

CHAPTER - VI

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF THE PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

Socio economic structures play an important role in the area development of an area and economic upliftment of the people. The physical factors have greatly contributed to a good yield rate of the tea and to concentrate the population within a very limited space in tea garden whereas the socio-economic factors have influenced the development of tea gardens and the standard of living of the people with respect to individual. Study of socio economic structure is urgently necessary for making all round plans and programmes of tea gardens. This chapter deals with different socio economic functions their distribution and like availability. Socio economic functions like Education, Health, Electricity, Communication, Water supply, Sanitation Housing, Marketing, Recreation etc. are most important for rural development. Moreover this chapter deals with the economic conditions of the people like; 1) Working season ii) Wage pattern, iii) Income iv) Dependency ratio and v) Economic facilities provided by the management. Nearly 10-15 percent families of each tea garden have been studied by sampling to observe the socioeconomic conditions of the people.

6.1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS

6.1.1. Education

Education plays an important role in the socio-economic development of an area. It is reflected by making people concern about the surrounding and their related problems. Proper education creates in man the faculty of reasoning to distinguish between right and wrong and choose the path of right (Madan, 1983.) It equips young men and women with general skills and techniques and make it possible for them to do some productive work related to their capacity and interests.

The level of literacy of the workers of the tea garden has been discussed in the previous chapter. Level of education and related matter are being discussed in this chapter. It is revealed that only 10 -15 percent of the total people can at least sign their names. Out of these literates only 17 percent of the total respondents have had formal education, and the remaining can sign their names only 15.65 percent of the total respondents have studied upto primary level and 15.65 has crossed the primary level but could not cross the Madhyamik level. Only 0.87 percent of the total respondents passed the Madhyamik level. There is no graduate in the substaff labour level.

It is also revealed from the field study that the planters and many N.G.Os. are striving hard for the universalisation of education in the district by opening new schools. There are at least one primary school within the tea garden including some private schools. Apart from this, there are some adult education centres introduced during 1990 -1994. Though every tea garden has at least one primary school but the drop outs at the primary level by the students in very large, specially in the case of females. This is due to child employment in the gardens. The little children help their parents in the household work at the time of working hour by cooking food, collecting drinking water and above all taking care of their siblings. There are only two junior high schools in the tea gardens are of the study area.

In view of the significance of preparing a personnel for various work this stage of education is regarded as the most important, because at this stage an individual is prepared fit for diverse occupation and for further higher studies. There are altogether five high schools in Nagrakata P.S. and seven High Schools in Banarhat P.S. It is revealed from figure 6.1 that the remote tea garden villages like Kurti, Chengmari Hope, Jiti, Jaldhaka, Gatha, Grammore of Nagrakata P.S. and Tota para, Kalabari, Huldibari Kathalguri, Karbala etc of Banarhat P.S. have no secondary school within 10 km. There is no college in study area. It can be finally deduced that lack of educationnal institution in most of the tea gardens has greatly influenced the level of literacy of workers. It is also evident that the plantation worker is prefer to engage their wards to child labour rather than to send them for schooling.

It is observed during field study that in Nagrakata and Banarhat Bazar their were some other institutions like adult education centre, type writing, Radio,

Television and watch repairing institute, carpentry shop, which impart informal education to the garden people.

6.1.2. HEALTH SERVICE

Health is a prime concern for the national progress because loss of health effects the productivity of tea plantation and tea industry both. It involves not only medical factors, but also social and economic factors. It is the positive state of well being of the individual. The main hospital for all tea growing centres of the study area is situated at Binaguri near D.B.I.T.A. Main office. This hospital has grown to be a very important facility not only for Binnaguri area but also for the entire Dooars tea growing area. The existing bed capacity of the hospital is 150 (1994) which is to be increased very soon.

Hospital facilities have to be provided in every garden at least up to the level of health centre or clinic. It is revealed that only big company gardens such as Goodrick, Duncan Andrew Yule's gardens provide more health facilities to the employees than other gardens. Infact in the Banarhat P.S. there are eleven big company gardens like Karbala T.G. Banarhat T.G., Gandrapaba T.G. and Telepara T.G. They have 50 bedded hospital in each garden. A fulltime Registered Medical Practitioner is employed in each gardens. But a few gardens like Laikshmikante, Maraghat Diana etc, do not have a full time doctor.

In Nagrakata P.S. only 5 gardens have a full time Medical Officer. These have doctors and provide proper medical facilities to the employees. Table 6.1 reveals that in Banarhat P.S. only 25 percent tea gardens have very poor health facilities.

Table 6.1 : Health facilities provided by planters and their percentage total in Banarhat P.S.

Types of Health facilities	No. of T.Gs	Percentage to total	
		available	Not available
1) Health Centre with outdoor facilities only	6	25.00	75.00
2) Health centre with very small indoor facilities	7	29.16	70.84
3) Hospital with Bed and Doctor	11	45.84	54.16

Source : Field study 1994 - 95

29.16 percent have medium health facilities and rest 45.84 percent garden give the maximum health facilities to the employees.

In case of Nagrakata P.S. Table 6.2 reveals that 20 percent of the tea gardens have very poor health facilities, 40 percent have medium health facilities and 40 percent tea gardens give maximum health service to the employees. Out door facilities mean there is no permanent doctor, only medical staffs are available in the morning for treatment.

Table 6.2 : Health facilities provided by the planters and their percentage to total Nagrakata Police Station.

Types of health facilities	No. of T.G.	Percentage to total	
		Available	Not available
1) Health Centre with outdoor facilities only	3	20.00	80.00
2) Health Centre with very small indoor facilities	6	40.00	60.00
3) Hospital with Bed and fulltime Doctor	6	40.00	60.00

Occasionally doctors visit the gardens. Health Centre with very small indoor facilities means delivery and two-three days post natal care in this types of Health Centre. Hospital with bed and fulltime doctor with sick-diet and minor operation is to be given.

Though the planters should arrange different types of medical facilities for the employees but most of the people of different communities do not take medicine for minor diseases. They use herbal products. At the time of delivery of post natal care is remarkable in Santal and Munde society. They make the child balded at the time of birth and wash the child properly. Nepalees have different customs. They put the child in the room and cover him or her for two-three days very carefully. Each community washed their new born baby in the Jhoras or rivers.

Most of the tribes of this region feed the child with juice of the green tea leaves. Now it has been proved that green tea has tremendous medicinal effect. Though the tea plantation labourer community is characterised by low level of health status a remarkable hygiene consciousness is found in some cases. The Oran women are conscious about the hygienic process during the period of

menstruation. They wash their clothes that means napkins in the flowing water in river or Jhoras instead of stagnant water and dry it in sun light.

6.1.3. Electricity

Electricity plays an important role in the agricultural production and development of rural economy. Electricity is required in every tea garden for plantation and industry as well as for domestic purposes.

It is observed that during 1994-95, 39 tea gardens had been connected with electricity. It is evident from the power consumption that the area under study is backward in respect of domestic use while most of the power is utilized for plantation development and industries. It is observed from Table 6.3 that in Banarhat P.S. two tea gardens do not provided electricity facilities to the workers. They are Lakshmikanta and Kalabari tea estates.

Table 6.3 : Percentage of power supply in tea garden of Banarhat Police Station.

