

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS
&
CONCLUSION

The intention of the present study as noted in introduction are :

1. To examine the structure and organization of the Farakka Super Thermal Power Project relating to its production system.
2. To highlight the interpersonal relations between the management and employees of this power plant.
3. To find out the formal and informal relation among the employees of FSTPP.
4. To analyse the role of trade union work and action of the power plant and their role in the life of the workers.
5. To highlight the social and cultural life of the people living in and around of this power plant.
6. Social implication of the power plant in the locality.

In the foregoing chapters it has already been presented an analytical discussion on various aspects of Farakka Super Thermal Power Project and its impact among the people living in and around of this power plant. In this section I shall furnish

the summary of findings on the entire study in the following lines. The validity of the hypothesis and their significance in the context of present study is also highlighted here. The conclusion has been drawn on the basis of empirical facts and their analysis as per objectives of this study.

I

Power generation has been given high priority in the Plan Programmes of contemporary India, but there is a shortage of power. To overcome this shortage, the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) was incorporated in November, 1975. The NTPC installed its fourth Super Thermal Power Plant at Farakka, situated in Murshidabad District of West Bengal in 1981.

Ultimate capacity of Farakka Super Thermal Power Project (FSTPP) is 2100 MW and the estimated manpower for the project would be around 3000 at the ultimate stage. There were 1630 employees in this power project as on May, 1989. Employees of this power plant are enjoying free quarters with free education for their children, free medical facilities, free vehicle facilities, etc.

65 percent of the employees of FSTPP were from outside Farakka. 80 percent of the employees were Bengalees and the rest

20 percent were non-Bengalees. Since they stayed at the same residential areas, i.e. quarters of FSTPP, an interaction among the employees is taking place.

NTPC has adopted a structure of three tier system which consist of (a) Corporate Functions, (b) Centralised Service Functions and (c) Operating Divisions, i.e. Projects. The Operating Divisions have the total responsibility for implementation of the project within the predetermined targets. FSTPP is under this division.

The works of FSTPP may broadly be divided into two categories, viz. (i) Corporate works (ii) Contract Labourers. The Corporate's work is to find out the Contractors' work and to produce power.

The administrative chief of this power plant is the General Manager. There are nine different departments headed by Deputy General Managers or Managers under the General Manager.

Employees of FSTPP are of two categories, viz. Executives and Non-Executives. The non-executives are of three types. There are Trainees, Artisans and Supervisors.

Within the plant, employees are maintaining informal relations rather than formal one and the formal relation among them is basically job-oriented. It is important to note here that the status of the employees is not so rigid to make the informal relations among the employees.

To improve the production and to look after the industrial harmony, certain committees are there in FSTPP which consist of the members of Management and employees. In spite of that there are serious class-conflicts among the employees in this power plant. In consequence of which the power generation programme suffer .

Almost all the employees from rural areas belong to the non-executive category. They are not much educated and are generally from the agricultural background. They were eager to adjust themselves to the prevailing system of the power plant. But due to their inadequate capability they failed to do so in some cases. Most of these employees are of first generation service-holders. It is observed that they are more committed to their works. Similar observation was made by Dasgupta who comments, 'The workers who came from distant villages have no other alternative but to live in the town. So, it appears that partial dependence on agriculture affects to some extent to wholesome commitment of the workers to the industrial occupation and tones down the motivation for unidimensional economic goal' (Dasgupta 1978 : 113).

On the other hand, most of the employees with urban background are not so committed to their works. It is observed that the technical employees are more dedicated than the non-technical employees. A number of employees of FSTPP do not bother to expose their dissatisfaction. There are plenty of instances where the workers even disobeyed their higher authority. There are also instances when the executives even violated the code of discipline.

Although there are a general notion that Trade Union activities of the private sector undertakings and public sector undertakings are quite different but the characteristics appear almost similar in both the cases.

It is observed that there is no secrecy about the political patronization to the union activities of this power plant. Even an union leader also functioned there as a contractor.

The interrelation of the members of different Unions and Associations is not very smooth.

