

CHAPTER IV

OCCUPATION OF THE STUDIED PEOPLE

Introduction

The economic organization is treated as a link between the material base to culture and social structure. Economic order in one form or another is a functional prerequisite to societal survival and continuity (Hoebel-Frost,1976:247). From the anthropological point of view economy is believed as a system of managing the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services in a society. Piddington (1952) says “economic system is designated to satisfy material wants of the people to organise production, to control distribution and to determine the rights and claims of ownership within the community (see Dash, 2004:123).” Actually, the economic system of any people quickly reveals that behaviours relating to production, exchange, property and consumption all tie in functionally with social organization and with the political, legal, religious and aesthetic behaviours (Kessing, 1958:223). The economic behaviour of the people lies in their own cultural terms, focusing on the substantive social and technological processes through which human interact with one another and with the environment to meet their subsistence needs (Hunter- Whitten, 1976: 251). The study of the relations between cultural patterns and physical conditions is of the greatest importance for an understanding of human society and it is intimately correlated with the economic organization of the concerned society.

The modern world is witnessing vast changes in the peoples’ way of life. Migration is one of the important factors that influence the socio-economic and other institutional changes in the society. It is said that migration is a response of human beings to the environmental, economic, social, political and other forces. Thus, when any society migrates from its original or traditional habitat to a new habitat, its traditional culture, norms and values undergo change to cope up with the new physical and socio-cultural setting (Reddy, 1995:1). It also tells upon their traditional occupational pursuits and force them to search for alternative means of livelihood. The new entrants to the urban labour market, particularly migrants from rural areas were forced to work in the informal sector and partly

due to the workers lack of skills and adequate experience required for the jobs in the formal sector (Sarkar, 2004:360). Urbanism has created new conditions of work, new job opportunities and encouraged the rise of new occupations and professions. As a result of these developments there emerged a new and specialized form of division of labour. Today in some countries migration from rural and smaller communities to metropolitan centres, influences the placement of people in the different occupational structure. The movement of population from rural to urban areas thus makes it almost inevitable that migrants living in urban societies take up to working involvement different from those of their parents. It is to be mentioned here that changes in the traditional occupational structure result from both external and internal forces. The external forces are industrialization, urban contacts, transport, communication etc. and the internal forces are village economy, the nature of castes and class distinctions in the villagers. As far as migration is concerned, it is a result of the impact of urbanization, occupational diversification and socio-political circumstances in some context within the rural community. It should also at the same time be noted that apart from certain facilities, there are certain obstacles in the way of a new migrant which prevent from adjusting with the existing urban culture (Pande, 1986:1-13).

In this context, the socio-economic feature of the studied people deserves a special attention. They were the early settlers of North Bengal and Bangladesh. Their traditional caste based occupation was settled agriculture and they were completely village dwellers. But due to severe socio-political unrest and several other factors they were forced to get displaced from their early settlements. They had no more scope to persist the traditional occupational pursuit. The concerned people came under the stress to survive and to accumulate their daily means of requisites. Further, they came in different adjacent areas of Siliguri town. Meanwhile, adjacent to this town the Balasan river provided the natural resources like stone, sand and boulder which were required as the prime raw material for different construction works. The studied people who were urgently needed the minimum requirements for their existence, readily got involved in work in the stone field of the Balasan river. Further, the vested land of the river also provided them the scope of resettlement. The said river provided the studied people a scope

of resettlement and an opportunity of new occupational pursuit without any sort of capital investment.

When the studied people came to their present settlement, they were almost without any penny pence. In that situation, their sole thought was to survive anyhow. Earlier in their agriculture based social system, the backbone of their economic organization was related with land and its produced crops. Those productions satisfied their daily livelihood necessities; at least they did not face any scarcity related with the fundamental needs of livelihood like food, dress and shelter. However, when they were displaced and further started to settle down in the studied area, a stable economic backbone was not persisting in their daily life. Although their new occupational pursuit did not demand any sort of financial investment but a hard manual labour was the prime thing to conduct it. In the stone crushing occupation one can earn only by hard manual labour. In most of the cases, the primary occupation of the studied people was the stone based occupation. On the other hand, these natural resources were not unlimited storage; thus adequate utilization of a limited amount was a prime important factor for minimum earning. For the sake of earning and survival all of the studied families were interested to work more. This struggle became forever for them and it had emerged as a part of their daily life.

Their daily livelihood awoke with the early dawn. After the initial refreshment and consuming a little amount of food or even in empty stomach they got involved in the stone based work either on the river bed or in their huts. In most of the cases, the women of the studied families had to go to their work after the completion of their essential household courses in a quick succession. Even in many cases the necessity of daily requirements forced them to give secondary priority to the household courses. They were involved in the hard manual labour throughout the entire day. Within that exhaustive schedule they had to manage a very short period for their lunch. Even often they could not manage it. Their struggle for survival was mainly involved in dual factor; foremostly it was related with their income to fulfill daily livelihood requirements and secondarily to get bound under pressure to work more and more for the adequate utilization of the natural resources which were available. After the day long hard manual labour they had to think about the way to fulfil the common minimum essentialities of their family members. Their occupational involvement did not secure any fixed

monthly remuneration and permanent economic infrastructure like in any organized sector; rather their earning was quite uncertain and co-related according to different contemporary situation. As a result, in most of the cases their fulfilment of daily livelihood necessities was quite uncertain. Most of the concerned people were aware of the fact that their daily livelihood did not lie on the bed roses but they had to accumulate them by utter constraints and hard struggle. As such the leisure and merriment of life did not bear any resemblance to their livelihood, because it would not satisfy their common minimum requirements. In the studied society hard manual labour was the only means of survival and on its basis they were involved in the struggle for existence. In a nutshell, the stone crushing occupation was the only means of survival for most of the studied families and they had a mere alternative means of occupation which could provide them a rigid economic backbone.

Generation wise occupation

In the Indian society each caste has a fixed hereditary occupation. Nesfield the profounder of this theory and his supporter Denzil Ibbetson believed that the origin of caste has nothing to do with racial affinity or religion but it is mainly due to functions or occupations. Nesfield mentioned that the technical skill of the occupation was passed on from generation to generation and because of practicing the same occupation over a long period of time, occupational guilds came into existence which latter on came to be known as castes (cited in Ahuja, 1993:259). Srinivas defines caste as a hereditary endogamous localized group having a traditional association with an occupation and is graded in a hierarchy depending on the occupation. Caste groups are characterized by a hereditary occupation. The division of society into castes is roughly a functional division of labour (Pande, 1986:61). But due to several factors often the people are forced to get displaced from their land and early settlement. Further, it alters their traditional occupational pursuit and they got exposed in a new working atmosphere. In this context, the studied people deserved a special attention. They belonged to Rajbanshi community. The said community was the numerically dominant scheduled caste group of North Bengal. The traditional occupation of the concerned people was settled agriculture. But due to different emerging adverse factors they were forced to get displaced from their land and settlement; while

their scope to get involved in the traditional occupational pursuit was no more prevalent.

Case Study 1: Mr. Debendra Nath Barman, aged 55 years came to the Balasan colony along with his parents in 1971. They were one of the early settlers in the studied area. During the study he had a seven membered family. He and his forefathers were involved in agricultural works in Bangladesh. They had ten bighas of agricultural land and three bighas of homestead land. Land based productions were the prime economic resources for them. He stated that they used the concerned agricultural produces only for their consumption and not for monetary exchange. Even he was involved in the agricultural work in his childhood. His father, uncle and brothers were collectively involved in the agricultural works on their entire land. Further, they utilized the agricultural produces collectively and none of them had any sort of personal sharing over such produces. They were in the joint family system and they earned a fold of rice collectively. They treated the land as if their mother and their entire livelihood were intermingled with the concerned land. However, during 1971 the socio-political turmoil started to occur and the mayhem soon reached to their villages too. In such a situation all of the members opined their view to divide the land in equal share and to sell it in a quick succession. Such circumstances created a quarrelsome atmosphere and their joint family was on the threshold of break up. In such a situation one of his uncle was kidnapped and no information of him was found any more. It frightened them very much. They left their settlement and soon migrated to the present habitat. They had no personal ownership of land in the colony. After the resettlement in the colony, soon his father passed away and the entire familial responsibility was bestowed upon his shoulder. It made him to get readily involved in the stone based work. His uncle and their descendants also started the stone crushing work. During the study they had only oral communication but they did not worked at all in together and that's why their earning was separated from one another. He also stated that the new occupational pursuit and new environmental exposure had changed their livelihood a lot. According to his view the stone crushing occupation was totally based upon hard manual labour. In the said work until an individual was working himself, there would be a least oppurtunity of his any sort of earning. In his family, all the

members had to work; otherwise it would be rather impossible for him to fulfil the common minimum livelihood for all of them. Even due to prolonged involvement in the stone based work, he could not remember any sort of previous agricultural knowledge and concerned technological practices. His son and grandson were never affiliated with any agricultural practices. He opined that after displacement, they became almost resourceless and their livelihood, family and occupation was altered completely. From the new settlement it was impossible for them to start their traditional occupational pursuit and reinstate their earlier mode of livelihood.

Case Study 2: Mr. Dinobandhu Adhikary, aged 35 years stated that priesthood was their traditional family based occupation. They had two bighas of agricultural land and two bighas of homestead settlement. The agricultural produces and the religious offerings collectively helped them to sustain their common minimum livelihood. However, during the socio-political turmoil they started to loss their resources and their kin members as well as other neighbourhood Hindu families started to migrate, but his father was quite reluctant to do so. Gradually the communal distinction started to emerge which destroyed their economic pursuit. Within a short span poverty gradually started to engulf their livelihood security. It forced them to migrate and further they were resettled in Balasan colony. In the new settlement they started to do the stone based work. As the said area was mainly comprised of stone and sand so it was merely impossible to start any sort of agricultural work. On the other hand, struggle for survival had reduced the scope of rituals to gain much privilege in the resettled society. So, their traditional occupational pursuit of priesthood came to an end. On the other hand poverty had hindered the people of the Balasan colony to provide adequate offerings to the priest according to the rituals. He also stated that being an *Adhikary* priest they had a distinctive social status in earlier but it was not prevalent in the contemporary period. He also stated that only the hard manual labour in stone based work could provide a fold of rice for them and everyone was interested to earn for their own means. If their earlier settlement and resettlement was compared then a number of changes could be noticed in their daily livelihood.

It can be noted that due to displacement the concerned people had lost their traditional occupational pursuit and further the stone based occupation remained

as the only alternative for them. The entire situation can be well understood if their generation wise occupational pursuits can be analyzed. Here the generations have been detected on the basis of the ego, where the ego was the eldest male member of the studied families. Among the studied 325 families, it was reported that the grand fathers of the egos' were involved in agricultural occupational pursuits in all the families. Further, among the parental generation of the ego's in 294 (90.46%) cases, their affiliation was with the agricultural pursuits, while they were more involved in the work as a day labourer. In this regard, it can be noticed that among this generation the involvement in the stone based occupation gradually got started. Afterwards in the generation of the egos, all were involved in the stone crushing occupation. Considering the generation of the egos' child, it can be noticed that they had the involvement with the stone crushing occupation and with other occupational pursuits (Table 3.13).

It was reported from the studied families that in their earlier settlement and during their affiliation with the traditional agricultural occupational pursuit, they had the ownership of land. It was mainly of two types viz. for the purpose of agriculture and for their own homestead. Most of the total studied families had 1-2 bighas of agricultural land. Even they had the agricultural land holding of 5 bighas or quite more than that. Adjacent to their agricultural land, they had own homestead land which was mostly of 1-2 bighas and in a few cases 3-4 bighas (Table 3.12).

Considering the occupational pursuit of the grandfathers' and fathers' of the concerned egos', it can be stated that the agricultural land and its production was the major source of their economy. The family members had their consensus and collective affiliation with their land. The consanguinal kin members worked together for the production and every one of them had the common ownership over the productions. Their kinship based social interaction as well as overall social structure was deeply co-related on the basis of their land holding and traditional occupational pursuit. Further, the agricultural occupation was very much affiliated with their material cultural aspects. It is to be mentioned here that in the parental generation of the concerned people the social structure and material cultural aspects had a deep co-relation with their land. But after their displacement this scenario was altered a lot. Migration resulted in a lot of changes to the social, cultural, economic and political domain which were associated with the livelihood of the concerned people. According to Census of India 1991, the

occupational division of the male migrants reveals the fact that 1.67 per cent and 1.96 per cent of them were involved in different unclassified occupation in India and West Bengal respectively. On the other hand, 2.10 per cent and 1.94 per cent of female were involved in the said occupation respectively in India and in West Bengal. Meanwhile, particularly in urban sectors 28.3 percent and 37.9 percent people were engaged in labour force before migration and after migration respectively (Bhattacharyya, 2002:46-48). In this concern, the studied people were involved in an unorganized occupational pursuit after their migration. Among them particularly in the generation of the egos' and their children, there took place a complete occupational alternation from their parental generation. Even they had no idea about their indigenous knowledge related with the agricultural works. Although a few aged people were involved in the cultivation in their earlier days but during the study it was revealed that now they were unable to memorize their indigenous knowledge of agricultural works. Meanwhile in their parental generation and earlier settlement, the land and its production was their prime resource. On the other hand, after their displacement, among the present generation their main resource was the physical labour of themselves. When the studied people belonged to the agricultural community, all of the family members and consanguinal kin members worked together and shared the production. But after their involvement in the new occupational pursuit, the kin members were no more collectively affiliated with the work. Further, on the basis of work they could earn and only through this earning they had the scope to accumulate their common minimum livelihood. Along with the alternation of generation wise occupation, a number of affiliated changes could also be noticed in the social structure and material cultural aspects of the concerned people. It is noteworthy to mention here that simultaneously with the changes of generation wise occupation of the studied people, altogether their daily means of livelihood got changed in a new environmental background and in a new contemporary circumstance.

Importance of the stone crushing occupation

The ancient civilizations of the world flourished in different times in different regions and ultimately lead to the development of an urban society. In this world wide flourishing a number of rivers are specifically important from ancient period to the present day. At first, the Mesopotamian civilization flourished in the

river deltas of the Tigris and Euphrates, the second was the Egyptian civilization on the valley of the river Nile, while the third was the Indus valley civilization in the valley of river Indus and the fourth major civilization was in China in the valley of Hwang Ho river (Khan, 2006:121-131). In the contemporary India major rivers like *Ganges, Yamuna, Brahmaputra, Krishna, Cauveri, Narmada, Godavari, Mahanadi* etc. have nourished the growth and flourishment of the major urban centers in their plains. In this context, the river Balasan had a close affiliation in the urban development of Siliguri. The said place has now emerged as the second largest urban center of North Bengal. In this city the different urban based construction works were under continuous progress. This expansion implied an endless demand for a variety of amenities and new construction based works had a continuous demand. Different government agencies and other organizations were launching a number of new townships and other construction based projects in and around the Siliguri town. Those construction based works were also going on in other districts of North Bengal like Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Malda which were adjacent to Siliguri. For these works, a huge amount of natural resources like the stones, sand and boulders were the prime essential raw materials. Incidentally the Balasan river was nourished with these major requisites. From the said river the studied people collected the raw materials, broke them into different shapes and sizes. Those were sold to the contractors and other persons who were associated with the construction based works. Even the same construction works were going on in different places of Bihar, Nepal and Bhutan. Those places were also located in close vicinity from the Balasan river and the Siliguri town. As a result, the natural resources of the Balasan river were also supplied to those places as the essential raw material. Even sometimes it was supplied to the different places of South Bengal. It is to be mentioned here that the urban development in the Siliguri town along with other districts of North Bengal as well as adjacent states and neighbouring countries were very much affiliated with the supply of raw materials from the Balasan river.

Further, Siliguri is located in the gateway of Northeast India. Major tourist spots of Darjeeling Himalayan region, Sikkim and Dooars are directly communicated with Siliguri through National Highways. Moreover, it has a direct transport communication with Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. It is well communicated

through national highway with the state capital Kolkata and the neighbourhood states of Bihar and Northeast India. Particularly the business sector of Siliguri is very much dependent on the transport communication. In this regard, the adequate maintenance of the transportation is earnestly required. But often due to heavy downpour, flood and landslide the major national highways passing through and around Siliguri used to become worsen in condition. The raw materials collected from the Balasan river played a major role for the construction and maintenance of these roads. It was because of the fact that the essential raw materials to construct the roads, particularly very small sized chips are well abundant here. Further, in this region there were important rail communication between Siliguri and other areas of North Bengal and Bihar. For the construction of railway lines the required stone chips were often supplied from the studied area. Thus it can be stated that the transport communication of Siliguri was very much dependent on the natural resources of the Balasan river. In recent period, particularly in some regions of North Bengal, the Central Power Authority has projected to build up a few hydro electric power plants. In this regard the construction of dams on the tide of the river like *Teesta* and *Jaldhaka* is going on. During the study it was reported that the stones, sand and boulders of the Balasan river had a huge demand to those construction sites and those raw materials were regularly supplied for the said purpose. Meanwhile, the web of rivers are passing through the different districts of North Bengal. Particularly during monsoon they often got flooded. To redress this natural calamity regular embankment is a prime essentiality. The boulders collected from the Balasan river were utilized frequently for making embankment of the concerned rivers in every year.