Types of power supply	Status	No. of T.G.	Percentage to total
1) Power supply is absent in workers domestic purpose.	Very Poor	2	8.33
2) 0 to 50 percent household are getting power supply facilities.	Medium	12	50.00
3) 50 to 75 percent household are getting power supply facilities	High	6	25.00
4) 75 to 100% households are getting power supply facilities	Very High	4	16.67
Total		24	100.00

The percentage of tea gardens having electricity is only 8.33 to total tea gardens. There are 20 tea gardens in this P.S. having electricity facilities. Each revealed that majority of the tea gardens have electricity facilities. Out of 20 tea gardens, 50 percent of them have electricity facilities. All these gardens are mainly medium sized tea garden. There are 6 tea gardens in this P.S. which provide power to 75 percent of the gardens people. Only 4 tea gardens have high electricity facilities. These gardens are Banarhat; Karbala, Lakshmipara and Gandrapara. All the employees including labours get electricity facilities in these tea gardens.

In case of Nagrakata P.S. (Table 6.4) it is revealed that all tea gardens are more or less electrified.

Table 6.4 : Percentage of Power supply in tea gardens of Nagrakata Police Station.

Types of power supply	Status	No. of T.G.	Percentage to total
1) 0 to 25 percent house are getting power supply	Poor	5	33.33
2) 25 to 50 percent household are getting power supply	Medium	3	20.00
3) 50 to 75 percent household are getting power supply	High	5	33.33
4) 75 to 100 percent household	Very high	2	13.34
Total		15	100.00

Out of 15 tea gardens 5(33.33%) have poor electric facilities. These gardens are Chengmari, Dharanipur, Carron, Looksan and Jaladhaka Altadanga. People are getting better power facilities in the remaining tea gardens than others.

6.1.4. Communication and transport

Communication transport facilities are the most important factors influencing the establishment and developments of rural areas. An effective transport system is indispensable for the effective utilization of resources and mobility of the people and goods. A transportation system generally serves two purposes namely accessibility and mobility.

Transportation facilitates the movement of commodities, people and idea across the space. The social, political and economic development of a region is dependent on quick and smooth transport system. The present day socio-economic structure of the world is largely dependent on the interplay of various transportation systems — roadways, railways, airways, waterway and pipelines plus the communication and postal systems and publications (Singh 1998).

Roads are an essential part of our modern civilization, and their number and quality reflect the standard of living of the states (Valkenburg and Stotz, 1963). The road is one of the most fundamental institutions of mankind. (Finch *et. al.*, 1957). Road is the principal communication system in this area. The

roads may be divided into three types, (i) Pacca (ii) Metalled road (iii) Unmetalled Road (Fig. 6.1). The N.H. 31C runs from Siliguri to Guahati (Assam) via Malbazar, Nagrakata, Banarhat and Birpara so on. The N.H. 31 joins Maynaguri and Alipurduar via Dhupguri and Falakata. Four tea gardens of Nagrakata P.S. and 10 tea gardens of Banarhat P.S. enjoy the NH road connection. Apart from the National Highway, there are two important metalled roads running from Banarhat to Chamurchi near Bhutan border and Nagrakata to Thaljhora respectively. A few tea gardens are connected by these metalled roads. The road connection is significantly very low in tea garden area. Unmetalled roads are the second most important routes of communication systems in the tea gardens. The people in the tea gardens are dependent primarily on cycle or walking. Though every tea garden has their own vehicle facilities for transporting green leaves to the factory or finished tea to the markets but most of the gardens do not make it convenient for the use of it for domestic purpose. The labourers and workers mostly use cycle or trolley-van because of the low communication system. It reveals that bus service is also very poor in the study area as compared to the whole district as a whole. (Fig. 6.2).

Second means of communication is the railways. At present the area is served by the North Frontier Railway which runs from Siliguri to Sovaganj. It is a metre gauge line (Fig. 6.1). There are seven railway stations in this line. The rail line connects only six tea gardens directly. This route helps the planters to sell their tea and to transport them to the Siliguri Auction Market. Only one passenger train runs through this line.

Other means of transport are Kuchha roads and temporary roads. The garden people use temporary paths through the open fields for saving time and distance to go to the market or schools. The labourers can travel 5 to 10 km with load. Fifty percent of workers (including female) carry their goods over their head and shoulders to and from the local market.

The function of postal services is directly related to local population. There is no head post office in these two Police Stations. Only 4 sub-post offices are situated in Banarhat P.S. They are Banarhat, Binnaguri, Gairkata and Chamurchi and 3 sub-post offices are located in Nagrakata P.S. There are Nagrakata, Looksan Nathuahat. They are 14 branch post offices in the

DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS

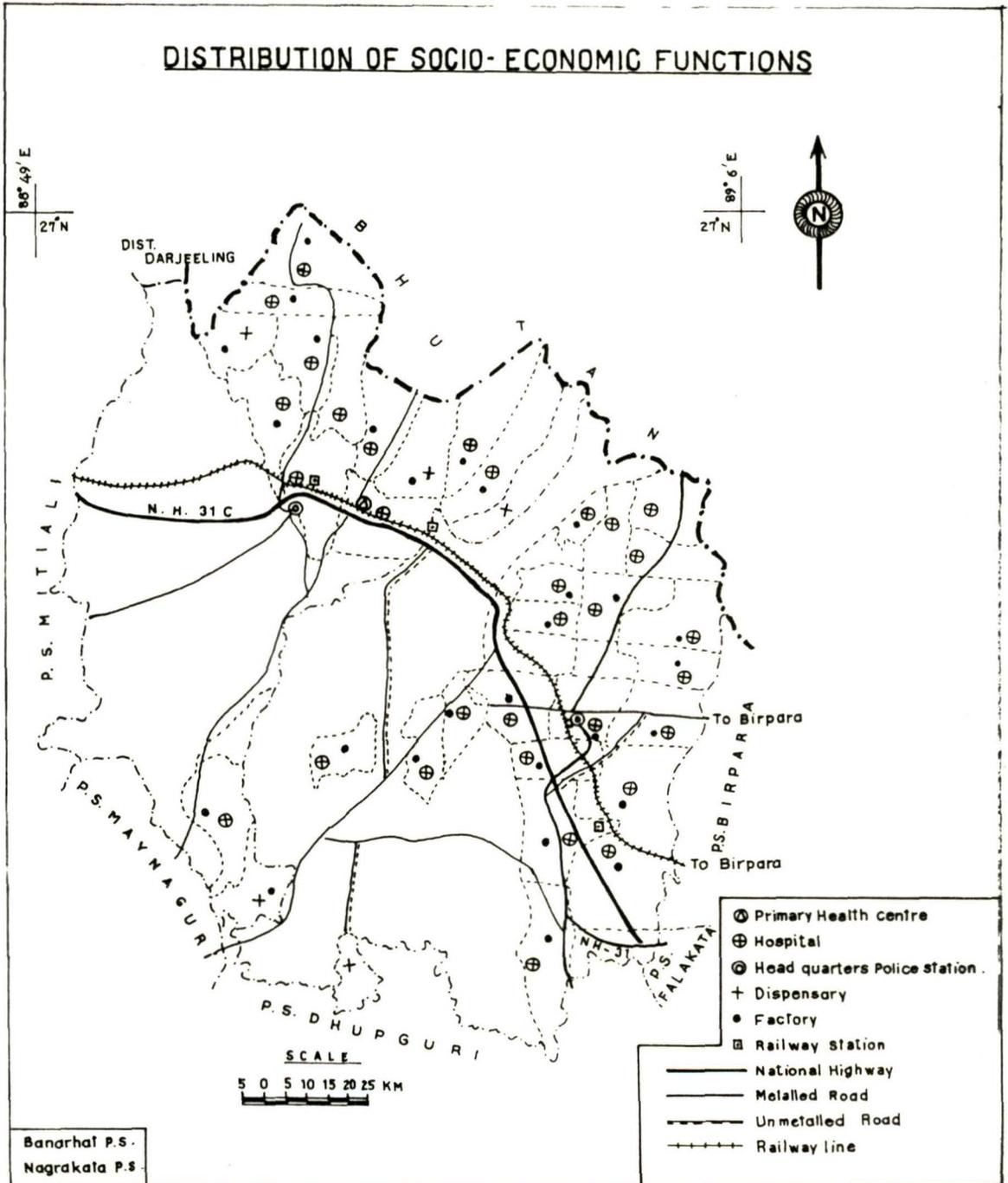


Fig. 6.1

DAILY VOLUME OF FLOW OF BUS AND MINIBUS SERVICES FROM JALPAIGURI TOWN (1998)

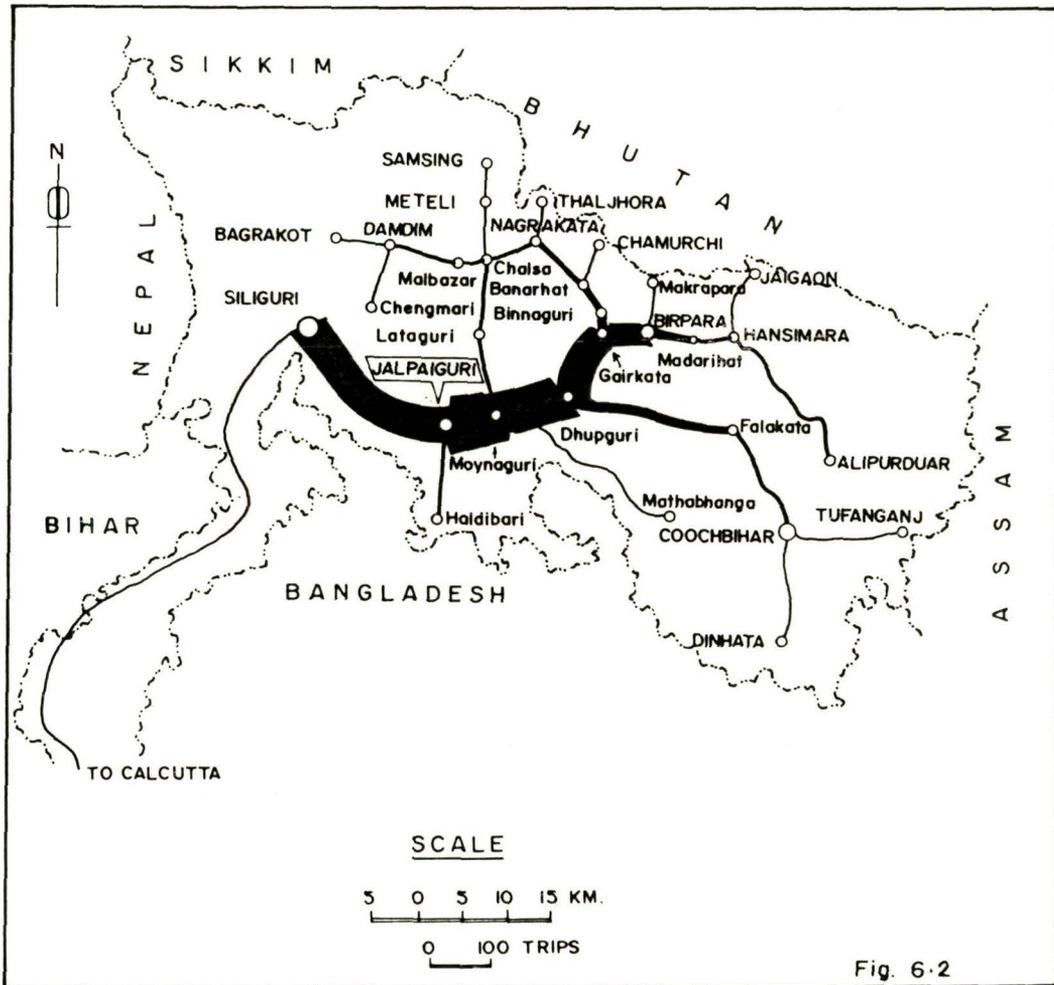


Fig. 6.2

study area. Now Banarhat is connected with telecommunications. The transport facilities are not satisfactory in the entire area.

6.1.5 Market

The market centres play an important role for the tea garden people. The activity of market centre is very complex and flexible in the developing countries. In the less developed countries, the relationship between the market centres and their hinterlands is poor. It makes the activities of market centres are more complex. They provide the materials of daily need to the deficit area (Haggett 1967) Market centre is the lowest service centre in the hierarchy of settlements. The size of the service centre is determined by the range of central goods and services offered to its command area. All the markets are based upon time period that is morning, noon or evening. The duration of time fluctuates with market activities. From field study, it is revealed that most of the market centres are poorly developed. Most of the marketing of the tea gardens is conducted by women labourers.

Table 6.5 : Number of tea gardens and their distance from daily market in Banarhat P.S.

Distance from nearest Daily market in km	Status	No. of T.G.	Percentage of tea gardens to total
< - 1	Very small	4	16.67
1 - 2	Small	3	12.50
2 - 4	Medium	4	16.67
4 - 8	Large	4	16.66
> - 8	Very large	9	37.50
Total		24	100.00

It is clear from the categorization that 16.67 percent of the tea gardens are within 0 - 1 kms from the daily market which is termed as very small range. These tea gardens are Banarhat, Chamurchi, Binnaguri and Gairkata. These tea gardens are fairly in a good position availing the modern facility of markets within a short distance from tea gardens. Only 3 tea gardens (12.5%) are located within 1 to 2 kms. from daily markets. These three tea gardens are Chunabhati, Telepara and Laksmipara. Therefore majority of the tea gardens workers in the study area have to move medium to very large distance for marketing in the nearest market.

Table 6.6 : Number of tea gardens and their distance from daily market in Nagrakata P.S.

Distance from nearest Daily market in km	Status	No. of T.G.	Percentage of tea gardens to total
< - 1	Very small	2	13.33
1 - 2	Small	1	6.67
2 - 4	Medium	3	20.00
4 - 8	Large	3	20.00
> 8	Very large	6	40.00
Total		15	100.00

In case of Nagrakata P.S. it is revealed from table 6.7 that only 3 (20 percent) tea gardens are within 0 to 2 km away from daily market. These tea gardens are Bhogatpur, Looksn and Carron. Therefore majority of people in most of the tea gardens in Nagrakata P.S. have to move medium to very large distance (more than 8 km.) for marketing from the daily market. There are 5 weekly or bi-weekly markets (hat) within or around the tea gardens. The retail services form an important socio-economic function catering to the daily needs of the people of an area. Easy availability and accessibility of retail services of the users promote the standard of development (Jana, 1986). Grocery stores and tea stalls are some of the common retail services available in the tea gardens. The distribution of retail services in the tea gardens indicates the backwardness of the area.

