

Occupation and Health: A Study Among The Stone Crushers of Balasan Colony, Darjeeling District in West Bengal.

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Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Science) In Anthropology*



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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled "*Occupation and Health: A Study Among The Stone Crushers of Balasan Colony, Darjeeling District in West Bengal*" has been prepared by me under the **Supervision of Dr. Samar Kumar Biswas**, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of North Bengal and under the **Co-supervision of Prof. Buddhadeb Chaudhuri**, Retd. Professor of Dr. Ambedkar Chair Professor in Anthropology, Calcutta University. **This is an original work and no part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree of fellowship previously.**

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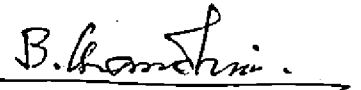
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This is also to certify that his thesis is based on the results of primary data which he has collected through empirical field work. This is his original work and he has incorporated all the suggestions made or given by me in it. I am forwarding his thesis for the award of the Ph.D. degree (Science) in Anthropology of the University of North Bengal.



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Somenath Bhattacharjee
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Occupation and Occupational Health Issues

Human being is keenly desired to survive. For survival they need certain common minimum livelihood accessibilities like food, dress, shelter, education, health care facilities and many other basic amenities. In the process of human evolution, the livelihood requisites of human being had changed significantly from time to time. They had left the stage of nomadism and started a permanent settled life. With the continuous modification of technological implements the economic organization shifted from dependable subsistence type to the productive surplus pattern. It had gradually paved the way of human civilization and this process is still continuing. Survival of human being is intimately associated with the continuous demand of certain livelihood requisites. Its sustainability needs a regular availability or supply of the fundamental requisites. To accumulate different livelihood requirements a man remains associated with certain activities or work. Production of such works either directly gives him the desired requirements or it provides them the capacity to purchase the objects required for sustaining their livelihood. Such activities or works are regarded as the human occupation. Thus, human occupation is nothing but the work performed by human being for their survival and to provide themselves the basic needs or it is the economic activities which human perform to meet their various requirements (Oxford Dictionary, 2013:472). People engaged in various occupations and depend on each other for the collective sustenance and it configures the economic backbone of a society and nation. Economy is an important constituent of life and plays a deciding role in the formation of cultural and social structure of a society (Vidyarthi, 1976: 93). Piddington (1952) says “economic system is designated to satisfy material wants of the people to organize production, to control distribution and to determine the rights and claims of ownership within the community (cited in Dash, 2004:123).” 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 co-related to the economic organization of the concerned society.

The different occupational pursuits of human being are intimately associated with the collection and utilization of different environmental resources. According to the variation of soil, topography and climate natural resources become variable from place to place. Consequently the human occupational features also become variable according to different geographical locations. All over the world there are different geographical areas or regions like ice covered mountainous region, fertile river bank, desert region, forest covered region, coastal area, plateau etc. and every one of them has their own ecological setting and diversified natural resources. It is the fact that primarily depending upon such natural resources the people of these concerned areas maintained their livelihood. Due to this fact occupational variations are found and even variations are also found in their mode of exploitation and utilization of resources. However, there are different types of occupation like hunting-gathering, pastoralism, shifting hill cultivation, terrace cultivation, settled cultivation, artisan works, handicrafts, industrial works etc. which are present among various groups of people all over the world. For example, the Pygmies of Central African forest region lives in a hot and humid climate with average rainfall. They primarily depend on hunting gathering. Semangs of Malaysia live in interior hilly and mountainous parts covered by monsoon forests. They depend on hunting gathering. The Sakais of Central Malaysia live in densely forested valleys, plains and depend on hunting, fishing. The Jarwas ,Onges, Saentinelles, Shompens of Andaman Nicobar island depend on the hunting-gathering and marine fishing. The Black foot people, a Red Indian tribe dwell in the grassland of Rocky mountain to the Gulf of Mexico depend on buffalo hunting. The Inuits of Arctic Tundra live in a frozen climate. They used to kill the seal, sea lion, walrus, polar bear for their survival and even their settlements are made up of snow. The Yukaghirs, Tungus of Northeastern Siberia are the reindeer hunters. In the southeastern parts of North America the Navajo exclusively depend on the rearing of sheep and horse. The Masais of Kenya rear the sheep and goat. The economy of Badawins of Arabian desert mostly depend on camel rearing. The Kirghiz of central Asia are the pastoral nomads of sheep,

cattle and horses. Yakuts are the herders and hunters of middle Lena river basin. The Boros of Amazon basin occupy small clearings in the forest and primarily depend on agriculture. Along with that they use to practice hunting and trapping of small forest creatures. The aboriginal groups of Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia depend on cultivation of coffee, cocoa and copra. Yoruba of Western Nigeria are the hoe cultivators and produces Yam, Maize, Millets etc (Hussain,2012: 411-526) . In the Indian context, the occupations of the tribal population are also varied in different regions due to diversification of natural resources. The Jarwa, Onge, Sentinelle of Andaman Island, Chenchu of Andhra Pradesh, Kadar of Kerala, Juang of Orissa are the hunter-gatherers. The tribes of Northeast India like Karbi, Garo, Khasi, Adi, Nishi, Apatani are associated with shifting hill cultivation. The Boros of Assam, Santal of West Bengal, Bihar, Gond of Bastar are associated with settled cultivation. The Drukpas of West Bengal are associated with orange cultivation primarily. The Gaddis, Bakrawal of Jammu Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Todas of Nilgiri Hills Tamil Nadu, Nageshia of Madhya Pradesh are associated with pastoralism. The Asur of Bihar, Agaria of Madhya Pradesh are the artisan group. The Northeast Indian tribes prepare different handicrafts made up of bamboo, cane. Further, they utilize the extract of different wild fruits to put on colour to their traditionally weaved dresses. Kolam of Maharashtra are the traditional mat weavers. Dommaras of Andhra Pradesh perform acrobats. The Kotas of Tamil Nadu, Kalbelias of Rajasthan are the snake charmer. The Warlis of Maharashtra are famous for their household painting. The Savars utilizes different natural colours of fruits and vegetables to prepare the famous Madhubani painting. The Santal, Oraon, Munda people are associated with different manual labour works like mining labour, industrial labour, tea garden labour etc (Vidyarthi, 1976: 93-144). Thus for survival, all over the world as well as in India different groups of people are associated with different occupations. To conduct different occupational pursuits people collect and utilize different natural resources to obtain the desired productions. In this regard, the following tables reflects the different occupational categories of India –

Table 1.1: Distribution of occupation per 1000 household

Distribution per 1000 households in rural areas						
State/ Country	Agriculture	Non agriculture	Regular wage/salar y earners	Agricultural labour	Other labour r	Others
West Bengal	273	197	139	230	132	29
India	393	119	129	200	122	37
Distribution per 1000 households in urban areas						
State/ Country	Self employed	Regular wage/salary earners		Casual labour	Other s	
West Bengal	391	453		94	62	
India	356	421		156	67	

Source: Report on Employment and Unemployment Survey 2012-2013,

Anex: Table-3.1,3.2: 3-4

In India and West Bengal agriculture is the prime occupation and agricultural labourers are mostly found. Most of the working sections are associated with regular wage base or salary earning and self employment.

Table 1.2: Employment in organized sector

State/ Country	Total employed (in lakh)	Percentage male	Percentage of female
India	281	80.1	19.9
West Bengal	19.3	87.5	12.5

Source: Selected Socio-economic statistics India 2011:57

In India and West Bengal the employment section is mostly dominated by the males. Women are mostly confined within the house hold sector and unorganized sectors.

Table 1.3: Occupational categories in different sectors

Occupational categories	Public sector	Private sectors	Total
Agricultural, hunting and forestry	463386	893893	1357279
Fishing	13570	2125	15695
Mining and quarrying	1112359	115134	1227493
Manufacturing	1060184	5197760	6257944
Electricity gas and water supply	838930	64103	903033
Construction	844771	80009	924780

Wholesale and retails trade	162059	289588	451647
Hotels and restaurants	11654	182764	194418
Transport storage	2600880	132360	2733240
Financial intermediation	1098276	333243	1431519
Real estate rented and business activities	257570	978239	1235809
Public administration	4684085	11212	4695297
Education	2676016	1654141	4330157
Helath and social work	1376880	235664	1612544
Social service activity	273424	116945	390369
Private households with employed persons	516	5027	5543
Extra-territorial organizations	143	298	441
Grand total	17474703	10292505	27767208

Source: Selected Socio-economic statistics India 2011:64

In Indian context the occupational categories are primarily divided into public and private sector. Most of the employments are associated with the public sectors in India. Among them the public administration is mostly preferred. However manufacturing and mining industry has also generated a significant employment oppurtunities both in public and private sectors.

Apart from various region such occupational diversities are primarily due to the variation of geographical areas, climates and availability of natural resources. The occupation of the people is very much dependent on the availability of natural resources and their scope of proper utilization. If the natural resources become scarce or their scope of utilization become limited or no more, then it may create a severe challenge to the occupation of the group of people. However, there are several factors which can create an acute challenge to the stable occupational pursuit of human being and even can diminish it. It may happen due to various

reasons like deforestation, environmental degradation, political factors, displacement, migration and refugeeism, warfare, industrialization, urbanization etc. For survival people depend on various types of occupation. To maintain livelihood, many of the people work hard day long in inhuman condition in various sectors and that may be organized, unorganized or others too. It is the fact that inspite by knowing the different inconveniences people engage themselves in various hazardous occupations as the other alternative occupations or earning scopes are limited to them. It can be noted that like other various factors, occupation is also a very important factor which greatly affect the health.

In this regard Biswas (2012), stated in his study about the impact of environmental degradation including soil erosion on the occupational pursuits, livelihood security, social structure and social organization of the agricultural and fishing communities in Sagar Island of West Bengal. In his another study, he stated that deforestation and land alienation had severely told upon the traditional occupational pursuit of the Totos which is a primitive tribal group of West Bengal. Both in his studies he mentioned that the said changing situations gradually affected the health of the concerned people. Biswas (2005) stated that during the period of independence of India and Pakistan and during the freedom movement of Bangladesh, a huge section of Hindu people were forced to get displaced from earstwhile Pakistan and they became refugees and still it is going on. He mentioned that the above situation created an acute socio-economic and socio-cultural crisis for the displaced people of Bangladesh and that's why most of them were involved in new occupations for survival. Vidyarthi (1976) stated that post independent industrialization and urbanization had uprooted a huge section of tribal population from their ancestral land and traditional occupational pursuit. The Uttarayan township of North Bengal was established against the complete annihilation of livelihood, economy and settlement of poor tea garden labourers of Chandmoni tea estate (Talwar, Chakraborty and Biswas,2005:4). Thus, there are several causes like environmental degradation, soil erosion, deforestation, migration, displacement, industrialization etc. which can degenerate the occupation and economy organization of any community. Even it can create multifarious crisis over their common minimum livelihood including health and consequently it can create a severe challenge to their social structure and social organization in various forms.

