in many cases with traditional tribal institutional structure and ethos and have produce negative reults. These were the contributory factors for dissatisfaction amongst tribal people and simmering unrest in some tribal areas.

The literacy rate amongst Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has no doubt increased over the years but the levels are still very low. The gap in literacy between Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the rest of the population has been increasing, as is evident from Table 4.

TABLE 4  
All India Literacy Rate of Scheduled Castes  
and Scheduled Tribes

<i>Year</i>	<i>Scheduled Castes</i>	<i>Scheduled Tribes</i>	<i>Rest of the Population Scheduled</i>	<i>Gap between rest of the population and Scheduled</i>	
				<i>Castes</i>	<i>Tribes</i>
1961	10.27	8.53	27.86	17.59	19.2
1971	14.67	11.30	33.80	19.13	22.50
1981	21.38	16.35	41.22	19.84	24.87

Variation in literacy rates among the different castes and the different tribes in also family pronounced. Among certain Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities, the percentage of literacy in 1981 was below five per cent. There is also wide inter-State variation in literacy levels of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. For instance, in the case of Scheduled Castes, Kerala, according to the 1981 Census, had a literacy rate of 55.96 per cent, while Bihar had only 10.40 per cent. Likewise, in the case of Scheduled Tribes, Manipur had a literacy rate of 39.74 per cent while Andhra Pradesh had only 7.82 per cent. Among females, in both the categories, literacy rate is very low. In the case of Scheduled Castes it was 10.93 per cent and for Scheduled Tribes 8.04 per cent, in 1981.

A large number of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe children discontinue their studies prematurely before completing the level for which they were enrolled. The dropout rate in 1986-87 for classes I--V was 50.79 in the case of Scheduled Castes and 66.12 in the case of Scheduled Tribes. In classes I to VIII, the dropout rates were as high as 69.15 per cent and 80.19 per cent respectively.

Untouchability stands abolished by virtue of Article 17 of the Constitution and its practice in any form is punishable. But Social discrimination against Scheduled Castes still linger in many parts of the country. It is a matter of concern that inspite of legal measures in the form of Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955 and the Scheduled castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, 76,748 cases of atrocities against persons belonging to Scheduled Castes and 17,101 cases of atrocities against Scheduled Tribes were reported between 1986 and 1990. Of these, 3,328 cases were of murder,, 5,339 of rape and 4,325 of arson.

The development process in many tribal areas, instead of providing soccour, has been instrumental in causing numerous disadvantages, promonent among them being displacement and loss of land, the tribal's main resource base. Notwithstanding the fact that the State Governments have enacted law/retulations to control/prohibit transfer of land to non-tribals, land alienation still continues.

While educational development programmes have widened the opportunities for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe, the number of job seekers among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has also increased. At the end of 1990, there were 44.53 lakh Scheduled caste and 11.48 lakh Scheduled Tribe job seekers on the live register of Employment Exchanges as compared to 19.69 lakh and 5.54 lakh respectively in 1981. The number of placements during 1989 was only 0.47 lakh in the case of Scheduled Caste job seekers and 0.27 lakh in the case of Scheduled Tribe job seekers.

### **Strategy for the Eighth Plan**

In the nineties there has to be an intensification of efforts to bridge the gap in the levels of development of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes and other sections of the population so that by turn of the century those disadvantaged sections of population are brought on par with the rest of the society in

all spheres of national endeavour. Problems of access for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of programmes and services have to be identified and removed. Elimination of exploitation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and removal of all forms of oppression of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes must receive high priority. Untouchability, suppression of rights, usurious money lending, land alienation, non-payment of minimum wages, and restrictions on right to collect minor forest produce have to be removed to enable these people to avail of the benefits of development efforts.

Problems of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have to be tackled by suitable streamlining of the mechanism of planning and implementation of programmes of special Component Plan, Tribal Sub-Plan, and the schemes specifically targeted for the welfare and development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The strategy of Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes and Tribal Sub-Plan will be reviewed *inter-alia* to make them effective instruments of planning to ensure real and tangible flow of benefits to the target, group, both individuals and families.