6.1.6. Water Supply

Water supply as well as source of water is an urgent need of a human being. Scarcity of drinking water is a vital problem in Banarhat P.S.

Table 6.7. Sources of water available in the number of tea gardens in Banarhat Police Station.

Distance from nearest Daity market in km	No. of garden	Percentage of tea gardens to total
i) Surface water	1	4.15
ii) Dug Wells	7	29.17
iii) Deep tube well	16	66.67
Total	24	100.00

Table 6.10 reveals that most of the tea gardens of Banarhat P.S. have deep tubewells as a source of water. Only 1 garden (4.16 percent) Churmurchi has surface water i.e. river water. A few gardens have dug wells as source of water. Both surface water and deep tube wells are found in Chamurchi T.G. Both dug wells and deep tube wells are found in six tea gardens. They are Debpara, Haldibari, Karbala, Mogulkata, Palashbari and Totapara.

Table 6.8: Source of Water available in the number of tea garden in Nagrakata Police Station.

source of Water	No. of tea garden	Percentage of tea garden to total
i) Surface water	8	53.33
ii) Dug Wells	5	33.33
iii) Deep tube Wells	2	13.34
Total	15	100.00

Source of water is very easy in the tea gardens of Nagrakata P.S. There are three types of source of water available at least one third of the total tea gardens. Surface water and dug wells are the common source of water.

Most of the tea gardens people of Banarhat P.S. use tap water for drinking and cooking. They can use well's water for bathing. The tap water may be chlorated fortnightly or once in a month. There is a bathing point for every 50 households in a public companies gardens and for every 25 household in a private tea gardens. The water from deep tube wells is generally used for the irrigation purpose of the plantation. There is an acute shortage of fresh water in the tea garden area. The supply of water is not sufficient in to the demand of the people. (Fig-6.3 ,Plate 6.4).

6.1.7. Sanitation and house type

Sanitation system is very poor in the study area. Most of the latrines are kuccha. Though the Plantation Labour Act play a vital role to improve the latrines and drinking water facilities for the people but still now the laboures have deprived from getting this benifit. It reveals that the number of kuccha latrines is found to be very low in the tea gardens of Banarhat compared to Nagrakata (Fig. 6.4) . Only 11% of the tea gardens have kuccha latrine. Rest of the latrines are pucca. But the sewerage system is based on conventional water carriage