Data reveals that, among the respondent, the attitude of 44.4 percent employees is positive and the attitude of 31.5 percent employees is negative towards their Union/Association activities. On the other hand, attitude of 23.7 percent employees is

positive and attitude of 64.1 percent is negative towards other Union/Association. Again, attitude of 45 percent employees is positive and 27.5 percent is negative towards their leaders.

Most of the employees staying at quarters of FSTPP are isolated from the local people. Again the relation among the employees is not very cordial within the residential complexes of FSTPP.

The employees staying at their own villages are continuing their cultivation during their leisure time. Many of them avail their due leave during sowing and harvesting times. Dasgupta have made similar observation. He stated 'During peak agricultural seasons like sowing and harvesting. The industrial workers avail themselves of their due leave or engaged agricultural labourers on payment' (Dasgupta 1978 : 113).

Employees of agricultural background were maintaining a close relation with their family and even with the village-life.

There was no difference between the mode of life of the labourers under contractors of FSTPP and that of the rickshwa pullers, coachmen of horse-drawn cart or even small shop-keepers. They are passing their leisure time by domestic works or by engaging themselves card-playing. Some of them are also engaged in various craft works for extra earning

According to 1981 Census, the total population of Farakka Block are 1,34,445 with 68,371 males and 66,074 females. The Scheduled Caste population of this block is 15,522 which consists 11.55 percent of the total population. The total Scheduled Tribe population is 2,275 which constituted 1.70 percent of the total population of this locality. The approximate ratio of the Hindu and Muslim population in this block is 30:70 . The total literacy rate is 20.75 percent. 13 percent of the total population is engaged in agriculture. Out of this, 5 percent are cultivators and 8 percent are agricultural labourers. 9 percent are craftsmen and 11 percent are service-holders.

II

In Farakka local people were not migrated due to inception of FSTPP, moreover a number of people immigrated to Farakka for earning. The local people witnessed that an industry has been grown up in their locality. But most of them do not have any direct benefit from this industry. They also observe that a number of people of outside places get the opportunity of employment at FSTPP but they failed to get that due to their lack of education. To get this opportunity the local people want to provide proper education to their children but many of them failed to do this. As a result they want to accept the indirect benefits of this power plant.

The upper caste people of Farakka have started to earn money as contractors. Some of them have started industry oriented business, agency etc. While the lower caste people partially converted themselves from agricultural labourers to contract labourers i.e. industrial labourer to earn their livelihood. At the same time they are continuing their traditional profession i.e. agriculture, household industry etc. Srinivas (1967) recognized it as a paradox of change and Singer (1966) designated it as compartmentalization.

Due to setting up of this power plant a few local people earned an unexpected money but they failed to adopt the industrial norms.

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that only a section of the local community, particularly higher caste Hindus and influential and educated Muslims, tried to adjust themselves with the process of industrialization. Such adjustment is also partial in nature. The people adjust with the demand of the new situation. At the same time they have patronising their traditional norms too, for example, religious belief and practices, social relations, traditional way of earnings and such others. Dasgupta (1978) stated this process as compromise between traditional and industrial demands. This group of people is going to their working place with pant, shirt, shoes etc. But they do not give up visiting temples, mosques or other religious places with dhoti and Panjabi

or Lungi and Kurta or Pajama and Kurta.

Those who directly or indirectly associated with the power plant are found to maintain the relationship with their kith and kins who are staying away from their place of work. Some people are also send money to their home to meet the expenses of their natal family and to look after the cultivation. Similar observation was made by Eames (1954), Gadgil (1954) and Prabhu (1956). To his study in a village in North Central India, Eames observed that about 75 percent of the total migrants send money regularly to their home. Gadgil and Prabhu observed that even when a migrant managed to take his wife and children to town with him, he probably had a piece of land, or his old parents and other relatives in the village, needing his continual attention.

It is also observed that majority of the local people of Farakka have a desire to get opportunity of employment from FSTPP. Because one can improve his life-style by such type of employment. Because of this they also want to get a service in FSTPP or any other establishment.