Re-orientation of administrative structure at all levels for functional coordination, integration and effective delivery of services will be necessary. There is considerable inter-caste and inter-tribe variation in the levels of socio-economic development of Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes and in the social and economic organisation of their life. It is essential that planning gives full cognizance to these variations and responds to their specific problems and needs and the socio-cultural values of the community through decentralised participatory planning.

Alleviation of poverty through sustained employment and generation of incomes is vital so that at least the basic needs are met. National poverty alleviation programmes will have to ensure that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are able to derive adequate benefit. Skill development programmes will be necessary to improve their earnings and help them to diversify into trades and occupations. It will also be necessary to provide assistance to Scheduled Castes and Tribes in the matter of choice of projects, marketing, procurement of raw materials, and introduction of new technologies.

Elimination of scavenging and rehabilitation of scavengers will be an important programme in the Eighth Plan. Education, training and other incentives will be provided to children of parents engaged in unclean occupations so that they can prepare themselves for occupations, which provide better incomes and a higher social status. Occupations like tanning and leather work would be modernised with improved technology to remove the stigma attached to these professions and to produce goods which have a better market.

A national policy on rehabilitation of people displaced by large-development projects will need to be evolved. It is important that project authorities give as much attention to this aspect as to the projects themselves and ensure that full rehabilitation is completed before or by the time the projects become operational. Rights and concessions of the tribals in forests should be codified and the Forest Policy implemented in letter and spirit to maintain the symbiotic relationship between the tribals and the forests.

When belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are in a far worse situation by all development indicators. Poverty and deprivation affect them more adversely. Although they work along with men, they are not recognised as producers in their own right. Their strategy for the development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will have to include a major thrust for the benefit of women folk.

Voluntary organisations will need to be promoted and assisted to play a partnership role in the designing and implementation of programmes. Their role in advocacy and acceleration of the process of change and development and in playing a constructive role of intermediaries in general and in innovating new programme structures, in organising and preparing the people and in giving them as take in the success of their endeavours, in particular has to be recognised. Voluntary organisations can also help in the training of grass-root level workers and in mobilising community resources.

Facilities like schools, hostels and institutional structures for health care, nutrition, drinking water supply, road linkages and housing will be made available in such a manner that these promote integration of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

with the rest of the society. Agencies and institutions excelling in promotion of integration and removal of all discriminatory practices will be suitably encouraged through appropriate incentives.

### **Programmes**

While both Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes lag behind the general population on most of the social and economic development indicators and in several areas the developmental needs are common, there are some important aspects in which the problems of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes differ. For instance, the Scheduled Castes suffer not only from economic backwardness but also from social disabilities. The Scheduled Tribes problems arise from geographical isolation characterised by low level of techno-economic development and wide variation in the levels of living between different areas and different tribal groups but all the same assiduously retaining their distinct socio-cultural identity in a large measure. The programmes for these groups during the Eighth Plan will, therefore, need to be attuned to meet specific needs of these communities.

### **Educational Development of Scheduled Castes**

For the educational development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, steps will be taken to ensure that at both pre-matric and post-matric stages, the problems such as high dropout rate, stagnation, non-enrolment of girl students and uneven growth amongst specified communities are effectively tackled. While the general sector would take care of the institutional arrangements for locating the necessary infrastructure, the programmes under the Backward Classes Sector would continue to pay special attention in supplementing these through incentives and support services.

At the pre-matric stage, programmes covering scholarships, boarding grants, hostel facilities, free supply of books, stationery and uniform and mid-day meals will be expanded. An appropriate package of services will be worked out to promote literacy and raise the level of education of communities where the current level is very low. Special attention will be paid to the retention of the girl child in school.

The post-matric scholarship scheme for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in operation since 1944-45 has helped students from these communities to pursue

higher education. Although the rates of scholarship under the scheme have been increased from time to time, no structural changes aimed at increasing employment opportunities have been made. The attempt during the Eighth Plan would be to rationalise the scheme to :

- (i) provide guidance with reference to employment opportunities and offering appropriate incentives for courses which have a larger market demand;
- (ii) improve the performance, if necessary by prescribing minimum standards; and
- (iii) identify causes for inter-caste/tribe variation in availing benefits under the scheme and chalk out appropriate remedial action.