AVAILABILITY OF WATERPOINTS AGAINST HOUSEHOLDS

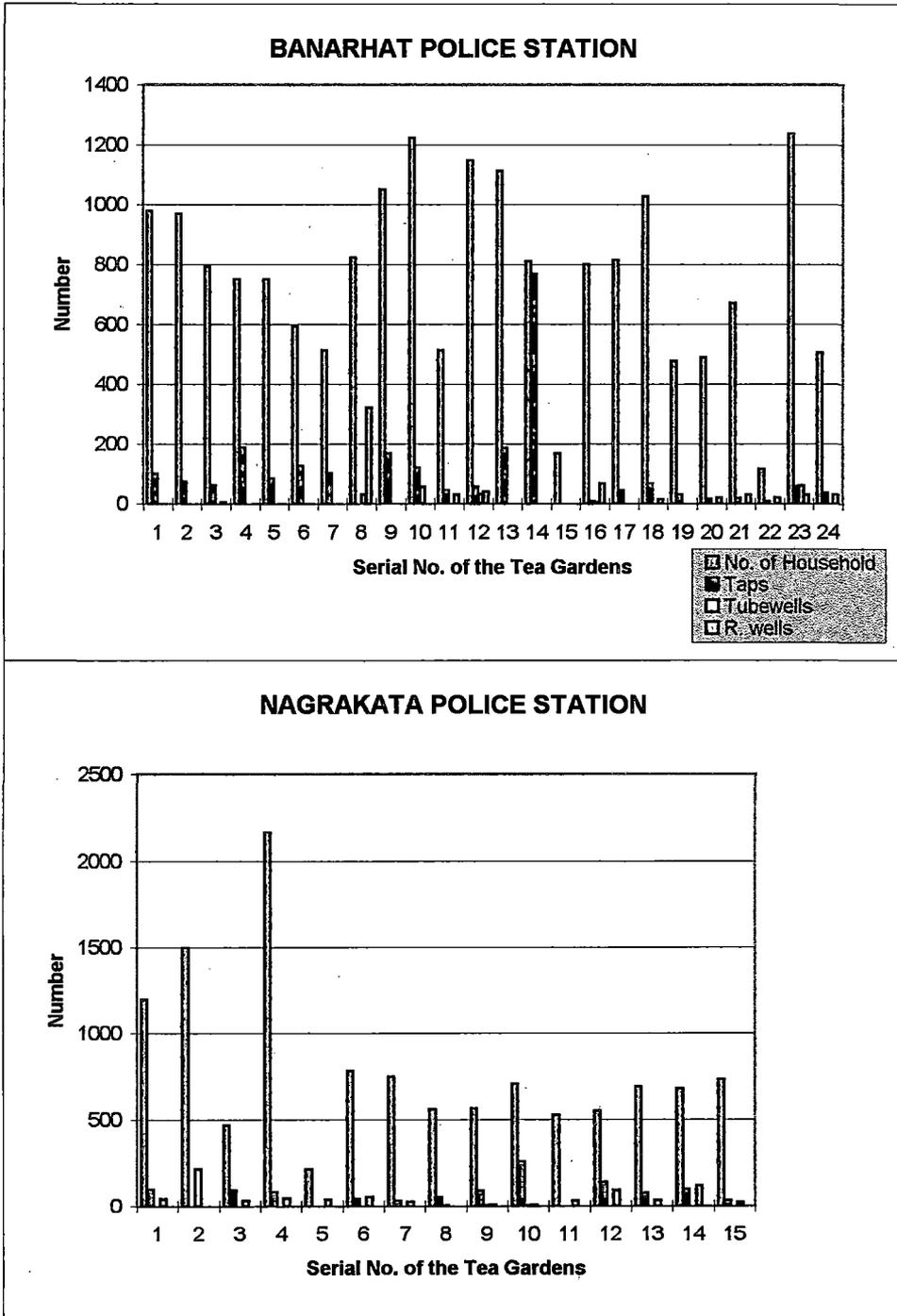


FIG-6.3

LATRINE TYPES OF THE STUDY AREA

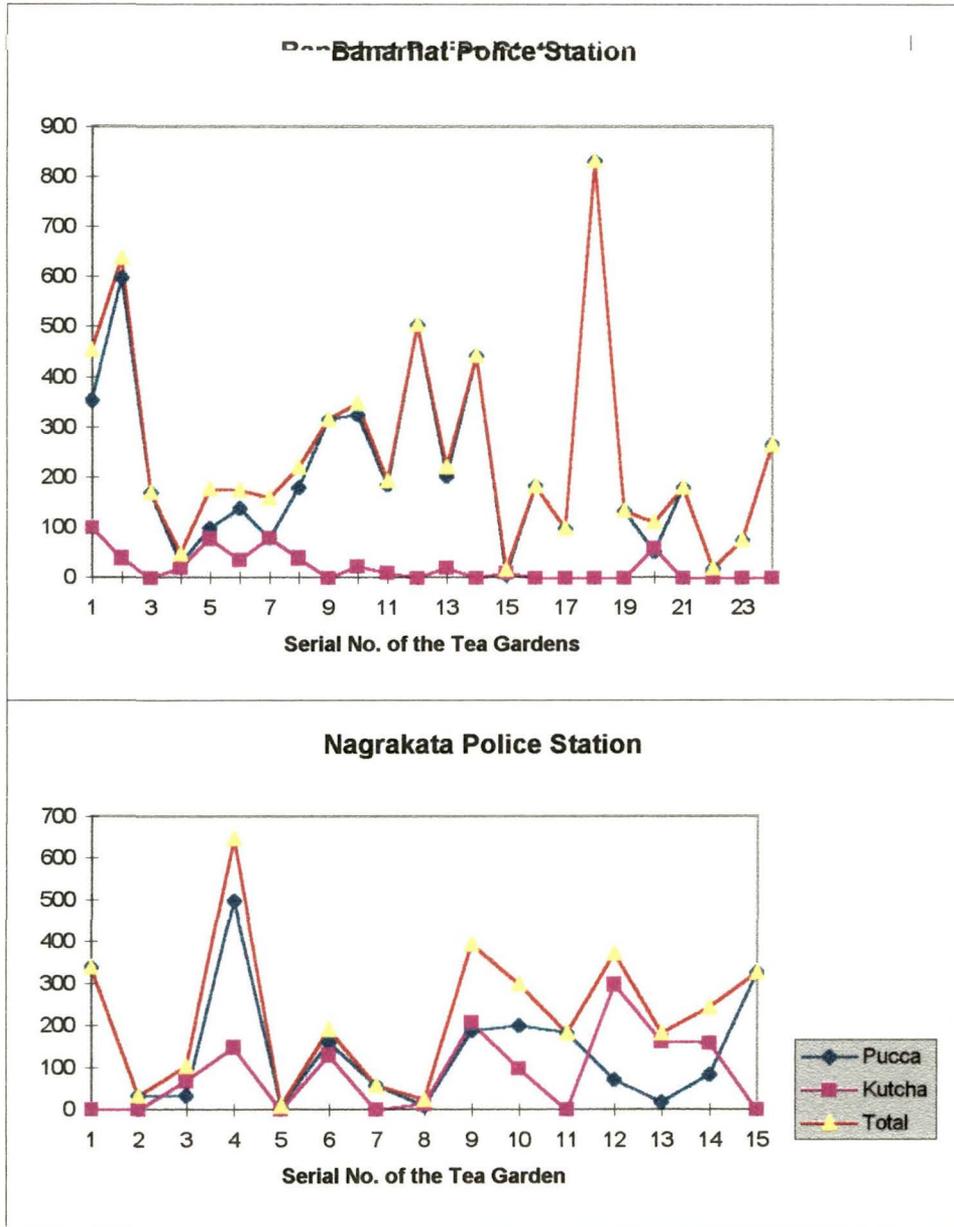


FIG 6.4

system. At present sewerage system is being constructed to cover 80% of the tea gardens in Dooars area. (Fig. 6.4). There is an acute shortage of lavatories, in the tea gardens. So the garden people use the open air sanitation instead of latrine.

Majority of the houses of the tea gardens are pucca (Plate 6.2). Some low level gardens have kuccha housing facilities for the labourers (Fig. 6.5). All most all the houses are one storied building. Pucca houses are made of cement and tin roof. Kuccha houses are made of local wood and bamboo with thached roof (Plate 6. 1). Labourers quarters comprise of a single or two rooms (Plate 6.3). All the members of the family are sharing this system. Some of the houses have found special system. There is a detached cell in the living room and the household deities are kept there. No unmarried young girl cannot enter this room.

6.1.8. Family Welfare and family planning

Family Welfare and family planning are very important for the plantation workers. Besides these studies the social condition of the worker cannot make a clear picture to us. So it is an essential part to analysing the family planning system in the tea gardens.

Table 6.9 : Percentage distribution of workers on ideal family size by age of the worker.

Age group	2 or less children	3 - 4 children	5 and above children	All groups children
Less than 20 years	23.08	63.46	13.46	100.00
21 - 30 years	27.17	63.77	9.06	100.00
31 - 40 years	21.56	59.63	18.81	100.00
above - 40 years	24.24	54.55	21.21	100.00
Total	24.01	60.35	15.54	100.00

Analysis of data on what the respondent considers as the ideal family size by the age of the respondent is presented in table 6.9. Only 15.63 percent of the workers in tea gardens indicated their ideal family size would consist of 5 or more children. About 60.35 percent indicated that 3 or 4 children would be an ideal and 24.01 percent reported having 2 or less would be ideal. Although there are no significant differences in the responses by the age of