Rao (1974) had the similar observation who observed that the villagers in general seek urban employment.

Only a few local people have neither adjusted themselves nor tried to adjust with the forces of industrialization. They

are continuing their traditional economy and social life too. Abegglen's (1959) study also shows that a pre-industrial social system may continue in the midst of a radically changed technological system. This group of people have a lot of grievances against the employees of FSTPP. These people even are less interested about education of their children. According to them education is not for their children and they will not be benefitted by such type of education.

The above discussion suggests that the first hypothesis i.e. 'By the process of industrialization, a pre-industrial community try to adjust itself with the industrialization without breakdown of their traditional norms' is only partially established.

The data reveals that the production of power in FSTPP is not very satisfactory. It is the only project of NTPC where employees have been denied of incentive bonus due to unsatisfactory performance. It is to be mentioned here that this incentive bonus is being paid by the Corporation to the number of its projects for their better production. Though the organizational set up of FSTPP is as per general standard, due to lack of rhythm of work, the generation of power is poor. This is because of the high politicization of the employees. Further, there is an information that a boiler which was rejected for sub-standard quality by the Korba Project, was accepted by the Farakka Project.

That boiler worked only for a few months . As a result, production of one unit totally hapered for several months. This is against promotion of commitment. A number of senior and experienced employees expose their dissatisfaction about their place of work. It is true that dissatisfaction reflects against the commitment of employees which obviously reflects the production too. This suggests that the second hypothesis 'the development of production system of the industry is entirely depended on commitment of its employees' is found valid.

The third hypothesis is — there lies a gap between ideology and practice in the trade union activities in industrial system.

It is observed that the leadership of trade unions are continued by the same persons for a long time. After becoming an union leader a person has interested for personal gains. But his appearance reveals that he works for the members of the union. Dayal and Sharma (1976) had the similar observations. They stated, "Those who showed higher interest in unions be lieved that the union is a source of economic benefit and job security".

Due to such various causes the gap between the ideology and practice of trade union activities is continuously increasing. This gap is also widespread - whether it is in public sector or in private organizations. This is true both for the industrial as well as non-industrial sectors.

In West Bengal as well as in India as a whole the trade union activities are guided by the political parties. Due to this, there is no ideal trade union movement at present. Instead of looking after the interest of the employees, the unions are looking into the interest of the respective political parties and managements. This seems to be more prominent particularly in West Bengal. Similar observation was made by Bhattacharya (1986) who observed "Freedom of the working class is not the aim of the present trade union activities. It's aim is to acquire some special facilities".

The trade union activities in FSTPP is not different from the above discussion. The union leaders of this power plant are availing extra privileges but they are showing that they are always working for the benefit of the general workers without any personal gain. It is important to note here that according to Tata (1977) the Management and the Government should pursue to develop healthy and responsible trade unionism in industry.

Another important factor which has been observed to be mentioned here that the employees of FSTPP generally maintaining their relation with the same class of people of outside the plant. To their social and cultural festivity, they are giving priority to interact with the people of same class. In some cases it has been observed that employees are giving preference to religion, caste and status to select their friends.

From the above discussion it can be said that the third hypothesis is valid.

The fourth hypothesis is about the possibility of industrial and agricultural development together. There is a wide scope for industrial development at Farakka. Every possibilities such as availability of raw materials, electricity, transport systems are there through which new industries may start at Farakka. But there is no proper planning for industrial growth. In the I.R.D.P. Scheme, Rs. 13,49,000 had spent in 1987-88 and Rs. 16,50,000 had spent in 1988-89 as subsidies. Certain schemes have taken by the authority to improve the local people, industrial development programme is not enlisted to the said schemes. On the other hand, there is a widespread scope for agricultural development in this place. But there is a lack of planning about this.

Due to lack of proper planning for agricultural and industrial development, it is not possible to testify this hypothesis.

The fifth hypothesis is — industries may be established in the rural sector without drastic change of social, cultural and psychological set up at the region.