Health is very much related to occupation, economic resources and ways of exploitation of the resources as well as ways of earnings. A stable occupational pursuit and regular earning can secure the quality of food, nutrition and better health care facilities. On the other hand, the economic insecurity can reduce the scope of food, nutrition and health care. For example, in North Bengal region during the last two decades total 19 tea gardens were completely closed. As a result, the concerned workers had lost their jobs and they were living in acute poverty, malnutrition and ill health condition (Talwar, Chakraborty and Biswas,2005:10-11). However, the people who have lost their occupation for different reasons and are struggling for common minimum livelihood often for survival become bound to do various occupations, where the work and the working environment are hazardous to the health and life. Such occupations are known as hazardous occupations and the ailments generated through such works are known as the occupational health hazards (Ali,2008:3). Occupational Health can be defined as “the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of workers in all occupations by preventing departures from health, controlling risks and the adaptation of work to people and people to their jobs (ILO,1998:1). Unhealthy or unsafe working conditions are found in many places. Poor working conditions of any type have the potential to affect a worker's health and safety. Occupational hazards have harmful effects on workers, their families, and other people in the community, as well as on the physical environment around the workplace. Work plays a central role in people's lives, since most workers spend at least eight hours a day in the workplace, whether it is on a plantation, in an office, factory, mines etc. Therefore, working environment is required to be safe and healthy. But every day the workers all over the world are facing with a multitude of health hazards in their work field due to dust, gases, noise, vibration, extreme temperatures etc. The existence of diseases related to work has been documented since antiquity. Imhotep (2780 B.C.) described the cases of occupational injuries and sprain of the vertebrae among the pyramid builders (Koh and Jeyaratnam, cited in Detels et.al. 2002: 1045). Hippocrates (460-377 B.C.) emphasized the importance of environmental factors in disease causation in his treatise on air, water, places (Hunter, 1969). Both Hippocrates and Galen (AD 130-201) described the diseases of certain occupations including metallurgists, fullers, tailors, horseman,

farmhands, fishermen, miners, tanners, chemists and other craftsmen. He stated that the most hazardous and labourious jobs, for example, mining were done by the lowest strata of society such as slaves, prisoners of war and convicted criminals. Further, in the middle ages Georgius Agricola (1494-1555) wrote exclusively on the diseases of miners and smelters of gold and silver, in his book "De Re Metallica", where he described the consumptive lung disease of the miners (Koh and Jeyaratnam, see Detels et.al. 2002: 1045). Paracelsus (1493-1541) in his book "On Miners' Sickness" and other "Miners' Diseases", wrote about pulmonary diseases of miners, smelters, metallurgists where the disease was caused by mercury (Koh and Jeyaratnam, cited in Detels et.al. 2002: 1045). In this context, after industrial revolution, the work started to being carried out in the factories of the urban centres. The consequent affects were seen both within the community as well as in the individual worker. In fact, the most significant health impact of industrialization can be seen on the community. Family life started to get disrupted, with men living their families and moving to work in new industrial areas. In the industrial areas healthy and social problems emerged such as poor housing, sanitation, alcoholism, prostitution and above all poverty. The individual workers too, were the victim of the process of industrialization. Inside the factories, individuals were exposed to long hours of work and uncontrolled occupational hazards and faced the risk of accidents at work. An occupational disease is not characterized merely by the disease itself, but by a combination of a disease and an exposure, as well as an association between these two. Such diseases may be caused by different chemical agents, physical agents, biological agents and even they have target organs like occupational respiratory diseases, occupational pulmonary diseases etc. International Labour Organization report estimated that two million occupational fatalities occur across the world every year, the highest proportions of these deaths being caused by work-related cancers, circulatory and cerebro-vascular diseases, and some communicable diseases. The overall annual rate of occupational accidents, fatal and non-fatal, is estimated at 270 million. Some 160 million workers suffer from work-related diseases and about two-thirds of those are away from work for four working days or longer as a result. After work-related cancers, circulatory diseases and certain communicable diseases, accidental occupational injuries are the fourth main cause of work related fatalities (Ali,2008: 3-5).

In India and China, the rates of occupational fatalities and accidents are similar at respectively 10.4 and 10.5 per 100,000 for fatalities, 8,700 and 8,028 for accidents. In sub-Saharan Africa, the fatality rate per 100,000 workers is 21 and the accident rate 16,000. This means that each year 54,000 workers die and 42 million work-related accidents take place that cause at least three days' absence from work. In Latin America and the Caribbean, about 30,000 fatalities occur each year and 22.6 million occupational accidents cause at least three days' absence from work. It is estimated that, every year throughout the entire globe over 1 million injuries and 2.3 million cases of ill health occur, around 40 million working days are lost, over 25,000 individuals lose their jobs because of injury or ill health (Ali,2008: 3-5). The details may be observed in the following table-

Table 1.4: Incidence of occupational diseases and mortality

Region	Incidence per year	Mortality per year
Established market economies	837,400-895,500	109,800-113,400
Former socialist economies of Europe	201,000-206,700	46,800
India	924,700-1,902,300	121,000
China	88,300-2,537,900	8,600-161,500
Other Asia and islands	711,500-1,463,700	93,100
Sub-Saharan Africa	537,400-1,105,600	70,400
Latin America and Caribbean	407,400-803,000	64,200
Middle eastern crescent	533,000-1,096,600	69,800
World	4,240,700-10,010,800	583,700-704,200

Source: Leigh,1999:629

Table 1.5: Estimated annual incidence of occupational injury and disease in the world

Categories	Number of new cases per year
Injuries	100,688,000
Diseases	106,840
Pesticide poisoning	109,000
Other poisoning	122,000
Cancer	191,000
Mental disorders	318,000
Pneumoconiosis	453,000
Noise-induced hearing loss	1,628,000
Skin disorders	1,895,000
Chronic respiratory disease	2,631,000
Musculoskeletal disorders	3,337,000

Source: Leigh,1999:629

Table 1.6: Fatality related to factories

Fatality in factories			
Nation/State	2008	2009	2010
India	1369	1509	1454
West Bengal	78	65	97
Number of Hazardous factories			
Nation/State	Number of Hazardous factories		Number of workers
India	24046		1949977
West Bengal	3289		217379

Source: www.dgfasli.nic.in/info.1.htm

Although the statistics for the overall incidence of the country is not available but Leigh et.al (1999) have estimated an annual incidence of occupational disease lies between 924,700 to 1,092,300 and 1, 21,000 deaths in India. The major occupational diseases in India are silicosis, musculo-skeletal injuries, coal workers, pneumoconiosis, chronic obstructive lung diseases, asbestosis, byssinosis; pesticide poisoning and noise induced hearing loss. Saiyed and Tiwari (2004) stated that the prevalence of occupational lung disease is 21 per cent in the stone quarries and 12 per cent in stone crushing. It can be represented as follows-

Table 1.7: Prevalence of some of the occupational lung diseases studies carried by National Institute of Occupational Health

Industry	Morbidity	Prevalence (%)
Slate Pencil	Silicosis	54.5
Agate Polishing	Silicosis	38
Stone Quarries	Silicosis	21
Potteries	Silicosis	15.2
Stone Crushing	Silicosis	12
Coal Mines Underground	Coal workers' pneumoconiosis	2.84
	Other respiratory morbidities	45.4
Coal Mines Open Cast	Coal workers' pneumoconiosis	2.1
	Other respiratory morbidities	42.2
Asbestos mine & mill	Asbestosis morbidities	11

Asbestos Textile workers	Asbestosis morbidities	9
Asbestos cement	Asbestosis morbidities	3-5
Textile Mills (Blow Room)	Byssinosis morbidities	30
Textile Mills (Card Room)	Byssinosis morbidities	38
Jute Mills	Byssinosis and other chronic obstructive lung diseases	48.8

Source: Saiyed and Tiwari, 2004:142

Thus, it deserves a special attention that human being search for occupation to sustain their livelihood; however, in certain cases occupation itself snatches the opportunity of survival and the concerned people become vulnerable to a number of diseases and ill health condition even its becomes fatal to them.

Review of Literature

Before the conduction of any research work a conceptual idea about the studied problem and an idea about the studied area, people is earnestly required through literary survey. It can help the researcher to find out the problems to be studied and the scope of such study. Further it helps him to conceptualize about the theoretical framework of research. To conduct this research work, a number of books, journals, national, international reports, data achieves etc. related to the study were consulted as the review of literature to conceptualize the research framework. These are stated below.

Daryll Forde (1934) mainly focused on the socio-economic life of different communities in different regions and emphasized on the interrelationship between environment and economic perspective of a society. Whellwright (1906) discussed about the significance of occupation in the livelihood of human being. He stated about the role of an individual and the role of family in the perspective of occupation. Firth (1939) conducted his study in the Polynesian society and stated about the importance of natural resources in the configuration of economic organization. Mathur (2008) in his study on the tribal communities of India

discussed about the interaction between environmental resources, technological application and its co-relation with the economic organization.