### **Economic Development of Scheduled Castes**

The economic development of Scheduled Caste families will be given high priority. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Development Corporations will strengthen their activities to enable proper identification of beneficiaries selection projects in non-traditional as well as traditional areas and matching them with the capabilities of the beneficiaries; provide financial assistance in the form of margin money or direct loan on concessional rate of interest in order to lessen the burden of repayment liability; facilitate the flow of credit through financial institutions for these projects; ensure tie-up with poverty alleviation programmes like IRDP; provide infrastructure support where necessary to enable the group of beneficiaries to take up their own ventures in a common work place; organise training in different skills to the target group; arrange for inputs such as supply of raw-material, marketing of finished goods, etc; and monitor the implementation of the projects.

A time-bound programme, to be completed within the period of Eighth Plan, will be launched to achieve complete elimination of scavenging. The objective will be achieved by :

- (i) making provisions of flush latrines mandatory in every house in urban areas and
- (ii) providing alternative work opportunities to those presently engaged in scavenging.

For this purpose, necessary training facilities will be provided and rehabilitation undertaken.

The National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation would take up projects for the benefit of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In addition, the Federation would organise training courses to provide skills.

### **Other Programmes**

Under the provisions of the Protection of Civil Rights Acts, most of the State Governments have taken measures for effective implementation of the Act including appointment of officers for initiating or exercising supervision over prosecutions, setting up of Special/Mobile Courts, appointment of Committees at the appropriate levels, periodic surveys on the working of the provisions of the Act and identification of areas where persons are under any disabilities arising from 'untouchability'. Later, in 1989, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act was promulgated to prevent commission of offences and atrocities against the members of the Scheduled Castes and the, Scheduled Tribes involving their person, dignity and property. The measures taken for implementation of the Act include strengthening of existing police cells, mobile squads, increasing the number of special and mobile courts for trying atrocities cases, survey of untouchability prone areas, provision of legal aid and relief, encouraging inter-caste marriages, monitoring, publicity and propaganda. The endeavour during the Eighth Plan will be to strengthen the enforcement of Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 and undertake programmes for mass awakening leading to attitudinal changes.

### **Educational Development of Scheduled Tribes**

For the educational development of scheduled tribes, existing programmes for pre-matric and post-matric education of Scheduled Tribes will be continued. Residential schools, including ashram schools, will be expanded. As envisaged in the National Policy on Education, 1986 priority will be accorded to the opening of primary schools in tribal areas. The socio-cultural milieu of the Scheduled Tribes will be taken into consideration in developing the curricula and devising the instructional materials in tribal languages at the initial stages with arrangements for switching over to the regional language. Anganwadis, non-formal and adult education centres will be established in tribal area on a priority basis. Further, the curriculum at all stages of education will be so designed as to create an awareness of the rich cultural identity of the tribal people as also of their enormous creative talent.

## **Economic Development of Scheduled Tribes**

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation through the State Tribal Development Cooperative Corporations would organise collection and marketing of minor forest produce in such a way as to ensure reasonable returns to the Scheduled Tribes will be formulated. The cooperative structure in the field for this purpose will be suitably reoriented and restructured.

The functioning of cooperative institutions including Large Multipurpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPS) in tribal areas will be reviewed with a view to meeting the genuine needs of tribal people in forests, credit, marketing of minor forest produce and supply of essential commodities. In addition, cooperatives for different occupational groups amongst the Scheduled Tribes will be formed. Essential productive and managerial skills would be developed in them through training and entrepreneurial development programmes so that they may seek self-employment. Measures aimed at greater participation of tribal people in conservation and development of forests and preservation of ecology, in a manner that their traditional rights relating to forest produce are not adversely affected, would be undertaken. Also, rights and concessions of the tribals in forests would need to be codified to ensure unhindered access to minor forest produce and use of forest resources by the tribals.