It can be summarized that the urbanization, transport, communication of the Siliguri town as well as several other construction based works in and around North Bengal were very much dependent on the natural resources of the Balasan river. These construction based works are regularly being carried out in this region. All these works and their maintenance require a large number of both skilled as well as unskilled labour. This is so because with the abundance of supplies from the villages, labour continues to be cheaper than the labour saving equipments. Thus, no significant change has percolated into the construction sector to affect its labour absorbing capacity. In the said work a huge amount of manual labour is required. People form Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Bihar and

other districts of North Bengal are regularly coming to this area as the migrant labour force. Even a number of local dwellers are engaged in the construction based works as their secondary occupational pursuit. Thus, the stone based occupation of the Balasan river had a multidimensional importance. Foremost, it provided the primary source of occupation, a mode of earning and a way of resettlement to the studied people who were displaced; secondarily, it regularly supplied the required raw materials for several construction based works in the said region and accelerated the rate of urbanization in and around Siliguri; lastly, it provided an allied source of occupational pursuit particularly for the migrant labours in different construction based works. The demands of such raw materials were quite noticeable during the study. In this regard, to fulfill the supply according to the requirements the common stone crushers were involved in that arduous work throughout their entire livelihood.

The Stone Crushing Occupation

The stone based occupation was the major economic pursuit of the studied area. The different aspects of livelihood of the concerned people were keenly interrelated with this occupation. In the context of present study an in-depth knowledge about the stone crushing occupation and its different aspects was the prime and most essential requisite. It became possible to know in detail about this occupational pursuit only due to regular field work. Rather, it needed to stay with them and to closely observe their daily occupational involvement and livelihood condition. For this purpose, I stayed in the house of my key informant and local Panchayat Sri. Bijay Krishna Roy and was able to get an in-depth knowledge about the major occupational pursuit of my studied area. I could easily awake at an early morning because with the first ray of dawn the concerned family members and their neighbourhood became busy to start their work. Within a very little moment the entire Balasan colony and the river bed became fully engaged in the work. The jingling of iron implements, the tide of the river, the threshing of stone filled basket, the rush movements of trucks with black emitted smoke, hubbub of labourers hurriedly carrying loads with their heads bend, the tender vision of the children reflecting their inability to bore the heavily weighed stones with their soft little hands- one is likely to come across such a scenario while traveling along through the Balasan Colony and the river bed. However, this is the

back drop of the stone field in Balasan river bed which used to supply the essential ingredient of ever increasing concrete jungle, so imperative for modern day living and civilization. According to Census 2011, work is defined as participation in any economically productive activity, with or without compensation, wage and profit. Such participation may be physical or mental in nature. All persons engaged in work as defined above are the workers. The workers are broadly categorized into two sectors viz. main workers, who work for the major part of the reference period (i.e. six months or more) and marginal workers, who do not work for the major part of the reference period (i.e. less than six months).

It is to be mentioned here that in Tari mouza there were total 5200 main and 932 marginal workers. Among the main workers there were 3755 male and 1445 female workers. Whereas among the marginal workers there were total 333 males and 599 females. Meanwhile, Census 2001 has described cultivator to those people who were involved in the cultivation in his own land or land provided by the Government. They have stated agricultural labourers as those who work on another person's land for money or kind or share. On the other hand, the other workers include Government employee, teacher, factory worker, plantation worker, trader, businessman, transport worker, mining worker, construction worker, political and social activists, priest, entertainment artist etc. The studied area was under the Tari mouza. The major portion of this mouza was adjacent to the Balasan river. The soil of the said area was mostly build up with sand and stone, while it was almost devoid of any composition of clay. It had almost seized the scope of cultivation or any sort of allied agricultural occupational pursuit. The concerned people were primarily engaged in the stone based occupation by utilizing the locally available natural resources and thus their working involvement in other workers category were quite higher in comparison. Similarly both male and female were mostly involved in the other occupational pursuit rather than agricultural work. As the studied area was administratively affiliated with the Tari mouza, thus the occupational affiliation of the concerned people was quite familiar with that of the mouza. The stone based occupation was the prime occupational pursuit for most of the studied people and their family. An in-depth analysis of this occupation is described below-

Source of raw material and its type: The stone based occupation of Balasan colony was totally associated with the raw materials like stones, sand and boulders. The Balasan river started to flow from the high hilly regions and finally it intermingled with the river Mahananda in the plains. In its way from the high hills to the plains, the river often came across a number of turnings and uneven land. It had given more tide to the river. With the help of its tidal flow, the river started to perform its erosive works from the uphill regions to the foothills. It constituted the accumulation of natural resources like stone, sand and boulder which flows along with the tide. As the river gradually came to the plains, it consequently started to lose its own velocity and the tide of water. On the other hand, it gradually started to deposit the raw materials both in the river basement and on the river bed or on any landscape situated on the tide of river. The stones were varied in their own shapes and sizes. Some of the stones were seized like big boulders while the others were medium in size or quite a smaller one. The sand was deposited mostly on the river bed or in the river basement. The people had to collect the raw materials either from the river basement or from the river bed with the help of their different working implements. Meanwhile, in recent times the concerned people started to dig up the soil of the river bed in search of the stones and boulders. However, during the study the tide of the Balasan river and its erosive work was the major source of raw material for the execution of the stone based occupation.

Different types of working involvement in the stone crushing work: The stone based work was associated with a number of working involvements. Foremost, the stones and boulders were collected from the river. After the collection they were threshed well to avoid the water as well as other least required materials and gathered them on the river bed. Even in many cases the concerned people dug up the soil and the basement of the river to collect the stone. Another major work was the collection of sand. It was done by digging up the river basement or the river bed. Often small sized stones and other allied materials got admixture along with the sand. After the collection of the sand, it was sieved for two or more times for the complete isolation of sand and other admixture particles. If the sand were collected from the tide of the river then it was allowed to get dried up and then sieved for the isolation of raw materials. The major work under the stone

based occupation was the stone crushing. The collected stones and boulders were broken up into different shapes and sizes according to the demand of market and the purpose of utilization. The big boulders were isolated aside without any breakage while the others were broken in many parts and then supplied to the market. The broken up stones had their own distinctive names. Each of them could be distinguished from others according to its shape and size. Along with this variation, the rates of the stones were also varied from one another. It is to be mentioned that the gradual decrease in the size of the stones could be made possible by gradually breaking them into smaller parts. Meanwhile, most of the studied people who were associated with the stone based works were involved in the stone crushing work along with allied activities. Many of them worked as labourer to load the stones and sand to the truck. They did the same either after breaking the stone by themselves and their family members, or they used to load the broken up stones of others according to the order of their superiors. Generally to load a truck with such raw materials a group of workers used to work collectively and co-operatively. Another category of working involvement could be noticed which includes the truck drivers. The concerned people who took the lease of the river and the urban contractors had their own truck to supply the raw materials to the required sites for constructions. For this purpose they used to involve local people who were familiar with this work. The concerned people did the same despite their other activities associated with the stone based works. Even in many cases, it was reported that when a truck of an outside area used to come in the studied area for the collection of raw materials and if the driver of the concerned contractor had other engagement or inconveniences then he used to involve the local people to bore up the responsibility of his truck and to supply the raw materials at particular place. All these categories of working involvements were directly associated with the stone based works. Here the works were executed by the concerned labourers by directly exchanging their manual labour. On the other hand, there were another category of people who were although primarily associated with this working operation but not by physical labour; they were the local work organizers or *Sardars*. They mainly organized the work, adequately monitored the working operation and kept the working discipline and occupational administration. As a whole, they had the job to operate the common labourers. Further, they had every right to take the adequate decision and the

needful act according to emerging situation and contemporary requirement. Under their vigil and authority the daily working activity in the studied area could be executed regularly without any obstacle or major inconveniences.

Different types of stones and their uses: The different types of stones could be distinguished from one another according to mode of their usage, shape and size. Generally, the stones could be broadly differentiated into two categories that is broken up stones and non broken stones. Further, those could be broken into different types according to the requirements. It is to be mentioned here that every distinguished category of stone had its own specific utilization. The demand of the stones was more or less equal throughout the entire year and it had no remarkable seasonal variation. The following table will illustrate the fact more clearly-

Table 4.1: Different type of stones, their names and mode of usage

Category	Name of the stones	Mode of usage
Broken stones	Common chips or 1 inch chips	It was used for meter gauge and narrow gauge railway construction.
	Medium chips	It was used for urban construction.
	½ inch chips	It was used for urban construction based works. It had a common usage in the damn construction.
	Single or ¼ inch	It was a prime raw material for the construction of roads. Particularly it was used in the construction of roads in the hilly regions.
Non broken Stones	¾ th inch	It was used for the construction of damns and in the construction of bridges which would carry heavy weight.
	Big boulder metal	It was used for the embankment of river to redress its erosive effect. Further, it was used to redress the landslide in the hilly regions. It was also used in the construction of damns very much.
	Special bazri ¹	It was admixed with the cement to build up the raw materials for the construction of floor of

¹ Bazri: A type of small non broken stone. It is a prime raw material for construction.

		the buildings.
	Pure bazri	It was admixture with the cement to build up the raw materials for the construction of roofs of the buildings.
	Accurate bazri or Grid	It was admixture with the cement to build up the raw materials for the construction of the pillars. Besides it was also used for the construction of roofs and floors.

Source: Field study

Generally, in the studied area, all sorts of these varieties could be more or less equally found, because around the surroundings of the studied area different forms of works were carried out in parallel. For the supply of raw materials to those areas the production should be kept on a regular basis and frequent availability according to the demand.

Price of the stones: The raw materials which were associated with the stone crushing occupation in the studied area were broadly categorized into two types viz. *chalu mal* or unbroken stone or *gura mal* or broken stone. The rate of the stones often had a few variation according to the size, demand, mode of transportation, distance of the destination and season. In the studied occupational pursuit there were two broad categories of truck, that is 'Full Punjab Truck'² and 'Shaktiman'³. A full Punjab truck had the capacitance to bear the raw materials upto 300 cft to 400 cft on average while a Shaktiman had the same capacitance of 150 cft on an average. The main working season persisted between the two consecutive monsoon sessions. Particularly during monsoon, the river got over flooded with water and it became quite inconvenient for the studied people to regularize their work. In this period, the rate of the stone varied a little bit. If the demand of a particular type of stone emerged in the market then it was sold at a higher rate by the stone crushers from their early stocks. On the other hand if the construction based work got interrupted due to irregular supply of raw materials during showers and on the other hand the concerned people were in an urgency to

² *Full Punjab Truck*: A six wheeler truck which have the national permit of transportation provided by Government of India.

³ *Shaktiman*: A four wheeler truck which have the state permit of transportation provided by the state Government or at the district level.

sell the raw materials then they had to leave their stocks quite at a cheaper rate to the contractors. However, there prevailed a standardized market rate of each distinguished stones throughout the entire year, as stated below in the following table-

Table 4.2: Different type of stones and their rate

Category	Name of the stones	Rate of the truck	
		Punjab/100 cft	Shaktiman/ 100cft
Broken Stones	Common chips or 1 inch Chips	Rs. 600/- to 700/-	-
	Medium chips	Rs. 800/-	-
	½ inch chips	Rs. 1,000/- to 1,100/-	-
	Single or 1/4 th inch	Rs. 1,100/- to 1,500/-	Rs. 700/- to 750/-
Non broken Stones	3/4 th inch	-	Rs.450/-
	Big boulder metal	Rs. 200/-	Rs. 200/-
	Special bazri	Rs. 800/-to 900/-	Rs. 700/-
	Pure bazri	Rs. 400/-	Rs. 300/-
	Accurate bazri or grid	Rs. 900/-	Rs. 700/-
	1/4 th inch	Rs.400/- to 450/-	Rs. 300/-

Source: Field study

The rate of the sand was more or less uniform throughout the entire year. However it had the variation according to the amount of collection. It is mentioned below-

100 cft sand- Rs. 150/-; 125 cft sand- Rs. 170/-; 150 cft sand- Rs. 200/- and 200 cft sand- Rs. 270/-. These above stated rate of the stones and sand were more or less unanimous. But often along with the distance and other internal transaction dealings these raw materials were sold at a quite higher rate to the contractors for their constructions. Meanwhile, this rate of the raw materials and its mode of transaction had a deep co-relation with the payment of the common stone crushers and the allied expenditures which were essential to operate the entire working infrastructure of the studied area and this particular occupational pursuit.

Organization of work: The organization of stone based work in the studied area was categorically divided into a number of sections. Actually the stone based work of the entire Balasan river was under the authority of the State Government. The entire river bed was divided into a number of sections. After a certain period, Government declares the tender to conduct the work and further according to official rules it was bestowed to different persons. From Dairy farm to *Loha pull* the collection of raw materials from the Balasan river was taken in lease for 15

years by Montu Sanyal. This authority of collection was locally termed as *dak*. The Balasan Colony was located on the river bed between these two distinguished zones. Thus, the studied people often stated that they worked under the *dak* of Montu Sanyal. In the studied area, the entire work was conducted under the authority of him and in the Government official record he was the authorized contractor to conduct the work. Under his authority a group of local work organizers or *Sardars* regularized the day to day work of the stone field. They had to keep communication with him regularly about the conduction of work and about the inconveniences if any. Each *Sardar* had a specific territory and under his authority a fixed number of workers were affiliated. In his zone he had to conduct the organization of work as well as he had to look after the payment of wages to his group of workers. Usually the *Sardars* did not get involved in the manual labour but if there emerged some urgent necessity of supply or lack of working hands then they had to adjoin with the workforce. But it was a seldom happening factor. Under the *Sardars* there was the group of labourers who were involved in the stone based works. As this occupation was devoid of gender biasness thus the female workers also had to work under the authority of the *Sardars*. The children who were involved in concerned work were treated cumulatively by the *Sardars* along with their parents involved in the studied occupation. The workers were bound to abide by the rules of the *Sardars* and had to co-operate with him in every circumstance. As a particular worker had the affiliation with a particular *Sardar*, thus he had no scope to violate his directions because he was superior in the work organization. Meanwhile if any labour showed reluctance to abide by his *Sardar* then he (*Sardar*) orally refused to bear any sort of responsibility of his labour and the concerned labour was no more affiliated with his team. Even he was seldom entertained by any other *Sardar*. On the other hand, the wages of the labourers were paid by their respective *Sardar*. Thus if some complexities arose between the labour and the *Sardar* then ultimately the labourers had to face all sorts of inconveniences in the work. It is to be mentioned here that if all the workers of a particular family were involved in a certain area then they were under the authority of a certain *Sardar* but if they worked in a distinct zone then they had to work under different *Sardars*. Further, the contractors of different urban centers and working sites mostly communicated with the lease holder for the raw materials. The lease holder gave adequate

direction to his *Sardars* to do the needful. However, the contractors often directly sent their vehicles to the river bed for loading the required materials. They used to contact with the *Sardars* for the same. In such a situation the *Sardars* were bound to inform the matter to the lease holder to seek the adequate permission. Thus, in the studied area, the lease holder operated the entire work with the help of local *Sardars* and in communication with their market based customers. Meanwhile, the local administrative wing had employed a group of middle aged people to collect the royalty from the trucks who were involved in the transportation of raw materials from the Balasan river. The lease holder pays this amount to their *Sardars* who gave it to the truck driver to deposit the money accordingly. Generally the urban contractors did not pay any royalty from their own self despite their expenditure to buy the raw materials. From the above all discussion the work organization related with the stone based occupation of the Balasan river bed can be represented through the following chart-

Figure: 1}

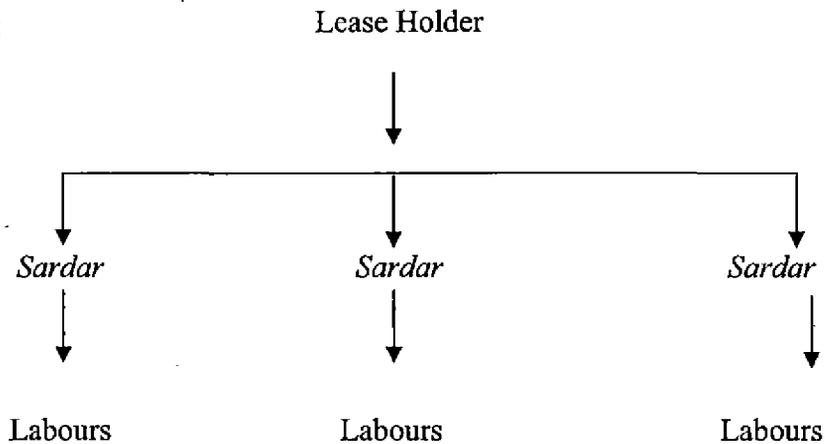
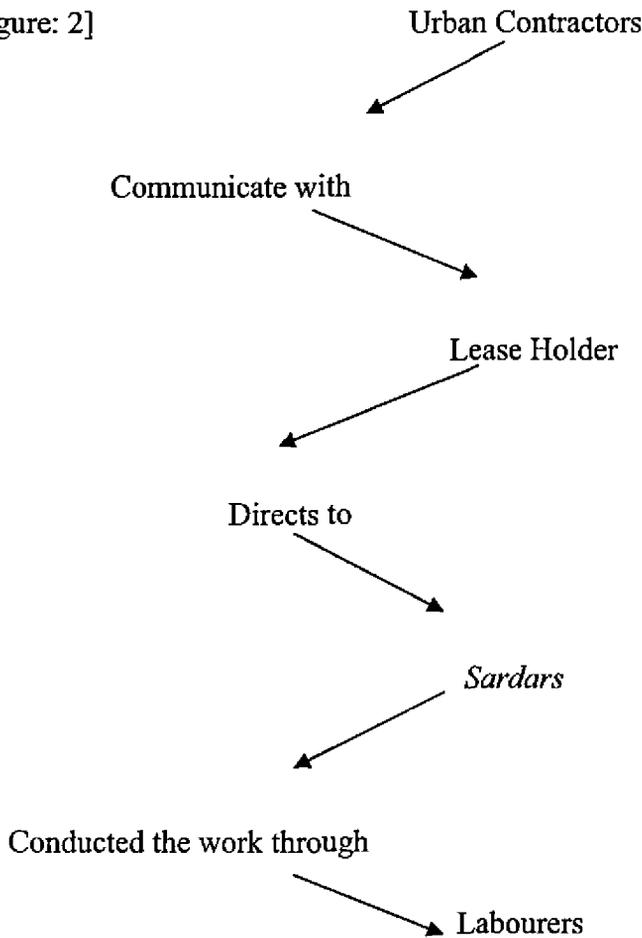