Campbell (1869), discussed about the different ethnic groups and their livelihood and culture in Darjeeling district. Hunter (1876), discussed about the different ethnic groups, their society, culture and traditional economic organization in Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling District. O' Malley (2001), had discussed in detail about the geographical ethnic and demographic aspect of the entire Darjeeling district including Siliguri and its surrounding areas. Bhanja (1941), described about the geographical and ethnic feature of Darjeeling district. Further he discussed about the different rivers of the district and livelihood of the people depending upon the natural resources in the said region. Debnath (2008), discussed about the different ethnic groups and their cultural heritage in North Bengal. He categorically mentioned about the Rajbanshis and their distribution, cultural heritage. Choudhury (2008), discussed about the ethnic and cultural diversities of the Darjeeling Himalayan region. She discussed about the significance of different natural resources in the livelihood of different ethnic groups dwelling in the said region. Barma (2008), discussed about the multi ethnicity of North Bengal. He discussed on the issues of folk cultural heritage of different ethnic groups in North Bengal. Dash (1947) gave a detail account of the entire Darjeeling district. Further, he mentioned about the locational importance of Siliguri and the contemporary socio-economic scenario of the said region and its surroundings. Dalton (1872) mentioned about the ethnology of Bengal and its different ethnic groups. Further he had stated about their traditional occupational pursuits. Sanyal (1965) stated about the ethnographic details of the Rajbanshis. He discussed about the traditional socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects of them and their origin and distribution as a whole. He focused on their several magico-religious beliefs and practices related to their health diseases and treatment. A detail ethnographic account of Indian population was given by Singh (1999). He had stated about the traditional socio-cultural and socio-economic perspective of the Rajbanshis dwelling in North Bengal. Sattar (1971) discussed about the distribution of Rajbansi population in Bangladesh. Further, he focused on the issues different socio-political instability in Bangladesh and its impact on the religious minorities. Roy Barma (1988) discuss about the origin and distribution of the Koch Rajbanshi kingdom in the historical perspective of Cooch

Behar town. Ray (2007) discussed about the social and cultural tradition of the Rajbanshi people. Mukhopadhyay (2009), discussed about the traditional socio-cultural aspects of the Rajbanshis and their factors influencing social changes among them. He also analyzed about the issues of Khasatriyaization among them. Shrestha (2010), discussed about the traditional economic organization and division of labour in the traditional Rajbanshi society. Wilson (2012) discussed about the socio-cultural heritage of the Rajbanshis in Bangladesh. Further, he discussed about their issues of identity based on caste hierarchy.

Dasgupta (1988) mentioned about the Urbanization in north Bengal. In this regard he specially focused on the factors related to the rapid urban flourishing in Siliguri town. Roy (2001) described about the gradual flourishing of Siliguri town in North Bengal. Dutta (2006), discussed about the issues of rapid urban growth in the Eastern Himalayan region. She focused on the various factors related with the urban development of Siliguri and also discussed about the emerging economic opportunities of Siliguri which was a major cause of migration of people in the Siliguri and its adjacent areas related to different jobs and services. Roy (2001) described about the human rights of refugees who were resettled in Northeast Indian regions and in different parts of West Bengal. Datta (2005), discussed about the issues of migration in North Bengal particularly in Siliguri region. Khawas (2008) analyzed about the demographical changes in Darjeeling district particularly due to migration. Datta (2002) described and analyzed in detail about different causes related to the migration. He identified poverty as a major cause of migration and analyzed that the migration has emerged as a major problem in the context of North Bengal. Behera (2011) discussed about the forces and factors associated with the migration of Bangladeshis in India. Reddy (1995) had critically examined on the various forces and factors related to the displacement in Indian context. He emphasized on the changes of economic organizations due to displacement. He analyzed several issues related to the changes of social organizations due to displacement. He also discussed on the multidimensional aspects related to the changes of social organization among the displaced people. Poverty and severe economic crisis has been stated as one of the major causes of migration by Pandey (1986) in his study focused on the issues related to the caste based traditional occupational pursuits and its transition due to migration. Iyer (2004) noted on the factors which has

forced the people of the rural areas to migrate and get involved in different wage labour based works in different urban areas particularly in North-Western parts of India. Further, he also focused on the issues and problems related to the child labour and women workers. Mishra (1985) mainly described about the economic scarcity among the people of the rural areas. She primarily emphasized on the aspects of health, nutrition which has emerged as a common social problem among the poverty stricken families of the rural areas of our country and their migration to urban areas. Gill (1994) focused on the migration of people from rural to urban areas for the sake of new occupational opportunities. He particularly highlighted on the socio-economic condition and the daily livelihood of the concerned people dwelling in the slums. He also emphasized on the interpersonal relationships between the slum dwellers and their familial relationships. Jamwal (2004) discussed about the issues of India Bangladesh border policies and the incidences of illegal trade and migration from Bangladesh to India. Hazra (2012) discussed about the continuous increase of rural to urban migration in India where economic factor is a very crucial aspect. Berry (1997) discussed about the various dimensions of acculturation and adaptation of the immigrant communities in a new settlement. Gill (2003) discussed about the issues of Nepali migration in different parts of India related with their seasonal work and its consequent socio-economic impact on their society. Piotrowski (2010) discussed about the migration of Nepalese people in different parts of India and the consequent socio-economic changes related to such migration. Prasad (1988) in her study on the Reja tribal community discussed about the issues of occupational change due to migration. In her study she focused on the role of women labourers who provided a major contribution to their familial income. However, they had to face severe economic, physical and psychological exploitation throughout their entire livelihood. Breman (2003) focused about the ignorance, exploitation and poverty which can be noticed among the poverty stricken labour class of India. He mainly focused on the socio-economic feature of the people who are engaged in hard manual labour to sustain their daily livelihood. Jhabvala and Subrahmanya (2000) analyzed in detail on the issues of basic needs and social security of the workers who are working in unorganized sectors. In this regard they highlighted on different perspectives of social insecurity of the said workers. They also focused on the issues related to different

problems for the working women and to different health problems of the workers in their concerned occupation sectors. Mandal (2005) in his study analytically discussed about the unorganized occupational sector and he focused on the women workers in the brick factories of North Bengal. He mainly stated about the socio-economic profile, daily livelihood, working atmosphere and the multifarious problems which they have to face during their works. Lister (2004) focused on different aspects of poverty and different causes related to it. He focused on the issues of inequality, discrimination, deprivation and social divisions between the two distinct categories i.e. rich and poor. He also emphasized on the violation of Human Rights of the poor people. Banerjee (1985) focused on the marginalized section of our society female folk has a major contribution in their familial income. She focused these issues among the women workers who were involved in different unorganized sectors in Kolkata. The urban poor of India had a significant affiliation with several unorganized sectors. Ramu (1989) did a significant discussion on the women who worked in different occupational sectors and also had to look after their familial courses in Delhi. In this regard within a specific schedule of time they had to work quite more than their male folk. But often their involvements in the household courses were ignored and in this regard gender discrimination of the male dominated society was quite prevailed. Kaila (2005) stated about the issues related to the working women and their role in familial discourse. Further, she focused about the hardship which the working women are facing in their working involvement as well as in their familial maintenance. He also focused on the issues of domestic violence related to the working women. She also stated about the occupational health hazards of the working women in their working environment. Karlekar (1982) stated that poverty forces the female to down their step beyond the courtyard for the sake of earning. She had discussed such a situation in case of the sweeper women in Delhi. In her study their entire socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects have stated in detail. Further, she also briefed about their different livelihood condition and its impact on their general health situation. Saradamoni (1991) stated about the occupational involvement of the female folk related to the paddy cultivation in rural India. She also described about division of labour existed in the said occupation and different co-related religious customs. She also

stated that the concerned female folk had to play a dual occupational role; both in their occupational sector and in their household.

A significant study on the socio- economic feature of the slum dwellers had been done by Rao (1990) in Mumbai. He also highlighted on the socio-cultural aspects of the concerned people with a prime focus on their social structure, social organization as well as familial and inter-personal relationships. There are several factors which are mainly responsible to force the children in several working activities. It has been clearly stated by Mohsin (2002). He also focused to the socialization and personality formation of the children in the context of their working and social environment. Singh and Pothan (1982) did an in-depth study on the formation of slums as a social problem in the context of our country. He cited about the social composition of the slums and the position of a children in a slum dwelling family. He mainly highlighted on the familial relationship of slum dwellers and its impact on socialization, psychological development, education and nourishment of their children in the concerned families.

Sujatha (2003) stated about the cultural practices and traditional knowledge related to health, disease and treatment. She focused on deep co-relation between human health and his physical environment. Banerjee and Jalota (1988) primarily focused on the importance of traditional knowledge related to the ailment of health problems. They focused on the interaction between man and environment which is related to the socio-cultural aspects of concerned people and the issues related to their health, disease and treatment. Chaudhuri (2003) focused on the issues of interaction between health and forest environment in the context of tribal societies. He stated about the magico-religious belief and practices among the tribals for the ailments of diseases which have rather become a part of their psychological support and the entire process is deeply concerned with their surrounding environmental factors. Telu Ram (1993) stated about the interaction between environment and health. Further he focused to the co-relation between cultural factors and health. He also discussed about different types of occupational health issues. Marmot and Wilkinson (2006) mainly focused about the role of social organization, livelihood environment and neighbourhood relationships related to the health issues of a people. They also stated about the importance of working environment related to the health situation of the people. Sarkar and Dasgupta (2000) stated about the impact of environment on the

livelihood and culture of the indigenous communities of India. It also focused on the significance of indigenous knowledge related to traditional health care practices. Park (2013) focused on the concept of health, disease and treatment. It provided a detail analysis about the feature of social and cultural aspects related to the health issue. Further it gave a brief account about the food, nutrition and their role in general health and also analyzed the role of environment in the aspects of health. Detels (2002) stated mainly about the scenario of public health and diseases in a world wide perspective. He also highlighted on several other social and cultural aspects related to the health and disease in a global perspective. Stellman (2011) discussed about the major occupational health hazards throughout the entire world. He also stated about the problems of the women workers and the child workers in different working sectors. In this regard he also emphasized to the relationship between working environment and concerned health issues. Alli (2008) discussed about different hazardous occupational pursuits prevailing in the world and its resulted fatality. Further, he stated about the different safety measures to prevent the occupational health hazards. World Health Organization report (2007) stated about the global burden of occupational diseases and its impact on the rights to health of the workers. Lansdown (2008) stated about the carcinogenic effect of different metals which are related to multifarious industry based occupational sectors. Saiyed and Tiwari (2004) discussed about some of the major researches on occupational health issues conducted in India. They focused on different hazardous occupation and prevalence of the fatality in Indian context. Mandal (2005) mentioned about the health hazards of the labourers working in the brick factories. Report on the 60th World Health Assembly of WHO (2007) focused on the proposed plan to secure the health aspects of industrial workers across the globe during the period of 2008-2017. Leigh (1999) discussed about the rapid increase of various disease and injuries in different occupational sectors across the globe with a special focus on the stone crushing occupation. Law (1998) focused on the inter-relationship between occupational health and well being of the people. They analyzed the health related risk factors associated with certain mining based occupation with a special reference to stone quarries. Takala (1999) focused on the issues of major accidents related to different occupational sectors. He further focused on the issues which are creating fatality and permanent physical disability caused due to



