

CHAPTER V

POLITICAL DEMOGRAPHY OF MATELLI AND PHANSIDEWA BLOCK: THE AREA OF STUDY

MATELLI BLOCK

Malbazar subdivision of Jalpaiguri district has numerous tea gardens. It will not be an exaggeration to state that quite a majority of the population is herein employed under the aegis of tea industry. Tea gardens, at large, were set up in the colonial British era. The working force for this industry was primarily tribal, incorporated mainly from the tribal belt of Chhota Nagpur. Centuries and decades hence, the working population remains unchanged. Majority of the labour force are tribal emigrants from Chhota Nagpur. The vast majority have henceforth shaken their roots identify themselves fully with the culture and land that they have been working under for centuries. However, they still retain some part of their indigenous culture.

The tribal culture and languages have undergone an amazing amalgamation in dooars area of West Bengal whereby they have developed a common language like ‘*sadri*’– the principal language of community for the tribal population. For centuries and decades together, this population was castigated as the “working populace”, thus devoid of the fruits of advancement of the general society. Recent endeavours of the Indian government aimed towards assimilation of the downtrodden into the main stream has however, borne fruits. The local governing body and *panchayati raj* has provided this population a scope for putting forth their demands meaningfully through a platform that has constitutional validity.

Matelli Community Development Block is in Malbazar sub-division of Jalpaiguri district. This area falls under the jurisdiction of Matelli police station. Head quarters of the Block is at Chalsa. Geographically, Matelli is located at 26.55’30seconds North and 85;45’ East. Matelli Community Development Block has an area of 54.88 sq-km. National highway 31C passes through Matelli Block. It falls under Alipurduar Lok Sabha Constituency and Nagarkata Bidhan Sabha Constituency. There are two higher secondary schools (Matelli Higher Secondary School which is Bengali Medium school and Rastrabhasha Hindi High School) and one Junior Girl’s School. Besides this, there are two primary schools (Matelli Special Boarding Free Primary School and Aamtala Free Primary School).

Gram panchayats of Matelli Block/PanchayatSamity are Bidhannagar, Indong Matialli, Matialli Hat, Matialli-Batabari I and Matialli-Batabari II.

Table 5.1: Showing the number of Gram Panchayats under Matelli Block

SL NO.	GRAM PANCHAYTS
1.	BIDHANNAGAR
2.	INDONG MATIALLI
3.	MATIALLI HAT
4.	MATIALLI BATAARI I
5.	MATIALLI BATABARI II

Matelli Block predominantly comprises of rural population. As per 2011 census of India, Matelli CD Block has a total population of 117,540 of which 102,418 are rural populace and 15,122 are urban. There are 60,109 males and 57,431 females. Scheduled Castes numbered 17,622 and Scheduled Tribes numbered 51,769.

Table 5.2: Showing the population of SCs and STs in Matialli Block

Matelli block (2011 census)	Total	Male	Female
Scheduled Castes (SC)	17,622	8,874	8,748
Scheduled Tribes (ST)	51,789	25,705	26,084

Census of India, 2011

The above table shows that the Scheduled Tribe population outnumbers the Scheduled Castes population. According to 2011 census of India the ST population is 51,789 in Matelli Block where female population is 26,084 and male population is 25,705. It means that female population is higher than the male population. Total SC population is 17,622 where 8,874 is male and 8,748 is female population according to 2011 census of India (see Table 5.2). Below is the chart showing the population of SCs and STs in Matelli Block. (Chart No.5.1)

Chart No.5- Showing the population of SCs and STs in Matelli Block

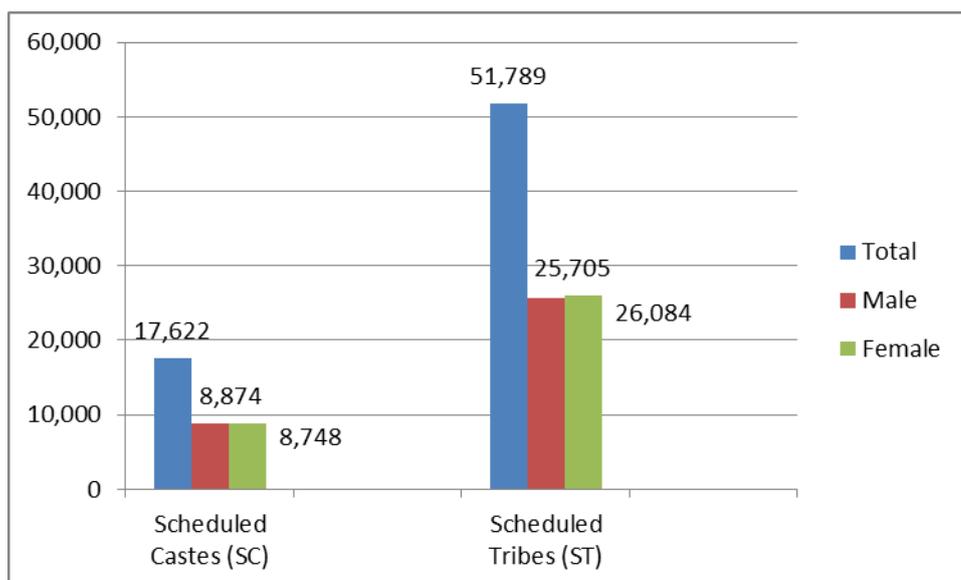


Table 5.3: Gram Panchayatwise Population of Census – 2001

Block: Matelli

District: Jalpaiguri

G.P.	Total population		Category wise Population Break-Up			
	Male	Female	SC	ST	OTH	Total
Matialli- Batabari-I	12809	12524	3547	13680	8106	25333
Matialli- Batabari-II	9223	8604	4635	6596	6596	17827
Bidhanagar	9381	9093	2956	8868	6650	18474
Matialli Hat	9778	10062	2381	6349	11110	19840
IndongMatialli	12274	12113	1707	13169	9511	24387
Total Pop.ofMatialli Block	53465	52396	15226	48662	41973	105861

Source: Census Charge Officer & Block Development Officer, Matialli Development Block, 2001

Table 5.4: Showing Block and GP wise Population of Census – 2011 of Matialli Block

G.P.	Total no. of household	Total population			Category wise Population Break-Up			
		Male	Female	Total	SC	ST	OTH	Total
Matialli- Batabari-I	6044	13554	13653	27207	4052	16085	7028	27165

Matiali- Batabari-II	4227	9643	9345	18988	3997	8848	6005	18850
Bidhanagar	4573	10553	10187	20740	3790	8722	8294	20806
Matiali Hat	4413	10322	10652	20974	2659	9609	8801	21069
IndongMatiali	5564	12823	12925	25748	3155	14529	8169	25853
Total Pop.ofMatiali Block	24821	56895	56762	113657	17653	57793	38297	113743

Source: Census Charge Officer & Block Development Officer, Matiali Development Block, 2011

Table 5.5: Decadal Growth Rate of Matiali Block (2001-2011)

Decadal Growth Rate of Matiali Block (2001-2011)						
	Male	Female	Total	SC	ST	OTH
Matiali Block	0.64%	0.83%	0.74%	1.59%	1.87	-0.87%

HEALTH SYSTEM OF THE WOMEN WORKERS IN THE GARDEN

The so called “support system” provided by the management in term of hospital and schooling system is extremely frugal to say the least. Majority of the tea garden hospitals do not have qualified doctors and are run by quacks who are hired by the management on meager wages. The so called hospitals in tea gardens are extremely ill equipped, barely having the infrastructure to cope with the minor emergencies. Their role is predominantly that of a referral centre devoid of providing workers with even the primary and basic medicinal care. The few qualified doctors who are yet a part of the health setup in tea gardens are under constant pressure from the management to curtail the medicinal expenditure. Thus they are unable to do justice to their profession and hence look for more meaningful jobs. The biggest sufferers in the whole scenario are the workers who are deprived of the basic medical facilities that is one of their primary rights. The medical coverage for the workers which is much flaunted by the tea garden management is a big farce.

Table 5.6: Showing Health Profile of the Matiali Panchayat Samity

No. of Health sub center	22
No. of Beds in Block Pry. H. Centre	15
No. of Child Birth (Year 2007)	2035
No. of Children covered under 6 Basic	4955

Immunization (year 2007)	
No. of Dai -	136 (44- Trained)
No. of Sanitized House Holds	11221
No. of Drinking Water Source	4094
No. of ICDS Centre Functioning	46

Table 5.7: Showing details of Labour Quarters

GARDEN NAME – CHULSA TEA GARDEN

SL.NO	TYPE OF QUARTERS	PUCCA	SEMI PUCCA	KUTCHA	TOTAL
1	DOUBLE	348	NIL	NIL	348
2	SINGLE	341	20	88	449
	TOTAL	689	20	88	797

Square Feet Area / Labour Quarters

SL.NO.	TYPE OF QUARTERS	PUCCA	SEMI PUCCA	KUTCHA
1	DOUBLE	680 sqrft	NIL	NIL
2	SINGLE	350 sqrft	280 sqrft	240 sqrft

The above two tables show us the labour quarters of Chulsa Tea Garden which is under Goodrick Groups of Tea Industry under Matelli Block. This shows us the very poor living condition of the workers of the tea garden. Close study and interaction with tea gardens in Matelli block has led me to conclude that the medical support for workers in tea garden is a great eye wash. The extreme locations of the tea gardens means that the workers have to travel great distance to avail government medical facilities provided by the Primary Health Centres and government hospitals. It is extremely under some and unpalatable for these workers to undertake their journey and avail of the medical facilities provided by the government. The extreme reluctance of the garden management to shoulder the medical expenses of the workers availing medical care outside the garden premises is a big deterrent. The larger sufferers in the whole scenario are the females and children. No wonder the infant mortality rate in the tea gardens is alarming high when compared with that of the general population. Basics requirements like vaccination of children are highly

neglected. Little is done to spread awareness among the workers towards the necessity of vaccination for children.

