

## CHAPTER - XII

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

12.1 West Dinajpur which is a backward district of West Bengal in terms of all criterious forwarded by different committees was created along with the partition of Bengal in 1947 and a huge number of migrants came into the district from East Pakistan, presently Bangladesh. Being a border zone, the economy of the district had been shaken twice during the last 30 years, viz. China war during 1962 and Bangladesh turmoil during 1969-70.

12.2 In terms of population the district of which the migrants form 15% stands 9th in the State with moderate growth rate. All demographic characteristics are favourable except 'Age Composition' and 'Literacy'. 60% and 33% of the total population are Hindus and Muslims respectively. 35% of the total population i.e. 54% of Hindus belong to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

12.3 The overall participation of workers in the district lag much behind the national participation. 68% of the population are non-workers. The primary-sector, secondary sector and tertiary sector account for 82%, 5.24% and 13.14% of the total workers respectively. Trade and Commerce (tertiary sector) alone accounts for 6.19% of total workers. No significant change has been noticed in the occupational structure except an unusual rise in the flow of landless agricultural labourers.

12.4 The district is mostly agricultural. Jute and Paddy are the main items of agricultural production. Though land utilization has reached the saturation point (86%) but due to underdeveloped agriculture process, productivity is lagging much behind the average productivity in the state. Most of the land are single cropped. Use of fertilizer and high yielding seeds is negligible and facilities for irrigation are limited. The use of agriculture equipments is

primitive and the joint farming is totally absent. Operational and actual holding are small, so also the size of farms. There is the existence of tremendous unemployment or under underemployment in this sector.

12.5 The district possesses no mining or forestry. However, the land are suitable for holding of water. Therefore fishery enterprises may be intensified.

12.6 The district possesses no large scale industry, nor has it much potential for large scale industry, except jute, which the district produces in a commanding quantity. The presence of organised industry is negligible, so also the employment in this sector.

12.7 After agriculture, it is the cottage and village industries which are providing livelihood to a large number of people. Cotton handloom, Jute weaving (Dhokra), Pottery, Beedi manufacturing, Bamboo and cane work are important among the others.

12.8 The artisans are poor and mostly belong to backward classes. They are scattered, unorganised and illiterate, each supporting a large family. Though the family as a whole provides labour, it is living at subsistence level. Most of them have twine occupations. A few are holding negligible areas of land and many are agriculture labourers. Their assets possession are negligible and most of them are indebted to mahajans.

12.9 In spite of the two incidents of economic disorder already mentioned, the cottage industries are achieving considerable expansion. Cotton handloom industry shows the highest growth in terms of employment. The peculiarity of the industry is that West Dinajpur is not a Cotton producing centre. The reason behind this peculiar

phenomenon is possibly the immigration of a large number of artisans from Pabna and Khulna districts of Bangladesh.

12.10 What is important to note is that the industry is not expanding in the household sector, thus deteriorating rural sector. In recent times we observed a tendency of the artisans to join non-household sector as wage earners, rather than having their own units of production. This tendency observed in all sector of cottage industries is indicated by a growth of number of artisans on the one hand and a decreasing number of establishment in the household sector on the other. This is a serious problem and is contrary to the interests of rural industrialisation. It is therefore to be studied in depth. The ownership of these industries is either based on sole proprietorship or on the joint Hindu family basis.

12.11 One of the major reasons for stagnation in expansion in household sector is the problems of entrepreneurship. We observed that the artisans have sufficient qualities for being successful entrepreneurs. But they have not been so, because of the lack of institutional support which they need most. We observed that the help of so called supporting system was limited in the district. Some of the facilities are not at all available and some others marginally present. The study criticised the role of District Handloom Development Centre and District Industries Centre as to their role played in the Development of handloom industry in particular and cottage industries in general.

12.12 The problem of finance as we observed in case of the artisans engaged in cotton handloom industry is acute. The artisans are not in a position to utilize their full production capacity due to lack of finance. In spite of

several policies of the government, the institutional finance in this sector was negligible. The low credit worthiness of artisans is perhaps the main reason. Financial assistance to the poor artisans may restrain them from joining non-household sector as wage earners.

12.13 The present sickness of cotton handloom industry in the district is partly due to their defective production policy and adoption of old techniques. Some techniques of production like, 'Ikat technique' are totally absent. The introduction of 'Ikat' technique may improve the present situation. The cost of production in the district is high in comparison to other places due to distance from raw materials centres. Since the artisans are poor, they can't buy in bulk and therefore they are subject to local retailers who charge them exorbitantly. Establishment of raw-materials bank may improve the situation.

12.14 Marketing problem faced by the artisans has been thoroughly studied. Some product faults are identified through consumers survey, like, design, colour (dye) etc. It is also observed that Sales across the counters of co-operative retail outlets are gradually increasing. In view of total capture of the market by Mahajans and their agents, establishment of a co-operative handloom marketing society with large number of retail outlets may be helpful. In view of market competition the study suggests shortening the channel of distribution.

12.15 The co-operative movement among the artisans has not been much of a success. The reasons may be the failure of existing co-operatives or lack of encouragement. Trade Unions can possibly play a unique role in organising the

artisans. The study also concludes that Panchayets may prove useful in implementation of government policies.

12.16 On the whole the study suggests :-

- \* more institutional assistance to the artisans in unorganised sector, be it in respect of finance, or training, or technology;
- \* the establishment of a raw-materials bank;
- \* the establishment of a co-operative marketing society;
- \* the launching of special campaign programmes to organise the rural artisans;
- \* the launching of Market research activity from time to time, to fill the gap of marketing knowledge of the artisans.

12.17 The study attempts within its limited scope to present an integrated and comprehensive analysis of the problems of cottage industries in general and handloom industry in the specific in West Dinajpur, a backward district of West Bengal. Just one study cannot be sufficient to fill all the gaps in our knowledge about the industry, which had a glorious past. Even now it constitutes an important element in the rural economy, inspite of its decline in the recent times.

At the same time, it faces a number of intricate problems. Justice will be done to it, if only further research to examine its other dimensions

is carried on. The present work hints at the field that require further in-depth treatment. In fact, each and every aspect of the industry covered in the present study may provide basis for further research. In conclusion, the cottage industries face multi-dimensional problems and play crucial role in the economy of a backward area. The development of them may develop the economy of this backward region.