HOUSE TYPES OF THE STUDY AREA

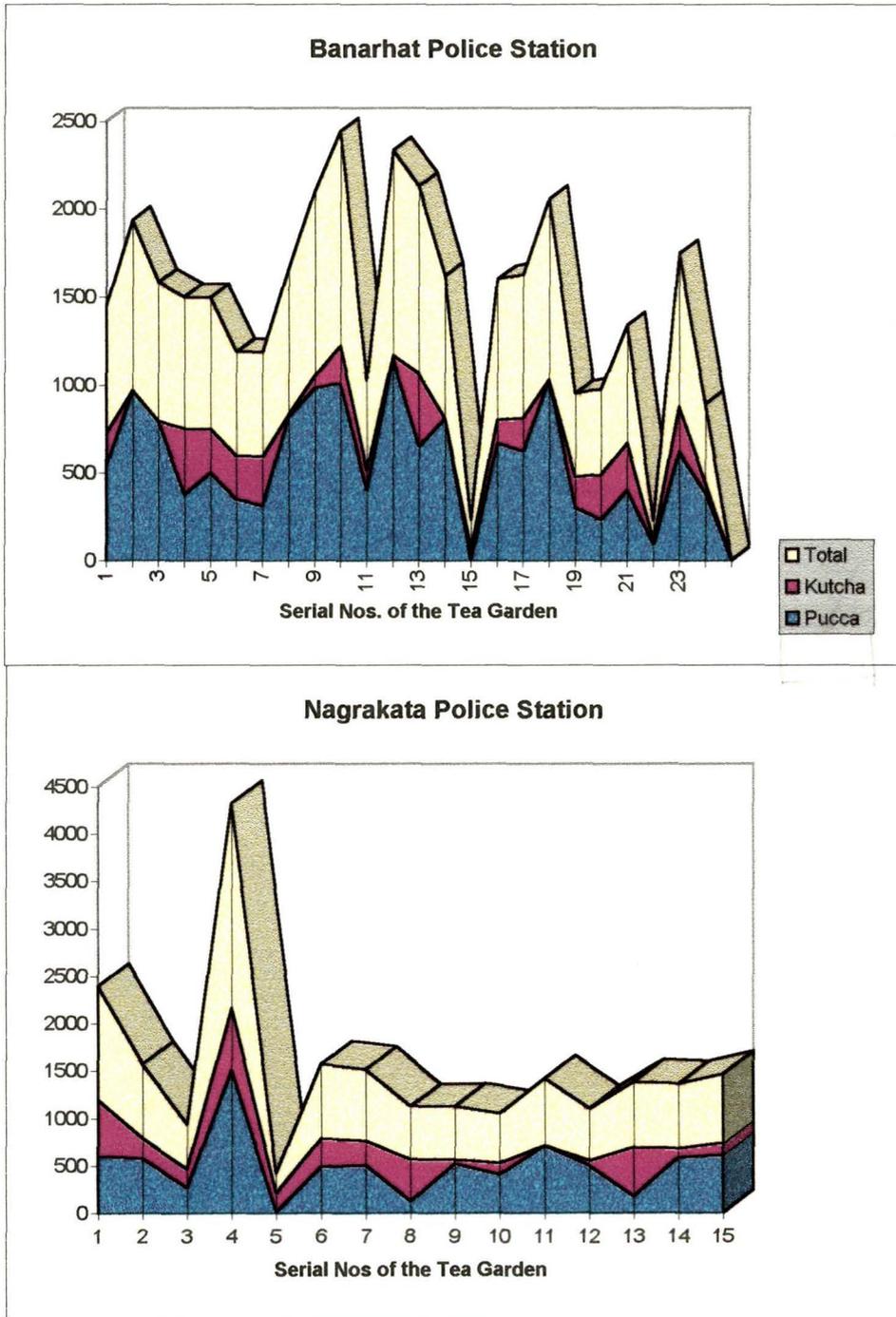


FIG 6-5

DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILY SIZE

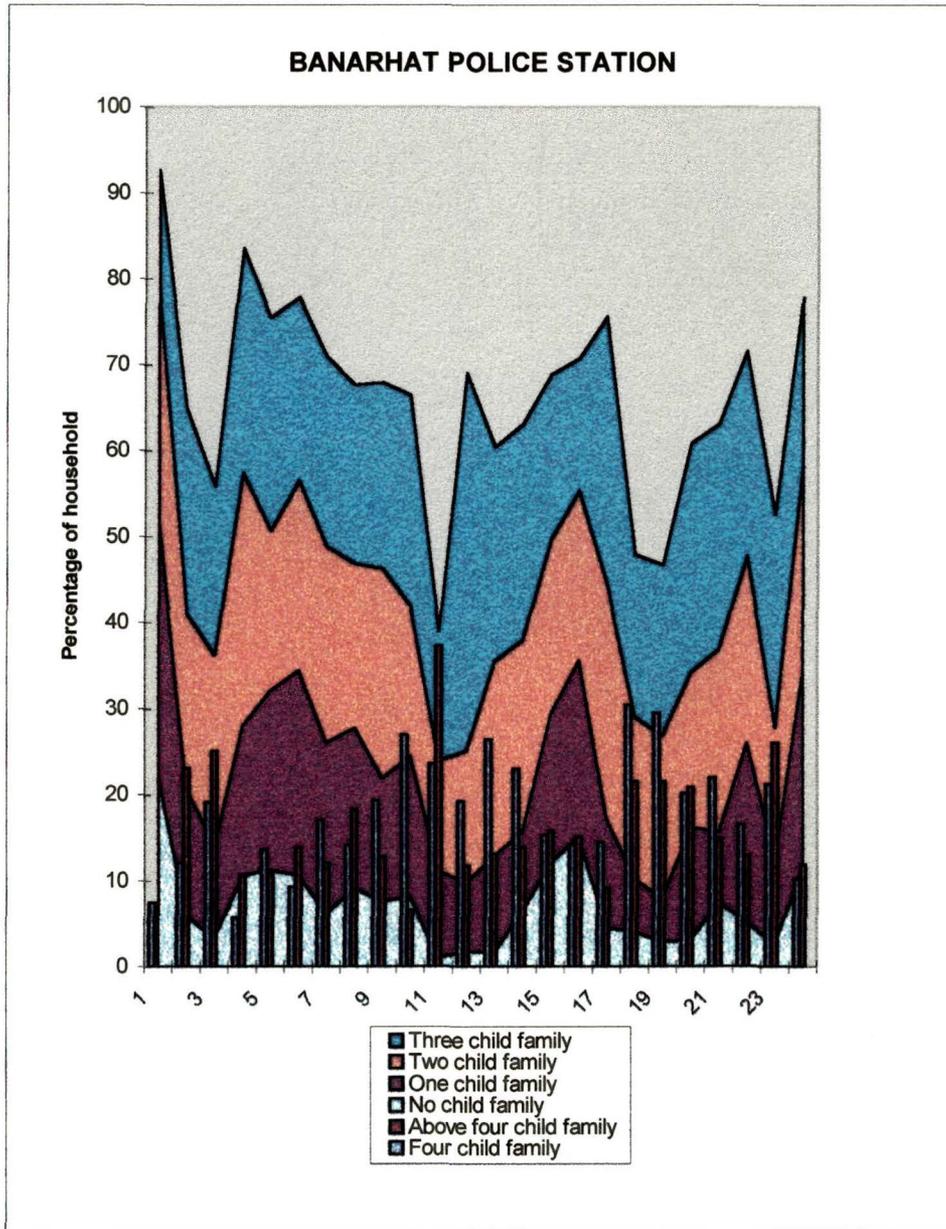


FIG 6.6

DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILY SIZE

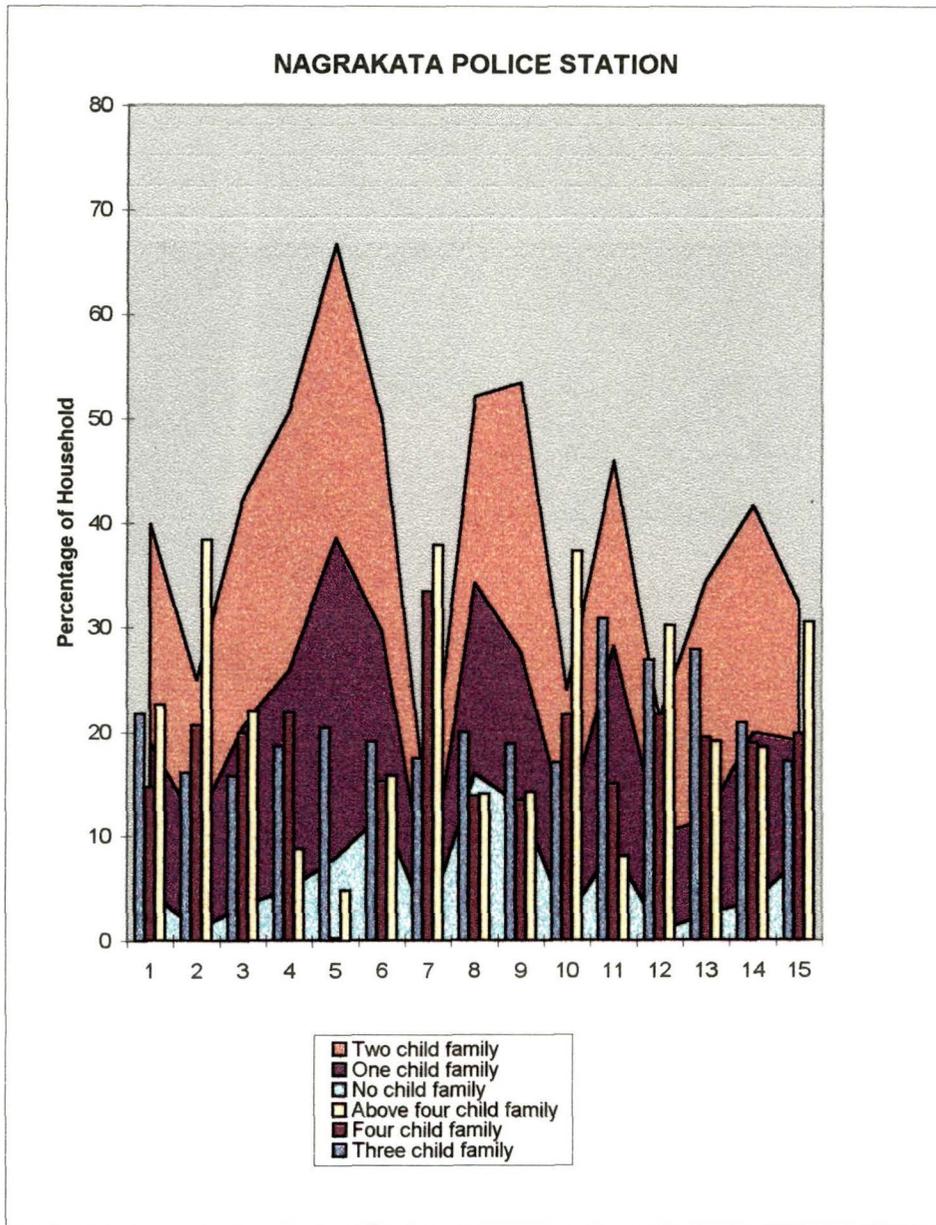


FIG 6.7



*Plate 6.1 House Type Kutchha
(Kalabari Tea Estate).*



*Plate 6.2 House Type Pucca
(Banarhat Tea Estate).*



*Plate 6.3 House Type : Semi-Pucca
(Kalabari Tea Estate).*



*Plate 6.4 Water Point
(Banarhat Tea Estate)*

the respondents it is perhaps noteworthy that majority of the persons in the age group of 21 to 40 years consider smaller number of children as ideal. In other words their attitude is favourable for the small family norm and further family planning methods to be accepted.

Table 6.10. Percentage distribution of workers on ideal size of family by religion.

Religion	Ideal size of the family			All groups
	Less than 2 children	3 - 4 children	5 and above children	
Hindu	24.4	63.9	11.7	100.00
Muslim	2.2	80.0	17.8	100.00
Christian	24.1	61.2	14.7	100.00
Others	40.9	54.5	4.6	100.00
All group	23.9	63.9	12.2	100.00

The percentage distribution of response on ideal size of the family by the religion of the respondents is presented in table 6.10. The percentage of couples indicating a relatively large family size (5 or more children) as the ideal size. It is higher among Muslims and Christians compared with other religions. However majority of all section of the workers