The antenatal checkup scheduled for the pregnant mothers are seldom complied with. Quite a considerable number of pregnant women in the tea gardens suffer from malnutrition. This has a detrimental effect on the pregnancy. The newborn are often underweight and would be mothers undergo lot of complications during the period of pregnancy. The penetration of *anganwadi* workers and *asha* workers has been a recent and welcome phenomenon. It however remains a fact that due to the flung locations of tea gardens, it remains quite unfeasible for the *anganwadi* and *asha* workers to reach to reach the needy tea garden workers. An innovative strategy to combat this would be to recruit these health workers from within the tea garden population. While this has been tried in many of the tea gardens, the strategy has not been too effective as it is extremely difficult to find women educated and competent enough to carry out the responsibilities bestowed on them as health workers. It brings us back to the basic point about the primary requisition of providing the tea garden workers, specially the women folk, with minimum and basic education. With proper emphasis on education, an educated working force can be raised within the garden populace that would be ready to shoulder bigger, effective and meaningful roles aimed towards betterment of the tea garden working class society as a whole.

EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF TRIBALS IN MATELLI BLOCK

The whole process has to begin at the grass root level where primarily the stress has to be on compulsory education for girls. Schemes like ICDS are a novel step towards realization of this goal. But here again comes the constraint borne out of the fact that the majority of tea garden are remotely located. It thus becomes extremely taxing for the children to actually be drawn towards education through ICDS schemes. The only way forward to redress this problem is to increase the number of primary schools. If every tea garden is provided with at least one primary school each, there is bound to be a phenomenal progress in terms of education level amongst the garden workers. This is of utmost importance and should definitely be considered by the powers that be on a priority basis.

School infrastructure in Matelli Block at a Glance- (Educational Profile)

No. of Primary School-66

No. of Students-10,500

Average Students per School- 159

No. of Teachers -147 (as on Nov. 2003)

Teacher Student Ratio- 1:71

Average of Teachers per School- 2.2

SishuSiksha Kendra- 68

No. of H.S. School- 01 (ChalsaGayanathBidhyapith)

Middle / High School- 04 (Matiali, Samsing, MatialiRastraBhasha, Batabari C.M)

No. of Jr. High School- 08

No. of SSK- 58

No. of MSK- 03

No. of Collage- 01 (PMS College)

No. of Madrasha- 14

No. of pry.Madrasha- 01

ICDS Centre- 06

No. of Libraries- 05

Literacy (as per 2001 census)- Total: 46.29% (M-56.98%, F-35.39%)

Source: CLRC Office, Matelli, DPEP, Chulsa.

It is really appealing to note that this fringe population of our society is yet to be an effective part of our development. Interactions with management of various tea gardens in 'dooars' area has led me to conclude that the managerial staff of these gardens feel themselves better entranced if the working population at large remain uneducated and this repressed. They thus remain dependent on the management for their basic minimum requirements for their livelihood. This places the management in a position of power from where can unjustly manipulated the scenario and run the tea gardens according to their whims and fancies.

Although it has to be admitted that the literacy percentage has yet not progressed to levels that can be considered favourable, its still has to be admitted that various government schemes aimed at promoting literacy has had a positive impact overall. As per 2011

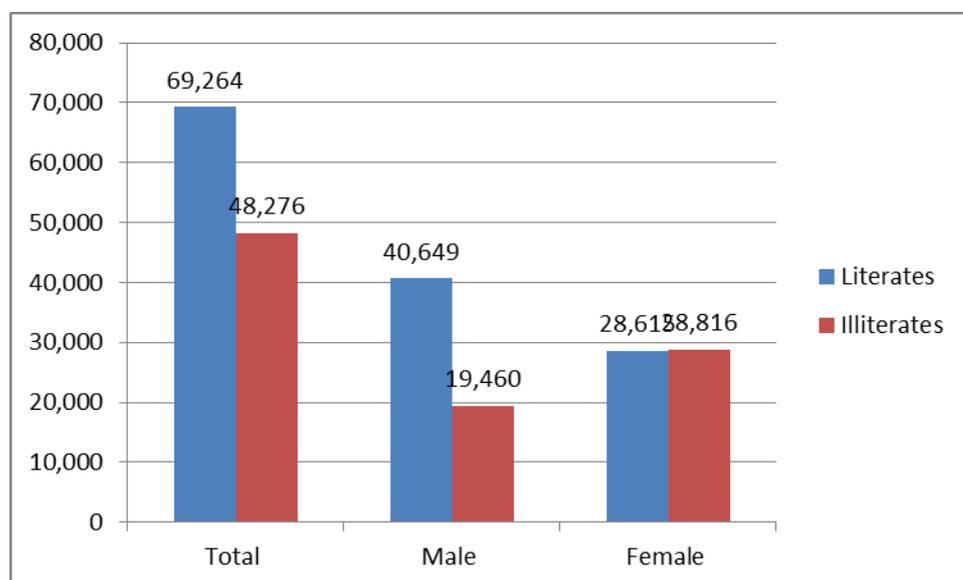
census, the total number of literates in Matelli CD is 69,264 out of which 40,649 were males and 28,615 were female

Table 5.8: Literates and Illiterates in Matelli block (2011 census)

	Total	Male	Female
Literates	69,264	40,649	28,615
Illiterates	48,276	19,460	28,816

Source: Census of India, 2011.

Chart No. 6- Showing Literates and Illiterates Matelli Block, 2011



Educations levels of the so called 'backward' strata of the society are yet to reach anywhere near the desired level. My interaction with this segment of the populace has time and again led me to conclude that whatever and however good the intentions and endeavours might be, without raising education level of this class, political empowerment will remain a distant dream. Political parties eventually just end up exploiting the system to further their own goals, which are not always pious to say the least. Primary stress has to be thus on education so that the actual fringe elements of society are able to drive benefits of political reforms like Panchayati Raj.

Table 5.9: State of Tribal Literacy in Jalpiaguri District and Matelli Block in 2001

Dist/Block	Persons literate		Male literate		Female literate	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Jalpiaguri district	2,27,633	42.58	1,46,652	54.23	80,984	30.66
Matelli Block	18,303	42.64	12,103	56.26	6,200	28.95

Source: Census of India, 2001.

There is however, quite a substantial percentage of this segment who have, when bestowed with power, toiled hard and sincerely towards betterment of their brethren. Many have managed to overcome political and bureaucratic hurdles successfully and have worked with zeal and earnestness. Endowed with the power of education, this marginalized section of society can definitely make the *Panchayati Raj* system an extremely successful concept. While the latest census data compares quite favorable with earlier data in terms of education, a more proactive attitude of the powers that be, can definitely go a long way in hastening us towards the desired goal, that is true empowerment of the so called 'subjugated' and fringe elements of society. Value of education can never be under played. Time and again I have been left to ponder over 'what might have been' had this basic requirement been met and dealt with in earnest.

Matelli Block falls under 'doors' Dooars is one of the principal producers of tea in our country along with Darjeeling and Assam. Dooars area is strewn with tea gardens. The life of the tea garden workers remains, even at this age, abysmal to the say the least. The uncertainty of garden lock outs, of which there have been plenty, remains an area of extreme concern. The gardens that are yet untouched by lockouts and performing too don't have rosy picture vis-à-vis the life of the workers. Their life is very much governed by the whims and fancies of tea garden management.

There are lots of organized unions claiming to represent the workers in these gardens. But almost all of these unions are affiliated to one political party or the other and their role thus is restricted to nothing other than furthering the political agendas of their parent political parties. They thus fail to address the real issues and just serve as a rallying force for creating vote banks for the political parties.

There is this rule in tea gardens where by the management is bound to offer one member of the retiring tea garden worker job in lieu of the retiring personal. This often does not suffice as many families are having one working member and their retirement does not provide avenues for all of their children towards gaining employment. There is thus generated a population who are forced to look and search for employment outside the garden premises. The deplorable educational standards prevailing in the tea garden is a huge hindrance towards gaining meaningful and respectable employment for this population. Lack of exposure towards life outside of the garden premises often lay them vulnerable when they are forced to leave the garden. They thus end up jumping from one exploitative system to another and generation after generation end up in the same quagmire.

Inter sibling rivalry aimed towards gaining one available employment opportunity upon retirement of the working member of the family is rampant. This leads to destruction of the basic ethos of the family. In this context one incident in Indong Tea Garden of Matelli Block is worth brining to the fore. The elderly mother of this family was declared a witch and castigated from the society at the behest of the elder son of the family so that he could gain employment in the garden as his mother was forced to retire. The dismal educational levels of the society made the “promulgation of witch” an easy task. The whole of the immediate society of the family was very easily led to believe the woman was actually a witch. The management did little to dispel this. It was ultimately left to the media to bring the whole episode to the forefront. The only means to redress the current situation is to provide education to the garden workers.

TEA GARDEN MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

The tea garden management perspective is no different from the perceptive of management of any industry. The basic aim of any industry is to earn profit. Raw materials are converted into products saleable to markets, and the ways and mean towards attaining this objective are the labour force.

The labourours, in this scenario, are supposed to be protected by labour laws. Indian labour law refers to laws regulating labour in India. Traditionally, Indian governments at federal and state level have sought to ensure a high degree of protection for workers, but in practice, legislative rights cover only a minority of workers. India is a federal from of

government and became labour is a subject in the concurrent list of the Indian Constitution, labour matters are in jurisdiction of both central and state governments. Both Centre and State government have enacted laws on labour relations and employment issues.

Plantation Labour Act, 1951 is aimed at protecting the rights of tea garden workers specifically. With employment of over one million, the plantation industry in India is among the largest private employment in India. It is spread across the states of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. The plantation workforce, however, has been amongst the most exploited workforce in organized sector. Their wages are amongst the lowest when compared to other workers and working and living conditions most dismal. Most of the plantations are located in remote areas. Workers are mainly dependent on plantations as there is hardly any other employment avenue. Workers are illiterate and mostly migrants with no awareness or information about their rights.

In 1951, the Parliament passed the Plantation Labour Act (PLA) which sought to provide for the welfare of labour and to regulate the condition of workers in plantation. Under this law, the state governments have been empowered to take all steps to improve the lot of plantation workers. However, the potential benefits promised under the PLA, remains unachieved mainly due to ignorance of workers about their rights under this law. (see Appendices).