such accidents. He also focused on the stone crushing occupation in this aspect. Biswas and Bhattacharjee (2007) discussed about certain health problems of the stone crushers working on Balasan river bed. Ilyas and Rasheed (2010) stated about the health hazards generated by stone crushing occupation in Pakistan. They focused that although the said occupation provide a high rate of gross domestic production of the said country, however the common minimum livelihood requisites of the concerned workers are facing an acute challenge and there are severe respiratory and other health hazards. Nwibo (2012) focused on the issues of multifarious pulmonary problems caused due to stone crushing occupation in the African continent with a special reference to Nigeria. Kitcher (2012) analyzed the problem of hearing loss among the children and adults who are associated with the stone crushing occupation in Ghana. Saha and Padhy (2011) discussed about the role of suspended particulated matter (spm) generated through the stone crushing occupation in creating environmental pollution. They analyzed how such spm are affecting on the forest resource of Lalpahari region and its consequent impact on the livelihood of the indigenous communities. Mukhopadhyay (2011) discussed about the problem of silicosis generated through the stone crushing occupation among the concerned workers in the stone quarries of central Indian region. Further, they focused on the issues of multifarious respiratory problems prevalent among the workers associated with the stone crushing occupation. Walts et.al. (2012) discussed about the effect of quartz in the health aspects of the mining workers. Onder and Onder (2012) discussed the incidences of hearing loss among the mining workers. Tiwari et.al. (2007) discussed about the incidences of tuberculosis among the workers who are exposed to silica dust.

However, all of the above studied works did not focused the issues that how certain socio-political factors can create land alienation, displacement and further involvement in hazardous occupation of a community or ethnic group or people like the Rajbanshis in general. Further, the above mentioned works did not focus the issue that how displacement can snatched the traditional occupational opportunities of a group of people and even force them to get involved in a hazardous occupation in the unorganized sector. In this context, the present study has been done on a section of migrant Rajbanshi people who are associated with the stone based occupation and primarily stone crushing work on Balasan river

bed which is adjacent to the Siliguri urban centre of Darjeeling district. Through an initial study during my M.Sc. dissertation course in 2003-2004, it was known that earlier most of them were settled in Bangladesh and were associated with agricultural occupation. They came here with roofless and any resourceless in condition and they were illegal migrants. However, due to certain factors they were forced to get displaced and later they came to the Balasan river bed and got a scope of resettlement on the vested land. They became involved in the collection of natural resources from the Balasan river like the stones, sand and boulders which were supplied for urban constructions in different areas and in this way they maintain their livelihood anyhow. Such issues attracted me to know about their socio-economic condition and co-related livelihood factors more elaborately. During the above mentioned study it seemed to me that the process of entire work may be quite arduous. The working environment appeared to be moist, dusty and polluted. However if they were migrant and came there with roofless and any resourceless in condition then what factors were responsible for their migration, when they came there and made the settlement? Was that their socio-economic situation which forced them to get involved in the stone crushing and related works? The working environment was moist, dusty and polluted, but still they were working and dwelling there- why? Was it any way related to their poor income or they had not other better alternative earning scope? If their income is little then how they were fulfilling their daily requirements and in this regard did they face any problem related with the same? Earlier they were involved in agricultural work in Bangladesh but during the study they were living in the Balasan river bed and engaged themselves in stone crushing works. Do such changes anyway affected their socio-cultural life, if yes then to what extent? They earned little, thus for survival who of the family members worked their and how long and what were their nature of works? They worked in the stone filed and primarily associated with stone crushing work in a dusty and polluted working atmosphere. Against the arduous labour what was their income? If it was poor whether it any way prevented to get required nutritious food? Do the people faced any sort of health problem as they were engaged in a hazardous occupation? Further if the working environment was polluted then do they suffer from various diseases, if yes then what types of diseases or injuries they were suffering from and what sort of treatment they availed? Such issues attracted me to observe and

analyze in detail about their situation including cause of migration, their further involvement in the stone based occupation, socio-economic situation etc and the impact of the said work as well as working environment on their health and so on.

Scope of the study

The above mentioned Rajbanshi people were all migrants and during the period of study they were living in the Balasan river bed which is very nearer to the Siliguri town of Darjeeling district in West Bengal. Most of them came from Bangladesh illegally with roofless and resourceless in condition primarily for survival. The Rajbanshis are one of the early settlers in this region and particularly living in North Bengal, Assam and its adjacent areas of the districts of Bangladesh. In India they are belonging to Scheduled Caste category and they are numerically dominant Scheduled Caste group of North Bengal and second largest Scheduled caste group of West Bengal. Traditionally they were agriculturist and folk based society. They had own socio-cultural norms, values and customs as well as their cultural heritage was rich. However the studied section of Rajbanshi population who were living on Balasan river bed were all migrants and came here with a very poor in condition. They came here from Bangladesh due to socio-political turmoil or some other reasons, a few of them came from other districts of North Bengal and adjacent areas adjusted their primarily due to poverty. That means the situations like socio-political unrest, poverty or other reasons forced them to come to the studied area for a scope of settlement and to opt the stone based work. The migrant Rajbansi people became affiliated with the stone crushing work after their displacement. It may raise a very pertinent query that whether the stone crushing work and the scope of resettlement have secured their socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects of livelihood or still they are suffering from common minimum requirements. Primarily for survival they engaged themselves in this hazardous type of occupation. To adjust with this new environment, socio-cultural system, economy, administration the said people may had faced several problems. Due to several factors they got migrated and were exposed to a new physical and social environment. However, their issues of social and administrative identity became a matter of concern. Although, they got the scope of resettlement on Balasan river bed but a major issue lied to the fact that whether it was an authorized or documented settlement or not. Again whether they had the right to citizenship of

India or they were the undocumented migrant; whether they had the right to claim over different Governmental beneficiary schemes or they were deprived of it. They were involved in a new occupational pursuit and new working atmosphere. However, a few issues became very pertinent to study like the pattern of work organization associated with this occupation; whether the occupation had any age and gender based division of labour; whether the occupation was very arduous; do they earned adequate amount of remuneration against their work and how far it could meet up with their livelihood requirements. Again, whether the issues of displacement and new occupational involvement had created any alternation to their family type or family structure; whether the alternation of occupation and settlement initiated any change over their religious performances either at the individual or community level. It is to be mentioned here that the studied area was located at the Sub Himalayan foot-hills with plentiful of natural resources like stones, sand and boulders. It was a region of heavy showers. As a result, the Balasan river had waist deep water throughout the entire year and the concerned level raised a lot during the rainy season. Due to continuous work related to the natural resources like stone, sand the river bed was quite dusty as well as it was very much moist in condition. Thus, it may be predicted that the studied people had to conduct the said occupation in a moist, dusty and polluted atmosphere. In this consequence, the concerned people might have a probability to become quite vulnerable to a number of occupational injuries and other diseases related to their working schedule, working involvement, working atmosphere as well as daily livelihood circumstances. However, with their income could they afford proper treatment to redress their ailments and ill health condition; what were the options left for them related to health, disease and treatment; during the work do they used any sort of safety devices to avoid injuries and occupational hazards. Meanwhile do they had the scope to get some legal beneficiaries against their occupational injuries or other vulnerabilities. Their socio-economic condition might be considered with prime importance as it was related to working environment and their daily livelihood condition as a whole. In this concern, there was a scope to examine the social structure and role of their social organization, social institutions as well as cultural aspects and their contemporary situation. The impact of their working and surrounding environment on daily livelihood condition might be an important area of study. Apart from this, the impact of

migration on the socio-economic and socio-cultural factors and its overall impact on the health situation of the concerned people is a very important aspect. Thus there were so many scopes of study as mentioned above and among them the major area of study was their social structure and social organization, migration, overall socio-cultural situation of the migrated Rajbansis, their economy and in particular stone based as well as stone crushing work, health situation, human securities and human rights issues and various changing situations etc.

Aims and objectives of the present study

In any research of social science certain general goals, academic goals, theoretical goals and the pragmatic goals are associated with their aims and objectives. The aims of a social science research is primarily to understand the functioning of society, to study the individual behaviour and social action, to evaluate social problems, their effects on society and to find out possible solutions, to explore social reality, to explain social life and to develop theories. In the context of present study the socio-economic and the health issues of the stone crushers will be examined from multidimensional perspectives. However, being a scientific research in the field of Anthropology, the present study has a number of relevant objectives which are stated below-

1. To know about the society and cultural tradition of the Rajbanshi people.
2. To know about the causes that influenced the studied people to choose the stone based occupation.
3. To know about the stone crushing work, organization of the work and working atmosphere in detail. In this regard special emphasis has been given to-
 - a) The inter-personal relationship between the workers with their work organizers and their neighbourhood.
 - b) Different perspectives of the stone based work, daily working schedule and the working involvement of the concerned people.
4. To know the socio-economic condition of the studied people in respect of their level of earning and the remuneration paid against their work.

5. To know about their social structure, social organization, their function and cultural practices related to daily livelihood in present context.
6. To know about the overall health situation of the stone crushing people. It has specially emphasized on-
 - a) Their socio-economic condition and its impact on the health situation.
 - b) Their socio-cultural practices related to daily livelihood, basic livelihood amenities and its consequent impact on their health situation.
 - c) Different diseases, occupational injuries of the studied people in their daily livelihood and working involvement as well as its probable mode of treatment and difficulties.
 - d) The impact of working atmosphere and social life on their overall health situation.

Hypothesis

A hypothesis is an assumption about relations between variables. It is tentative explanation of the research problem or a guess about the research outcome. According to Theodorson and Theodorson (1969), “a hypothesis is a tentative statement asserting a relationship between certain facts.” This statement is intended to be tested empirically and is either verified or rejected. Test here means either to prove it wrong or to confirm it (Ahuja, 2001:71). The major criteria of a hypothesis is, it should be empirically testable, it should be specific and precise, it should specify variables between which the relationship is to be established, it should describe one issue only.