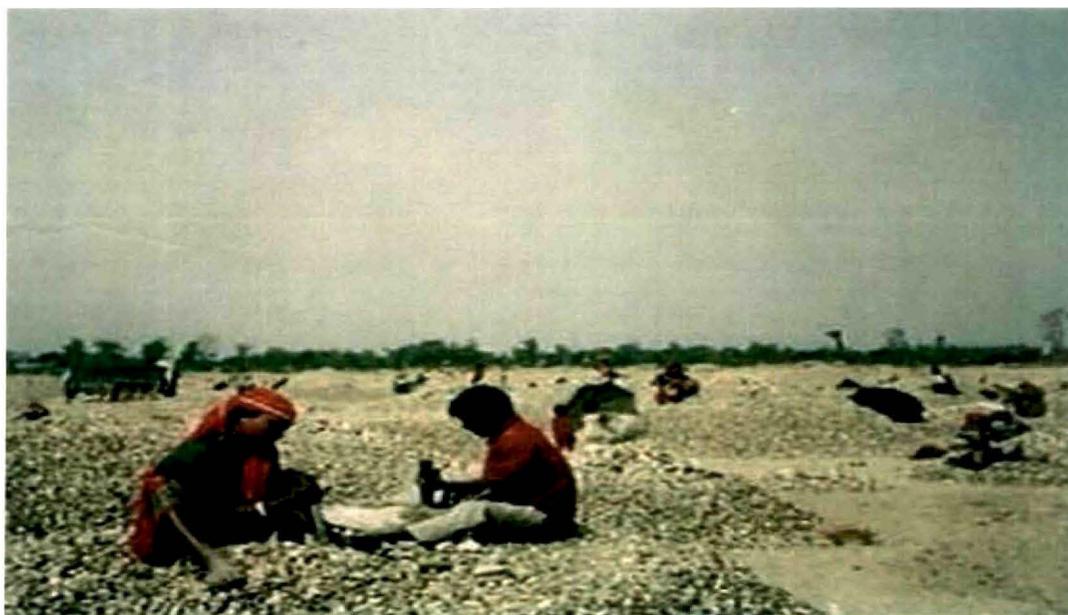
Figure: 2]



Division of labour in the work: The stone based occupation was devoid of any age or gender biasness. The males were involved in the loading of stones and sand to the truck. Along with that they collected the stones, sand and used to crush the stones according to the requirements. It was noticed that in the morning the males were mostly involved in the collection of stones but accordingly as the time passed on they got involved in loading the trucks as per the instruction of the *Sardars*. Meanwhile, a few of them were involved in the transportation of the trucks but according to their familial requirements or other emerging situation they also got involved in the stone based work. The females, on the other hand were mainly involved in the collection of stones, sand and the crushing of the stones. In most of the cases they did the work along with their household courses. The females had a more exhaustive working schedule in their daily course. It was noticed that for the sake of earning the females also got involved in the loading of stones to the trucks. The aged males and the aged females were mostly involved in the stone crushing work. If required they used to bore the physical load of stone

or sand collection and stone or sand loading. Most of the aged females also had to look after their household courses. The children were also involved in the stone based occupation. In most of the cases they did the collection of stones from the river and those who were a little grown up, also did the stone crushing work along with their parents, besides the collection of stones. However, they were not involved in the loading of raw materials because it was beyond their physical capability. Often in the absence of parents, the elder children had to look after and had to take proper care of their younger siblings. Thus, except the loading of trucks by children, all other sorts of works were done by all of the workers and as such no gender discrimination was prevailed in this occupation. It is to be mentioned here that the *Sardars* were always the males. Although many females had a prolonged working experience in the stone field but they were never bestowed the responsibility to work as a *Sardar* by the lease owner. Age was not the factor to become a *Sardar* rather the authorized lease holder gave this responsibility to such a person who had both an experience about the occupation and the potentiality to operate a group of labour to conduct the work.

Picture 4.1: A couple engaged in the Stone crushing work



Different implements: Every economic pursuit has a close affiliation with different technological implements. Technology is the combination of techniques common to a group devised by man for his existence on this earth. Technology is a cultural screen that man sets up between himself and his environment. Beals and

Hoijer,1977 stated that by technology we refer to the sum total of techniques, possessed by the members of a society i.e. the totality of their ways of behaving in respect to collecting raw materials from the environment. In a particular economy mechanical, symbolic and organizational techniques are always constant factors. Mechanical techniques are represented by tools, instruments etc.; ideas, traditions etc. represented by represent symbolic technique; where as groups and institutions are the manifestations of organizational techniques. All these factors and their skill of application collectively formulate the mode of production in a particular occupational pursuit. The stone based occupation in the studied area was also associated with a number of technological implements. All of them were collectively associated with the mode of production and ultimately it was related with the earning of the concerned people. It is to be mentioned here that the required implements to conduct the stone crushing work were being supplied to the labourers by their *Sardars*. These implements were-

i) Gayen or cylindrical iron hammer: It was the prime iron implement for stone crushing work. It was cylindrical in shape. The length of the implement was 6-7 inches and the radius was 3 centimeter. Its weight varied from 1 kilogram to 1.5 kilogram. With this implement the stone was repeatedly being crushed to obtain the desired size.

ii) Jhuri or basket: The said implement was made up of bamboo split. It was oval in shape and the surface area was 40-45 centimeter. It was mainly utilized to bore the collected stones and sand from the tide to the river bed. Meanwhile, the broken up stones were carried by the labourers in it to load into the truck. Its weight was varied from 250 to 300 gram. From the ground surface its height was 8 centimeter.

iii) Jhahri or seive: The said implement was made up of iron. It was triangular and three dimensional in shape. Its length was 50 centimeter, breadth was 40 centimeter and the depth was 25 to 30 centimeter. The thin iron wires got enmeshed with each other to provide a sieve like structure. Its weight was 500 gram. It was primarily utilized to collect the stones from the tide of the river. Through its sieve like structure water and other materials got perforated and the

stones could remain within the implement. Those collected stones were then put to the basket or *Jhuri* and deposited on the river bed for the crushing.

iv) *Chaluni* or smaller seive: It was made up of both wood and thin iron wires. The frame was built up with the wood while the nets were built up with the thin iron wires. It had a stand to provide upright position on the surface. Its length was 3 feet and the breadth was 2 feet. The sand which was collected from the river bed and basement was admixed with different particles. It was sieved through the *Chaluni* continuously for two to three times. Ultimately it could isolate the sand and other admixture particles. Its weight was 1 kilogram approximately. The gaps between the enmeshed iron wires were very thin. It had become very much helpful to distinguish between the smaller indivisible stones from the sand. After this isolation they utilized accordingly.

v) *Dar* or stand: It was made up of iron rods and altogether it had three rods which were encircled through a ring. Each rod was 3.5 feet in height. Actually the said implement was kept stand on the river basement and on its top the basket was kept. People collected the stone from the tide of the river through the *Jhajri* and then collected it to the basket. Its weight was varied from 1.5-2 kilogram. Each rod had a pointed structure at their tip.

vi) *Belcha* or spread: It was made up of iron and wood. The edge of this implement was made up with the iron and its handle was made up with the wood. The edge had 20 centimeter of length and 15 centimeter of breadth. The wooden handle had the length of 2.5-3 feet. The total weight of this implement was 2 kilogram. It was recognized as the very important implement for the stone crushing work. It was used to uplift the broken up stones and sand in the basket and later it was loaded to the trucks for commercial transaction. Moreover, they used it to sieve the collected sand to isolate different elements.

vii) *Kodal* or spread: The major component element of the said implement was iron and wood. The edge was made up with the iron and its handle was made up with the wood. The length of the edge was 18-20 centimeter and the breadth was 15- 17 centimeter. The wooden handle had a length of 2.5 feet. Its total weight was 2 kilogram. It was also recognized as a very important implement for the said work. With it they used to dig up the soil to collect the stones and boulders from

the river bed. Further, they used to dig up the river bed for the collection of soil. Meanwhile, the concerned workers used it to sieve the collected sand for the proper isolation of different elements.

viii) *Sabol or Crowbar*: It was a long, rigid and cylindrical iron implement with a length of 3 feet and a weight of 2.5 to 3 kilogram. Its working end was slightly tapering and the gripping end had a cylindrical structure. It was used to dig up the river basement or the river bed to collect boulders and stones.

ix) *Bira or head gear*: It was usually made up of straw and weighed very little. The people who were involved in the stone based work used to put it on their head. It provided them the balance to carry a stone filled basket on their head. Further, it partially redressed the inconveniences of the common workers to lift up the heavy weight of the stone filled basket on their head, which was itself very arduous in nature. Generally it was sold in the local market against a very nominal amount. Even it was noticed that the common people could easily made it with their locally made towel known as *gamchha*, by folding it in a circular fashion for three to four times. However, the straw made *bira* was required to alter in a frequent succession.

x) *KB Box or measuring box*: It was made up of wood. It was square in shape and had four strong handles with two in the front and the other two in the back. Its length and breadth was 2 feet, while it had a depth of 1.5 feet. It was mainly used to measure the amount of broken up stone on the basis of which the payment was given by the *Sardars* to the labourers. Further, it was also utilized to load the broken up stones directly to the trucks.

Picture 4.2: A stone crushing family with working implements



These above mentioned technological implements were primarily associated with the stone based work in the studied area. Although they had distinctive functional aspects but these were collectively associated with the mode of collection, transformation and utilization of the raw materials. As a whole the said implements were primarily associated with the mode of production in the stone based work, even more precisely, these implements provided a fold of rice to the studied people. However, in their traditional agricultural occupation, they had totally different mode of technological implements and their mode of operations were completely distinct. But after displacement and further due to an exposure to a different environmental circumferences the studied people had to get involved in a new occupational pursuit just for their survival. Consequently, to pursue the new occupation the studied people gradually became familiar with the application of new sorts of technological implements. Its mode of production was totally dissimilar from their traditional technological implements. Further, it can be stated that due to displacement and working involvement in a new occupational pursuit, a complete alternation can be noticed in the material cultural aspects of the studied people, at least in the case of technological implements which were associated with their present occupational pursuit.

An economic system is the part of a socio-cultural system that deals with the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services within a particular society. Every society produces, distributes and consumes or uses goods and services. Every society therefore has an economy, a system for managing these processes. Its people also display certain economic behaviour, certain motivations and choices in the production, distribution and consumption of those goods and services. The basic assumption of formal economics is that human material wants are unlimited, but the means for achieving these wants are not. All people must therefore make choices about how to use time, energy and capital in order to achieve desired ends. A further assumption of formal economics is that people economize that is make choices among alternative courses of action in a rational manner, means choosing a course of action that will maximize the individuals well being and profit. In the industrial societies the basic unit of production is organized only for economic purposes. It does not produce goods for the use of its members; the items it produces are sold for profit. In this sector, work is carried out in an impersonal setting and the rewards of work are primarily economic. In economies, where households are the producing units, there can be little expansion and innovation is not a by product of economic activity. It means that large scale production and the mass distribution system with which we are familiar tend not to develop where economic systems are made up of households (Nanda,1984:175-184).

In the studied area most of the families were primarily associated with the stone based works. Here the entire family worked as a production unit. The overall occupational involvement of the studied people and the various issues related with this occupation are discussed below in detail. In the said occupation the natural resources were utilized by the every family for the source of income, which in turn provided them the requisites of common minimum livelihood. In the studied area, all of the concerned families worked as a production unit. They collectively worked to utilize the production for the means of their own consumption. The concerned people were mostly related with the stone based occupation for the sake of earning. It is to be mentioned here that the studied people were involved either in a particular sector or they were engaged in multiple sectors.

Working involvement of the people: The stone crushing work was conducted both by the male and female on Balasan river bed. The entire family worked as a production unit for the sake of livelihood. Their affiliation with the said occupation is mentioned below-

i) Working involvement of the male: In the studied families, males were the prime earning members and actively engaged in the quest for daily livelihood requirements. Balasan river was the fundamental source to the studied families for the sake of their survival. Thus, being the prime earning member of the family, the males were very much focused upon the adequate utilization of the natural resources in their daily occupational pursuit. They were quite well known that any sort of misuse of the resource and reluctance or leisure during the working schedule could seize the opportunity to accumulate a fold of rice for their family members. Their entire livelihood was keenly associated with the prime occupational pursuit. The said occupation was comprised of different categories. Particularly the males were either involved in a particular sector or they were simultaneously engaged in multiple sector. It is to be mentioned here that the population of Balasan colony gradually got increased and there increased the number of the workers associated with the stone based occupation.

However, there was no scope to increase the amount of natural resources in the proportionate manner. It made more and more people to depend on a limited amount of resources. Thus, all of the prime earners of the studied families i.e. the males had a keen intention for more laborious working involvement and to try at their level best to fulfill the common minimum needs of their family members. The following case study could provide a more threadbare analysis on this issue.

Case Study 1: Bhupen Barman, aged 79 years was the eldest male worker of the studied families in Balasan Colony. He had a six membered family. He migrated with the family from Bangladesh in the year 1972. Since then he had affiliation with the stone based work. He remembered that earlier there were plentiful of natural resources and he got resettled with his family on the basis of income conducted through the stone crushing work. After the marriage of his son, he had a plan to leave the stone based work. However, when his grand children was born, there emerged severe economic crisis in his family. He had realized the inability

of his son to fulfill the common minimum familial livelihood single handedly. So, he had restarted the work. He stated that he could work for at least eight hours in a day. He stated that the stone crushing work was a very laborious one and needed a lot of physical strength. He expressed his sorrow that inspite of his utter hard work, he could earn a very little amount. According to him during the studied period, there were lesser amount of natural resources and upon it a large section of people were depended. The income from this occupation got reduced into manifold from the earlier days. He opined his view that with that poor level of income, they could not manage adequate nutritious food, which was a prime requisite to conduct such heavy workload. So, he felt very weak. Further, he stated that a heat wave emerged out from the stone and sand. It created a lot of physical inconveniences to him. He expressed his grief sorrow that in true sense the concerned occupation could generate a very poor income for the workers and a large profit for the contractors. He stated that upon their hard labour work the natural resources were supplied elsewhere for different construction works; however he and all the other workers were getting deprived even from the access of common minimum livelihood. He exclaimed that due to poverty, he was unable to educate his child beyond primary level and it will be same for his grand children also. He could hardly maintain his sustenance and he had no alternative to search for any other occupational pursuit because he was devoid of such skills. During the study he had left any more hope for living and he was passing his days with a lot of grief sorrow. In this regard the primary occupations of the adult males are mentioned below.

Table 4.3: Distribution of adult male population on the basis of primary occupation

Age group	Primary occupation		Total
	Stone based work	Student	
15-19	26 34.67	49 65.33	75 100.00
20-24	66 90.41	7 9.59	73 100.00
25-29	68 100.00		68 100.00
30-34	51 100.00	-	51 100.00
35-39	46 100.00	-	46 100.00
40-44	48 100.00	-	48 100.00
45-49	32 100.00	-	32 100.00
50-54	40 100.00	-	40 100.00
55-59	15 100.00	-	15 100.00

60-64	19 100.00		19 100.00
65-69	8 100.00		8 100.00
70 and above	8 100.00		8 100.00
Total	427 88.41	56 11.59	483 100.00

Source: Filed Study

Quite from an early age the males were involved in the stone based occupation. Among the youths, although most of the individuals were primarily involved in education but in 16 (21.33 per cent) cases (Table 4.3) for the sake of livelihood requirements, they primarily got involved in the stone crushing occupation. From the present study it was revealed that from the adolescent period, the parents of the youths in the concerned families imposed the responsibility of earning for familial requirements upon them. It created an opportunity for the parents to get an additional working hand along with them for the fulfillment of their common minimum livelihood. On the contrary, the said involvement had seized the opportunity from the youths to continue their studies. In the studied families the adult males were the prime earning members and they had a keen involvement with the stone based work. The familial responsibilities were mostly bestowed upon them. They were quite well aware that the stone crushing was the best possible means for them to accumulate a fold of rice. The situation forced them to get involved in hard manual labour without any sort of leisure during their working schedule. Meanwhile, in the said occupational sector, a large section of people were dependent on the limited amount of natural resources; thus it is noteworthy to mention that there existed an unlettered competition among the working population to utilize the natural resources as much as they could. From the field study, it was reported that out of 483 (100.00 per cent) working males, 427 (88.41 per cent) individuals were primarily involved in the stone based work (Table 4.3).