WORKER'S PERSPECTIVE

The tea garden workers are certainly a deprived lot. More so under the present circumstances where closure of gardens is quite rampant. The situation that they are in is gruesome to say the least. The hard working conditions are coupled with the uncertainty of whether they will be able to provide for their family tomorrow or will they walk to their work place and find the gardens doors closed. The most hard pressed are the women folk in tea gardens. Most of the women in tea gardens are employed as working force and they share equal work load vis-à-vis the men folk. Added to this is the burden of having to look after their household. Pitiably financial condition along with having to manage a ceremonious situation at home is really a big task. Extension of *Panchayati Raj* System to grassroots level is definitely an endeavor to give a meaningful voice to this class. Many of the *panchayati* seats have been reserved for women so that they can be incorporated into

the larger political picture and made a part of the decision making bodies, so that they can have their say.

Women empowerment is the foremost requisite for development of any society. In fringe and underdeveloped, societies, it is all the more important to have a meaningful involvement of women so that real development of this society can be expedited. Most of the tea garden actually fails to provide the workers with even the basic amenities like proper medical care and housing, which the management is duty bound to provide under the aegis of Plantations Labour Act, 1951. (see Appendix)

My sustained interactions with tea garden workers spanning the tea gardens of Indong, Engo, Matelli, Samsing and Chalsa has led me to conclude that while many of the provisions laid down in the Plantation Labour Act are met with, there are still enormously glaring lacunas. The majority of these affect the women garden workers per say.

The granting of maternity leave is not always adhered to in letter and spirit. Many management, though not denying the leave, do not adhere to the mothers if they choose to avail of maternity leave. This fear of losing their wages makes many of the female workers to forgo the maternity leave to which they are legally entitled. Inadequate nutrition coupled with the hardships of working in the plantation often leads to anemic mothers presenting with complications before and during labour.

A visit to the maternity ward of the local Mal district hospital was an eye opener as quite a few of the pregnant mothers are admitted for blood transfusions at some stage of their pregnancy. Though the infiltration of health workers in the form of ICDS and *anganwadi* workers into the garden has managed to reduce the nemesis to a certain extent, a lot still remains to be done.

The result of pregnancies paralysed by so many deterrents often produces babies who are under weight and thus prone to infections at any early age. Though the national schedule for vaccinations is in place, the implementation of the same at ground level in tea gardens is far from being totally inclusive. Then comes the issue of the mothers post nately. This provisions laid in the Labour Act make it mandatory for the management to provide crèche for the children – which are (1) located close to the working place of the mothers

and (2) provided with trained female personnel or dais competent to administer and look after the needs of children. The gardens having crèches do not adhere to the number of crèches needed to be provided for a particular number of children in the first place and secondly the attendants put there in care hardly boast of having even the minimum basic training for child care. This leaves the woman with to choose between the devil and the sea- either quit the job and loose the wages that are so very important towards supporting her household or take the child to work with her and thus compromise with the care every child needs.

The second important lacuna that needs urgent redressal is lack of competent medical personnel in the garden premises for providing them with basic medical care. Though the management is bound by the Act to employ in their garden a qualified medical professional, majority of the tea gardens do not adhere to the laid down guidelines. The post is quite often filled up with “quacks” and compounders, who are incompetent to provide scientific medical care.

Third these few gardens who do employ qualified doctors, the doctors are forced by the management to curtail medical expenditures, thus rendering their efforts useless on ground. There is thus a major exodus of qualified doctors who, under constant pressure from the management authorities, are frustrated at not being able to provide with even the basic medical care to the population if tea gardens. As a result, a large population of garden workers is thus left to either fend for themselves in case of medical emergencies or rely on “quacks”, praying and hoping for the best. When a worker tries to beget a better medical facility outside of the garden premises, the management refuses to shoulder the financial burden. The remote location of the tea gardens renders it impossible for the worker to reach the nearest government medical facilities. It’s a pathetic scenario indeed.

The education facilities for children of workers that the many management is duty bound to provide is also abysmal. Primary schools that the management is bound to provide to the children within the garden area is either conspicuous by its absence manned by teachers who have little commitment to their profession. Though, admittedly, schemes like mid-day meal programme in schools has managed to push the students’ attendance in schools, wherever they exist, the lack of quality teachers renders the whole purpose of

providing basic education to the children futile. Thus, for majority of children of tea gardens workers attending these schools, it is more a means of securing a onetime meal rather than acquiring wholesome and meaningful education. Despite in plantation of the mid-day meal scheme, there however still remains a high percentage of school “drop-outs”. This is particularly for the girl child.

In majority of families of tea garden workers, both mother and father are workers, thus rendering the task of looking after newborns and toddlers quite impossible to manage. It is here that often the school going girl child is forced to opt out of school and take up the arduous task of looking after the younger siblings. They fall into a quagmire at quite an early age and when they grow up, they are forced to continue their adult like as garden workers, as they have little educational back up to dream of a life and livelihood outside the garden. And this vicious cycle thus keeps on repeating itself through generations.

THE ROLE OF LABOUR WELFARE OFFICER

The role of labour welfare officer can never be undermined for in any tea garden, he is the link between management and workers. The duties of labour welfare officer are manifold, as laid down in the Act. One of the important log in this wheel is his duty to provide workers with suitable and healthy accommodation within the garden premises. He is responsible also for proper maintenance of their accommodations.

The ground reality in the gardens that I studied was the accommodation for workers provided by the management is abysmal, to say the least. It is not that the labour welfare officers lack the desire to work and justify their job. But again it boils down to the management who are quite reluctant to allocate necessary words for fulfilling their social obligations. Even basic maintenance workers required in accommodations in worker’s colonies (labour lines) are almost non-existent. Whatever funds required for upkeep and maintenance of accommodations are necessarily met with by the workers themselves. Their paltry wages renders this task quite arduous for them but nevertheless, it remains a fact that it is the worker’s own personal endeavours that go into the basic maintenance or upliftment of these accommodations.

Most of the tea garden workers have been employed in these gardens through generations and the accommodation granted to them hence becomes like their permanent refuge.

Thus, in absence of substantial help from the management, which they are legally bound to give, the workers themselves try to uplift their accommodations through generations. But in case of being confronted with natural calamities like storms and earthquakes which are not so rare phenomenon in North Bengal, the workers are left to fend for themselves. Though surveys are carried out by the labour welfare officers after every such calamity to assess the extent of damage to the worker's accommodations, the actual grant coming in after submission of such surveys, is miniscule, to say the least. In many of the worker's colonies, specially those which are adjacent to forests, elephant menace is another factor. Herds of elephants wandering off into worker's colonies are quite common, often leading to widespread destruction of specially *kuccha* accommodations. The aftermath of these episodes is again detailed survey of the damages-which are more often than not, not met with inadequate compensation by the garden management and local government authorities.

The labour welfare officer in tea garden setup is supposed to be a link between the management and workers. On principle, he is supposed to look after the welfare of the labour force and convey to the management any issues that are brought up by the workers, so that smooth functioning of the garden is ensured. It is mandatory for the management to employ trained and suitable personnel to the post of labour welfare officer and also to give due cognizance to the feedback of the labour welfare officer.

The ground reality in majority of the tea gardens is quite contrary to the guidelines laid down in the Act. In majority of the tea gardens, employment of labour welfare officer is just looked upon as a formality by the management and often incompetent persons are employed to the post, just to fill up the post. In effect, they just end up being a tool in the hands of management, devoid of any meaningful contacts with tea garden workers. Bigger groups like Goodrick, do cater to the criteria laid down in the act and employ qualified personnel to the post of labour welfare officers.

My close interactions with the labour welfare officer of one such garden – the Chulsa Tea Garden, owned by the Goodrick group, was quite revealing. Though the welfare officers in this gardens have always been appointed adhering to the laid down criteria, the management always has the last say and inputs by these welfare officers is often just of academic interest. Little credence is given to the inputs of these personnel and any

measures which are aimed at welfare of workers are either duly discarded or kept in abeyance, if the economic fallout of such recommendations are not palatable to the management. Thus providing of basic facilities, such as proper maintenance of workers accommodation and providing of fire wood are often neglected, firewood, to this date, remains an important part of a workers life, which provide for not only a cooking media but also a means of keeping their household warm during the harsh winters. With precious little support from the management, the workers are often left to fend for themselves. The firewood provided by the management is often so miniscule that it is insufficient to tide over even a month's requirement. The tea gardens in North Bengal are often surrounded by forests which are potent sources of supply of fire wood. But these forests, especially in dooars area, are house to elephants.

There are many instances of ten garden workers infiltrating into the reserve forests in search of fire wood, where they are either conger and fined by the forest officials or they bear the brunt of elephants. I was witness to one such instance in Chulsa tea garden, where a young nepali garden worker, Kancha aged 37, who was employed as a cook in the garden doctor's bungalow, was murdered and killed by elephants in forest where he had gone after his duty hours to collect fire wood. Since the entry into these reserve forests for collecting of firewood is illegal, the family was denied any compensation whatsoever. If the management gives genuine credence to the needs of workers in this regard, which they are duty bound to do under the law, such calamities can easily be avoided. The role of labour welfare officer has to be truly carried out in earnest. The personnel employed under this post, have to be more diligent towards discharging of their duties so that effective and meaningful measures are taken from their office aimed at genuine welfare of the workers. It has also to be made mandatory upon the management so that under pressure is not brought upon the LWOs of the gardens and it is not degraded into an ornamental post.

The various avenues laid down under the Plantation Workers Act, if properly and earnestly implemented, would definitely go a long way towards better of tea garden worker's life. However, the ground reality, though the law exists, is far from satisfactory. There is a glaring lack of will and of course provision, to bring the guilty parties to book. The tea garden industry is centuries old, governed more by the traditions which are often hard on the workers. Laws, subsequently enacted, to safeguard the interests of workers

are laid in with lacunae. Workers awareness, though much better than may be a few decades back, is far from satisfactory. Workers engaged in such a big and wide industry, spanning across Assam and large areas of North Bengal deserve their rights to be protected and safeguarded. Majors aimed at truly looking after their interests will go a long way towards the socio-economic upliftment of this part of the country as a whole, as quite a substantial portion of the population in this area is directly or indirectly linked with the tea industry. The tribal population engaged as working force with this industry is enormous. Any measures aimed at resurrecting the status of this population will go a long way towards upliftment of the down-trodden women of the society. An educated, confident, politically aware and vibrant work force can be created which will be, in the long run, an asset and serve as a catalyst for betterment of the society as a whole.