Hypotheses are important as tools of scientific enquiry because they are derived from theory or lead to theory. It helps the social scientists to suggest a theory that may explain and predict events, and it performs a descriptive function. In the context of present study the following hypothesis can be formulated-

1. Any socio-political unrest or turmoil may generate the displacement of people and it can consequently alter their traditional occupation and economy.
2. Displacement and the consequent loss of traditional occupation may degenerate the economic backbone of the concerned people.

3. Displacement may cause a major alternation in the social structure and social organization of a concerned society and it may alter a number of traditional cultural practices among them.
4. Poverty and fragile economic condition may result an adverse impact upon education, social life and health situation of a community.
5. In a community the prevalence of poor socio-economic condition can be responsible for poor health condition of the concerned people. Further it is not merely an individual matter rather all the community members may be affected due to such adverse condition.
6. Economic scarcity and consequent struggle for daily livelihood may generate distress in social life which may tell upon their health situation.
7. Health situation of an individual mostly depend on the socio-economic condition and allied factors like categories of work, working environment, working schedule, remuneration against work, quality of daily feeding and social situation of the concerned people.

Research methodology

Methodology refers to the structure of procedures and transformational rules whereby the scientists shifts information up and down this ladder of abstraction in order to produce and organize increased knowledge. Methodology denotes the logic-in-use involved in selecting particular observational techniques, assessing their yield of data and relating these data to the theoretical propositions (Pelto and Pelto, 1978:2-3). According to Theodorson and Theodorson (1969), “it is a systematic and objective attempt to study a problem for the purpose of deriving general principles.” Russell Bernard (1998) describes it as a systematic investigation to find solutions to a problem. The investigation is guided by previously collected information. The researches in the field of social-cultural anthropology are an empirical one which involves observation of facts or interaction with people. The concerned researches focus on the study of human groups or the process of social interaction and the knowledge is build through the collection of empirically verifiable facts.

To conduct the present study both primary and secondary sources were used to collect data and other required information. The primary data were collected

through intensive and empirical field work. However, the secondary sources of data collection was done from books, journals, periodicals, district gazetteers, census, data archive, infibnet and various internet sites, different Government reports as well as various national and international reports etc. District Statistical Handbook; and various published and unpublished official records of the Government of India, Government of West Bengal and so on were also consulted.

To do this research work the primary data was collected by me through field study. In this regard to conduct the present study I have selected a village namely Balasan colony which is in the Matigara block under the Siliguri sub division in Darjeeling district of West Bengal. All the studied people belonged to the Rajbanshi community and they were under the category of Scheduled Caste. They were numerically dominant in North Bengal. At first a pilot survey was done in the studied area during January 2006. The concerned study was exclusively done on the stone crushing people. In this regard the Balasan colony was selected for study as it was the largest and oldest settlement on the Balasan river bed where the people associated with stone based occupation were dwelling. The studied area used to supply huge quantity of raw materials to the different parts of the country and neighbouring areas. Based on those two major criteria, i.e. the settlement of migrant Rajbanshi population and stone based occupation the studied area Balasan colony was selected. In the Balasan Colony there were total 347 families and among them 325 were associated with the stone crushing occupation and rest of the 22 families were associated with different other occupations in the said area. Meanwhile all of the 347 families belonged to the Rajbanshi caste group. The study has been conducted among 325 families, where all the members were primarily or secondarily involved in the stone based occupation. The studied people could easily communicate through Bengali and their written language was also Bengali. The researcher's knowledge of Bengali enabled him to have a free interaction with the studied people. The concerned field work was conducted in different time span. It was started from January 2006 and extended upto December, 2013. The major period of data collection extended between 2008 to 2013. However, during the period of analysis and report writing for the verification of data the field study was required to be conducted for a number of times during the period of 2013. To collect the primary data from the

field the field work was done in three different times: i) From January 2006 to June 2010; ii) July 2010 to December 2011;

iii) January 2012 to December 2013. However to conduct the research work the total field work was done in seven stages which are discussed below.

Stage I: Initially a pilot survey was conducted to select the studied area. During this period the primary occupational feature of the concerned people was revealed. Rapport establishment was gradually built up with them to inform about the forthcoming study and its importance.

Stage II: Along with continuous observation, Preliminary Census Schedule (PCS) were used to collect the family level data covering all the stone crushing families of the studied village, Balasan colony. The details of that form are discussed in the forthcoming sections.

Stage III: Case studies were taken on the migrated families; on the occupational change of the concerned people; on the people related to the stone crushing occupation and about their views related to the same; on the educational constraints of the children. The concerned case studies were taken on the basis of sample.

Stage IV: Further, case studies were also taken on the persons suffering from different diseases and health hazards, as well as their method of treatment. In this study, the person who were suffering from different diseases since the last two years were considered for evaluation. The concerned case studies were taken on the basis of sample.

Stage V: Detailed open structured and structured interviews were taken from the medical personal including the traditional healers and western medical practitioners (quack, doctor, private doctor, health officer and health assistant of sub centres, PHC's, Sub divisional hospital and medical college.

Stage VI: Evaluation of different global and Central Government schemes related to rural development, social security of unorganized occupational sector; different global and national health schemes and projects were also evaluated. In this concern, the interviews of different administrative personal, village Panchayat were taken. The interviews of workers and helpers related to Government schemes and projects were also taken during this period of study.

Stage VII: The daily livelihood of the studied people, their working condition, the actual situation and infrastructure of sub centres, PHC's, sub divisional hospital and medical college were observed under this division and relevant data were collected during this period. The visit in each medical institution during this period also provided adequate information. The availability of medicine and the social awareness of the adjacent medical shop owners were also observed by the researcher during that phase of field work.

During these different phases the qualitative and quantitative data were collected from the field through the following ways –

Stage I: During this stage the pilot survey was conducted and interaction was established with the local people. During this stage the total studied families were selected and the area map was prepared. Along with that the local administrative set up of the studied area and the status of settlement of the studied people was verified from the concerned Government official sectors.

Stage II Preliminary Census Schedules (PCS): There are eight sub sections in this form. At the first phase of field work the data were collected through it from every family of the studied area. The major contents of the form were-

1. General information at the family level : It provided the information of – (i) house hold number; (ii) date of survey; (iii) name of the informant; (iv) total members of the family; (v) relationship of the members with their head of the family.
2. Demographic information at the individual level : It provided the information about the individual members of the studied families related to their (i) name; (ii) age; (iii) sex; (iv) marital status; (v) age at marriage; (vi) age at first child; (vii) occupational pursuit; (viii) educational status; (ix) cause of educational drop out.
3. Information about migration and resettlement: It provided the information related to their- (i) period of migration; (ii) major cause of migration and (iii) place of migration. It also stated about their (iv) previous land holding pattern. It also focused on their issue of (v) resettlement; (vi) contemporary land holding pattern and (vii) administrative affiliation.
4. Information about present occupational pursuit: It highlighted on their- (i) generation wise occupation; (ii) present occupational involvement of the family members; (iii) technological implements applied in the work; (iv) type of work;

(v) daily working schedule; (vi) mode of payment; (vii) monthly income and expenditure; viii) any sort of loan or indebtedness.

5. Allied familial issues: It focused on the issues related to (i) addictions of the male in the studied families. It also helped to collect data about the major issues related to the (ii) familial conflicts.

6. Information of the health situation at the individual level: It provided the information related to their- (i) general health awareness; (ii) place of birth; (iii) who attended during that period (doctor/quack, nurse, midwife); (iv) quality of daily food and nutrition; (v) information about the food and nutrition of pregnant women; (vi) issue of child mortality. Further, it also focused about their (vii) different types of diseases and (viii) its causes; (ix) duration of the diseases; (x) procedure of treatment (traditional, modern), different food taboos related to the diseases; (xi) about its ailment during the study; (xii) economic expenditure for the purpose; (xiii) status of immunization of the reproductive women and children; (xiv) pulse polio vaccination; (xv) attendance to ICDS (for pregnant mother and children only); (xvi) consensus about family planning (for married adult only); (xvii) feature of addictions at the individual level.

7. Information about their house: It focused on their (i) number of room; (ii) position of kitchen; (iii) condition of it – (a) kuchha or (b) pucca; (iv) drainage system; (v) presence of electricity in the houses.

8. Information on health situation at the family level: It provides the information related to the (i) source of drinking water and water for other household courses; (ii) purification of drinking water; (iii) daily food habit; (iv) practices of daily bathing and cleanliness of cloth; (v) means of sanitation in the houses.

Stage III and IV Case Studies: According to the analysis of PCS the sample of the detailed case study on different aspect were chosen from the studied village. The major categories of selection were distinctive from each other according to the cases. These are discussed below-

In the case study on migration, the first migrant family and the last migrant family (till the study) were considered. Along with that, in the period of every five years, the case study of a family has been selected. Those concerned families were the first migrant one during that time span. In such a way, total ten case studies were taken. in the cases of generation wise occupation two case studies were taken.

One of them belonged to the first group of migrant people involved in agricultural work and the other was earlier involved in priesthood.

Regarding the case studies on present occupational pursuit, it was distinguished into three criterion viz. the elderly most people, the people working for the longest duration and the youngest child working group. From each of this category a male and a female individual was selected. Case studies were also taken on the educational constraints of the children. In this regard, the children belonged to the eldest and the youngest age group of child population was considered. From each category case studies of both the sexes were taken, which revealed distinctive criterion. In this section total four case studies were discussed. Meanwhile case studies were also taken on the issue of familial conflict and its impact particularly on the children. Here total three cases were taken depending upon their distinctive cause and severity of the issue. Further, the case studies were taken on the people suffering from various diseases. In this regard, the criterion which had been considered are sex, type of disease, duration of suffering, mode of treatment. For each distinctive disease and their mode of treatment, the case studies of a male and female were taken who were suffering for the longest duration. All the case studies were taken according to the availability of the respondents. These were taken through the structured (open and close) interview schedule.