Further, the adult males who were primarily involved in the stone based work, were not only confined to a particular type, rather they got affiliated to different aspects of this work simultaneously. It was mainly dependent upon the availability of working opportunity and the requirement of the labour force in the studied occupational pursuit. For example, in early working hours, an adult male member got involved in the collection of stone from the river and crushed them for a certain period. Later if he found an opportunity to load the truck in the river

bed then he would get involved in it; while the stone crushing works would be carried out by himself as well as by his other family members. Their hard manual labour and wholistic involvement in the stone based occupation were the main source for them to earn a fold of rice. However, a large section of people were dependent on this occupational pursuit which was based on limited amount of natural resources. Thus, in the context of struggle for survival only the primary occupational involvements of the adult male members were quite disproportionate according to the daily requirements of the studied families. In such circumstances, the youths and the adult male members who were not primarily involved in the stone crushing work had to get affiliated with it secondarily. The following table is giving the details.

Table 4.4: Distribution of adult male population on the basis of secondary occupation

Age group	Secondary occupation		Total
	Stone based work	Student	
15-19	49 65.33	26 34.67	75 100.00
20-24	7 9.59	66 90.41	73 100.00
25-29	68 100.00		68 100.00
30-34	51 100.00	-	51 100.00
35-39	46 100.00	-	46 100.00
40-44	48 100.00	-	48 100.00
45-49	32 100.00	-	32 100.00
50-54	40 100.00	-	40 100.00
55-59	15 100.00	-	15 100.00
60-64	19 100.00		19 100.00
65-69	8 100.00		8 100.00
70 and above	8 100.00		8 100.00
Total	391 80.95	92 19.05	483 100.00

Source: Field Study

Particularly the youths (aged between 15 to 19 years) who were primarily involved in their education, also had to get affiliated with the said work in most of the cases (65.33 per cent) to meet up with their familial requirements. Meanwhile, in that age group, those who were involved in different occupational pursuits, had the desire of education in certain cases (34.67 per cent); but their hard struggle for

the work often emerged out as a great hindrance to carry on their studies (Table 4.4). Further, it can be noted that the limited accessibility over natural resources and continuous increase of competition was gradually emerging in the stone based occupation. In such a situation, although the concerned workers were involved in hard manual labour, but their effort was not meeting upto the adequate profitable level, even for the sake of their daily livelihood. It is to be specially noted that during the monsoon season the studied people had to face severe inconveniences to conduct their work regularly. It created more hindrance for them to accumulate their common minimum livelihood. It can be noted that the physical labour was the only resource of the studied people by which they could accumulate their common minimum livelihood. So, the people who were not primarily involved in the stone based work had the involvement with the stone based work secondarily. It could be revealed that altogether 80.95 per cent males were secondarily involved in the stone based occupation (Table 4.4). Most of them were totally dependent on the stone based occupation, which means that they both had primary and secondary involvement with the said occupation. From the field study it was noticed that among the total studied families, there was not a single family which was unaffiliated with the stone based occupation. It was reported that after their migration and resettlement, the stone based occupation provided them the chance to earn a fold of rice. On the other hand, in the studied area there was no scope to pursue the works of vegetation, cultivation or other natural food products to meet up with the requirement of food. It was only the natural raw materials which would meet up to prevent the hunger of the studied people. Although, the stone based occupation had a number of constraints, but the concerned people were more psychologically affiliated with this occupational pursuit rather than to leave it up altogether. They knew quite well that it would be very hard for them to secure their own place by competing with the skilled workers in the urban labour sector. They had a psychological assurance that the stone based occupation could at least provide a fold of rice inspite of several inconveniences. So, being secondarily involved in the stone based occupation, the adult males or the prime earners of the studied families were interested to secure their minimum livelihood at least from one end. In the concerned families another major aspect was their daily household work. From the above facts, it can be stated that among the studied families, the males were the prime earning members. Their prime wealth

was the physical ability and they used to utilize it in different aspects of hard manual labour work. They spent their entire effort to earn a fold of rice. For this purpose they used to utilize their labour in different categories of stone based work.. Even the younger generation was also directly involved in the occupational sector to provide a source of income for their families. If required then the concerned males were also involved in the familial courses too. The males of the studied families were very hard working from an early age. It was their work, which could only provide them a square meal and to maintain their familial courses inspite of several inconveniences and adverse circumstances.

ii. Working involvement of the female: Since earlier when men hunted animals, women were found to share the burden of their respective families shoulder to shoulder with their parents in all the occupations (Prasad, 1988: 177). The rural working women are the unsung heroines, born to die in the backyard of human civilization, carrying on the burden of humanity for a mere pittance. They work in the scorching sun and in the pouring rain. Away from the home they slog to break the stones at the quarries and doing all drudgery at the mines, factory premises, brick kilns etc. They earn on their own or supplement the family income to keep off starvation. They do many things more which men do not do (Prasad,1988:2). World wide economic profile of women indicates that they represent near about 50 per cent of total population, constitute 30 per cent of the labour force, contribute 60 per cent of all working hours, receive 10 per cent of world's income and own less than 1 per cent of the world's property. Women's work is the extension of their domestic and familial role (Mondal, 2005: 2-3). The Human Development Report of 1990 also says "Much of the work that woman do is 'invisible' in national accounting and censuses, despite its obvious productive and social worth. Women have shouldered a large part of the adjusted burden of developing countries in the 1980's. To make up the lost family income, they have increased production for home consumption, worked longer hours, slept less and often eaten less" (Report of The National Commission on Labour, 2000: 936-937).

The employment of poor women is indispensable for the survival of individual families as well as for the maintenance of the wider socio-economic system (Karlekar, 1982: 120). If a woman using her own labour produces from freely

available materials certain kinds of goods and services which the family otherwise, would have had to purchase at a price in the market then she has in principle, earned that amount of real income for the family. Women’s economic tasks in India can thus be divided into three categories-

- a) As an entrepreneur, a self employed worker or a wage earning employee producing goods and services for the market;
- b) As a participant, in return for a share in the living, in the family’s production activities whose products are, at least partially meant for the market; and
- c) As a contributor to the family’s real income by processing some goods which are available free in order to supplement or replace its market purchases (Banerjee, 1985:9-10).

Irrespective of whether they earn wage, they are part time workers, engaged in according to the compulsion of family’s economic contingencies (Mondal, 2005:3). Onwards from 1970’s women’s economic contribution began to be amply acceded and since then it has become categorically clear that their economic role is crucial for both family survival and economic development. According to Census data, women workforce participation is steadily increasing: 14.2 per cent in 1971; 19.7 per cent in 1981; 22.3 per cent in 1991 and 25.7 per cent in 2001. The following table reveals the issues more clearly-

Table 4.5: Work participation rate of the female

Country/State	Main worker		Marginal worker		Total population
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	
India	16.7	9.1	14.2	2.4	25.7
West Bengal	8.9	8.8	11.8	2.3	18.5

Source: Census, 2001, see Mondal, 2005:8.

Globally the unorganized sector has been growing in relation to the organized sector. It includes a high percentage of agricultural workers and also workers who are not attached to any particular employer. Women constitute a large percentage of the work force in the unorganized sector. As per the Census 1991, 96 per cent women workers were employed in the unorganized sector and this ratio is 90 per cent for men. In the unorganized sector, the share of women in total employment at 30 per cent is relatively higher than their share in the organized sector (14 per cent), predominantly due to their contribution in agriculture and related activities (Saxena, 2004: 411-412). Data from the 55th Round of NSS (1999-2000) show

that in the non agricultural sector, own account enterprises have a higher concentration of women workers because they can organize their time in such a way that they can undertake activities along with their domestic chores (Report of The National Commission on Labour, 2000:946, cited in Saxena, 2004:412). It is to be mentioned here that in undertaking economic activities in terms of wage earning Indian women have been compelled to and their works have been conditioned not by the consideration to eke out own livelihood but to sustain or safeguard the family fortune. Particularly for the rural women there tends to have closer co-relation between economic conditions of the family and women's employment. For the poor family woman's wage is indispensable and inevitable. Survival of the poorest of poor household depends on the definite economic contribution of women members. Woman work during economic distress or duress of the family, they are asked to lend helping hand to its survival. Women's work is exclusively for the family rather than for their own sake and sustenance (Mondal, 2005:4).

In the studied area the women were directly involved in the occupational pursuits. The concerned families had to face an utter hardship to accumulate their common minimum livelihood after being displaced. Although, they were further resettled but the new occupational sector which emerged out in front of them, was completely different from their traditional occupational pursuit, particularly in the aspects of technological application. It required a few years for them to get adequately adapted with this occupational pursuit. On the other hand, economic requisites gradually started to increase for the sake of survival. It has been already mentioned that the common minimum livelihood requirement of every studied family had an in depth co-relation with the accessibility of limited amount of natural resources. In such a circumstance if a family got depended only upon the income of their men folk then a mere scope of sustenance would be left for them. In such cases, the female folk of the concerned families utilize their physical labour as the capital and provide a major contribution to their familial income. In the studied occupational pursuit, the mode of earning was totally dependent on the adequate utilization of the natural resources within a stipulated duration of time. In this regard if within a certain period, both the male and female members of a family could show their direct affiliation with the concerned work then obviously their mode of production would get increased.

In the studied area the females primarily worked to accumulate a fold of rice for their family members. They played multifarious role in their families; they earned along with the males, they had to look after the children and they had to go through the daily household courses. The different occupational involvements of the concerned females are discussed below in detail and in this regard the following case study could give an in depth analysis.

Case Study 4: Kaminibala Barman, aged 73 years was the eldest female worker of the studied families in Balasan Colony. She had a two membered family. She was migrated along with her husband in 1975. In Balasan colony she organized the marriage of her two daughters and a son. After the marriage of her son, acute familial conflict began to emerge. Both her son and daughter-in-law stated that it would not possible for them to manage a fold of rice for them and they should get separate. She stated that her husband was ill and he could not work any more. The local Panchayat managed a settlement for them. During the study she was the only earning member of her family. She had to work for more than eight hours in a day and along with that she had to look after every familial discourse. She further opined her view that her occupation generated a very little amount of income and with this mere income it became unmanageable for her to maintain the familial discourse and their treatment to redress ailment. She expressed that the stone crushing work required a lots of nutritious food. However, she had no scope to consume those. She told that often she felt quite fatigued and in a number of occasions she became faint in scorching sunlight during her work in the river bed. Still she continued the work otherwise they had to starve. She expressed her sorrow that often she had no money to purchase rice or vegetables from market. At that time, she often had to collect spinach from the river bed and she cooked only that. She told that this stone crushing occupation could only extract energy from her body but in turn it could not provide them any security of livelihood. She expressed her agony that they were living in a substandard fashion. She stated about her loss of every rejoices of livelihood and she was waiting for the fag end of life to get relieved from this miserable livelihood.

From the field study, it has been revealed that in the primary occupational involvement the workforce participation rate of the females were 93.63 per cent (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Distribution of adult female population on the basis of primary occupation

Age group	Primary occupation		Total
	Stone based work	Student	
15-19	27 50.00	27 50.00	54 100.00
20-24	71 100.00	-	71 100.00
25-29	63 100.00	-	63 100.00
30-34	55 100.00	-	55 100.00
35-39	36 100.00	-	36 100.00
40-44	46 100.00	-	46 100.00
45-49	37 100.00	-	37 100.00
50-54	25 100.00	-	25 100.00
55-59	15 100.00	-	15 100.00
60-64	14 100.00	-	14 100.00
65-69	4 100.00	-	4 100.00
70 and above	4 100.00	-	4 100.00
Total	397 93.63	27 6.37	424 100.00

Source: Field Study

Like the males, the females were involved in occupational pursuit quite from an early age. Particularly among the youths, it was noticed that the concerned people were equally involved in education and different mode of occupation. The concerned age group was very much aware that the stone based occupation was the major occupational pursuit in their settlement. The parents expected very much that their grown up children must share an additional working hand for them to fulfill the common minimum livelihood requirements. Simultaneously, the female youths were quite aware that the stone based occupation was the prime source of earning in their settlement and their labour could provide a little economic backbone to their families. A large section of the female youths (50.00 per cent) of the studied area, in between the age group of 15-19 years were primarily involved in the stone based works. In this way they were primarily involved in the source of earning and their mode of income provided a fold of rice

to their family members. Further, their elder parents had to spend long hours in the river bed for the stone based works. In this regard, particularly the adult women folk had to focus more on the occupational involvement rather than to look after every nooks and corners of their daily household activities. The said situation had forced the female youths to primarily bore up the responsibility of regular familial courses (Table- 4.6). They had to look after the household particulars along with the work. Their parents bestowed the responsibility of little children upon the grown up daughter child during their involvement in the work. Thus quite from an early age the female youths in the studied families took a major responsibility for the safety, security and protection of their family members. Most of them (50 per cent) were primarily involved in education (Table-4.6). However, it was reported that in most of the cases they had a mere opportunity to attend the school regularly or to attend the full academic session of the school in a day.

It was primarily because of two factors. In one hand, they had to play the role of additional work force along with their parents for the sake of common minimum livelihood requirements; on the other hand, they had to look after the daily household activities and other familial courses during the absence of their parents. Altogether, they were directly involved in the mode of production, it might be through the mode of earning or to materialize the raw materials (accumulated from occupational involvement) into the mode of consumption for their family members. They had a direct functional involvement for the maintenance of regular familial discourse.

Their direct affiliation with the mode of production had reduced the opportunity to continue the studies regularly. Meanwhile, security of earning was an emerging challenge for the young generation. However, one major important thing revealed that the female youths did not show any interest primarily to get involved in alternative occupational pursuits in their surrounding areas. It might be due to the fact that their parents were quiet worried about their social security and that's why they were very much relevant to allow their daughters to go for work beyond their territory. Further, in the studied families the adult females were very much aware of the fact that the stone based occupation was the only source of major occupational involvement in the studied area. They could accumulate a fold rice only after the utilization of limited amount of natural resources in an appropriate

manner. On that limited amount of resource a large section of people were completely dependent. In such a situation, a particular family would not be able to accumulate their common minimum livelihood requirements, until and unless they became very much focused upon to conduct hard manual labour without expending valuable time in any sort of leisure. Meanwhile, it is to be mentioned here that both the time and hard manual labour were two very important aspects in the stone based work. It was proportionately related with their mode of production. The spouses supported their partner by getting affiliated with the studied occupational pursuit. From the field study, it has been reported that out of total working females, 397 (93.63 per cent) were primarily involved in the stone based work (Table 4.6).

Meanwhile, in the context of primary occupation it was noticed that the educational involvement of the females are quite less in comparison to the males. It might be due to the fact that the parents to a certain extent prefer the education of their son more. On the other hand a girl child had to look after certain household courses when their mothers remained busy in the work. Further, it was also reported that as a girl gradually grew up she became aware of the fact that her marriage related dowry was an additional burden for the family. So she herself started to get involved with the stone crushing work for earning and gradual accumulation of dowry.

Further, the adult females who were primarily involved in the stone based work were not merely confined to a particular option rather they got affiliated to different aspects of this work simultaneously. It was mainly dependent upon the availability of working opportunity, requirement of the labour force in the occupational pursuit. Another major important aspect of the female work force in the studied area was, in most of the cases the couple worked together. For example, in early working hours often the couple started to work together by collecting the stones and breaking it. Further, when the males went out for the loading of the trucks then the females continued to the collection of the stones and their break up. It was noticed that among the working females, most of them were involved in the collection of the stones and their crushing. However, for the sake of earning in a number of cases the females had shown their involvement with the loading of the stones to the trucks as well. On the other hand, in the studied area the concerned females had diversified working involvement. Along with their

direct involvement with the stone based work, the females were also bestowed with the courses of their household activities. Particularly when the adult females were busy with their working schedule, in many cases they bestowed the responsibility of their little children upon their grown up daughter child who belonged to the category of youth. Thus, quite from an early age the youth daughter children had a direct involvement with the different occupational pursuit in the studied area. Their hard manual labour was either directly associated with the mode of production through financial earning or their labour played a supportive role to the daily household courses to ensure the affiliated mode of production. However, the concerned females in the studied families were involved in the fulfilling of their daily livelihood requirements. It had forced them to perform a dual role - one at home, the traditional mother-wife role and the other outside to expose income oppurtunities. One of the major important factors lied in the fact that their requirement of common minimum livelihood and need for the money had forced the concerned women to focus their major priority on the stone based work, inspite of their daily household courses. The total quantum of work done by them would significantly depend on the relative levels of their family income and responsibilities. From the field study it was noticed that among 63 per cent of the total studied families the women earned nearly 50 per cent of their total familial income. While in 37 per cent cases they earned upto 50 per cent or more of their total familial income. Their income not only raised the probability, rather ensured their basic minimum livelihood. However, due to limited amount of natural resources and the involvement of a large section of people on it, only the primary occupational involvements of the adult female members were quite disproportionate according to the daily requirements of the studied families. In this circumstance the youths who were not primarily involved in the stone crushing work, had to get affiliated with it secondarily. However, either primarily or secondarily, the educational involvements of the female youths were much lower in comparison to their male counterpart. It might be because of the fact that the concerned parents thought it more justified to involve their daughter child in the affiliated household courses along with the stone crushing occupation. Ultimately it had gradually reduced their scope to continue the studies regularly. It can be noted that the adult females who were primarily involved in

non stone based work, also had the involvement with the stone based work secondarily (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Distribution of adult female population on the basis of secondary occupation

Age group	Secondary occupation		Total
	Stone based work	Student	
15-19	27 50.00	27 50.00	54 100.00
20-24	71 100.00	-	71 100.00
25-29	63 100.00	-	63 100.00
30-34	55 100.00	-	55 100.00
35-39	36 100.00	-	36 100.00
40-44	46 100.00	-	46 100.00
45-49	37 100.00	-	37 100.00
50-54	25 100.00	-	25 100.00
55-59	15 100.00	-	15 100.00
60-64	14 100.00	-	14 100.00
65-69	4 100.00	-	4 100.00
70 and above	4 100.00	-	4 100.00
Total	397 93.63	27 6.37	424 100.00

Source: Field Study

It is to be mentioned here that the adult female population of the studied area had to play a major role in their familial income and in such circumstances they were directly involved in the stone based occupation (Table 4.6). Simultaneously they also had to look after their household particulars too. Since early morning to the utmost level of their sight they were involved in the stone based work at the river bed. Afterwards, from the evening they had to get involved in the household activities. Thus, from the perspective of manual labour in a day, a female had twice fold involvement in comparison to a male. In the studied area, a male was involved in the mode of production through earning. On the other hand, a female had the affiliation with the mode of production against manual labour as well as they converted the produces into consumable form which could meet up with the common minimum livelihood of their family members. Meanwhile the aged population, might be due to their lack of physical ability and several other factors

could not afford the workload related with the stone based occupation regularly as they did in their younger days. Under such circumstances they had to depend on the income of their other family members for common minimum livelihood.