PHANSIDEWA BLOCK

Phansidewa (Community development block) is an administrative division in Siliguri subdivision of Darjeeling district in the Indian state of West Bengal. Phansidewa police station serves this block. Headquarters of this block is at Phansidewa. Phansidewa is located at 26.58°N 88.36°E. It has an average elevation of 98 metres (324 feet). Phansidewa community development block has an area of 336.56 km². It has the density 171,384 (2001) and the area is 336.56 square kilometres (129.95 sq mi).

Phansidewa Block of Darjiling district has **total population of 204,501** as per the Census 2011. Out of which **103700** are males while **100801** are females. In 2011 there were total 42,138 families residing in Phansidewa Block. The **Average Sex Ratio of Phansidewa Block is 972**.

As per Census 2011 out of total population, 0% people lives in Urban areas while 100% lives in the Rural areas. The average literacy rate in urban areas is nil while that in the rural areas is 64.5%. Also the Sex Ratio of Urban areas in Phansidewa Block is nil while that of Rural areas is 972. Schedule Caste (SC) constitutes 29.7% while Schedule Tribe (ST) were 30.6% of total population in Phansidewa Block.(see Table 5.9 & 5.10).

Table 5.10: Gram Panchayat wise Population, Census of India 2001 and 2011

Name of the Gram Panchayat	Area in (sq.km)	Population 2001	Population 2011		
			Male	Female	Total
JalasNijamtara	39.693	26,368	16269	14990	31259
PhansidewaBansgoanKismat	33.34	18,612	10658	10158	20816
ChathatBansgoan	68	23,477	14917	14177	29094
Hetmuri-Singhijhora	108.8	27,909	17091	17419	34510
Bidhannagar I	42	25,121	15244	14826	30070
Bidhannagar II	33.758	22,294	13608	13451	27059
Ghoshpukur	53.378	27,636	15913	15780	31693
Total		171508	103700	100801	204501

Source: Block Development Officer, Phansidewa Development Block

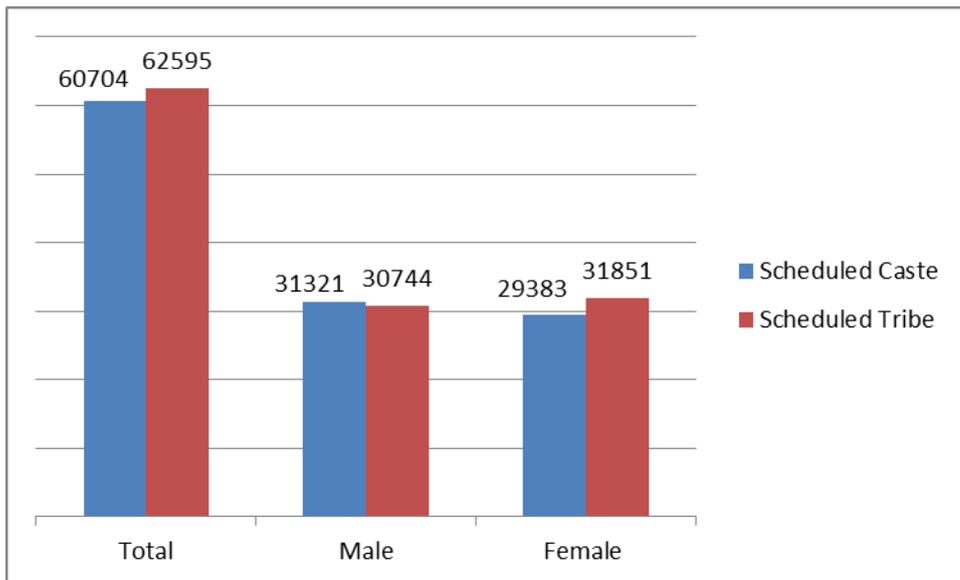
The above table shows that among all the gram panchayats in Phansidewa Block, Hetmuri-singhijhora Gram Panchayat has got highest population followed by Ghoshpukur Gram Panchayat. The lowest population among these seven gram panchayat under Phansidewa Block is PhansidewabansgoanKismat GP. The population of Children of age 0-6 years in Phansidewa Block is 28354 which is 14% of the total population. There are 14375 male children and 13970 female children between the age 0-6 years. Thus as per the Census 2011 the Child Sex Ratio of Phansidewa Block is 972 which is less than Average Sex Ratio (972) of Phansidewa Block. The Total literacy rate of Phansidewa Block is 64.46%. The male literacy rate is 62.56% and the female literacy rate is 48.29% in Phansidewa Block. Average literacy rate of Phansidewa Block in 2011 were 64.46% in which, male and female literacy were 72.63% and 56.06% respectively. Total literate in Phansidewa Block were 113,572 of which male and female were 64,890 and 48,682 respectively.

Table 5.11: Caste-wise Population of Phansidewa Block

	Total	Male	Female	% to total population
Scheduled Caste	60704	31321	29383	29.7%
Scheduled Tribe	62595	30744	31851	30.6%

Source: Census of India, 2011

Chart No. 7- Showing Caste wise Population



Census of India, 2001

MOUZA:- 113 Nos.

I.T.D.P. MOUZA:- 46 Nos.

NO. OF VILLAGES:-340 (Approx)

NO. OF ELECTRIFIED VILLAGES: - 255

TOTAL POPULATION -1,71,508

MALE- 87,945

FEMALE- 83,563

SCH. CASTE - 53,372

MALE- 27,748

FEMALE- 25,624

SCH. TRIBE - 53,654

MALE- 26,898

FEMALE- 26,756

POPULATION BY RELIGION:- (Not available)

LITERACY RATE:- 41.59%

MALE:- 51.85%

FEMALE:- 30.80%

Background of Phansidewa Block

POLICE STATION :- 3Nos.

COLLEGE :- Nil

H.S. SCHOOLS :- 13Nos.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS :- 5 Nos.

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS :- 2 Nos.

PRY. SCHOOL :- 118 Nos.

HOSPITALS :- 2 Nos.

HEALTH CENTRES

Primary Health Sub-Centre :-21 Nos.

DISPENSARIES :- Nil

TOTAL NO. OF BEDS :- 17Nos.

Phansidewa Primary Health Centre :- 12

Bidhannagar Health Centre :- 5

AREA UNDER FOREST WITH NAME OF FORESTS :- Nil

TOTAL AGRICULTURAL LAND :- 18.45 HEC.

NO. OF COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES :- 14 Nos.

TEA GARDENS :- 14 Nos. (Big)

REGISTERED SMALL SCALE :- 36 Nos.

INDUSTRIAL UNITS WITH NAME

M/S Kayon Agro Industries, M/S Terai Paints, M/S Bhola Flour Mill, M/S Kamini Enterprise, M/S Himboard Pvt. Ltd., M/S Mandal Furniture, M/S Hitech Organic Industries, M/S Tarun Kr. Das, M/S Md. Rafiul, M/S Genesis Audio Visusul, M/S Chhetri Ata Chaki, M/S Shakti Tea Procession and Manufacturing Pvt. Ltd., M/S RadhaGobinda Press etc.

NO. OF BANK BRANCHES :- 6 Nos.

State Bank of India, Leusipukur Branch, within JalasNijamtara Gram Panchayat.

State Bank of India, Hansqua Branch, within Hetmuri Gram Panchayat.

Central Bank of India, Phansidewa Branch, within Phansidewa G.P.

Central Bank of India, Bidhannagar Branch, within Bidhannagar I G.P.

Uttar BangaKshetriyaGramin Bank, Ghoshpukur Br. Within Ghoshoukur G.P.

Uttar BangaKshetriyaGramin Bank, Chathat Br. Within Chathat G.P.

NO. OF POST OFFICE :- 12 Nos.

CINEMA HOUSES :- Nil

VIDEO HALLS :- 4 Nos.

NEWSPAPERS & PERODICALS PUBLISHED :- Nil

RIVERS :- 8 Nos.

HAATS :- 15 Nos. (Approx.)

MELA & FESTIVALS:- 8 Nos.Mela organized in different occasions like Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Maharam etc.

TOURIST ATTRACTION / ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE:- One Aqueduct at Haptia, Two Picnic Spot at JalsNijamtara GP and Bidhannagar

ANY OTHER INFORMATION VITAL IN RESPECT OF THE BLOCK:- This block has three types of border i.e. International, State, District border. Eastern side of this block surrounded by Indo-Bangladesh border, southern portion surrounded by Uttar Dinajpur District, western side is surrounded by Bihar State.

Phansidewa block consists of rural areas only with 7 gram panchayats, viz. Bidhannagar–I, Chathat-Bansgaon, Ghospukur, Jals–Nijamtara, Bidhannagar–II, Phansideoa Bansgaon and Hetmuri–Singhijhara. This block has one police station at Phansidewa. The headquarters of this block is in Phansidewa.