Limited access to credit for consumption and production purposes has resulted in increased dependence of Scheduled Tribes on money lenders/ traders leading to:

- (a) siphoning of developmental benefits in order to discharge loan liabilities to money lenders and traders;  
and
- (b) loss of resources base in the form of land or other assets.

An important objective during the Eighth Plan will, therefore, be to provide increased access to credit from banks and cooperative institutions.

For the primitive tribal groups, detailed plans will be prepared for their economic development, as far as possible, with the family as the unit. Infrastructure and other developmental needs will be specifically identified so that an integrated plan is developed. Schemes will be developed which take into account the social and economic organisation of life of these communities, their interests, aptitudes and

abilities.

A viable and lasting solution to the problem of shifting cultivation, involving an area of about 10 million hectares affecting 6 lakh tribal families, is yet to be found. Even though special programmes under the Central Plan including a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with an outlay of 75 crores, have been operating and these have been supplemented by the States own schemes, many of them have been unable to make any real impact. During the Eighth Plan, schemes on water-shed basis, in which sectoral programmes like agriculture, forestry, horticulture, infrastructural and social services facilities will be interwoven in an integrated and viable manner to enable the shifting cultivators to take to settled cultivation.

Originally created for meeting the manpower requirements for exploitation and regeneration of forest resources, the forest villages numbering about 5000, wherein more than 2 lakh tribal people live, have remained largely deprived of normal developmental benefits. In March 1984, the Ministry of Agriculture had advised the State Governments to confer long term heritable but inalienable rights, say for 15-20 years, in respect of lands in occupation of tribals for more than 20 years. But this suggestion does not seem to have been fully implemented. In September 1990, the Ministry of Environment and Forests advised the State Governments to convert the forest villages into Revenue villages after denotifying requisite land as forest. It was further suggested that administration of these and other Revenue villages in forest areas should be entrusted to the State Forest Departments. While details of conversion are not readily forthcoming, the progress does not seem to be encouraging.

During the Eighth Plan an attempt will be made to reach developmental benefits to forest villages in a manner suited to the situation. Arrangements for review, on a regular basis, of the functioning of developmental schemes in forest villages for their all-round development, keeping in tune with environmental requirements, will be made.

### **Other Programmes**

Legal and administrative measures and programmes aimed at elimination of exploitation in matters relating to land, forest, money lending, trade and labour will receive priority attention. These will be so implemented as to ensure for the Scheduled Tribes, the retention of basic resources like land, access to minor forest produce

especially items for food, fuel and fodder and self and wage employment opportunities.

Peoples' initiative and participation would be made a key element in the process of development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and protecting their interests. Towards achieving this end, peoples' initiative and participation would be enlisted through continued assistance to non-governmental organisations working amongst Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Research will be carried out to help identify the problems of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Tribal Research Institutes in the States will be activated to undertake concurrent evaluation of programmes under implementation. A bench-mark survey was undertaken in 1978 in tribal areas. It would be useful to undertake a similar survey in respect of the Tribal areas during the Eighth Plan.

Most of the State Governments have drawn up their own lists of socially and educationally backward classes and are implementing developmental schemes for them, mainly in the field of education. For the denotified communities, nomadic and semi-nomadic groups, rehabilitation measures have been taken up. Some State Governments like Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka and Maharashtra have also set up Development Corporations for other Backward Classes and Denotified Tribes. Efforts during the Eighth Plan will be to critically examine the ongoing schemes and modify them to more effectively cater to the needs of different groups amongst these communities.

The National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation will promote the economic and other developmental activities for the benefit of the backward classes. Assistance will be given to promote self-employment and other ventures subject to such income and /or economic criteria as may be prescribed from time to time.

An outlay of Rs. 2548 crores in the Central Sector, including Rs. 1125 crores as Special Central Assistance for Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes and Rs. 3086.06 crores for the State Plan under Backward Classes Sector have been provided. In addition, a provision of Rs. 12.0 crores has been made Special Central Assistance to Tribal sub-plan.