Work means participation in paid production, an income-earning activity (Beneria, 1982: 120). In the studied area the occupational involvement of the women was indispensable for the survival of individual families as well as for the maintenance of the wider socio-economic system. The studied women contributed substantially to the family income and in addition were largely responsible for the material and non material needs of their children, husbands and other kinfolk; all major household works were an allied responsibility for her along with their earning pursuits. They were involved in the work for sheer economic necessities and not lured by any other charm or attraction. The participation of the concerned women in economic activities and their earnings provided a major contribution to the household maintenance. They started working and earning to help the family quite early in life and continued to work until their utmost level of physical capability. In many cases it was noticed that if the male member of a particular family could not carry out their normal working schedule due to several inconveniences then the earning of the female folk became a crucial factor to provide the common minimum livelihood requirements for their families. From the above all analysis it can be stated that among the studied families, the females played a very vital role along with the males in the familial earning. Alike the males, their prime wealth were the physical capability and they used to utilize it in different aspects of hard manual labour work. They were in arduous labour to earn a fold of rice. For this purpose they utilized their labour in the different aspects of the stone based work in their locality. Even the younger generation was also directly involved in the said occupational sector to provide an economic backbone for their families. The females of the studied families were also very hard working quite from an early age. It is noteworthy to mention that only their hard manual labour had provided them a square meal and to maintain their familial courses inspite of several inconveniences and adverse circumstances.

iii. Working Involvement of the Children: Children are the source of great pleasure to parents. Even from the social and cultural point of view, they are considered precious in India to such an extent that any talk of the economic values of children or the cost and benefits of children appears ridiculous to the

common man. Though it is not proper to treat children merely as “economic objects”, it has to be admitted that the economic aspect of the value of children cannot be completely ignored in a poor country like India. The problem of child labour has become an issue of great concern in recent times all over the world. Millions of children all over the world today are working many in servitude and hazardous conditions. A large number of children of tender age are being exploited and compelled to work for long hours for low wages and under conditions damaging to their health and to their physical, social, psychological and mental development. Millions of children are thus being deprived of their healthy childhood. Today children from a sizeable section of the labour force are involved in several areas of employment.

The terms ‘Child Labour’, ‘employed children’ or ‘working children’ may be explained as employment of children in any occupation for material contribution to the income of the family. As per the International Labour Organization (ILO) “Child Labour includes children prematurely leading adult lives, working long hours for low wages, under conditions damaging to their health and to their physical and mental development, some times separated from their families, frequently deprived of meaningful educational and training opportunities that could open up for them a better future (Dash,2008:48). The Child Labour (prohibition and regulation) Act of 1986 defines child as a person who has not completed 14 years of age. This is applicable to all forms of child labour.

According to the International Labour Organization, almost one billion children are working for their survival (Saraswat, 2008:5). An ILO study in 2002 puts the number of working children at 246 million and estimates that 80 per cent of them are exposed to work that is hazardous for their health and safety. The study suggests that about 110 million children during such hazardous work are withdrawn immediately (Singh, 2004:397). As per the latest estimate of ILO, in 2004 out of an estimated 317 million children in the age group of 5 to 17 years who are globally engaged in some form of economic activity, 218 million falls within the strict definition of child labour. There are 126 million children engaged in hazardous occupations. In other words, more than 2/3rd of the child labour is still engaged in hazardous occupations (Dash 2008: 49). The practice of child labour is more prevalent in poor countries of Asia and Africa. Child labour participation is supposed to be as high as 32.9 per cent in eastern Africa, 24.2 per

cent in West Africa, 20 per cent in East Asia, 14 per cent in South Asia, 12.8 per cent in South America, 11.1 per cent in South-East Asia etc (Singh,2004:397). As per Census 2001, India has the largest child population in the world, approximately 42 percent population below the age group of 15 years including 15.37 percent between the age group of 0-6 years. According to Census 2011 the child population was 158,789,287. In West Bengal the child population was 10,112,599 which was 11.07 percent of the total population. Regarding child labour, India occupies the top rank among the neighbouring countries in the South Asian Region. Child labour is estimated to be 300 million all over the world. Out of this, India alone accounts for about 100 million. Non official reports estimate that there are 150 million children in the workforce of our country (Jacob and Sekar, 2005:20). The United Nation Children’s Fund estimates that in India there are more than 35 million child labourers, accounting for 14 per cent of children in the 5-14 years age group. As per census 2001 there are 1.26 crore economically active children in the age group of 5-14 years (Saraswat, 2008:5). Since 1971 onwards, the phenomenon of child labour has shown an increasing trend. The following table depicts the situation of child labour in our country as well as in West Bengal over the different census period-

Table 4.8: Number of child labour in India and West Bengal

Year	Number of child labour	
	India	West Bengal
1971	10,753,985	5,11,443
1981	13,640,870	6,05,263
1991	11,285,349	7,11,691
2001	12,591,667	8,57,087

Source: Dash, 2008:49 and Saraswat, 2008:6

Meanwhile Census 2001 had stated the fact that in India there are total 12, 19,470 child worker in between the age group of 5-14 years who are engaged in different hazardous occupation (cited in Saraswat, 2008:7). It is to be mentioned here that the urban and sub urban areas in India are characterized by a strong concentration of population, the emergence of slums and the urban poor. The continuous flow of people from rural to urban areas conjoined with a natural increase of population leads to a variety of social crises. While migrating to urban centres, the migrants bring with them a number of children. In order to raise their level of earnings they seek employment for the children associated with a variety of economic activities.

The child labour which faces restrictions to get entry in the formal sector, is comparatively easily absorbed in the informal sector activities which are outside the purview of the legal restrictions (Dash, 2008:48). The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 218 million children aged 5-14 years are engaged as child labour all over the world. India is the home to the largest child labour force in the world, with an estimated 30 percent of the world's working kids living here. Government statistics say that there are 2 crore or 20 million child labourers in India. Non Governmental agencies assert that the figure is more than 6 crore or 60 million including agricultural workers (India Tribune, 4/1/2014:1). The reason for employing children is to supplement the family income when it has not been sufficient to meet the requirements of the family. Particularly in Indian context it has emerged as a main reason where more than 26 per cent of people live below the poverty line, it is believed that poor families very often send their children to work in order to increase household income. This is because child workers make significant contributions for the survival of family. Any addition to the family income helps to ease the burden of the family. In most developing countries like India, having more children is considered a great advantage because every children means two extra hands to work, which means more income for the family. The child by working is able to reduce to a great extent the poverty in which he lives and hence satisfies some of his basic needs. Even the smallest payments in cash or kind are welcome in his poor home and he shares in the maintenance of his family. Child labour is more prevalent among the weaker section of the society.

In this regard it is to be mentioned here that due to migration the stable economic pursuit of the studied people became completely ruined up and they were exposed to an economically vulnerable condition. The stone based occupation further emerged as their only source of income. However, to yield the production from the natural resources, its proper utilization within a specific period was the prime essential factor. Under such circumstances more working hands could provide an additional source of income for the studied families. In spite of working involvement of the adults and youths, the children of the concerned families were also directly affiliated with the stone based occupation in most of the cases. It is to be mentioned here that most of the children in the Balasan colony were primarily involved in education. However, after they came back from the school,

they often found that their parents and other family members were involved in the work on the river bed. They used to get adjoined with them on the river bed and in this way they could gradually get a close affiliation with the entire working atmosphere. Further, along with the studies, involvement in the stone crushing work also became a common part of their daily schedule. These children inevitably lived out what life is left to them in denial and snatched from familiar surroundings. Hands that otherwise crave for toys are stuffed with iron implements, for favours demanded on the household or river bed. Their silent screams are far removed from the range of mothers or fathers or aunts and uncles who might have once cared but soon enough got rid of liability. The following case studies will illustrate the facts in more details-

Case Study 5: Sanjay Barman, aged 5 years and 2 months was the youngest male child worker of the studied families in Balasan Colony. They were residing in the studied area since 25 years and they had a seven membered family. During conversation he stated that ever since his birth, he is noticing the stone crushing work. His parents often used to say that they had more consuming person and fewer earners. He viewed that all the family members could not work for all time and it tells upon their earning. He stated that his parents used to say him to help in their work and so he used to go to the river bed along with parents early in the morning. In this concern, he used to collect the stones from the river along with his mother, while his father used to break them up. He viewed that due to his work, at least a little amount of their familial earning could get increased. He further stated that after his returning from the school, no one remained in the household. So, he directly used to go to the river bed and conducted the work along with his mother till the evening. There he could have the lunch along with his mother. Further, he mentioned that he did not go to the school regularly and often being busy in the work he used to forget about his school time. He used to work for five hours in a day. He further looked after the feeding of his younger brother and daughter. He exclaimed his unexpressed desire to play a lot but his parents did not like frequent playing inspite of work. He was beaten up twice by his father, as he had played with the friends in the river bed. His voice became grief to say that he could not consume the requisite amount of food as he desired; whatever he was given once was the ultimate and he had no scope to express his wish on any other food item for twice. He stated that he felt a lot of inconvenience

to do the stone based work. However, his parents replied him that regular involvement of such work would redress it accordingly. He was quite reluctant to go to the river for work quite early in the morning; but it would make his parents angry. He expressed that the tide of the river was quite fast and it was quite troublesome to collect the stones against the tide of the river. He was always scared to get fell in the river. Moreover, his foot was injured for several times against the stones submerged in the water. Meanwhile, to carry the stone filled basket on the head was another awful task for him because it created shoulder injury for him in a number of occasions. He stated that finger and eye injuries during work became almost a regular phenomenon. He exclaimed that he was least desired to work; however his grand father had stated that without work they had to live in starvation. In his locality there occurred fairs during Durga Puja and he went there along with his parents. Once he wished to have a fun in that but his father refused his desire because the tickets were too much expensive for them. He had a toy but it was broken since long. He told his grand father to buy a new one but he replied that such amount could manage their food for a day. He realized that their family had economic crisis and as the stone based work was not profitable enough, so they were poor. He also told that familial conflicts were a common occurrence and often his father had beaten him and his mother after being drunk. He expressed the fact that they were quite worried about their future. He was once told by his grand father that it was a curse to born in a poor family. He felt that his childhood was spoilt due to poverty and they had to do only this work life long with any sort of betterment.

Case Study 6: Bharati Barman, aged 5 years and 1 month was the youngest female child worker of the studied families in Balasan Colony. They were residing in the studied area since 15 years and they had an eight membered family. She stated that all of her family members were involved in the stone based work. However, when her father got suffered from chronic chest pain then he could not continue the work. Even if her mother continued to work for a number of days then she felt ill too. Both her father and mother could earn much for their family. Her elder brother works regularly. He broke the stones and sold the collective materials along with his parents for more income. She further stated that earlier her father and elder brother told her to get involved in the work but

she refused due to her interest on study. However, at the end of last year, her father became seriously ill and he was unable to conduct work for nearly one month. It made them to almost strive. Further, she could remember the day when her father became tremendously angry and stated her that they belonged to a poverty stricken family. As the children of other families were helping their parents through manual labour, so she also must do the same, otherwise it would be mere impossible for him to provide food for every member with his sole earning. Her mother also criticized her reluctance related to work. Her father also told her very clearly to keep it in mind that she was a daughter child and it would be quite hard task for him to manage the amount related with her marriage and dowry, after running the family. The entire situation had forced her to start the work. She was called by her mother early in the morning. There she collected the stone and her father used to broke them. Latter on her father got involved in other aspects and she started to break up the stones along with her mother. Then she came to school. However, often due to engagement in work she used to forget about the school time or examination schedule. She mentioned further that when she used to arrive from the school in the noon, then hardly any one is there in their household. It made her to go to the river bed directly and she could work with her mother till the evening. She mentioned very clearly that she did not play much, because she knew very well that playing would spoil her working schedule and it would ultimately snatch their fold of rice. It was very well known to her that she had to manage the expenditure of the marriage herself. She stated with sorrow that never she could get sufficient amount of food to consume. She also stated that the said occupational involvement creates physical inconveniences to her. It was quite troublesome for her to uplift the stone filled basket on her head and to do the same she faced physical injuries for a number of time. To collect the stone from the river she felt down for a number of times and her leg, hand were hurt against the submerged stone. She exclaimed with sorrow that her family had no merriment and familial quarrel between her parents was a common happening factor. She saw several times that her mother was violently physically abused by her father and even she was also beaten up by her drunken father in a number of occasions. It made her very sorrow and she is well known that it would not be possible for her to achieve a better future.

It was reported that the parents of the studied families earned low wages which was not enough to fulfill the familial needs properly, thus, they involved their children in the work. Moreover, consequent poverty created such a severe constraint on the poor and vulnerable families, that they had no choice but to use young children for survival. At the family level child labour is as a result of the strategy of maximizing output by maximizing working involvement. The involvement of the children in stone based work can be represented through the following tables.

Table 4.9: Distribution of the families on the basis of child worker in the family

Child worker in the family		Total families having child population (0-14yr.)
Presence of child worker	Absence of child worker	
227	26	253
89.72	10.28	100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 4.10: Category of the child worker

Category of child worker		Total child worker
Male	Female	
187	172	359
52.09	47.91	100.00

Source: Field Study

In this regard, among the studied 325 families of Balasan Colony, 253 families had the child population between the age group of 0-14 years. Among them in 227 (89.72 per cent) families the children were involved in stone based work, while only in 26 (10.28 per cent) families the children were not affiliated to any sort of work. Among the total 227 families, there were total 359 child workers, among whom 187 (52.09 per cent) were male and 172 (47.91 per cent) were female child worker respectively (Table 4.9 and 4.10). In the studied area, the working involvement of the children could be broadly categorized into two sectors viz. (i) the children who were working individually and (ii) the children who are working with their families. All of them worked to provide an economic support for their families. Children who worked individually collected the stones themselves and then broke up. Further, according to their requirement, they sold it to the *Sardars*. That was completely their personal earning. If they desired then they provided it in the families; otherwise it could be treated as their own earning. Meanwhile, most of the children were involved in the occupation as an allied workforce for their

parents. They could help to collect the raw materials from the river and further helped their parents to break them. Their effort could collectively increase the quantity of the broken up stone which could be sold to *Sardars*. Thus, their labour ensured an increase in the overall familial income. However, they provided their earning for the sake of familial requisites. It could be noticed from the field study that only 44 (12.26 per cent) children worked without getting affiliated with their families, while the other children had a close affiliation with their parents to provide them a very little economic support. Their working feature can be represented below.

Table 4.11: Working feature of the children

Sex	Working feature			Total child worker
	Individually	With family	Other source	
Male	18 9.63	166 88.77	3 1.60	187 100.00
Female	23 13.37	149 86.63	-	172 100.00
Total	41 11.42	315 87.74	3 0.84	359 100.00

Source: Field Study

The children mostly worked along with their families (Table 4.11). It might be due to the fact that their parents particularly the father had a direct control over their earning. It might be due to the fact that if the children had the money in their hand then it would be misused and would not be purposive for desired familial support. They could hardly utilize the money according to their own desire. It can be further noted that the females had more individual working affiliation rather than the males. It might be due to the fact that from these mere earning they got started to accumulate the amount which could largely help to meet up with their marital expenditure in the near future. The primary occupation of the male child is represented below.