Table 5.12: Gram Panchayat-Wise Area of Phansidewa Block

Name of the Gram Panchayat	Area (in km ²)
JalsNijamtara	39.693
PhansidewaBansgoanKismat	33.340
ChathatBansgoan	49.914
Hetmuri-Singhijhora	53.714
Bidhannagar I	44.332
Bidhannagar II	33.758
Ghoshpukur	53.378

Source: Block Development Office, Phansidewa Block

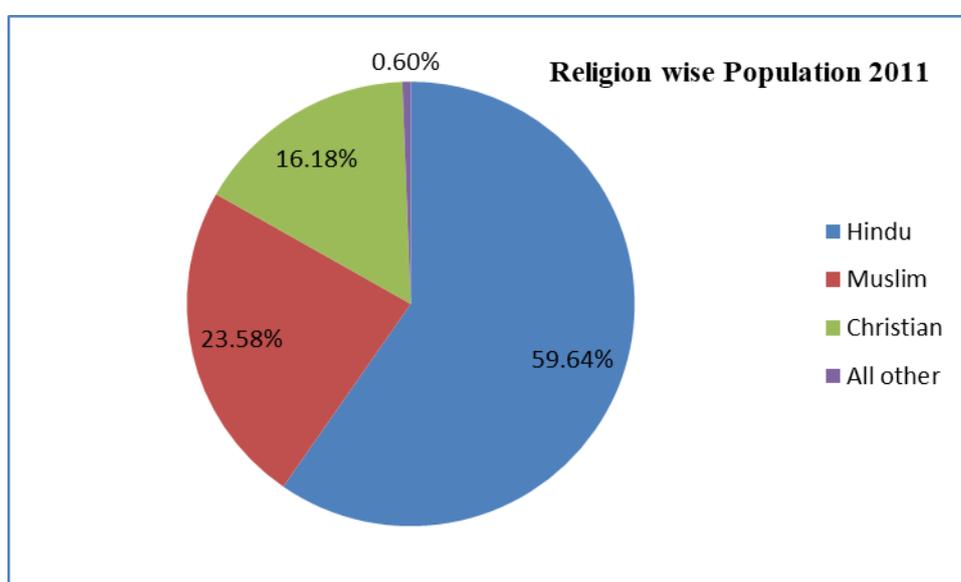
Table 5.13: Religion-wise Population – Phansidewa Block

Religion	Total	%	Male	Female
Hindu	122,064	(59.68%)	62,356	59,708
Muslim	48,202	(23.57%)	24,640	23,562
Christian	33,096	(16.18%)	16,140	16,956

Religion	Total	%	Male	Female
Sikh	148	(0.07%)	88	60
Buddhist	471	(0.23%)	231	240
Jain	13	(0.01%)	3	10
Other Religion	367	(0.18%)	187	180
No Religion Specified	161	(0.08%)	74	87

Source: Census of India, 2011

Chart No. 8- Showing Religion wise population of Phansidewa Block in 2011



If we see the above chart 5.4 which shows the religion wise population for Census 2011 has Hindu comprising of 59.64 per cent followed by Muslim 23.58 per cent in the sub-district. Since the area has tribal concentration the Christian community is 16.18 per cent in the area. (see Table 5.13). Growth of population of the sub-district has increased by 19.2% in the last 10 years. In 2001 Census total population here were about 1.7 lakh. Female population growth rate of the sub-district is 20.6% which is 2.7% higher than male population growth rate of 17.9%. General caste population has increased by 26%, Scheduled Caste population has increased by 13.7%; Scheduled Tribe population has increased by 16.7% and child population has decreased by -12.5% in the sub-district since last Census. (see Chart No. 5.3)

Working Population – Phansidewa Block

In Phansidewa Block out of total population, 76,561 were engaged in work activities. 77.7% of workers describe their work as Main Work (Employment or Earning more than 6 Months) while 22.3% were involved in Marginal activity providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Of 76,561 workers engaged in Main Work, 7,917 were cultivators (owner or co-owner) while 9,725 were Agricultural labourer. Phansidewa has 37% (about 77 thousand) population engaged in either main or marginal works. 51% male and 24% female population are working population. 43% of total male population are main (full time) workers and 8% are marginal (part time) workers. For women 15% of total female population are main and 9% are marginal workers. (see Table 5.14).

Table 5.14: Work Participation for Main workers and Marginal workers

	Total	Male	Female
	59,468	44,510	14,958
Cultivators	7,917	7,229	688
Agriculture Labourer	9,725	7,632	2,093
Household Industries	931	739	192
Other Workers	40,895	28,910	11,985
Marginal Workers	17,093	8,089	9,004
Non-Working	127,961	51,120	76,841

A. Bidhan Nagar 1 Gram Panchayat

Table 5.15: Population of Bidhan Nagar 1 Gram Panchayat as per Census 2001 and 2011

			2001						2011					
Sl. No	Name of Mouza	Jl. No.	Male	Female	SC	ST	Gen	Total	Male	Female	SC	ST	Gen	Total
1	ChotaPikpara	103	352	360	197	358	157	712	376	612	226	458	304	988
2	Lahuguan	104	5144	4807	2819	630	6502	9951	5793	5189	3514	723	6745	10982
3	Dhakpara	105	1366	1316	1154	148	1380	2682	1812	2712	1526	245	2753	4524
4	Budharuguan	106	2752	2553	932	806	3567	5305	3542	3827	1716	1218	4435	7369
5	PurbaMadati	108	3269	3293	1397	4318	847	6562	3869	4132	1961	5261	779	80001
Total Population			12883	12329	6499	6260	12453	25121	15392	16472	8943	7905	15016	31864

Source: office of the Bidhan Nagar 1 Gram Panchayat, Bidhannagar, Darjeeling

The above table (5.15) shows that in 2001 the total population was 25121 which increased to 31864 in 2011. That means there is an increase of population by 6743. Again the SC population was 6499 which increased to 8943 and ST population was 6260 which came to 7905 according to 2011 Census. It is interesting to see female population outnumbering the male population by 1080 in 2011 Census.

B. Bidhan Nagar II Gram Panchayat

Boundary of the Gram panchayat- West: Bihar State, East: Bidhannagar-I G.P & Phansidewa G.P., North: Sorounded by Ghoshpukur G.P, South: Bidhannagar-I G.P.

Total Population of the G.P. : 27061 (as per Census 2001)

Male : 13609, Female : 13452, SC : 7847, ST : 13530, OBC : 4059

Total BPL Family : 1908 nos., Total family in G.P.: 5500 no. Total Tax-Payee: 2744

Number of Mouzas:-
 1) Bara Paikpara J.L.:- 102
 2) Mandilajha J.L.:- 101
 3) PashimMadati J.L.:- 100

Nos. of Villages: 45 nos.

No. of Tea Garden: 03 nos.

No. of Commercial Bank: 1) Uttar BangaKshetriaGramin Bank (Sahadargachh)
 2) Canara Bank (Bhimbhar Hat)

No. of Post office: 1) Madati Post Office

Name and number of Hat
 1) BhimbharHar,
 2) Dangapara Hat,
 3) Bukdhola
 4) Kumdangi Hat
 5) Kagigachh
 6) Bagmara

No. of Electric Power Sub-Station:
 1) Bijlimoni 1100k.v. Power Sub-Station.

No. of Tea Factory:-
 1) Motidhar Tea Factory (with seed) 7) Bijlimoni Tea Factory (with seed)
 2) Bijlimoni New Tea Factory (with seed) 8) Sayedabad Tea Factory (with seed)
 3) Mount view Tea Factory (Bottle Leaf) 9) Shakti Tea Factory (Bottle Leaf)
 4) Dalmia Tea Factory (Bottle Leaf) 10) Mono Kamana Tea Factory (Bottle Leaf)
 5) Top-Line Tea Factory (Bottle Leaf) 11) SreeRupa Tea Factory (Bottle Leaf)
 6) Brajedra Tea Factory (Bottle Leaf) 12) Nulsur Tea Factory (Bottle Leaf)

Other Factories: 1) BijlimoniAnnant Shree Polymer Factory

- 2) Anantshree poly Feb. Factory
- 3) Balaji Stone Crasher
- 4) NH 31 Toll Plaza

Petrol Pump-

- 1) Filco Station
- 2) Reliance Pump
- 3) Dangapara Pump
- 4) Bijlimoni Five Star

Name and Number of Primary School:	Name & Number of High School
1) ChowdhuriagachhPry.School	1) Madati High School
2) Satbil Pry. School	2) Rupramgachh M.S.K. Centre
3) Kharubbangi Pry. School	
4) Bijlimoni T.E. Pry. School	
5) Madati Welfare Pry. School	Name & Numberr of SSK Centre
6) Bijlimoni Village Pry. School	1) Chowdhuriagachh SSK
7) Motiddhar T.E. Pry. School	2) Bel-Line SSK
8) Pathuria Pry. School	3) Sal- Line SSK
9) Sayedabad T.E. Pry. School	4) Poulush Line SSK
10) Bagmara Pry. School	5) Baraghoria SSK
11) Bidhannagar Pry. School	6) Kouniavita SSK
12) Kumartuli Pry. School	7) Kanagachh SSK
13) SahadargachhNetaji Pry. School	8) Jhoraline SSK
14) Malagachh Pry. School	9) Kuchiyagachh SSK
15) Mejmangachh Pry. School	10) Bogilagachh SSK
16) Bukola Pry. School	11) Debidangi SSK
17) Rupramgachh Pry. School	12) Gangdhani SSK
	13) Gourigachh SSK
	14) Hiragachh SSK

Other Private Educational Institution:

- 1) Father Leb-Lond School (English Medium Boarding School)
- 2) Olivia Enlightened English School
- 3) Bhimbhar Blind School

C. Phansidewa Bansgoan Kismat Gram Panchayat

Boundary of the Gram panchayat- West: Ghoshpukur and Bidhannagar- II G.P, East: Mahananda River and Bangladesh, North: J alas Nizam tara G.P., South: ChathatBasgoan G.P. There are ten (10) Mouzas and sixty (60) villages under this Gram Panchayat. The total population is 20818 according to Census 2011 where 10659 are male and 10159 are female. There are 8743 (SCs), 1665 (STs), 7910 (OBCs) and 2500 fall under other category. The land and house tax is paid by 4791 persons.

Other offices in the G.P.-

- 1- Central Bank of India (1 Phansidewa)
- 2- BDO Office (1 Phansidewa)
- 3- Electricity Office (1 Phansidewa)
- 4- RI Office (1 Phansidewa)

- 5- BLRO Office (1Phansidewa)
- 6- Telephone Exchange (1 Phnasidewa)
- 7- Police Station (1 Phansidewa)
- 8- PHE Pump House (2 Phansidewa)
- 9- Bandhan Bank (1Phansidewa)
- 10- Forest Bit office (1 Phansidewa)
- 11- Post Office (3 Phansidewa, Kantiveta, Nizbari)

Table 5.16: Phansidewa Bansgaon Kismat G.P. Population according to Census 2011.

Sl. No.	JL.No.	Name of the Mouza	Male	Female	Total Population
1	91	Sahananda	718	688	1406
2	94	Bandargachh	2010	1881	3891
3	89	Dhamnagachh	1216	1140	2356
4	90	Kadmi	627	628	1255
5	88	Mahipal	946	941	1887
6	86	Lembutari	396	380	776
7	96	Uttar Basgoan	2590	2474	5064
8	95	PurbaBasgoan	1135	1049	2184
9	99	PaschimBasgoan	830	814	1644
10	97	Kantivita	191	164	355
Total			10659	10159	20818

Child Education Centre- 16

1. Manbhokjot
2. JaigirGachh,
3. GoyalGachh,
4. KamargachhSawtal Para,
5. BoroSudamagachh,
6. Fatamari,
7. Chakchaki,
8. Karan Gachh,
9. PurbaBangagachh,
10. BangagachhShivmandir,
11. Baghavita,
12. Goyaltuli,
13. Dhamnagachh,
14. Daspara,
15. Tambari,
16. PurbaDundyajot.