are in favour of 3 to 4 children. Perhaps with better education and motivation they may be persuaded to accept a smaller family size as the ideal. It reveals the family size of each tea garden of Banarhat and Nagrakata P.S. (Fig. 6.6 & 6.7).

About 75 percent of the eligible couples on tea plantation of D.B.I.T.A. know about family planning/family welfare (Fig 6.8). However only 18 percent of the eligible couples are currently practicing family planning/family welfare methods. The prevalence of current practice of family planning methods among younger age groups is relatively low. Educated workers are currently practicing family planning.

There is a relatively greater prevalence of terminal methods (ie. vasectomy and tubectomy) than the temporary methods (ie. use of conventional contraceptives and oral pills). The use of IUD among the workers in tea gardens is negligible.

6.1.9. Recreation and Others

The main recreation pattern of this area is Vedeo showing. Dashera, Diwali and Holy are the main festivals. A special practise of hunting is observed on

FAMILY PLANNING ACTIVITY OF THE STUDY AREA

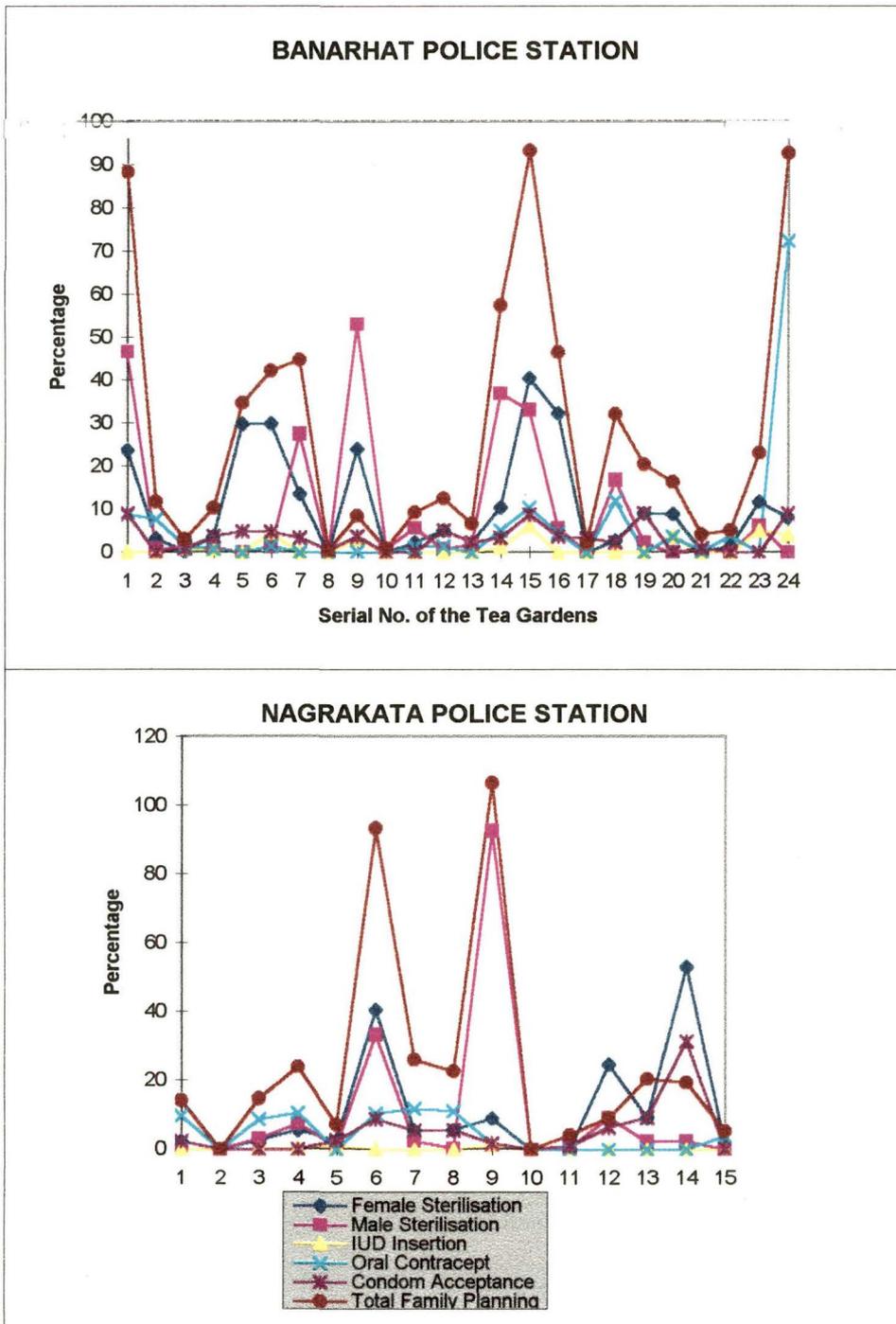


FIG 6.8

the day of Buddha purnima. The whole community participates in that hunting ceremony. A man who kills the most important animal is considered to be the hero of the community. The whole community glorifies his bravery. The wage earning day is a day of celebration for them. They spend most of their earnings in merrymaking and drinking.