Stage V: To collect data on the traditional healing practices, the author had to face some problems at the beginning of this work. At the initial stage the traditional healers thought that the author might have some ill motive to know all about the secrets of the services, techniques, practices and so on. But on clarification of the nature and objective of the present study, the author became successful in winning their confidence as well as faithfulness. Soon the informants (traditional healers) became friendlier and rapport was established. Although there was an open structured interview schedule but the author met with them for several times in their own healing places to collect adequate data. A different open structured interview schedule was used for taking data from western medical practitioners. As they were quite well aware about this work so the interviews were so formal and friendly. It is remarkable that some suggestion of them regarding this work was an added achievement. Along with the above formal method and technique the authors observation regarding various aspects

was quite mentionable in this study. Along with the natural causes for different diseases, the studied people had a strong belief about different super natural forces like evil spirit, ghost etc. which could cause several diseases. For the ailment of the same, they had a psychological faith on different magico-religious practices. In this regard, the combination of modern medical practices and traditional medical practices could be easily noticed in the studied area.

Stage VI: During the study, the author had communicated for several times with Block Development Officer, Panchayat Pradhan, local village Panchayat, other official staffs of the Panchayat and block office, official staffs related to different government sponsored projects and medical institutions. They were fully aware of the present study. During these conversations, a wide range of diversified aspects had been covered related to their different aspects of livelihood. The active participation and wide range of help of the concerned people enlightened the knowledge of the author, regarding various aspects, which include different governmental schemes, its scope of implementation and majors constraints related to it.

The villagers gathered after evening at the local market to gossip as well as to exchange their news and views. It was a conducive time for the researcher to collect data directly from them. Focus group interviews were also taken during the said period. In many cases there were different types of opinion among the villagers and it was taken from one, in front of other; that's why in the same time crosschecking of different data could be possible. The researcher did participant observation of magico-religious healing practices, rites and rituals which were held to ward off evil spirit and diseases. During the study researcher also took some herbal medicine given by a traditional healer for coping with severe eye swelling due to dust. Remedy from the sudden eye swelling was a memorable fact during the period of field work.

Stage VII: Anthropological research in human community is inevitably complex and personalized. It is carried through intensive study in one or few communities. It is committed to study all the culture known to the mankind. Anthropological research design lie in the structure of primary data which were actually gathered through field research operations. The anthropological investigations aim to descriptive integration with determination of cause of phenomena. The present

study includes research design on descriptive analysis. Primary source of this study are confined on the data collected through preliminary census schedule, case studies, open structured interview of traditional and modern medical practitioners, health officials of different medical institutions, Integrated Child Developmental Scheme (ICDS), malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy and polio eradication project officers, general health worker, and observation during the field study.

The collected data were of two types viz. qualitative and quantitative. All the data were classified and the tables were prepared manually and analyzed. Maps illustrating the location of the concerned study areas was included where ever needed. The researcher went through library works in different academic institutes to collect relevant information from different books, journals, encyclopedias, dictionaries, scientific papers, articles and Ph.D. thesis etc.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is comprised of following seven chapters-

Chapter I- Introduction: In this chapter major discussion has been done on the different perspectives of human occupation. In this context the significance of environmental resources in different economic organization has been analyzed particularly among the indigenous people. Further, the issues of different occupational health hazards and its correlated fatality as well as the incidences of permanent disability have been analyzed. In this connection a brief note about the present study and research methodology has been discussed.

Chapter II- Urbanization in Siliguri and the Issue of Migration: This chapter primarily emphasized on the gradual urban development of Siliguri and the major causes responsible for its proliferation as the largest urban centre of North Bengal. Here the discussion is done on diversified working opportunities in this region particularly in the sector of manual labour works. Further, the issues related to the migration of people mainly from Bangladesh to North Bengal has been discussed. In this regard the significance of the studied area has been revealed.

Chapter III- The Studied Area and People: In this chapter the researcher has discussed about the present studied area as well as its geographical and administrative set up. Then the discussion has been done on the brief historical background of the concerned people particularly on their traditional socio-

economic and socio-cultural practices. Next, in this chapter a major emphasis has been given on the issues of migration and re settlement of the studied people.

Chapter IV- Occupation of the Studied People: This chapter is a very crucial one from the perspective of the present study. Here a detail analysis of the stone crushing occupation had been done. In this regard, the involvement of the concerned people in this occupation and its relevance to their livelihood has been discussed. Reader could easily have an in depth idea about the working atmosphere, working schedule, rate of stones, work organization and division of labour related to the said occupation from this chapter. Further, the detail about their issues of monthly income and its impact on the common minimum livelihood of the concerned people have been discussed.

Chapter V- Social Life of the Stone Crushers: Here discussion has been done on the issue of social structure, social organization, daily cultural practices as well as religious and political organization of the studied people. Reader can also have a brief idea about United Nation's and Central Governments Social Development goals and contemporary situation of the studied people as well as different emerging social problems of the studied area.

Chapter VI- Health Situation of the Stone Crushers: In this chapter researcher has focused on the interaction between socio- cultural practices related to health, disease and treatment. Different national health policies and health rights of human being have also been discussed. From this chapter, reader can get an elaborate idea about traditional concept of health, disease and treatment of the studied people. Case studies of those patients who availed the traditional medical treatment in different circumstances is a vital portion of this chapter. Several super natural beliefs of the studied people are also discussed here. Idea about community participation of different religious festival to prevent several ill health conditions is a major area of emphasis. Role and activities of the traditional healers and the psychological faith of the studied people upon them is one of the crucial part of this chapter.

The reader can find a detailed discussion about different western medical health care facilities as well as programmes of the Central Government and its contemporary scenario in the studied area. In this regard, actual condition of the western medical institutions deserved a special attention in this chapter. Role and activities of western medical practitioners could focus on a number of

contemporary issues related to the western health care facilities of the studied area. Case studies of the concerned patients who availed western medical facilities in different circumstances were also a vital portion of this chapter. Hygienic condition related to daily livelihood practices has also been discussed in detail. Further, an illustrative description about the overall physical, mental and social health condition of the studied people and the concerned society has been done.

Chapter VII: General Observation- An overall discussion of all the above raised issues were the main portion of this chapter and a general observation about the whole work was also given along with the suggestive measures.

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CHAPTER II

URBANIZATION IN SILIGURI AND THE ISSUE OF MIGRATION

In the perspective of global population scenario, about two third population of the total population increase in the developing world will add an amount of 600 million people during the present decade. It is estimated that 1.9 billion people will be living in towns and cities in developing countries and it may approach 3.5 billion by the year 2020 (Sandhu,2000:3). According to Philip A. Houser and J. Metras, "Urban area is that area where people live in large numbers and the density of population is high and large part of population is engaged in non agricultural activities" (Jhingan,2003:148). According to UN Report, the definition of an urban area can be given on the basis of five concepts viz. size of population, administrative area, expansion of local government, urban features and domination of economic activities (cited in Sandhu,2000:4). In the Indian Census of 1951, whichever area had municipality was called urban area; even it does not possess any other urban features. In the census of 1971, the following strict scale definition of urban area was adopted –

- i) All places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee etc. so declared by a state law.
- ii) All other places that satisfy the following three conditions viz. a) a minimum population of 5,000;
- b) At least 75 percent of male working population engaged in non agricultural pursuits; c) Density of population of at least 400 persons per square kilometer.

According to Census 2011, out of total 1210.2 million population in India, the urban population is 377.1 million or 31.16 percent. The urban population is expected to reach at 564 million by 2021 (Singh, 2005:1). Moreover by now about 1/4th of India's population resides in urban areas called as towns and cities (Nagpaul: 1996, 30-31). The rapid urban growth in India is not confined within any specific region, it is a common phenomenon of the entire nation and the region of North Bengal is not exceptional from this trend. In the said region,

Siliguri is recognized as the largest urban center and it is also the second largest urban center of the state.

Importance of the Area

The town of Siliguri, “ the stony site” is 396 feet above the sea level and is situated at 26° 43' N latitude and 86° 26' E longitude, in the foothills of the Darjeeling Himalayan Region on the verge of Terrain. It lies on the bank of river *Mahananda* river close to the border of the Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri district. It was mere village with a population of 784 in 1901 and from where it has emerged as a town by reason of its importance as a centre of communication and transshipment. When the North Bengal State Railway was extended to Siliguri in 1878, the village was transferred from the Jalpaiguri district to Darjeeling. The Darjeeling Hill Railway on a different gauge was very soon completed and the cart road to Darjeeling was thereafter steadily improved. Siliguri thus became a transshipment point from the meter gauge railway to the narrow gauge railway and the Cart Road. Roads and railways were later opened out in the Terai and up the Teesta valley, thus increasing the business importance of Siliguri. Such administrative importance as Siliguri has secured is due to its position as a focus of communication (Dash, 1947:263). Siliguri's geographical location is very important to understand its phenomenal growth in the post partition Bengal. The Siliguri subdivision is bounded by Kurseong on the North, Bihar and Bangladesh on the South, Jalpaiguri on the East and Nepal on the West. Though administratively a mere sub divisional town, its importance lies in its role as a commercial centre at the nodal point on the cross roads from east to west and from north to south in the gateway of Northeast India. Siliguri is well communicated with other urban centers of North Bengal and South Bengal; other states of India and with a number of adjacent inter national countries. Primarily Siliguri is a commercial centre and connected with entire dooars, Sikkim. Further, the Northeastern states like Assam, Arunachal Pradesh are well communicated with Siliguri. Through railways, Siliguri is communicated with almost all prime urban centres of India. International countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh are at very close vicinity from Siliguri. Even through Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Tibet, Siliguri is communicated to China and Myanmar. Primarily Darjeeling, Sikkim and adjacent hill stations are considered as one of the renowned tourist

spots throughout the world. The scenic beauty of Dooars and historically important towns like Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar also attracts a number of tourists from every corner of the country and from abroad. Siliguri is considered as the juncture spot for the tourists. Diversified occupational pursuits and alternative ways of survival can be easily availed in Siliguri. As a result, people from adjacent districts and states frequently migrate to Siliguri for permanent source of income and in search of common minimum livelihood. The sudden increase of population in Siliguri might be ascribed to the partition of Bengal in 1947 and a huge number of migrants came to Siliguri and established their permanent settlement. Its importance further increased after the Sino-Indian border war of 1962. Further, due to political unrest in Nepal and due to various problems in Bihar a huge number of Nepalese and Bihari migrants came directly to Siliguri town. Primarily on the basis of tea industry in Darjeeling and dooars along with rapid urban growth of Siliguri, a number of supportive industries and factories started to develop here and the migrants got the opportunities of involvement in it. Again, a number of new small scale cottage based industries mainly chemical produces, automobiles, household appliances, small scale iron based implements, food processing products, mining, asbestos, slate, marble and urban construction based works provided a wide and open job market to the educated youths and uneducated labour forces.