Education Related Information:-

1. Child Education Centre-16,
2. Health and Child Development Centre-42,
3. Primary School No. – 13,
4. Madhayamik Educational Centre-1 (Nizbari),
5. Higher Secondary School-3,
6. Junior High School- 1,
7. Gramin Pathagar-1 (Phansidewa).

Primary School- 15

- 1) Phansidewa Junior Basic School,
- 2) Phansidewa Girls Primary School,
- 3) Jyotinagar Primary School,
- 4) Mahipal Primary School,
- 5) Hari Singh Primary School,
- 6) Palpara Primary School,
- 7) Lembutari Junior Basic School,
- 8) Dhaman Primary School,
- 9) KadmiAdarsh Pry. School,
- 10) KadmiJote Pry. School,
- 11) Nikargachh Pry. School,
- 12) Helagachh Pry. School,
- 13) Sudamgachh Pry. School,
- 14) RanjanPrava Pry. School,
- 15) Balaigachh Pry. School.

Gram Sansad- 16

- 1) Phansidewa-1,
- 2) Phansidewa-2,
- 3) Phansidewa-3,
- 4) Phansidewa- 4,
- 5) Sahananda,
- 6) Kadmi,
- 7) Lembutari,
- 8) Jyotinagar-1,
- 9) Jyotinagar -2,
- 10) Mahipal,
- 11) Nikargachh,
- 12) Helagachh,
- 13) Sudamgachh,
- 14) Sudamgachh-2,
- 15) RanjanPrava,
- 16) Balaigachh.

D. Jalas Nizam Tara Gram Panchayat

Table 5.17: The population of Jalasnizam Tara G.P. as per census 2001 and 2011

Year	Male	Female	Total	SC	ST	Minority
2001	19803	13626	33429	18285	285	13984
2011	21981	15125	37106	20296	316	15522

E. Ghoshpukur Gram Panchayat

Boundary of the Gram panchayat- West: Kharibari/Buraganj G.P, East: PhansidewaBansgaonKismat G.P., North: Hatighisa / Hetmuri-Singhij G.P., South: Bidhannagar G.P. There are 24 Mouzas under Ghoshpukur Gram Panchayat. The total number of villages is 44 and the number of household is 2274. The total population is 31695 where 15918 are male and 15781 are female under 2011 Census of India.

Table 5.18: Name of the Mouzas under Ghoshpukur Gram Panchayat

Sl. No.	Name of Mouza	Total pop.	Male	Female	SC	ST	%
1	Aambari	1371	721	650	761	06	84.75
2	Valomansi	2951	1507	1444	79	1740	74.10
3	Churaman	842	417	417	87	517	69.15
4	Dandrajhar	1050	513	513	688	339	56.42
5	Dhaknagachh	184	88	88	0	167	52.83
6	Dhamvita	728	370	370	527	44	66.03
7	Fakirdip	948	491	491	0	224	44.09
8	Farabari	1405	719	719	661	468	71.42
9	Foudigachh	787	395	395	644	134	62.16
10	Fulbar	1279	617	617	03	1227	65.83
11	Hawdavita	736	371	371	202	434	81.62
12	Harivita	1042	533	533	421	09	64.37
13	Jogivita	2221	1109	1109	158	1827	65.73
14	Kaduvita	205	106	106	04	201	65.93
15	Kantivita	645	347	347	463	85	79.65
16	Kuchia	1360	659	659	876	403	73.24
17	Lachuvita	1260	650	650	627	481	66.21
18	Madhavita	1090	552	552	220	597	63.86
19	Mohanlal chat	307	145	145	52	140	65.93
20	Patharharihria	502	257	257	25	319	53.55
21	Patharharihria	4039	1971	1971	113	3541	60.39
22	Sustagachh	634	310	310	0	625	45.16
23	Tetulguri	916	453	453	109	798	61.52
24	thakurganj	2571	1289	1289	145	2005	72.48

Source: The Secretary, Ghoshpukur Gram Panchayat, Ghoshpukur.

Other Informations of the Ghoshpukur Gram Panchayat

1. Number of Primary Schools- 18
2. Number of Madhayamik and Higher Secondary Schools- 04
3. Health and Child Development Service Centre- 91
4. UttarbangaKhetriaGramin bank -01
5. RI Office – 01
6. SIF School Office – 01
7. Ration Shop- 04
8. Land Ragistration Office- 01
9. KishanMandi- 01
10. College – 01
11. SSK School- 11

F. Chathat-Bansgoan Gram Panchayat

The name of the Gram Panchayat is Chathat-Bansgoan Gram Panchayat under Phansidewa Block and Siligri Mahakuma Parishad, District Darjeeling. The Gram Panchayat is situated near the Chathat Bus Stand. The Gram Panchayat is surrounded by West- Bidhan Nagar, South -North Dinajpur, East- Bangladesh, and North -Phnasidewa GP.

Table 5.19: Showing the Population , number of households and literacy rate of the GP

Population of the GP	29098
Male population	14921
Female population	14177
Number of Household	5751
Number of SC households	1484
Number of ST Households	1200
Number of Minority Households	3067
Number of BPL households	3465
Literacy Rate (%)	60%
Literacy Rate (%)	30%

G. Hetmuri-Singhijhora Gram Panchayat

Under Hetmuri - Singhijhora Gram panchayat there are 24 Sansad under which total number of household is 7257. The total population according to the Census 2011 is 34520 where 17091 is the total male population and 17419 is the total female population for the GP. (See Table 5.20)

Table 5.20: Sansad-wise Household of Hetmuri-Singhijhora gram Panchayat under Phansidewa Block

Sl. No	Name of the Sansad	No. of Households	Total Population	Total Male	Total Female
1.	Chowpukuria	386	1764	905	859
2.	Singhijhora&Sanyasithan T.E	389	1855	895	960
3.	Nunujote	432	2053	1014	1039
4.	Bagdogra T.E	235	1206	592	614
5.	Moonee T.E	319	1501	717	784
6.	Vesty	291	1474	758	716
7.	Taipoo T.E.1	265	1335	654	681
8.	Taipoo T.E. 2	219	1103	540	563
9.	Chowpukuria 2	136	638	322	316
10.	Halal	290	1511	757	754
11.	Dhemal	453	2150	1079	1071
12.	Gungaram T.E (Tarabari)	63	289	138	151
13.	Gungaram T.E	617	2793	1354	1439
14.	Toonah	224	1070	523	547
15.	Hansqua T.E 1 (Facory Line)	190	840	419	420
16.	Hansqua T.E (Bandijote)	217	969	479	481
17.	Bandi	576	2662	1267	1395
18.	Sarkargach	355	1899	921	978
19.	Bawkali	381	1842	939	903
20.	Tarbandha	335	1415	730	685
21.	PanchimDanagach	167	794	402	392
22.	PurbaDanagach	300	1448	738	710
23.	Bhojnarayan T.E.1	217	993	493	500
24.	Bhojnarayan T.E. 2	200	916	455	461
	Grand Total	7257	34520	17091	17419

CASE STUDY OF VILLAGES

A. Siril Line- Kamala Bagan

There are 100 households in the village and the total population of the village is 600. The villagers are all Christian by faith. We interviewed Silbrius Ekka (35), Christian by faith is the agent of LIC and the member of RCM (Right Concept Market). His wife is a permanent worker of the Kamala tea garden. He is 10th pass and his wife is 9th class pass. His wife is from this village. His is a love marriage. (When we reached his house his wife was getting ready to go to the market with her friends therefore we could not interview her. He was there looking after his two kids.) His father was illiterate and permanent worker in the garden. They are five brothers and sisters. He appeared for Madhyamik exam and got back result in the science group therefore left the school. He has two children. The eldest is 8 years old and is going to Hindi medium school and younger son

is going to Bengali medium school. He could not afford to send his children to English medium school as the fee structure is very high.

In the village the girls outnumber the boys. Women are going for ligation after 2-3 children. Earlier most of the deliveries took place at home but now the women are becoming conscious about their health and hygiene and have began to go to the garden hospital for delivery. Some women who are well off still visit private doctors. The garden doctor writes the prescription and the workers have to buy the medicines from outside. The get married normally after the age of 22-23 years. There are 4-5 families which are not depended at all on tea garden. They have 4-5 *bighas* of land of their own where they grow paddy. There are also some families who work at the garden and also have two to three *bighas* of land where they grow paddy after their leisure from the garden. Kamala tea garden was closed last year (2007) for 20 days. There are 10 service holders in the village who are mainly working in the SSB, CRPF, BSF, Police and Army. Those who do not have work in the garden work as daily wage labourer and are engaged in highway road construction work where crushing of stone is mainly done by the boys and girls.

In the village there is not a single graduate. There only 3-4 girls and boys who are up to Higher Secondary. Two to three children who are 6 years of age are not going to school due to family financial problem. There is a Rafel Hindi Medium School which is run by the missionaries which is one kilo meter away from this place. Another reputed school is St. Peter's Higher Secondary School at Gayaganga which is 3km. Madati School-6-7km. They do not get any help from the missionary's school. After Madhyamik the children are leaving the school the reason behind this is mainly financial.

Fee structure: 1-3 class- Rs. 70 per month

4 class- 100 per month

5 class and above- 125 per month

Raymond Minj is the worker in the garden and member of the Naxalite party. his competition was with the Congress candidate. The villagers are mostly Congress supporters but the other group which is Kanu supporter is coming up very fast and gaining popularity in the locality. Women participation in the garden is almost negligible. The decisions in the house are mainly taken by the male members/head of the family.

Panchayat Development Programmes for Tribals (in brief)

- Formation of SHGs.
- Rural road construction programme under NREGS.
- Drinking water facilities-well and deep tube wells.
- Old Age Pension for the people above 60 years of age.
- Stipend for the students.
- Self employment generation scheme.
- Through SHG you make people financially reliant.
- Generate a sense of cooperation or collective spirit.
- You make them aware of their rights and entitlements.
- You train them to come up with small scale and collective enterprises.