Table 4.12: Distribution of the male child on the basis of primary occupation

Age group	Primary occupation				Total
	Student	Stone crushing	Stone collection	Others	
5-6	41 89.13	2 4.35	3 6.52	-	46 100.00
7-8	35 94.59	-	2 5.41	-	37 100.00
9-10	12 75.00	1 6.25	3 18.75	-	16 100.00

11-12	6 54.55	4 36.36	1 9.09	-	11 100.00
13-14	53 68.83	18 23.38	3 3.90	3 3.90	77 100.00
Total	147 78.61	25 13.37	12 6.42	3 1.60	187 100.00

Source: Field Study (Age group selected according to "The Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 1986")

Regarding the primary occupation of the 187 male children, it is to be mentioned here that 147 (78.61 per cent) children were involved in education; however the requirements of familial courses had forced 37 (19.79 per cent) children to utilize their labour primarily, inspite of their studies. They were involved in the work of stone crushing and the stone collection. On the other hand, 3 (1.60 per cent) children who were grown up went outside their locality and utilized their work force in different other manual labour based work to earn a fold of rice for their families (Table 4.12).

It might be because of the fact that they had realized the limited amount of natural resources and the competition related to the stone crushing occupation could not provide a regular and stable economic resource for them over a long period. Thus, from the very beginning they were tried to find a place in some alternative economic pursuit which could at least provide a square meal for them after the day long hardship. Again, as the children gradually grew up, it was reported that their prime affiliation in the occupational sector gradually got increased. It is to be mentioned here that as the children gradually grew up they could understand the economic scarcity in their families. Further, the unlettered desire of the parents to involve their children in the work could not become unrevealed any more to them. On the other hand, when a child woke up in the morning and further came back from his school then often he could not find his parents in the huts, then to search them often went to the river bed. Here they could find that their parents were quite busy in the wok. It was observed that they came beside them and started to pick up one or two pieces of stones in a childish manner. Further, they picked up the iron implement (*gaen*) and gave a blow or two on the stones, with their tender little hands. If in such a blow a stone got broken upthen it would become a matter of rejoice to the tender mind of a children. Such rejoices attracted the children to go to the river bed regularly and it went on for a month and further for a year. In this way, through a means of leisure, they came into the close physical contact

with the raw materials and iron implements. Accordingly through a mere sport of day or two, it started to become a part of their daily life. Within a very short period the concerned children gradually got involved in the fore fold of the stone crushing occupation.

The secondary occupational involvement of the male children in the studied families revealed a complementary scenario.

Table 4.13: Distribution of the male child on the basis of secondary occupation

Age group	Secondary occupation				Total
	Student	Stone crushing	Stone collection	Nil	
5-6	5 10.87	3 6.52	31 67.39	7 15.22	46 100.00
7-8	2 5.41	2 5.41	28 75.68	5 13.51	37 100.00
9-10	4 25.00	4 25.00	8 50.00	-	16 100.00
11-12	5 45.45	2 18.18	4 36.36	-	11 100.00
13-14	24 31.17	31 40.26	22 28.57	-	77 100.00
Total	40 21.39	42 22.46	93 49.73	12 6.42	187 100.00

Source: Field Study (Age group selected according to "The Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act,1986")

In this affiliation very few of them (6.42 per cent) had no working involvement which meant that they were totally engaged in education. On the other hand, the labour force of 135 (72.19 per cent) children had a requirement in the stone based work (Table 4.13) to accumulate a fold of rice for their families. Although, they were primarily involved in education, still without their contribution of labour, the common minimum livelihood of the studied families had to face several inconveniences to a large extent. On the other hand, the children who were primarily involved in the stone crushing occupation around 21 per cent of them had a secondary affiliation with education (Table- 4.13). However, the struggle for survival had reduced the scope of the concerned children to continue their studies regularly. Their involvement in the stone based work had provided an additional resource to the concerned parents to meet up with their daily requisites. It is to be mentioned here that the concerned working children neither could generate a huge amount of production nor they could earn a plentiful amount for their families. However, their involvement in the collection of raw materials along

with their parents could provide an opportunity that a particular family could have more accessibility over natural resources. Further, their involvement in the breaking up of stones provided the scope for the concerned families to utilize the natural resources for their economic transaction. Thus, in the studied area, the work force of the male working children in a particular family mainly helped to accumulate additional resources for the production. Further, it could generate the proportionate amount for their consumption. As most of the male children had the working affiliation along with their parents thus, their labour force collectively generated more source of income for the entire family.

Family is the prime institution where most of the girls are persecuted as child labour. The girl child does many chores, be it working at home or in the field, yet her world remains small with few opportunities and facilities (Jacob and Sekar, 2005:20-21). In the studied families of Balasan colony, the female children also had a number of working involvement. It can be represented through the following table.

Table 4.14: Distribution of the female child on the basis of primary occupation

Age group	Primary Occupation				Total
	Student	House hold	Stone crushing	Stone collection	
5-6	43 82.69	2 3.85	1 1.92	6 11.54	52 100.00
7-8	19 73.08	1 3.85	2 7.69	4 15.38	26 100.00
9-10	8 66.67	2 16.67	-	2 16.67	12 100.00
11-12	6 66.67	1 11.11	-	2 22.22	9 100.00
13-14	58 79.45	6 8.22	4 5.48	5 6.85	73 100.00
Total	134 77.91	12 6.98	7 4.07	19 11.05	172 100.00

Source: Field Study (Age group selected according to "The Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act,1986")

In the studied families, the female children had their working involvement both in the household and in the stone crushing occupation. Regarding the primary occupation of 172 (100.00 per cent) female children, 134 (77.91per cent) children were involved in education; however the requirement of daily livelihood had forced 26 (15.12 per cent) children to utilize their labour primarily, inspite of their studies. They were involved in the work of stone crushing and stone collection. The children of the concerned families could see that their mothers were very busy in the stone based work and she had a limited time to look after every

household courses adequately. Even she had a mere opportunity to provide proper parental care to her children. The concerned mothers executed their parental duties but always keeping in mind that she had to go for the work within a quick succession. In this regard, many of her works could not meet up with completion and were left half done. Further, as per the social norms prevailed, such responsibilities got bestowed upon the shoulder of the girl children. They had to get involved in the household works for the completion. Primarily 12 girls (6.98 per cent) were involved in different household courses like brooming the courtyard, cleaning up the hut, washing the menials and clothes and even to look after as well as fed their younger brothers or sisters. Again, with their gradual grow up, their prime affiliation in the occupational sector gradually got increased (Table 4.14).

It is to be mentioned here that as the children grew up they could easily visualize and understand that their families were passing through economic scarcity. On the other hand, to redress this crisis a little bit, the slightest expectation of their parents to involve their children in the work did not leave unrevealed to them any more. Again, like the male children when a female child could not see her parents in the huts after her woke up or her coming back from the school, they often went to the river bed in their search. As usually they were quite busy in their work. In such circumstances, it has been observed that they came besides them and gradually became familiar with the stone based work. On the other hand, the secondary occupational involvement of the concerned females is as follows.

Table 4.15: Distribution of the female child on the basis of secondary occupation

Age group	Secondary Occupation					Total
	Student	House Hold	Stone crushing	Stone Collection	Occupation less	
5-6	9 17.31	2 3.85	1 1.92	38 73.07	2 3.85	52 100.00
7-8	7 26.92	4 15.38	2 7.69	9 34.62	4 15.38	26 100.00
9-10	4 33.33	1 8.33	1 8.33	6 50.00	-	12 100.00
11-12	3 33.33	-	2 22.22	4 44.44	-	9 100.00
13-14	15 20.55	15 20.55	22 30.14	21 28.77	-	73 100.00
Total	38 22.09	22 12.79	28 16.28	78 45.35	6 3.49	172 100.00

Source: Field Study (Age group selected according to "The Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 1986")

In this affiliation 6 (3.49 per cent) children had no working involvement, which meant that they were totally engaged in education. In comparison with the male

children the female children were less affiliated in this category. It could easily reveal the fact that there persisted an unconscious gender gap in literacy among the girl children of the concerned families. In the studied families the education of the children were quite desired by the concerned parents. However, whether it was properly executed or not, were not properly mentioned by the guardians and concerned parents. Particulars in case of the daughter child it was very much applicable. On the other hand the labour force of 106(61.63 per cent) children had a requirement in the stone based work to provide an economic backbone to their families (Table 4.15).

Again, 22 (12.79 per cent) children were affiliated with the different household courses. Although, they were primarily involved in education but without the contribution of their manual labour, the common minimum livelihood of the studied families had to face several inconveniences to a large extent. Further, the children who were primarily involved in the stone based occupation or household courses they had a secondary affiliation with education in 38 (22.09 per cent) cases (Table 4.15). The concerned children found very difficult to continue their studies regularly because regularly they had to provide an additional work force for the familial requirement. Particularly, in case of the female children, their involvement in the stone based work had provided an additional resource to the concerned parents to meet up the common minimum livelihood. However, neither they could generate a huge amount of production nor they could earn a plentiful for their families. Their involvement as an additional work force along with their parents could provide an opportunity that a particular family had more accessibility over natural resources. Even their involvement in the breaking up of stones provided the scope for the concerned families to utilize the natural resources for economic transaction. On the other hand, the children who were affiliated with the household courses had provided an indirect additional support to increase the level of production in the familial context. It helped their parents to get involved in the stone based occupational pursuit for longer duration without expending plentiful of time for the household courses. As stated earlier studied occupational pursuit, duration of work and involvement in hard manual labour, had a very important role to earn a fold of rice. In such a circumstance the children who were engaged in household courses had provided an additional major support to their parents, because it would provide them the scope to

accumulate greater production. Meanwhile, it is to be mentioned here that ever from the childhood, a girl child could notice multifarious scarcity in her family. From, quite an early age she could easily understand that her birth had generated an additional mental pressure for the concerned parents. It was because of the fact that inspite of severe economic crisis they had to arrange her marriage and it would require a huge amount of money. The concerned girl child often had the thought that their working involvement could provide a few more money for their families. They also thought it might secure a financial amount which would meet up with their marital expenditure to a large extent. In this circumstances if a girl child started to work from their childhood until their attainable period of marriage then she would have prolonged time duration in her hand to bore up their own expenditure of marriage through their mode of earning. Moreover, their involvement in the breaking up of stones provided the scope for the concerned families to utilize the natural resources for economic transaction. Thus, in the studied area, the workforce of the female working children in a particular family mainly helped to accumulate additional resource for the production. Further, it could generate the proportionate amount for the consumption. As most of the female children, had the working affiliation along with their parents, thus, their labour force collectively generated more source of income for the entire family. The occupational involvements of the children were an additional work force fore the concerned families. Further it provided a little bit of support for the accumulation of their common minimum livelihood.

Working environment in the studied area: Working environment is that particular circumstance of work in which an individual carries out his occupational activity and attains the highest level of production related with that particular work. In any particular working aspect there are two types of environment viz. natural or physical environment and social relations related within the working circumstances. The stone based occupation of the Balasan colony had a distinct working environment. The concerned work was mainly carried out on Balasan river bed. The physical environment of the river bed was a very dusty and polluted one. All the time it was prevailed with the dust emitted out from the broken up stones and the sand collected from the natural flow of the river. The tide of the water made the river bed always drenched. The concerned workers had to carry out their work on the drenched river bed regularly. Further,

it was observed that the air of the river bed was very much moistened. The studied people had to collect the stones from the river by getting submerged into the waist deep water; for the children it was almost upto their neck. The collection of stones and sand was almost regularly carried out by a worker for a number of times in a day. They had to carry out their work by getting completely drenched in condition. It was observed that the concerned workers even the children carried out their work throughout the entire day by wearing wet clothes and getting completely drenched in condition. Further at the river bed the black smoke emitted from the trucks could be noticed frequently. The workers had to do the work in a dusty atmosphere. Moreover, the smoke emitted from the trucks made it quite polluted. They carried out the work irrespective of any climatic condition of scorching sunlight, heavy monsoon or shivering cold. They mostly worked beneath the bare sky. Meanwhile they rarely had any means of protection which could prevent their physique from the distinct climatic features throughout different period of time in a year. Even during the rainy season often the water got over flooded throughout the entire river bed. It almost reduced the scope of the workers to conduct the work regularly. However, if the situation demanded then they did the collection of stone by almost getting submerged into the water. Further, the concerned people particularly the children responded to the natural calls often on the river bed. It had made the environment of the river bed filthier. In this concern it was rather impossible for the concerned people to breathe a fresh air in such working atmosphere. Their need to sustain common minimum livelihood had forced them to continue the work regularly for a long duration.

Another major aspect related to the studied occupational pursuit lied in the inter personal social relationship among the workers. Here all the concerned workers had to conduct their work under the authority of *Sardars*. They got the payment of their work from the *Sardars* according to their quantity of work. It would be rather inconvenient for them if they committed any sort of misconduct with their *Sardars*. If such an incident took place then the *Sardars* provided least working opportunity to that particular worker. Even their broken up stones were not considered to get marketised in proper time. Moreover, if some frequent verbal interaction took place between the *Sardar* and the worker then he often rejected the working opportunity of the concerned workers under his authority. In such a situation other *Sardars* also showed their reluctance to involve the particular

worker under his authorization. Ultimately it could create all sorts of inconveniences to the concerned workers either to get involved in the loading up of trucks or could sell their broken up stones in a week accordingly against proper remuneration. In the river bed each *Sardar* had their own distinguished zones. Beyond that limited territory they usually did not show any interest to go to the territory of others. Each *Sardar* had to organize the work in their territory by himself. To do the same he should have an adequate authorization over the labour force. Generally the common workers were controlled by their *Sardars* and according to them *Sardar* had a very dignified importance. On the other hand, in the stone crushing occupation there lied a severe struggle for survival. In the context of hard manual labour no one provided a mere opportunity for their fellow worker friends to accumulate more natural resources or by other words a fold of rice. This severe struggle for survival often created a number of chaos among the concerned workers. In the vast area of the river bed if an individual worker went and started the work in the accumulated position of the others, rather by mistake within a quick succession serious quarrel would broke up. Further if someone stole the accumulated or broken up stones of others and got identified then the quarrel often turned out into physical assault. Those sorts of intricacies were mostly solved by the *Sardars*. Here a consensus could be formulated between the concerned workers of two antagonistic sections. On the other hand if some arguments emerged out between the workers of two distinct zones then only their concerned *Sardars* could settle up the matter. However, in some critical situations the issues were discussed in the meeting of local village political organization. In its judgement the offenders were punished by the council. Moreover, practice of abusive language and gesture were a common occurrence during the conversation of two workers. If some sort of argument and cross argument took place between two female workers then the issues often got turned into very personal matter and obscene as well as abusive were often being delivered to each other. Meanwhile, it is to be mentioned here that either the quarrel took place between two male or two female workers, they were least bothered that their children were working along with them. In front of the children they frequently spoke illicit word and show abusive gesture. Further, in the studied area and on the river bed, people belonging to different communities and creeds came from several regions for the purpose of their required raw materials. A number of young women and teenage

girls worked regularly on the river bed. Although the outsiders did not get any chance to do any sort of mischief but their unlettered attitude expressed the sentence of their brutal desire. So, it was rather a major inconvenience for the women and teenage workers to conduct the work with their dignity. Then they had no option left and in spite of several problems they were forced to do the work. It is to be mentioned here that in the studied occupational pursuit the concerned workers had to work for long duration to earn a fold of rice. However, most of them had to face a lot of unfamiliar situation and circumstances in their place of work. By getting involved in the said occupation from a long duration, such incidences became a part of their daily work. The overall working atmosphere of the Balasan river bed was not at all adequately suitable for the concerned workers. However, the need of their families forced them to sell their labour and to carry on their work regularly. It was an ongoing process for them and it would continue.

Working schedule in the studied area: It has been already mentioned in the present discussion that in the studied area the source of earning the studied people were related on the basis of their accumulation of resources like stones, sand and boulders. Further, the collected stones were needed to be broken up into different shapes and sizes; only after that it would be ready for economic transaction. The entire working involvement was quite a hard task for them and it required a prolonged working involvement throughout the entire day. However, it was not a matter of a day or two for the studied people rather it became a part of their daily livelihood. During the study it was quite evident to the author that their earning was proportionately co-related with their duration of work. As long as an individual or the total working members of a family could get engaged in the hard manual labour, as much as they could accumulate a fold of rice for their family members and to earn their common minimum livelihood requisites. The adult males were the prime earner for their families. Their working affiliation is mentioned below.

Table 4.16: Total working hours of the adult male

Age group	Working hours							Total
	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	Above 8	
15-19	19 25.33	28 37.33	9 12.00	19 25.33	-	-	-	75 100.00
20-24	-	7 9.59	6 8.22	12 16.44	38 52.05	7 9.59	3 4.11	73 100.00
25-29	-	-	7 10.29	17 25.00	19 27.94	18 26.47	7 10.29	68 100.00
30-34	-	-	-	-	12 23.53	18 35.29	21 41.18	51 100.00
35-39	-	-	-	-	7 15.22	27 58.69	12 26.09	46 100.00
40-44	-	-	-	-	7 14.58	17 35.42	24 50.00	48 100.00
45-49	-	-	-	-	4 12.50	18 56.25	10 31.25	32 100.00
50-54	-	-	-	-	7 17.50	23 57.50	10 25.00	40 100.00
55-59	-	-	-	-	7 46.67	6 40.00	2 13.00	15 100.00
60-64	-	-	-	-	3 15.79	7 36.84	9 47.37	19 100.00
65-69	-	-	-	5 62.50	2 25.00	1 12.50	-	8 100.00
70 and above	-	-	-	5 62.50	3 37.50	-	-	8 100.00
Total	19 3.93	35 7.25	22 4.55	58 12.01	109 22.57	142 29.40	98 20.21	483 100.00

Source: Field Study

In the studied families it was noticed that the concerned members were very early riser. After getting refreshed and having a little breakfast or even in empty stomach the males went to the river bed and got involved in the work. It got continued throughout the entire day. In a number of day they even did not get any chance to have a fresh bathing and lunch by coming back to their home in noon session. Often they did the same on the river bed. Among the total 483(100.00 per cent) male workers, 240(49.61per cent) workers had the duration of work for 7-8 hours or more than 8 hours. Among the teenage males it was noticed that those who were primarily involved in their studies in 47(62.66 per cent) cases they could hardly get involved in the work hardly from 2-4 hours. On the other hand, in this age group in 28(37.32 per cent) cases they worked for 4-6 hours in a day (Table 4.16).