It is observed that after inception of the power plant, there is no remarkable change of social and cultural life of the

people of Farakka. Moreover, it appears that there is a change of mentality of the local people. They cannot accept the fact that the outsider would earn at their place. Education, culture, social and economic condition are the factors for this mentality. Another factor is there that the outside people have notion to avoid the local people. Some local people have an aspiration to improve themselves in the aspects of their economic, social and cultural life but they have failed to do so for various reasons. It has already been discussed that the poor local people demand relating more price for their agricultural products or charge more remuneration for their labour. Economic gain is not the only tendency believed this. Their outlook reveals that since the outsider immigrated to their own place for earning they have to spend extra money.

It has been described earlier that some of the people of Farakka are economically benefitted by FSTPP. But their numbering are very less. A few local people also got the chance to work in FSTPP. But majority are continuing their traditional cultural life. Thus there is no abrupt change in the social and cultural life. In some cases it is observed that a few people have accepted the trends of change into industrialization of the area but at the same time they are also continuing their traditions under new environment. There are no significant impact to their religious belief, norms, festivals, etc.

In the context of social change in Farakka, it is found that some people of Farakka have adjusted themselves to new occupational roles in the new system of values, they have sought to order their roles in the family and household in terms of traditional system of values with some modifications. Similar observations was made by Rao. He stated, "While villagers validate their activities in one area of social life in terms of new rights and obligations, they seek to legitimize their activities in another area in terms of traditional norms. In doing so they perceive no contradiction but only advantages" (Rao 1974 : 517-518).

The above discussion reveals that a peasant society is not fully affected by the implication of a modern sophisticated technology based industry which is similar to the observation made by Nash (1958). According to him factories may be introduced into peasant societies without drastic chain of social and cultural consequences implied in the concept of industrial revolution.

The foregoing discussion reveals that the hypothesis is partially valid.

III

The study reveals that the performance of Farakka Super Thermal Power Project is comparatively better than that of other power stations of West Bengal. But on the whole the power production of FSTPP is the poorest among the projects of NTPC. Lack of rhythm of work is one of the factor and high politicization of workers is the other factor behind this.

It appears that this power project is not as beneficial to the local people as it was expected. This power project has been set up by acquisition of cultivable land of the local people. It is a fact that the landholding peasant enjoys an air of prestige in the rural area. Land thus not only provide security but also enhances status of its owner. The landholding peasants and the landless labourers belong to two distinct class of unequal social status. It is true that compensation has been paid by the project authority for acquiring land and the compensation has been calculated in the economic terms. In reality it is no match to social prestige since money can never restore the social prestige of the landless to that extent. Obviously the loss of prestige cannot be compensated by the monetary terms.

After inception the power plant, the social harmony among the people of Farakka has been threatened. It is difficult to compare the economic benefit with this loss of harmony among the people.

Though some employment opportunities were created with inception of this power plant, such opportunity was too restricted and would hardly meet the needs of the local people. As a result, a class-based society has been further segmented in terms of economic classes and a conflict between the classes became inevitable .

It is a fact that a peasant society has been affected due to the inception of this power plant and the effects are as follows:

- (i) A number of land owning peasant has become landless.
- (ii) Some of the local people converted themselves to industrial worker and on the other hand some of the people remain same as they were before setting up of this power plant.
- (iii) Few local people suddenly earned an unexpected amount of csh due to setting up of this power plant. As a result a neorich group has emerged.
- (iv) The very presence of this neo rich is humiliating the village aristocrat.

The above discussion may give an impression that the present author is against of modernization and industrialization of the area. This is certainly not a fact, rather the author is eager for a qualitative change in the rural scene. Considering

the overall situation he wants to sound a caution. Generally whenever a project of this dimension is planned, its feasibility is considered only by taking the financial aspects in view. As a result, the social consequences of such measures never become conspicuous. Financial and other benefits notwithstanding, as because social consequences due to setting up the power plant to this area. The caution therefore is to pay due attention so that there should not disintegration of the society by way of loss of social values and heritage of the people.