Normally 10-12 members make one SHG. One village can have more than one SHG if the number of members crosses 12. To maintain link with the *panchayat* the *panchayat* has appointed two female Resource Persons. These RPs have been drawn from the active members of SHG. They are paid Rs. 1400 per month each.

B. HELAGOJ VILLAGE

On 1 April 2008 we visited Helagoj, Picshala and Rakhalgoj villages, which are situated on the bank of river Pichla. First we visited a tribal village called **Helagoj** which is inhabited by some 22 Oraon families. In the east of the village there is Nicorgoj village, in the west Nayabari village, in the north it's a Bangladesh border and in the south river Pischla is there. The village is one km away from the pacca road. The village has linear structure. The houses have tin roof and fencing boundary.

We talked to AmrushEkka (50 yrs), Yakub Lakra (48 yrs), Daud Kujur (45 yrs), Rajen Lakra (24 yrs), Johan Lakra (65 yrs), and about 15 men and women who had gathered around us from that village. It took the shape of a group discussion, where each question was being answered by at least three or four persons. The answers thus turned out to be consensus answers; where one's answer was substantiated by others who had more precise information on the subject.

There are around 22 families in the village among which 5-6 families are Christian families and the rest are Hindus in the village. This village is Oroan dominated village.

The male- female ratio is 50:40. The villagers are mostly illiterate. There was only one boy who is Madhyamik pass. Not a single girl in the village has studied up to class 10. There was only a girl who has studied upto 8th standard. There are two primary schools (Bengali medium) in the nearby villages where the children of this village go to study. One primary school is 3 km away and the other one is 2 km away from this village. The children go walking to the school. All the children go to school but only up to primary level they could study and they leave the school. The parents complain that they make sure that their children go to the school but one doesn't know whether the children have reached school or not.

The villagers are mostly agricultural labourers. They have land of their own. Some have 1 bigha and the person who has the big land is 5 bighas. Some villagers go to work in the tea garden which is small in size. They work for 3-4 days in the garden. Mostly women go to the garden while boys work in the land cultivating seasonal vegetables and other crops. During season time boys too are engaged in the garden. They get Rs.40 as their hajira. No one in the village is permanent labourer in the garden. Everybody works on temporary basis. A man in the village has 30 bighaland but this land is to be divided among his six brothers.

There is one house given through Indira AwasYojona (IAY). It was decided by the villagers that the house should be given to the person in the village who is very poor. After the death of his first wife he has remarried another lady. Pichla River is near by and this river is used for bathing, washing cloths and for many other purposes. There is no latrine and bathroom in the village. There is no health centre in the village. In case of treatment they go to Phansidewa hospital. If the case is more serious they are referred to Medical at North Bengal Medical College.

The people of the village do not believe in the witchcraft. They do not have so called ojha. They prefer to take medicine in case of any kind of sickness rather than going to the ojha. There is not a single case of inter-caste marriage in the village. The villagers have kinship ties. People are observing the family planning methods. After 2 to 3 children the women go for operation at Phansidewa hospital even if they have 3 daughters. There is not much of boy child preference among the tribals of this village.

We interviewed the following persons:

AmrushEkka (50 yrs), Yakub Lakra (48 yrs), Daud Kujur (45 yrs), Rajen Lakra (24 yrs), Johan Lakra (65 yrs), Chandmuni Lakra (35 yrs), FulmaniToppo (32 yrs), Ganga Kujur (31 yrs), SonatiLakra (25 yrs), Radha Ekka (26 yrs), Aloti Ekka (25 yrs), Rupani Ekka (35 yrs), and Podo Kujur (30 yrs)

The villagers are not being paid any of the facility from government regarding electricity and other kind of facilities. There is no SHGs in the village. But it is there in the other nearby villages. The villagers are aware that if the SHGs had been in the village it would have helped the women get economically strong.

Since the Oraons practice tribal endogamy and clan exogamy all the families in the village are bound by some kind of kinship ties. The common religion binds them together. The Church and the Church-centric religious activities bind the families together. Earlier, they used to receive many gifts from the Church but that flow of gifts has stopped in recent years. The villagers in general feel that Christianity has made their life better. They maintain a clear boundary with the Hindu Oraons and Protestant tribals. They do not intermarry nor do they maintain in social relation with them. Christians from this village go to Chathat Church every Sunday. They maintain a clear boundary with the Hindu Oraons and Protestant tribals. They do not intermarry but they maintain good social relation with them. In case the girl is Hindu and the boy is Christian the girl has to be Christian. For marriage the Christians go to Chathat Church and their marriage is blessed by the priest. But there is no Hindu priest to perform such marriage ceremonies for the Hindus. The family head or the groom's father performs all the ceremonies related to marriage. There is not a particular Hindu priest for the Hindus of this village.

In the village everybody has the voter card and they are regular voters. In this area CPI(M) is the ruling party. Until 4 years now CPI(M) has come to power in this constituency. Earlier all the villagers were supporters of Congress party but very recently some of them have joined the left front. Before voting the villagers gather together to decide whom to vote. One particular candidate is selected and everybody decides to vote him. But that's only in theory. In reality people have their own choice for the candidate and they vote for the person whomever they feel like. And this is very much visible that in the village there are two groups one which supports the Congress and the other is the

supporter of CPI(M). (the people we interviewed they themselves told us that “I support Congress and he is my cousin who votes for the CPI(M) and it seemed that there was not much of rivalry between them on party basis). But in a family everyone is the supporter of the same party. If the husband is for Congress naturally the whole family will be supporting the same party.

There is no Adivasi leader in the village. The CPI(M) is the ruling party here. Some are supporters of Congress and some are of CPI(M). As mentioned above there is no electricity in the village. Party leaders asked the villagers to collect some money to buy poll but the villagers are not able to because of lack of money. Electricity is in the nearby villages. There is no pacca road going to the village. There is another tribal village nearby which is Santhal dominated where 150 voters are there. This village is named Bara Helagoj. The people from Helagoj have good interaction with them but they avoid inter caste marriage with the Santhals.

Bengali is fluently spoken by the people of this village. They could very well interact in Bengali. But among themselves they use Oroan language. Children were playing close by and they talked in Bengali among themselves. We didn't find any case of child marriage. The marriage age for girls is 18 -19 years. They don't pay dowry. If they wish they can give some gifts to the groom. But now we could notice the influence of Hindu high caste marriage on them. Sometimes there is a demand from boy's side asking for bicycle, watch and so on. And it becomes obligatory on the part of bride side to fulfill the demand of the groom. Sometimes they have to sell their land. And the people who do not have land they face the heavy burden of debt on their shoulder. However, the villagers denied of having any kind of indebtedness to anyone for whatsoever reason.

C. Pischla Village

We went to the village on 1 April 2008 and spent the whole day talking to the people of this village. The following persons were interviewed:

Anjulus Kindo (80 yrs), Martha Toppo (70 yrs), Bharoti Lakra (Xalxo) 25 yrs, Monica Kindo (14 yrs), Celestina Xalxo (40 yrs), Golo Xalxo (25 yrs), Kiran Toppo (18 yrs), and Mercila Ekka (30 yrs).

There are 35 families in the village mostly Oroan dominated. The estimated population is near about 175 aprox. The male female ratio is 60:40. There are 7 families who are totally landless and work on the others land for their survival. The land is washed away by the river Pischla. The villagers said that it is very difficult to get work here in the area as most of the people are landless and those who have land work themselves in their own land.

The villagers have shifted to this place very recently. Earlier this village was at Bangladesh border. But they had settled here as former place was taken by the military for the purpose of border security force. Many of the families are still to get some money from the government but villagers think that they will never receive any help from the government. We could see only 3-4 houses which were pacca houses newly made by the government. Some houses were still under construction. The rest were staying in the mud house with tin roof.

The villagers don't like to stay at this place as they have start their life and settle everything from the beginning. They liked the earlier place where they could earn more as the river Mahananda was close by and they could do fishing and sell the fish for their daily survival. But here they don't have any other means of livelihood therefore they also have to starve.

The village falls under Jahanara panchayat which is Congress dominated. The people have voters card. In every election they vote. This year their candidate lost his seat and Congress came to power. They are the supporters of CPI(M) party. They are continuous supporters of "lal" party but they complained that party didn't provide any facility to them and to their village. The villagers said that these pacca houses were given through panchayat. There is not a single pacca well through panchayat. The people of this village have arranged themselves for the well. No health centre in village and not even in the approachable distance. For any kind of sickness they go to Phansidewa which is 8 km away from this place. Villagers are also scared of being theft from the other side of the border as the village is very close to the Bangladesh border area. They complained that since there is no electricity the burglar's take advantage of this. The man we interviewed said that the burglars stole his ox (bull) not less than three times and he worn-out buying the ox. These people very much depend on the ox for the agriculture purpose.

Children go to Chathat School which is 3 km away from the village. They go by walking. Only 3-4 girls from this village who are Madhyamik pass and rest are all drop outs after 6-7 class. There is only one HS pass named Sanjay Tirkey who is supposed to go to Army as the villagers told us. There is no tribal leader in this village. The village is divided on the ground of party. Some are supporters of CPI(M) and others are Congress. There are no other parties except for these two. The villagers admit that there is no unity among themselves on party basis therefore there is no development so far in the village. Had they been united and voted for one party alone they would benefit. There is no general meeting before the election. It's the individual wish to vote whomever one likes. Before election the party leaders make thousands of promises but after winning they disappear from the scene. In a family the members support the same party. The people in this village have not much of rivalry among themselves. There has been no big conflict until now.

People do not believe in the so-called *ojha* or *jharphuk*. Earlier they did believe but now with the coming of Church and with the spread of Christianity among tribals that they don't have faith in superstition of this type. But this is an outside story. Still now these people believe in *ojha* and other type of superstition. The pregnant women are regular visitors of the health centre at Chat Hat. To clarify this we asked two ladies standing they said that they went to hospital for delivery. After two or three children the ladies go for ligation/operation. Earlier church helped people with medicine, rice, wheat and dal. But recently this sort of help has been stopped from the church authorities. Now these medicines are distributed by the missionaries at Mailanijote and at Jesu Ashram. Ladies are the members of SHG and they collect money. In a group there are 10 members.