It might be because of the fact that their concerned families depended a lot on their source of earning for the fulfilment of their common minimum livelihood. The economic responsibility of the studied families gradually got imposed upon the shoulder of the male members. Considering the age group between 20-64

years, the age group of the father and their eldest son; it was noticed that they had to work regularly at least for more than 6 hours and even for more than 8 hours in a day. During the entire working hours they were involved in different activities related with the stone crushing work. Again, the elderly person (i.e. between the age group of 65 years to more than 70 years) worked for 5 to 7 hours in a day (Table 4.16). They knew it very well that if they became unable to earn a fold of rice at least for them then it would be very tough for their family members to provide the security of common minimum livelihood to the aged people for a prolonged period.

Again, the concerned female population of the studied families had a major role to play as an additional workforce along with their males. They awoke with the dawn and tried to complete their household courses as soon as possible. Although from the perspective of familial requirement lot of household courses remain undone but for the sake of earning they could not pay enough attention on it. Throughout the entire day they were busy with the different aspects related to the stone based occupation. However, in a number of cases, the concerned women whose children were quite infant, had to focus more on their household work. They conducted their work within their household premises along with looking after their children. The working involvement of the adult females is as follows.

Table 4.17: Total working hours of the adult female

Age group	Working hours							Total
	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	Above 8	
15-19	27 50.00	8 14.81	7 12.96	12 22.22	-	-	-	54 100.00
20-24	-	17 23.94	7 9.86	34 47.89	7 9.86	3 4.23	3 4.23	71 100.00
25-29	-	-	7 11.11	21 33.33	22 34.92	9 14.29	4 6.35	63 100.00
30-34	-	-	32 58.18	21 38.18	2 3.64	-	-	55 100.00
35-39	-	-	-	15 41.67	9 25.00	10 27.78	2 5.56	36 100.00
40-44	-	-	16 34.78	6 13.04	12 26.09	6 13.04	6 13.04	46 100.00
45-49	-	-	6 16.22	12 32.43	12 32.43	2 5.41	5 13.51	37 100.00
50-54	-	-	3 12.00	13 52.00	3 12.00	2 8.00	4 16.00	25 100.00
55-59	-	-	2 13.33	8 53.33	3 20.00	2 13.33	-	15 100.00
60-64	-	4 36.36	-	2 18.18	2 18.18	-	3 27.27	11 100.00
65-69	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2

			50.00		50.00			100.00
70 and Above	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	3
					100.0			100.00
					0			
Total	27	29	81	144	76	34	27	418
	6.46	6.94	19.38	34.45	18.18	8.13	6.46	100.00

Source: Field Study

Among the total 418 (100.00 per cent) female workers, around 33 per cent had to work for 6 hours to more than 8 hours in a day. Again, among the teenage population, around 65 per cent female workers had to work for 2 to 4 hours in a day. Those concerned workers conducted the work along with their primary involvement in education. Further, among them around 35 per cent female worked for 4 to 6 hours in a day. It was due to the fact that they were mainly involved in the household courses along with their mother and further they also did the stone based work (Table 4.17). On the other hand, the adult female workers of the studied families were involved in the stone based work both for shorter and longer duration. The females who had only infant children could not provide longer duration to the work and they could work for 3-4 hours in a day as observed among 17(23.94 per cent) female workers in the age group of 20-24 years. It is to be mentioned here that in this age group particularly those mothers could conveniently work for more than five hours in a day who had another child of little older in age. In such case, they had a chance to bestow the familial responsibility and care of the infant upon them (Table 4.17). Most of the female workers beyond this age group were involved in the work for more than five hours during the day long duration of work. As they played a major role for the sake of familial income, so they tried their level best to utilize the total period of work as much as they could. Again, after their completion of work on the river bed throughout the entire day, with the arrival of dusk, their fatigued body and mind had to think for the accumulation of a fold of rice for all of their members. In this concern if the working involvement of the females were considered both in the river bed and in their household then it was quite evident that they worked for longer duration than their male counterparts. Meanwhile it was reported from the studied female that even during their pregnancy period they worked for 2-3 hours in a day either in the river bed or in their household premises. It was mainly due to the fact that they knew very well a new born baby would bring a lot more responsibility in their poverty stricken families. They had to provide common

minimum means of livelihood to the new born baby and it needed a good amount of money. In this regard if due to physical condition she showed any reluctance to do the work then it would be rather difficult for the concerned family to meet up with the new financial requirement. To provide the new comers a fold of rice their mothers were involved in hard manual labour and ignored their ill health condition as well as requirement of physical rest. Thus, the adult and aged males and females of the concerned families went through hard working schedule for the entire day. They awoke in the morning with the thought that they had to utilize the entire working day at the utmost level and they went to sleep by thinking that they had to woke up early in the morning to earn the common minimum livelihood.

It has been already mentioned that the concerned children played the role of additional work force in the studied families. The working involvement of the male and female children is mentioned below.

Table 4.18: Total working hours of the male children

Age group	Working hours					Total
	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	
5-6	14 30.43	21 45.65	6 13.04	5 10.87	-	46 100.00
7-8	22 59.46	11 29.73	2 5.41	2 5.41	-	37 100.00
9-10	3 18.75	6 37.50	3 18.75	4 25.00	-	16 100.00
11-12	3 27.27	327.27	-	5 45.45	-	11 100.00
13-14	6 7.79	22 28.57	25 32.47	18 23.38	6 7.79	77 100.00
Total	48 25.67	63 33.69	36 19.25	34 18.18	6 3.21	187 100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 4.19: Total working hours of the female children

Age group	Working hours					Total
	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	
5-6	19 36.54	26 50.00	7 13.46	-	-	52 100.00
7-8	8 30.77	8 30.77	10 38.46	-	-	26 100.00
9-10	3 25.00	7 58.33	2 16.67	-	-	12 100.00
11-12	2 22.22	4 44.44	3 33.33	-	-	9 100.00
13-14	7 9.59	18 24.66	32 43.84	7 9.59	9 12.33	73 100.00
Total	39 22.67	63 36.63	54 31.39	7 4.07	9 5.23	172 100.00

Source: Field Study

Among the 187 male working children, around 79 per cent children worked for one hour to four hours in a day. It was because they were primarily involved in education. On the other hand around 31 per cent children in between the age group of 13-14 years, worked for more than four hours in a day. It was mainly because of the fact that either they went outside of their locality in search of work or they worked for longer duration along with their parents (Table 4.18). Further, among the 172 (100.00 per cent) female working children, around 91 percent worked for one hour to four hours in a day. It was reported that the said children were involved in the stone based works and household courses along with the studies. On the other hand a few female children (9.30%) worked for five hours or more in a day. Those children did not continue the studies regularly and were mostly involved either in the household courses or in the stone crushing work along with their parents (Table 4.19). As a whole, all of the concerned children among the studied families had a regular working involvement, even for least working duration. Their valuable duration of work certainly played a major role to proportionately utilize the natural resources to sustain their common minimum livelihood. In such a way the entire families worked altogether as a production unit. They collectively utilized the entire duration of work and it accordingly provides them the scope of earning.

Category of monthly income: During the study it became very evident that the concerned people exercised their entire labour force in the stone based occupation. Their involvement in hard manual labour was not an isolated incidence for a day or two; rather they were involved in the said economic pursuit year after year. Dimensions of time had changed and along with it several global, national, regional, economic and political issues got altered too. However, the work of the studied people and their struggle for survival was going on since decade after decade. Throughout the entire calendar year there took place regular seasonal alternation but it could not alter the working schedule of the studied people. They dedicated their life to the hard manual labour to earn a square meal for the entire family. Meanwhile, their affiliation with the said economic pursuit did not remain same throughout the entire year. Particularly during rainy season, the water level of the river got increased into manifold. Again, as the river was

going down from the high hill region, thus, the tidal flow of it also got enhanced. Under such circumstances, it became rather dangerous for the concerned workers to collect the raw materials from the river. Because it might abashed them into a distant place; even it could also turn out as fatal physical injury for them if they got hurt with the rocky substratum. To avoid such untoward incidences they had a very little working involvement during the monsoon session. Thus, it clearly revealed the fact that the studied workers had the chance to work regularly for nine to ten months in a year if not the monsoon and allied climatic factors existed for a longer duration. In this regard, it became quite evident that within a shorter working duration they had to accumulate the common minimum livelihood for longer session in the year. Under such circumstances category of monthly income should obviously bore a special significance; specifically a rigid economic backbone should be the prime expectation for the overall sustenance of the studied people. During the study it was reported that different persons were categorically involved in the stone based occupation. Obviously their source of earning was very much related with the commercialization of the stones, sand and boulders. It is noteworthy to mention that the earning of the studied people was quite dependent on a number of allied factors. The demand of natural resources and marketization of raw materials played a key role in the monthly income of the concerned people.

During the study, it has been reported that after making of the embankment in *Tarabari*, the main tidal flow of the river was altered to another direction. Naturally, it reduced the scope of abundance of natural resources and its collection for the concerned people. Although the flood took place in almost every year but the availability of the natural resources got reduced a lot. Meanwhile, it was a consensus of the workers that even 7-8 years ago if a couple of people could collectively work for 3-4 hours in a day then they could easily earn Rs. 200/-. However, in the present scenario, a group of 3 to 4 people could hardly earn Rs. 100/- in a day by utilizing their labour for more than five hours. Again, it has been reported that in earlier if a man worked for even one and half hour in a day then he could load three quarter section of a truck. On the contrary, during the study it was noticed that due to infrequent availability of natural resources the same quantity of work could get conducted with at least four workers. It was already mentioned that the concerned people were not paid on

regular basis. They were paid by the *Sardars* on Tuesday according to their quantity of work. In this context if the stones were collected by an individual, further broken up into a particular category and afterwards 100 cft of the same were sold then he would get the stipulated amount accordingly (Table 4.1). However if *Sardar* provided him the same quantity of stone to be broken up into a particular category then he would get an additional amount of Rs. 50/- along with the stipulated rate. It was because of the fact that at initial stage the concerned worker gave the *Sardar* the said amount to meet up with the expenditure related with the collection of stones and its mode of carrying to the labourer. On the other hand if a person had the urgency to sell their broken up stones which was even less than 100 cft then the quantity would be measured through KB box and he would be paid accordingly.

Earlier it was 12 inch/12 inch in length and breadth; however during the study it became 18 inch/ 18 inch in length and breadth. In the common measurement of the stone crushers 100 cubic foot of stone was equivalent to 30 KB of stone. A Shaktiman truck usually had the capacity of 150 cubic foot and a Full Punjab truck had the capacity of 400 cubic foot to 500 cubic foot. Thus, to load a Shaktiman truck 45 KB of stone was required, while to load a Full Punjab truck 120 KB to 150 KB of stone was required. Generally for most of the varieties of stones the rate of each KB was varied from Rs.8/- to Rs.10/-; while during the season and demand such rate was increased upto Rs. 15/-. Again, the 1/4 inch of stone or single which was the most expensive was sold at Rs. 20/- per KB. Thus if a stone crusher broke a little amount of stone and was in a hurry to sell it early then he could get the value of his work according to KB rate. However, the availability of more labour with the same category of stones often reduced the KB rate. Again, the supply of more trucks and emergency of loading could also reduce the KB rate of stones. However if he broke 100 cft of stone or more and was interested to load it to the truck then a different calculation would be considered. In such cases first he had to contact with the *Sardar* under whom he was involved. The *Sardar* would further come up with a truck to collect the stone from the stone crusher. In that consequence, a *Sardar* would get a commission of Rs. 20/- from the labour for 100 cubic foot of stone. Thus for a Shaktiman truck he would get a commission of Rs. 30/- in total. However, even for a Full Punjab truck, a *Sardar* could get the highest commission of Rs. 30/- accordingly, the

Sardar would purchase the particular type of stone from the stone crusher at the particular fixed rate of 100 cubic feet. In such a way *Sardar* collected the stones from different workers and filled up a full Punjab truck. *Sardar* went through some earlier agreements with the urban contractors or the owner of the trucks. For example, the rate of ½ inch chips was Rs. 1,000/- per 100 cubic foot and if it was loaded to a Full Punjab truck then the cost would rise upto Rs. 4,000/- to Rs. 5,000/-. However, the royalty charge of raw materials was Rs. 550/- for full Punjab truck. Again, the total labour cost to load a truck was Rs. 300/-. These amounts were being paid only by the *Sardars*. The *Sardar* would look after their profit and he used to sell the 500 cft of ½ inch stone at Rs. 6,000/- to Rs. 6,500/-. The said amount was paid either by the truck owner or by the urban contractors. However, a truck owner or an urban contractor could never purchase the raw materials directly from the stone crushers; always he had to purchase it from the *Sardars*. Meanwhile, during the selling or economic transaction *Sardars* specifically thought about the distance where it would get supplied. As the place of selling became more distant, proportionately the *Sardars* fixed the rate of selling in an increased amount. Thus, it was quite evident that the *Sardars* purchased the stone from a common stone crusher at a certain fixed rate. Further, when he sold it to the owner of the truck then the rate got increased where the *Sardars* had their own profit. Again, the owner of the truck sold it to the urban contractors in more enhanced rate including his profit also. In such case, the raw material which was collected by a stone crusher and the same material which was used for various constructions had two completely distinct economic transactions. The cultivator of natural resources had a mere chance to get profit while those who were using it could easily generate more economic beneficiary. The following chart would illustrate the fact more clearly-

Figure -3]

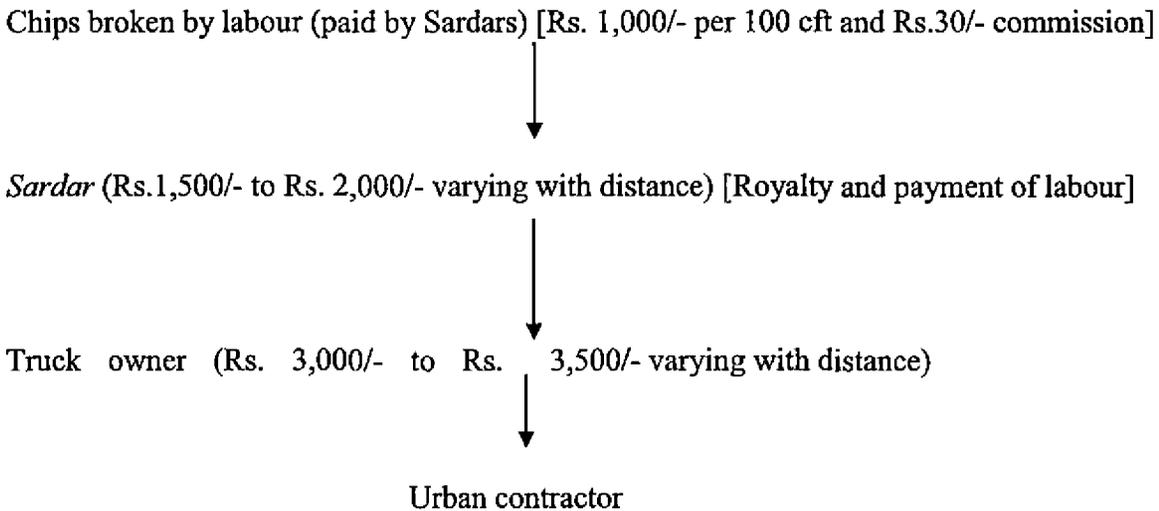
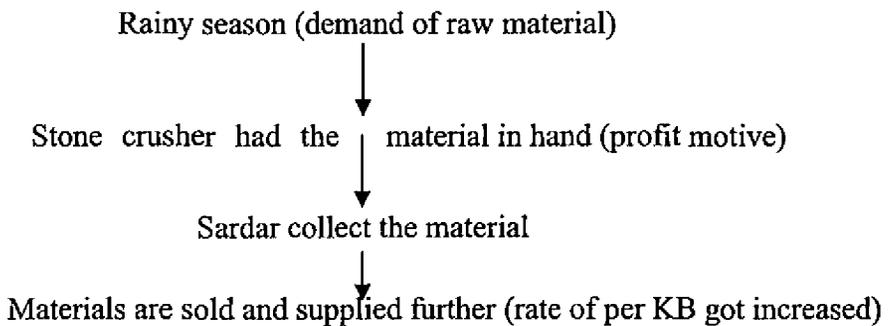


Figure-4]



Again besides the collection and breaking of stones, the concerned workers had another opportunity of earning that is the loading up of trucks. It has been reported that to load a Full Punjab truck it required six labourers and to load a Shaktiman it required three labourers. To load a Full Punjab truck the collective expense for the labourers was Rs. 300/- for a 400 cubic foot vehicle and Rs. 400/- for a 500 cubic foot vehicle. Such expenditure for a Shaktiman was Rs. 120/-. In such way by loading a truck any studied people could hardly earn Rs. 30/- to Rs. 50/- for a single period. Meanwhile a *Sardar* had to provide the same opportunity to every worker associated with him. In this way, a particular person could hardly load three to four trucks in a week. The said amount was also collectively paid along with their breaking up of stones in every Tuesday. Further, in the concerned occupational sector, the drivers of the trucks had a distinct mode of payment. The truck owners of Siliguri bestowed the responsibility it to the drivers and a few of them were also inhabited in the studied area. They worked for the entire week by

driving out the vehicles. During season, even they could get 6 to 7 trips of supply in every day. They also got payment from the *Sardars*. Generally, in a Shaktiman truck driver was accompanied with three to four labourers; while in a Full Punjab truck, he was accompanied with six to seven persons. They had to collect the raw materials from the river bed and had to supply it to the desirable place. In this regard, for each trip of Shaktiman a driver could get Rs. 200/- while in a full Punjab truck he could get Rs. 300/- for each 200 cubic foot. The *Sardar* was bound to equally distribute the amount among the driver and other accompanied person. In such a way, the driver of a truck could earn Rs. 80/- to Rs. 90/- in a day. Meanwhile, under a *Sardar* there were also a number of trucks and he had to give the chance to everybody rotationally. In such cases, the drivers of the trucks could avail the full trip maximum for two to three days in a week. In this way, they were involved in multifarious occupational pursuit to earn a fold of rice. Everyday they worked for long hours with the hope that on every Tuesday they would earn more money. It is to be mentioned here that on every Tuesday they went to the local *haat* (weekly market) at Matigara to purchase their essential commodities in a cheaper rate. In this concern their weekly earning had a special significance to maintain the common minimum livelihood. However, their category of monthly income was quite disproportionate to their hard manual labour. The following table can illustrate the fact in more detail.