Siliguri is communicated with other national and international territories mainly through NH 31, Siliguri-Jalpaiguri state highway, New Jalpaiguri railway junction and Bagdogra Airport mainly. Due to this communicational importance it became the leading business centres of West Bengal and entire Northeast India. The contemporary economic characteristic of Siliguri was service cum trade and commercial cum industrial. Despite the prime urban centre of North Bengal, Siliguri became the most important trade-commercial centre of the entire North Bengal and one of the major urban centers of entire Northeast India.

Urban Development in Siliguri and Neighbourhood Areas

The scenario of urban development in Siliguri had taken place in a very quick succession. According to the report of Siliguri Municipal Corporation of 2013, the total area of it was 41.90 sq.km; with a population of 5,09,709 and the population density was 11,171/sq.km. Regarding urban amenities, the town was provided

with a number of civic conveniences like markets, educational institutions from school to university level, nursing homes, hospitals, medical colleges etc. To provide the civic amenities and daily requirements to the urban dwellers approximately 189 factories of medium to small scale based with its subsidiary outlets got emerged in and around the Siliguri town. A number of township and industrial projects had grown up and many of them were under construction. Regarding its importance as a tourist center, a number of luxury hotels were developed which became a direct source to earn foreign currencies. With the continuous flourishing as the largest urban center of North Bengal, a number of new job sectors and sources of income gradually started to emerge. People from adjacent districts and states started to come in Siliguri in search of occupation and settled down permanently. Even a huge number of migrants from the adjacent international countries like Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh were dwelling in and around the Siliguri for the sake of livelihood. In this way, there occurred a huge population growth. Along with the continuous urban development, there were huge scopes of construction works, wage based skilled labour works and other labour works. The people of adjacent sub urban areas and nearby villages came regularly to this town for their daily livelihood. There were 500 neighbouring villages and local hamlets around the vicinity of Siliguri town that were dependent on it for economic and various other reasons. The continuous urban flourishing of this town was not only concentrated within the area of Siliguri Municipal Corporation, rather the areas upto 10 miles radius like Matigara, Shivmandir and Bagdogra had been included under the greater urban agglomeration of the Siliguri town. The potential and process of urban growth and development in Siliguri received recognition in 1931 when it became a non-municipal town, which was followed by its declaration as a Municipal Town in 1950. Siliguri Municipality had an area of 15.54 sq. km, which was substantially increased in 1994 to 41.90 sq. km when it was upgraded to Siliguri Municipal Corporation. This is an indicator of the rapid pace of urbanization in Siliguri Urban Area (SUA), which comprises Siliguri Municipal Corporation and the adjacent urban growth centres. Siliguri has shown consistently high rate of population growth throughout its 63 years of existence. A population of less than 6,500 in 1931 had multiplied manifold to 32,480 in 1951. In 1991, Siliguri Municipal Corporation area had a population of 3,70,421 whilst the population of

the Siliguri Urban Area was 5,09,709 (Source: <http://www.sjda.org/about-us/location.html>). The following tables are highlighting in details about the scenario of urban development in Siliguri-

Table 2.1: Growth of urban population in Siliguri

Year	Total Population	Percentage of decadal variation
1931	6067	-
1941	10487	72.85
1951	32480	209.72
1961	65471	101.57
1971	97484	48.9
1981	154378	58.36
1991	216950	40.53
2001	284602	31.18
2011	509709	44.16

Source: Annual Report of Siliguri Municipal Corporation, 2013

Table 2.2: Present population of Siliguri and adjacent sub urban areas

Sub Division	Rural			Urban			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Siliguri Sub Division	98532	93248	191780	261218	248491	509709	359750	341739	701489
Siliguri(MC)	-	-	-	261218	248491	509709	261218	248491	509709
Matigara	65123	58798	123921	2881	2524	5405	68004	61322	129326
Phansidewa	87945	83563	171508	-	-	-	87945	83563	171508
Naxalbari	67595	61546	129141	8236	7538	15774	75831	69084	144915
Kharibari	45449	42781	88230	-	-	-	45449	42781	88230

Source: Annual Report of Siliguri Municipal Corporation, 2013

Scenario of Migration

Migration is generally known as the movement of people from one residence to another permanent or temporary residence for a substantial period of time. Paterson, 1958 defined migration as “movement motivated by the individual willingness to risk the unknown of a new home and breaking form a familiar social universe for the sake of adventures, achievements of ideals or to escape a social system from which he has become alienated.” Caplow, 1975 observed that “migration is strictly speaking a change of residence and need not necessarily involve any change of occupation, but it is closely associated with occupational shifts of one kind or another.” Migration is relatively a permanent transition of a collectivity called migrants from one geographical location to another preceded

by the decision making on the part of the migrants on the basis of hierarchically ordered set of values and valued ends and resulting in changes in the interactional pattern. Movement of people, especially rural people from the land to the cities, from one country to another and from one continent to another is an international phenomenon and not a phenomenon of modern times only. Migration flows are generally pronounced from economically backward or stagnating areas to prosperous and dynamic areas. Most economic factors that motivate migration may be termed as a push and pull factors and general economic condition. Push factors in reality refers to the poor economic condition, low productivity, unemployment, underemployment, low income, low level of production and consumption. Pull factors are those which encourage migration to an area such as opportunities of better employment, higher wages, amenities of modern life etc. attract people to certain areas. Further, social and cultural factors also play their role in migration. The quest for independence, the desire to break away from traditional constraints of social organization, conflicts among the family members, exclusion from the community circle for one reason or other or affecting of being isolated etc. may cause migration. The persons when move from their ancestral village to another place and establish a settlement they will be striking roots again. In this context, the earlier migrants used to have a great support to them. The movement of people tends to be at those places where they have contacts and where the old migrants serve as links for the new migrants. The chain which was thus formed is usually termed as chain migration. They usually have kinship chains and networks of relatives and friends who helped them. Migrants belonging to a particular region, language, religion, caste and tribe tend to live together in separate neighborhoods in cities. They form ethnic groups on the basis of shared elements of culture and ideology. They also build their own place of worships. The social phenomenon has favourably or adversely influenced the place of origin of migrants and the place of their destination. Their impact on both places can be assessed in terms of morphological, economic, social and political aspects. Indeed the importance of economic factors is crucial in human migration as it provides necessary conditions for migration. Despite that, the social factor play significant role simultaneously in human migration, which in reality strengthen and motivate to take final decision of migration.

According to the 64th Round of National Sample Survey, it was estimated that almost a third of Indians that was some 325 million people, out of a population of 1.14 billion in 2008 were migrants (Hazra, 2012:4). During the last 50 years rural population had decreased from 82.0 to 68.9 percent. Migration from rural to urban areas was up from 27.8 to 31.1 percent since 2001. It is estimated that approximately 2 million people were shifting from rural to urban areas annually and approximately 22 million people had migrated from rural to urban areas since 2001. It is reported that 57 percent of urban migrant household were migrated from rural areas. Further, 67 percent of the households in the urban areas had migrated for employment related reasons (Gautam,2012:6-7). West Bengal has received 5.5 million of migrants by place of birth. During the last decade (1991-2001) the number of migrants in India rose by 32.9 percent high in comparison to India's total population which recorded a growth of 21.5 percent during this decade. It is to be mentioned here that, according to the 55th round of NSS conducted during 1999-2000, the migration rate stands at about 266 per thousand total persons in the country (Datta, 2005: 147). The migration differences are clearly observed between males and females in the rural and urban areas. In rural areas the female migration rate was nearly 5 to 6 times higher than the male migration rate, while in urban areas, it was about 1.5 times higher for females. The male migration rate in urban areas was 2.5 to 3 times higher than that in rural areas. The following table will illustrate the fact more clearly-

Table 2.3: Migration rates per thousand population of by sex and residence based on Census and various NSS Rounds-1971 to 2000

Census Year/ NSS Round	Category	Male			Female			Total
		Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	
Census 1971	POB	141	375	189	431	413	428	304
	PLR	140	381	190	434	421	431	306
Census 1981	POB	122	349	178	449	423	443	306
	PLR	126	353	187	459	428	452	312
Census 1991	POB	100	276	146	425	373	412	274
	PLR	102	276	148	430	375	416	276
Census 2001	POB	109	323	170	452	396	437	299
	PLR	115	329	175	461	403	446	306
NSS 38 th Round Jan-Dec. 1983		72	270	120	351	366	354	234
NSS 43rd Round Jul 1987- Jun-88		75	268	119	399	396	398	254
NSS 49 th Round Jan- Jul.1993		65	239	108	401	382	396	248
NSS 55 th Round Jul 1999- Jun-00		69	258	117	426	418	424	266

Note: POB= Place of Birth, PLR= Place of Last Residence (Source: Singh, 2005:274)

Regarding the migration pattern, the rural to rural migration stream is most dominant, followed by rural to urban stream and urban to urban stream of migration. Various small scale sample surveys including periodic NSS rounds have collected information on the reasons for migration, which include movement due to economic reasons such as search for employment, better employment, transfer of job, proximity to work place, for pursuing study, after marriage, due to movements of parents or earning members, political problems, natural calamity, health, housing and other reasons. The following table illustrates the reasons of migration-

Table 2.4: Percentage distribution of life time migrants by sex and reasons for migration, NSS 2000

Reasons for Migration	Rural			Urban		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
In search of employment	6.49	0.21	1.12	17.08	0.67	7.26
In search of better employment	10.52	0.38	1.83	15.66	0.77	6.75
To take up employment/Better employment	6.55	0.15	1.07	9.21	0.49	3.99
Transfer of service-contract	6.02	0.22	1.05	9.1	0.93	4.21
Proximity to work place	1.04	0.03	0.18	1	0.07	0.44
Studies	5.31	0.39	1.09	6.24	1.35	3.32
Acquisition of own house	3.95	0.35	0.86	4.13	1.41	2.5
Housing problem	3.67	0.44	0.9	2.28	0.8	1.4
Socio- Political problem	3.96	0.51	1	1.44	0.72	1.01
Health	0.99	0.07	0.2	0.35	0.12	0.21
Marriage	9.51	89.1	77.6	1.62	58.7	35.77
Family Migration	26.15	6.27	9.13	27.14	31.1	29.48
Other reasons	15.84	1.92	3.92	4.76	2.9	3.65
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Singh, 2005:281