D. Rakhalgoj village

We went to the village spent the whole day talking to the people of this village. There are 13 families in the village who are Christians there are 13 Munda tribal families who are non-Christians living in the Reshamgoj village which is adjacent to the former village. The total population of the village excluding Reshamgoj is about 80. The male female ratio is 40:60 respectively.

People of this village have land of their own. Every family has minimum 1 and half *bighas* of land. The highest land owner is the *panchayat* member (DorothiaTurkey) of the village who has 5 acres of land. Her husband bought some land from other villagers. This village falls under Chat hat *panchayat*. There were two candidates from the same village in opposition to each other. But the Congress candidate defeated the opposition party candidate (Ratna Kujur) from CPI (M) party with 13 votes difference only. Except for these two women who stood for *panchayat* election no other women member is active in politics.

We could interact with the lady who lost her seat in the election. Her name is Ratna Kujur who is a CPI (M) candidate. she is class 8th pass. She felt very bad after she was defeated. She was not interested in the party but the local leader and the *Pradhan* of Phansidewa block forced her to stand against the Congress candidate. But she has kinship ties with the rivalry candidate. Even after she has lost the seat they have good relation with the present *panchayat* member of the village and for any problem they go to her seeking solution. Now she is working in the ICDS and cooks food for the ICDS children. She goes to Nijbari everyday for her work. There are four helpers under her. For the party purpose the village is divided between two groups. The one supports congress and the second follow the CPIM rules. But they all have good relation among them when it is the matter of social and religious issues. There are only 3 BPL families in this village who are landless. The *panchayat* has constructed the *kaccha* road which leads to the village from the main pitch road.

People who are no land go to work for other on daily basis. They are paid Rs. 50 per day and the one time meal. But the labourers who work in the near by small gardens are paid only Rs. 40 per day. When there is no work in the garden or in the land there is no other means of livelihood for these people. They sometimes have to starve. There is only one boy who is higher secondary pass. And now working as para teacher in the near by school. Not a single girl has reached up to *Madhyamik* level. There is one girl doing nurse at Siliguri who is 8th pass.

A RETROSPECTIVE COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE DIVERGENT AREAS OF DOOARS AND TERAI

In context of my studies spanning across the Dooars and Terai region which have been earlier enumerated in Chapter VI , I have tried to have a comparative analysis amongst the tribal women population in Dooars and Terai region. The tribal population in Dooars at large comprises of tea garden workers, reside in far flung localities. Though a substantial percentage of tribal population is employed in tea gardens in Terai region, there still remains a majority of this population who have chosen to have their independent socio-economic status, seconded by their agricultural activities. This tribal population in Terai region are thus not at the mercy of far flung and remotely located tea gardens for generations of their livelihood. This makes the tribal population in Terai to be much more in tune with the main stream social network. This fact is reflected in my studies as there is a significantly large population of tribal women who can claim to have effective and meaningful political participation within the Terai region vis-a-vis their Dooars counterparts. However the fact remains that, spread across these two divergent societies the tribal people and tribal women at large still continue to be amongst the lowest stratas of their respective societies.

The situation of tribal population does not really change relatively, as irrespective of whichever society they are part of they continue to always bring up the rear guard. Measures aimed towards upliftment of tribal population at large have thus to be initiated, spanning across all the social spectrum that they are part of. Although I have had a separate statistical analysis amongst the tribal population of Dooars and Terai region, it yet brings the basic fact to the forefront that tribal population, spanning across divergent social cauldrons still continue to remain amongst the most socially deprived and exploited strata of the society. A thorough perusal of my studies, reflected in the following tables will bear testimony to my aforesaid observation. I have also endeavoured to analyse the demographics of the constituent tribal population in Dooars and Terai region and tried to extrapolate my various observations and inferences in the backdrop of this demography.

The tribal population is definitely more in Phansidewa block as compared with the Matelli region of Dooars. However, the tribals comprise a higher percentage of total population in Matelli block as compared to that of Phansidewa block. (see Table 5.21).

This is a fact that the Matelli block in Dooars can claim to have a better male-female ratio as compared with the terai region. (see Table 5.22)

Table 5.21 -Total Population, ST and SC Population and their proportion to Total Population, 2011

	Total Population	ST Population	%	SC Population	%
Phansidewa	204501	62595	30.6	60704	29.7
Matiali	117540	51789	44.1	17622	14.9

Source: Census of India, 2011

Table 5.22- Population table showing Sex Ratio, 2011

	Population			ST	SC	Sex Ratio
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Total	
Phansidewa	204522	103719	100803	62595	60704	972
Matiali	117540	53472	52434	51789	15965	992

Source: Census of India, 2011

Table 5.23-ST Literacy Rate by Sex and Gender Gap in Literacy Rate

	Population		Literacy Rate		Gender Gap in Literacy
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Darjeeling	102,287	101,880	65.1	45.8	19.2
Jalpaiguri	324,250	317,438	54.2	30.7	23.6
Phansidewa	87,945	83,563	62.2	37.7	24.5
Matiali	53,472	52,434	67.1	41.6	25.5

Source: Census of India, 2011

Darjeeling as district can claim to have a least gap between the educational standards of male and female. Comparatively Jalpaiguri district (which comprises of my areas of study) has a much more male preponderance in education. Thus at large the tribal women

in Jalpaiguri district always face a socio-education handicap as compared with their neighbouring district as Darjeeling.(see table 5.23). Compared within my areas of study Matelli block (situated in Dooars) has a higher rate of literacy as compared with the Phansidewa block in Terai region. (see table 5.24).

Table 5.24- Number of literates and literacy rate by sex

	Literates			Literacy rate		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Phansidewa	70004	44539	25465	50.3	62.2	37.7
Matiali	49029	30469	18560	54.4	67.1	41.6

Source: Census of India, 2011

Table 5.25-Distribution of Population by Worker and Non-worker

Districts / Blocks	Population			Total Workers (Main+Marginal)			Non-Workers		
	Persons	Male	Females	Persons	Male	Females	Persons	Male	Females
Darjeeling	1609172	830644	778528	5694420	402970	166472	1039730	427674	612056
Jalpaiguri	3401173	1751145	1650028	1303136	915400	387736	2098037	835745	1262292
Phansidewa	171508	87945	83563	62208	43483	18725	109300	44462	64838
Matiali	105906	53472	52434	43356	26130	17226	62550	27342	35208

Source: Census of India, 2001

Table 5.26- Number of Workers and Work Participation Rate by Sex

Districts/ Blocks	Population			Number of Workers (Main+Marginal)			Work Participation Rate (Main+Marginal)		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Females	Persons	Male	Females
Darjeeling	1609172	830644	778528	5694420	402970	166472	35.4	48.5	21.4
Jalpaiguri	3401173	1751145	1650028	1303136	915400	387736	38.3	52.3	23.5
Phansidewa	171508	87945	83563	62208	43483	18725	36.3	49.4	22.4
Matiali	105906	53472	52434	43356	26130	17226	40.9	48.9	32.9

Source: Census of India, 2001

Table 5.27- Percentage distribution of Total Workers by Main and Marginal category

	Number of Total Workers			Main Workers %			Marginal workers %		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Darjeeling	569442	402970	166472	29.8	43.2	15.4	5.6	5.3	6.0
Jalpaiguri	1303136	915400	387736	30.1	46.6	12.7	8.2	5.6	10.8
Phansidewa	62208	43483	18725	30.1	44.1	15.4	6.1	5.3	7.0
Matiali	43356	26130	17226	31.6	41.0	22.0	9.3	7.8	10.9

Source: Census of India, 2001

Table 5.28- Distribution of Total Workers by category in Percentage

	Cultivators %			Agricultural Labourers %		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Darjeeling	15.5	14.4	18.2	10.2	8.9	13.4
Jalpaiguri	20.7	22.2	17.3	17.7	14.2	25.7
Phansidewa	15.7	18.7	8.9	21.3	22.1	19.2
Matiali	8.3	9.8	6.0	6.3	6.6	5.8

Source: Census of India, 2001

Table 5.29- Distribution of Total Workers by category in HHI and other workers by Sex

	Workers in HHI %			Other Workers %		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Darjeeling	2.8	2.5	3.6	71.5	74.3	64.8
Jalpaiguri	2.1	1.6	3.1	59.6	62.0	53.9
Phansidewa	1.7	1.6	2.0	61.3	57.6	69.9
Matiali	1.1	1.1	1.1	84.3	82.5	87.1

Source: Census of India, 2001

Table 5.30- Percentage distribution of Main Workers by Cultivators and Agricultural Labourers

	No. of Main Workers			Cultivators %			Agricultural Labourers %		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Darjeeling	478851	359110	119741	14.3	14.0	15.3	6.5	6.6	6.2
Jalpaiguri	1025433	816528	208905	20.5	22.7	11.7	13.1	12.6	15.1
Phansidewa	51690	38780	12910	16.9	19.7	8.4	18.1	20.5	11.0
Matiali	33460	21939	11521	7.6	9.9	3.4	4.3	5.5	2.1

Source: Census of India, 2001

Table 5.31- Distribution of Marginal Workers by category in percentage

	No. of Marginal Workers			Cultivators %			Agricultural Labourers %		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Darjeeling	90591	43860	46731	21.6	17.2	25.7	29.9	27.6	32.0
Jalpaiguri	277703	98872	178831	21.6	17.8	23.8	34.5	27.8	38.2
Phansidewa	10518	4703	5815	10.1	10.2	10.0	36.7	35.7	37.5
Matiali	9896	4191	5705	10.3	9.3	11.1	13.1	12.7	13.3

Source: Census of India, 2001

Table 6.32- Distribution of Marginal Workers by category in percentage

	Workers in HHI %			Other Workers %		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Darjeeling	5.4	4.7	6.1	43.1	50.5	36.2
Jalpaiguri	2.9	1.8	3.5	41.0	52.6	34.6
Phansidewa	1.4	1.1	1.5	51.9	52.9	51.0
Matiali	1.6	1.2	1.9	75.0	76.8	73.6

The above tables are a reflection on a few of my observations based on statistics.