Table 4.20: Total monthly income of the families

Total monthly income							Total family
Upto Rs. 1000/-	1001/- to 1200/-	1201/- to 1400/-	1401/- to 1600/-	1601/- to 1800/-	1801/- to 2000/-	Above 2000/-	
12	32	42	211	17	8	3	325
3.69	9.85	12.92	64.92	5.23	2.46	0.92	100.00

Source: Field Study

Among the studied families, 12 (3.69 per cent) families had the monthly income of Rs. 1,000/- or less than it, where as more than 95 per cent of the families had the monthly income between Rs. 1,001/- to Rs. 2,000/- and only 3(0.92 per cent) families had the monthly income of more than Rs. 2,000/- (Table 4.20). From the empirical field data it was revealed that per head per capita income of the studied occupational group was Rs. 292.85/- per month and Rs. 9.76/- per day. Again the average family income of the studied families was Rs. 380.48/- per month and Rs. 12.68/- per day. With this mere amount of income they had to maintain an

average five membered family. So, every individual of the studied families had an average income of Rs. 2.54/- per day. It is to be mentioned here that the per head per capita income of our country in the year 2008-2009 was Rs.25,494/- (India,2010:133), while in case of West Bengal it was Rs. 25,223 (Manorama Year Book,2000:667). Thus, it was Rs. 2,124/- per month and Rs. 70.82/- per day in India. Again, the Ministry of Labour, Government of West Bengal has fixed the daily wage of unskilled workers involved in the stone breaking and stone crushing occupation to Rs.116.23/- per day (Ministry of Labour, Government of West Bengal, 2009:5, dated 5/1/2009). Thus, it could be easily revealed that in comparison with the National and State level data the economic feature of the studied people were completely in an antagonistic stage. With that poor level of income they had to accumulate their common minimum livelihood. It can be noticed through the following table.

Table 4.21: Dependency of family members on the basis of monthly income

Monthly Income (in Rs.)	Family Members			Total
	1-4	5-8	9and above	
Upto Rs. 1000/-	9 75.00	3 25.00	-	12 100.00
1001/- to 1,200/-	14 43.75	17 53.12	1 3.12	32 100.00
1201/- to 1400/-	18 42.86	22 52.38	2 4.76	42 100.00
1401/- to 1600/-	75 35.55	132 62.56	4 1.90	211 100.00
1601/- to 1800/-	6 35.29	8 47.06	3 17.65	17 100.00
1801/- to 2000/-	-	2 25.00	6 75.00	8 100.00
Above 2000/-	-	-	3 100.00	3 100.00
Total	122 37.54	184 56.62	19 5.25	325 100.00

Source: Field Study

Further, from the field study it was revealed that three families had monthly income upto Rs. 1,000/- and in those families there were more than five members. Again, total 207 families had a monthly income of Rs. 1,400/- to Rs. 1,600/- and with it they had to provide the common minimum livelihood of even eight members. Meanwhile, four families who had nine (or more) members were

dependent on the said amount of monthly income to accumulate their common minimum livelihood. Further, nine families had a monthly income of Rs. 1,801/- to more than Rs. 2,000/-; with this mere source of income they provided a fold of rice to at least nine members in their families (Table 4.21).

Meanwhile the level of earning and the earner dependency ratio can be represented through the following table-

Table 4.22: Category of monthly income, prime earner and dependent children

Monthly income	Total prime earner	Dependent children		Total family
	More than one	1-2	More than 2	
Upto Rs. 1,600/-	297 100.00	30 10.10	267 89.90	297 100.00
Rs.1601/- to 2,000/-	25 100.00	-	25 100.00	25 100.00
Above Rs. 2,000/-	3 100.00	-	3 100.00	3 100.00

Source: Field Study

It can be noted that among the studied families in most of the cases, more than one child were the dependent member on the mere earning of their parents. Again, in case of the few joint families the aged members could hardly earn a considerable amount due to their lack of physical capability and reduction of working involvement. In such cases they also became a dependent member to a certain extent. Thus with a very poor level of income it became very difficult for them to manage the daily livelihood requisites.

It has been already stated that the concerned people had to face an unlettered competition in their working involvement because a huge section of people were dependent on limited amount of natural resource. The said resources were the prime elements for their survival and it was simply unsharable. On the other hand, their hard manual labour had ultimately provided them a very little amount of income. With that mere economic backbone they had to fulfill their common minimum livelihood. It is noteworthy to mention that except the children of toddler stages, most of their family members were affiliated with different sources of earning. Nearly all of them exercised their manual labour to earn a fold of rice. In the studied families, it was observed that they were quite reluctant to share their earning and food resources with non working individuals of their families. They were almost in an inaccessible position to utilize the common minimum livelihood requirements for them. In such a situation whatever could be earned,

they utilized it for their own means of survival while they had no scope to think about the misery and poverty of the fellow neighbours. It is to be mentioned here that after resettlement, a strong economic backbone was their prime requisite. However, even after their occupational involvement since last four decades, the studied families were quite economically insecure. The stone based occupation was unable to provide them an economic stability which could redress their multifarious inconveniences related with daily livelihood.

Rights to common minimum livelihood and emerging challenges:

In the context of livelihood a few fundamental aspects are inseparable for the sake of our survival. In every society, every human being desires to have a minimum accessibility over them to lead their common minimum livelihood. These fundamental aspects are known as the basic needs. A conventional list of immediate basic needs are food, clothing, shelter, education and health. Many modern lists emphasize the minimum level of consumption of basic needs of not just food, dress and shelter but also water, sanitation and proper health care (Denton,1990:17). The authorization over basic needs of livelihood were recognized globally as the fundamental human rights for all. Basically human rights are for human being. It referred to those elemental rights which any human being deserved to have honoured in order to survive, enjoy well being and flourish him or herself by virtue of human being. It should secure the freedom from discrimination, freedom from fear, freedom from injustice, freedom of the thought and speech. The basic attributes of Human Rights clarifies that everyone has the –

- 1) Right to life, liberty and security of a person.
- 2) Right to a nationality, individual dignity.
- 3) Right to culture and religious freedom.
- 4) Right to justice.
- 5) Right to social security.

(Source: PDHRE, 2010).

However, in the context of present study and the livelihood of the concerned people, certain aspects of Human Rights have been focused with specific relevance to analyze the fact more elaborately. These are stated below accordingly-

1) *Rights to Refugees and Displaced People*: The human right to equal protection of the law, equal access to courts and freedom from arbitrary or prolonged detention.

- The human right to nationality.
- The human right to life.
- The human right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, shelter and clothing.
- The human right to work and to basic labour protections.
- The human right to the highest possible standard of health and to access to health care.
- The human right to live in a healthy and safe environment.
- The human right to free and compulsory elementary education.

2) *Human Rights and Work*: The human right to work is the human right of all women, men, youth and children to dignified, creative and productive labour, free from discrimination and exploitation, enabling all persons to live in peace, security, justice and dignity. It primarily includes-

- The human right to work and receive wages that contribute to an adequate standard of living.
- The human right to adequate, safe working conditions and safe environment.
- The human right to reasonable limitation of working hours, rest and leisure.
- The human right to proper consideration of women reproductive rights and sexuality, including job security during and after pregnancy, flexible working conditions and access to child care.
- The human right to protection during pregnancy from work proven to be harmful.
- The human right to protection for the child from economic exploitation and from any work that may be hazardous to his or her well being and development.

(Source: PDHRE, 2010).

3) *Rights to Adequate Housing*: Every man, woman, youth and child has the human right to a secure place to live which is fundamental for living in dignity, to physical and mental health and to overall quality of life. It primarily includes-

- Right to adequate shelter and standard of living.
- Right to access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

- The human right of the child to an environment appropriate for physical and mental development.

- The human right to security, including legal security of tenure.

4) *Rights of Children and Youth*: The human right to a standard of living adequate for a child's intellectual, physical, moral and spiritual development, including adequate food, shelter and clothing.

- The human right to the highest possible standard of health and to access to health care.

- The human right to a healthy and safe environment.

- The right to protection from neglect.

- The right to protection from economic and sexual exploitation.

Meanwhile, United Nations Millennium Development Goal 2006 stated a few major initiatives like-

Goal 1- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

Goal 2- Achieve universal primary education everywhere.

Goal 3- Promote gender equality and empower women.

Goal 4- Reduce child mortality.

Goal 5- Improve maternal health.

Goal 6- Combat HIV/ AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

Goal 7- Ensure environmental sustainability.

Goal 8- Develop a global partnership for development. (United Nation Millennium Development Goals Report, 2006: 1-32).

Meanwhile, United Nations thought for the development of common minimum livelihood of the people throughout the entire world. In this context, the Human Development Report of UNDP (1994) provided seven separate components of security-

1. Economic security (Assured basic income).

2. Food security (Physical and economic access to food).

3. Health security (Relative freedom from disease and infection).
4. Environmental security (Access to safe water, clean air and a non degraded land system).
5. Personal security (Enjoyment of basic human rights and freedom).
6. Community security (Security of cultural identity).
7. Political security (Enjoyment of basic human rights and freedom). (See Chaudhuri and Chaudhuri, 2007:410).

It is noteworthy to mention that the issues of human security became a prime matter of concern. Basically it meant of reducing the human costs of violence, conflicts, as a strategy, to enable Governments to address basic human needs and offset the inequalities, to provide social safety nets to impoverished marginalized people (Chaudhuri and Chaudhuri, 2007:410).

The issue of social security of the marginalized people has emerged as a major global social problem in the contemporary period. Social security essentially implies about securing of a basic minimum level of security for the employed so as to protect them from economic distress. The International Labour Organization (ILO) first proposed a comprehensive definition of Social Security as “ the protection which society provides for its members, through a series of public measures, against the economic and social distress that otherwise would be caused by the stoppage or substantial reduction in earnings resulting from sickness, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, invalidity, old age and death; the provision of medical care, and the provisions of subsidies for families with children (ILO,1989; cited in Jhabvala and Subrahmanya,2000:20). Social security represents a guarantee by the whole community to all its members of the maintenance of their standard of living or at least of tolerable living conditions by means of redistribution of income. However, in case of unorganized occupational sector, the issue of social security had to face a few obstacles; firstly, the unorganized occupational sector is not a homogeneous category and here employment relations vary considerably; secondarily, it is very difficult to identify the employer; thirdly, security of employment and income are needed simultaneously; fourthly, in the said sector women and child oriented needs were prior important. However, economic security and social security are intimately connected. Economic security is the means by which the society provides all persons access to their full requirements of employment, income and assets,

required to reach a basic standard of living. Social security is the means by which society provides its workers their basic needs to food, health care, child care, maternity care, old age support, housing, shelter, education and other locally defined needs. The linkage between the two is that economic security is the primary means by which persons are able to obtain their needs of social security; while social security is a means to increase and maintain the productivity of the worker, so as to increase the economic security (Raha, 2004:428). It is noteworthy to mention that a society could not meet up with their goals of social security until they could gain the adequate economic security. Thus, in the context of present study it is quite relevant to have an idea about the issues of poverty and their economic situation to analyze the issues of their common minimum livelihood requirements and emerging challenges.

It is a common notion that poverty denotes hunger. It is the lack of shelter. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom. The programme of action of the World Summit for Social Development in 2002 defined poverty as being characterized by- lack of income and productive resources; hunger and malnutrition ill health; limited or lack of access to education; increased mortality from illness; social discrimination and exclusion; lack of participation in decision making and lack of participation in civil, social and cultural life (www.legalserviceindia.com:2010). Government of India 2007 report for poverty estimate states that 28 per cent of the rural population and 26 per cent of the urban population was below poverty line. The poverty line as defined by the Planning Commission Expert Group for rural areas was Rs. 356.30/- while the figure was Rs. 538.60/- for urban locations per capita per month for 2004-2005 (Rustagi,2007:4). The 61st Round of NSSO for 2004-2005 stated that this level of income would have permitted both the rural and urban people to consume about 1,800 kilocalories per capita per mouth (Ministry of Rural Development, 2009:4). Further if the per head per capita monthly income (Rs. 292.85/-) of the studied families being composed with the standard criterion of the Planning Commission to fix the poverty line (Rs. 356.30/- and Rs. 538.60/- for rural and urban areas) then it could be easily stated that the concerned people were quite poverty stricken (India 2010:130). In that circumstance they had a fragile economic backbone and the issue of economic security had a mere chance of attainment for them. Consequently, they might devoid of the measures of social security in their

daily livelihood. Simultaneously their basic needs and fundamental rights to common minimum livelihood might also get violated. The issues related with lack of economic security and its consequent effect on every aspects of their social security could be easily revealed through the different perspectives related with their socio-cultural practices in daily livelihood.

Economy is regarded as the backbone of any society. It provides the fundamental aspects to accumulate their common minimum livelihood resources. Permanency of economic organization provides stability to socio-economic condition in any society. It is intimately associated with political stability of a nation-state and any sort of political or social turmoil results into direct or indirect effect on the economic organization of that society. Traditional occupational pursuits of the studied people were settled agriculture and they had a permanent settlement mostly in Bangladesh. However due to severe political turmoil in Bangladesh during 1971 they were forced to get displaced and became refugees. They were completely uprooted from their permanent settlement and stable economic pursuit. On the other hand during that period Siliguri was gradually developing as the largest urban centre of North Bengal and a number of new occupational sectors were emerging. Adjacent to Siliguri town Balasan river was floating from the high hills and was provided with plentiful of natural resources like stones, boulders and sand. On its pathway in the upward region of Tarabari a number of people were associated with the collection of such raw materials, their crushing and supply to urban areas. Meanwhile, being completely roofless and absolutely resource less the studied people were desparately looking for a place of resettlement and new occupational pursuit. However, they did not have any financial capital to invest for a new occupation. The Balasan river bed and its natural resources were the best option left for them. It provided them the scope of resettlement and an oppurtunity of new economic pursuit which required hard manual labour. They became readily involved in it. The stone based occupation was free from any age or gender biasness. The entire family worked there as a production unit. It is to be mentioned here that the lease of river bed was approved in favour of a few urban contractor as per Government regulation. Those contractors involved a group of local organizers to regularize the work. They were locally known as *Sardars*. Each of them had a specific territory and under his authority a fixed number of workers were affiliated. The said

occupation required very hard manual labour and more number of working hands could generate better scope of earning. It is to be mentioned here that the earning of a family was equally proportionate with the amount of natural resources they were collecting. However, the natural resources were getting limited and the number of families in the studied area was gradually increasing; thus there always prevailed an unlettered competition among them to accumulate and utilize the natural resources. In most of the cases the entire families worked as a production unit either primarily or secondarily. Even the children were also associated with the said occupation. The concerned workers collected the raw materials and used to break them in different shapes and sizes. Further, as per the fixed rate they used to sell them to the urban contractors through the *Sardars*. It can be noted here that the monthly income of the stone crushers were quite poor in condition. Through the entire year and in every climatic condition they were engaged in very hard manual labour. Even the children were regularly involved in the said work to support their families. It is to be mentioned here that the girl children were quite well aware of the fact that it would be an additional burden for their parents to accumulate the dowry. Thus quite from an early age they were involved in the stone based work to reduce the burden to a certain extent. However, with this mere level of income it became difficult for them to manage their common minimum livelihood requisites. After getting resettled a strong economic backbone was earnestly required for them. However, the stone based occupation ultimately became unable to provide them any economic security. They could hardly manage their common minimum livelihood requirement and secure their fundamental rights simply by virtue of a human being. Displacement had snatched their stable economic pursuit and even after resettlement it was still prevailing. This economic bizarre may result an adverse impact on their livelihood and social condition in multifarious aspect. These issues related with their daily livelihood as well as social matters have been discussed in the next chapter.

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