Marriage is one of the important custom of plantation workers and the marriage ceremony is done by their tribal ethnic customs which is very common in these tea gardens. Though educationally backward; Santals exhibit a remarkable advance attitude towards individual in the society. Men and women enter the social life through marriage. Marriage negotiation in a Santal community is organised by Ryabar (Mediator) and initiative is taken by groom. Bride price is given to the parent of the bride. Santal is a free society. Free mixing, Divorce are present in this society.

It is reveals from the field study that in this community the boy and girls enjoy considerable amount of freedom in their movement. Premerital sex relation is not looked down upon provided it does not result pregnancy. But even in such cases the child is legitimized by marrying off the girl.

There are two process of marriage found in Kharia society.

i) Negotiation marriage

ii) Sanga Biha — means second marriage. Dowry system is present in negotiation marriage.

A Metch boy or girl has no right to exercise their choice as regards to their marriage partner. Elderly men and women may express their opinion about the selection of boy or girl for their marriage and also put some familial pressure. A Metch parent is anxious to get their son married as early as possible and then they must have the capacity to pay the bride price. Widow marriage, remarriage and divorce are present in the Metch society.

The Rajbansi observe a separate practice in their marriage negotiation. The bride before marriage come to the house of the would be inlaw and reside with them for two or three months to adjust herself with her new family. Most of the people of tea gardens enjoy considerable rights to dissolve marriage if the husband or wife illtreat each other. They may divorce and re marry soon. This is possible because of some economic support. Although, some notable changes

have taken place in the workers social life, the plantation workers have still not made any major transformation as in other tribal societies of North Bengal. It is necessary for discussing about economic structure of the worker in the tea garden.

6.2. ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF THE TEA WORKERS

It is observed that during the pre independence period the wages of the tea garden workers were extremely low. In 1948, the total cash wages of a male worker in Dooars was 1 Rupee 1 anna and 6 paise (including Basic hazira, doubli and Dearness allowance). After independence, the Government of West Bengal set up minimum wage advisory committee for tea plantations in March 1950. In 1952 the committee fixed the minimum wage of a male worker in the Dooars Rs.1.16 per day. In 1959, it increased to Rs. 1.81. The Central Government appointed the Central Wage Board for tea plantation industry in December 1960. The Board took 6 years and 3 months time to declare its final recommendation. However, during this tenure, the Board declared two interim increments. By the final recommendation of the wage-Board the daily wage of a male worker increased at a very slow rate either through the recommendations of bipartite meeting or through the demand of the trade union. By June 1973, the daily wage of a male worker in the Dooars increased to Rs. 2.94. For the revision of wages, the Govt. of West Bengal set up the second minimum wage fixing committee in July 1973. A few increment were granted by the committee during its four years term. But it could not come to any decision regarding the new rate of wage of workers. Ultimately in may 1975 a consensus was reached. Accordingly the committee granted a yearly increment of 45 paise per day in the daily wage of an adult worker for the next two years w. ef. July 1975. Finally the committee recommended that the wage of all daily rated workers would be increased by one rupee annually w.e.f. July 1975. Thus by June 1979 the daily wage rate of an adult male worker in the Dooars stood at Rs. 6.24. Since then the rates of wages of daily rated worker in West Bengal tea industry have been fixed by tripartite agreements. The term of every tripartite agreement is three year. Till July 1994 six tripartite agreements had been made on the wage issue. They were in June 1977, May 1980, August 1983, June 1987, August 1990 and in July 1994. The tripartite agreement of August 1990 expired in June 1993, but the next agreement was signed in July 1994. During the first two years the wage of daily rated workers would be increased by Rs. 2.50 annually and in the

third year by Rs. 2.00. It was also agreed that the workers will be provided compensatory settlement money' for the period December 1993 to 31st March 1994. After this agreement the daily wage of an adult worker in Dooars stood at Rs. 21.80 in July 1994 (Labour gazette 1994)

6.2.1. Wage Pattern of worker

Most of the workers in tea plantations are daily rated worker. They constitute about 89% of the total work force. Daily rated workers (both Male and Female) are mostly engaged in plucking jobs. Besides pluckings they however are deployed in other types of jobs as Paniwallas, Malies, Sweeper etc. All the worker have to pay Rs. 21.74 per day. The payment will be given on one day of the week.

The Bigha workers (casual) are also paid the same money during the pick season that is May to September. Daily rated worker engaged in certain jobs in a garden other than plucking and also those engaged in factories get additional compensation over and above the daily rate of wage. An additional compensation in case of garden jobs is now Rs. 1.20 and in the case of daily rated worker engaged in factory is Rs. 1.50. In Dooars, the rate of extra leaf price (over and above the plucking task prevalent in a tea estate) per kg is now 25 paise.

6.2.2. Economic facilities provided by the management

Apart from daily wages, the daily rated workers enjoy the facility of subsidised ration for self and dependents. One kg. rice and two kgs wheat/atta are issued per adult (Price is @ 40 paise). 2.5 peels of firewood are issued in the name of the family of a daily rated tea plantation worker. (Plate 6.5. & 6.6.) Facility of 400 Grams of dry tea per month and a pair of chappals once in a year are enjoyed by the daily rated worker.

The workers enjoy the facility of bonus once in a year also. There are 4 types of economically graded tea gardens in this area.

- | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------|---|---|
| A | — | Very good economic condition | | |
| B | — | Good | " | " |
| C | — | Moderate | " | " |
| D | — | Very low economic condition | | |

The A grade type garden workers are get 35 days bonus in a year. Only daily rated permanent workers get this facility. Banarhat, Karbala Gandrapara, Hope are the A grade tea gardens of this area. The B grade tea garden workers



Plate 6.5 Uprooting Bush for Fuel and Furniture.



Plate 6.6 Uprooting Bush for Fuel.

enjoy 25 days bonus and the C grade types of tea garden workers enjoy only 15 days bonus in a year. The D type tea garden workers are deprived from getting bonus for each year.

CONCLUSION

The Socio economic condition of the plantation workers are quite different from the other sector of industries in the country. Moreover the plantation workers in Japan and China are get much more facilities than India. So there will be conflict between the social and cultural environment as well as physical environment. After discussing the socioeconomic factors it is necessary to discuss about interaction between people and environments in the next chapter.