Thus, besides an economic phenomenon, migration is more a social phenomenon. The massive increase of population in India was due to both natural growth and migration from outside. The situation in West Bengal vis-a-vis North Bengal was much more intricate since it had to receive an increasing number of immigrants from neighbouring Nepal, Bangladesh mainly and also from Bhutan. The phenomenon of migration had an immense importance in the context of North Bengal. Regarding the population growth and economic development of the said region, the importance of migration could never be overstated. The existence of three international borders viz. Bangladesh, Nepal

and Bhutan had contributed to a continuous flow of migrants to this region. Therefore, North Bengal is achieving a remarkable experience of steady and continuous flow of migrants from different places (Datta, 2005:16). The population of North Bengal was being raised continuously through the past century, from an initial level of 0.27 crore and a settlement density of 12.5 persons per sq.km in 1891. The population growth in the region during the first part of the last century was directly attributable to the proliferation of tea plantations. Further acceleration was noticed after 1947 because of massive population migration associated with India's partition and its aftermath (Mondal, 2007:132-133). There was a tremendous population growth in this region after the independence of the country. The overall population trends in North Bengal through the first half of the present century indicated an increasing migration between 1931 to 1951. But after 1951, the population of North Bengal increased sharply. As such the population in the region which was 39, 61,000 according to the 1951 Census, was raised to 1, 47, 24,940 in 2001. This growth is due to normal population growth as well as migration and immigration. Owing to locational and other advantages, many people from the other states in India and also from neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Nepal and Tibet etc. were also settled in North Bengal (Mondal, 2007:132). Most of the migrants in this region had come from Bangladesh because hunger, poverty, security threat recognize no border (Datta, 2005:147). The partition of Bengal in 1947 and further the political turmoil in Bangladesh in 1971 forced a continuous migration. Though the border between Bangladesh and India was demarcated, but the free movement across the border was a common phenomenon. It was estimated that there were about 15 million Bangladeshi nationals living in India illegally. According to one estimate by Border Police Department about one thousand migrants cross the border every day and enter West Bengal. Meanwhile, India shared 4095 kilometers of border with Bangladesh while West Bengal had a border of 2216 kilometer running with it. Ever since the independence, India was facing the issue of Bangladeshi migration. During 1948-1952 it took place due to partition of India and Hindu backlash. In the period of 1964-1965 the migration was due to the Indo-Pak war. Further, during the Bangladesh liberation war in 1971, migration took place extensively. It is to be mentioned here that upto 1971 the political factor was the main reason for

migration; in between 1971 to 1990 both political and economic factors were the underlying causes. From 1996-2001 the migration mostly took place due to economic reason and onwards from mid 2001, the reason for migration was political including the insecurity of life and property of the minority community (Datta,2005: 148-155).

Table 2.5: Migration by place of last residence

Total migrants by last residence	314.5 million
Duration less than 1 year	8.8 million
Duration 1 to 4 years	47.2 million
Duration 5 to 9 years	42.1 million
Duration 10 to 19 years	69.4 million
Duration 20 years and above	101.0 million
Duration not stated	45.6 million

Source: Census,2001

According to Census 2001, there were total 3,031,127 Bangladeshi migrants in West Bengal. Among them, regarding the place of enumeration 1,578,141 were the rural dwellers while 1,452,986 were the urban dwellers. Further, in Darjeeling district there were total 58,103 Bangladeshi migrants among whom 33,778 were rural and 24,325 were urban regarding their place of enumeration. According to the report of UNDESA 2013, the total number of Bangladeshi migrant in India was more than 3.2 million. The people who came from Bangladesh, got started to settle down in different places of North Bengal. In this region, the rapid growth of population had created several problems in terms of effects on forest, decrease in open spaces, decrease of agricultural lands, problems in economic development and man power planning, scarcity in job opportunities, development of slums and congested areas, increasing settlement in the banks of hilly rivers and so on. In the present study such a situation has been observed which are gradually discussed.

The evolution of Human society reveals the fact that the permanent settlement of livelihood is an out come of interaction between the social and cultural process. The prime aspect of any social system is to protect the fundamental right of its every individual. In one hand these are related with their common minimum livelihood requirements and on the other hand it is intimately associated with their self identity. Thus a nation should protect the nationality of its citizen and it

should secure their existence in a comprehensive manner. Any country is made up of both the rural and urban areas. The prosperity of a nation is intimately associated with the prosperity of both of its rural and urban areas. Because, both of them are the core centre of entire domestic production and its marketization. The economic stability of a nation is very much depended upon the interaction between its rural and urban centre as well as upon the exchange of goods and services. However, due to different emerging social turmoil such stability may have to face a severe challenge and a number of consequent affect may be noticed accordingly. In the context of North Bengal, the locational importance of Siliguri was immensely important. It was regarded as the gateway of Northeast India and it was adjacent to a number of neighbouring countries of India. Onwards from the decade of 1970s, rapid flourishment of Siliguri was noticed. Gradually it became the largest Urban centre of North Bengal and the second largest centre of West Bengal. Siliguri became well communicated with rest of the megacities of our country and abroad through surface, railway and aviation. Along with the rapid flourishment of Siliguri town, numerous organized and unorganized occupational sectors emerged in and around of it. Consequently different white collar jobs, semiskilled and unskilled economic pursuits developed and gave a new dimension to its economic growth. Obviously it became the core urban centre of North Bengal to sustain the livelihood of a large section of population. Meanwhile, ever since independence, the migration of displaced people from Bangladesh is a continuously happening factor. The issue became more severe during the period of 1971 at the time of freedom struggle in Bangladesh. During that time a huge section of Hindu Bengali people were forced to get displaced from their livelihood, settlement and stable economic pursuit. They became completely roofless and almost resource less in condition. For the sake of survival any mere economic opportunity was earnestly required for them. At that point of time, diversified newly emerging economic opportunities provided them a new ray of hope. However, they were primarily associated with traditional caste based agricultural occupation. They had hardly any opportunity to get involved in any skilled technology based organized occupational sectors. In that circumstance, different unorganized occupational sectors left the only alternative for them. On the other hand rural people from the districts of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur etc. were also finding severe

hardship to sustain their livelihood with their traditional caste based occupation due to several causes. They were also looking after some sorts of alternation and keenly desired to move into the rapidly flourishing urban centre i.e. Siliguri in search of their economic security and livelihood sustainability. Thus, the population of Siliguri town and its adjacent suburban areas got started to increase into manifold and it gave different new economic opportunities as well as new scopes of resettlements to the rural migrants.

In the present era of globalization, urbanization is rapid and an ongoing phenomenon. It has also been noticed in different parts of our country and in this consequence Siliguri had emerged as the largest urban center of North Bengal. The locational importance of Siliguri played a major role for its rapid urban growth. In this region, the people came from different regions and countries from a prolonged period. It might be due to the fact that, the said region had a number of working opportunities and people had the scope to accumulate their common minimum livelihood. Along with this population growth, several situations had also emerged like the decrease of forest land, decrease of open spaces, development of slums and congested areas and continuously increasing settlement in the banks of hilly rivers and so on.

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CHAPTER III

THE STUDIED AREA AND BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDIED PEOPLE

The Studied Area

Anthropological research is primarily based upon the qualitative data which can be collected through the empirical intensive field work. To conduct the anthropological research and the field work, selection of the studied area is a very fundamental and crucial aspect. The study area will be certainly a human settlement like village, hamlet, urban centre, slum area etc. According to the purpose of the study and the target group of population the studied area was selected by the researcher.

Location: The present studied area is located in North Bengal. It is the portion of land lying from the bank of Ganges in the south and the Himalayas in the north, physically called as “North Bengal” within the state of West Bengal. It consisted of six districts viz. Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur and Malda. It is surrounded by Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan to the North, Bihar to the West, Assam to the East and Bangladesh and rest of West Bengal to the South. Mountains, valleys and undulated foothills and plains covered by forests and agriculture lands, crisscrossed by rivers and streams has given the place a natural background of unique character. North Bengal is considered to be a place of floral, faunal and cultural diversity. The people of this place are bewildering in socio-cultural variety and ethnicity. The entire region covered the vast Himalayan and sub Himalayan tracts as well as Barind plains spreading over 21, 855 sq.km. and had a population of 17, 204,239 (Census,2011). The region is approximately 0.87 per cent of the land area of India and 24.62 per cent of the total area of West Bengal. This included distinct climatic zones ranging from tropical to naval within its span from the Barind plains of Bengal to the high Himalayas. The climate of North Bengal varied from cold, temperate, alpine to sub tropical type. The elevation range within North Bengal and the resulting geological and pedagogical diversity led to the formation of distinct ecological

and floral zones. The extensive forests that lied along the Himalayan and the Sub Himalayan regions provided rich floral and faunal diversity in the place. Besides these it is very famous for various natural and mineral ores like graphite, calcium, magnesium, brass, lead, dolomite etc. North Bengal is very important to travelers and tourists owing to its scenic beauty and the historical and cultural significance of the place.

North Bengal is the abode of a number of ethnic groups consisting of tribes, castes, religious minorities and other communities who were dwelling since historical times. The entire region is a meeting ground of different ethnic, social and cultural groups. There is a harmony of races and cultures in this place. Different ethnic and social groups lived in North Bengal with their distinct cultures. Due to close interaction, the people of this place also developed some common traits that distinguished them from the people of other regions. Among the total population of North Bengal there were 34 per cent scheduled castes, 12 per cent scheduled tribes, 22 per cent Muslims and 32 per cent other castes and communities. Around 70 per cent of the regional population belonged to the under privileged section. It is to be mentioned here that the most significant aspect of the economic structure of North Bengal is that like others parts of the country, the presence of women in the regular paid workforce tended to be low. In recent years women marginal workers are gradually increasing in off-farm activities, particularly in the vicinity of urban centers, where opportunities are available in construction and house keeping works. On the basis of ecology, material culture and social behaviour, North Bengal could broadly be categorized into three distinguishable but overlapping sub cultural areas or cultural zones viz. i) Hill cultural zone, ii) Foothill cultural zone, iii) Plain cultural zone (Mondal, 2007: 127-141).

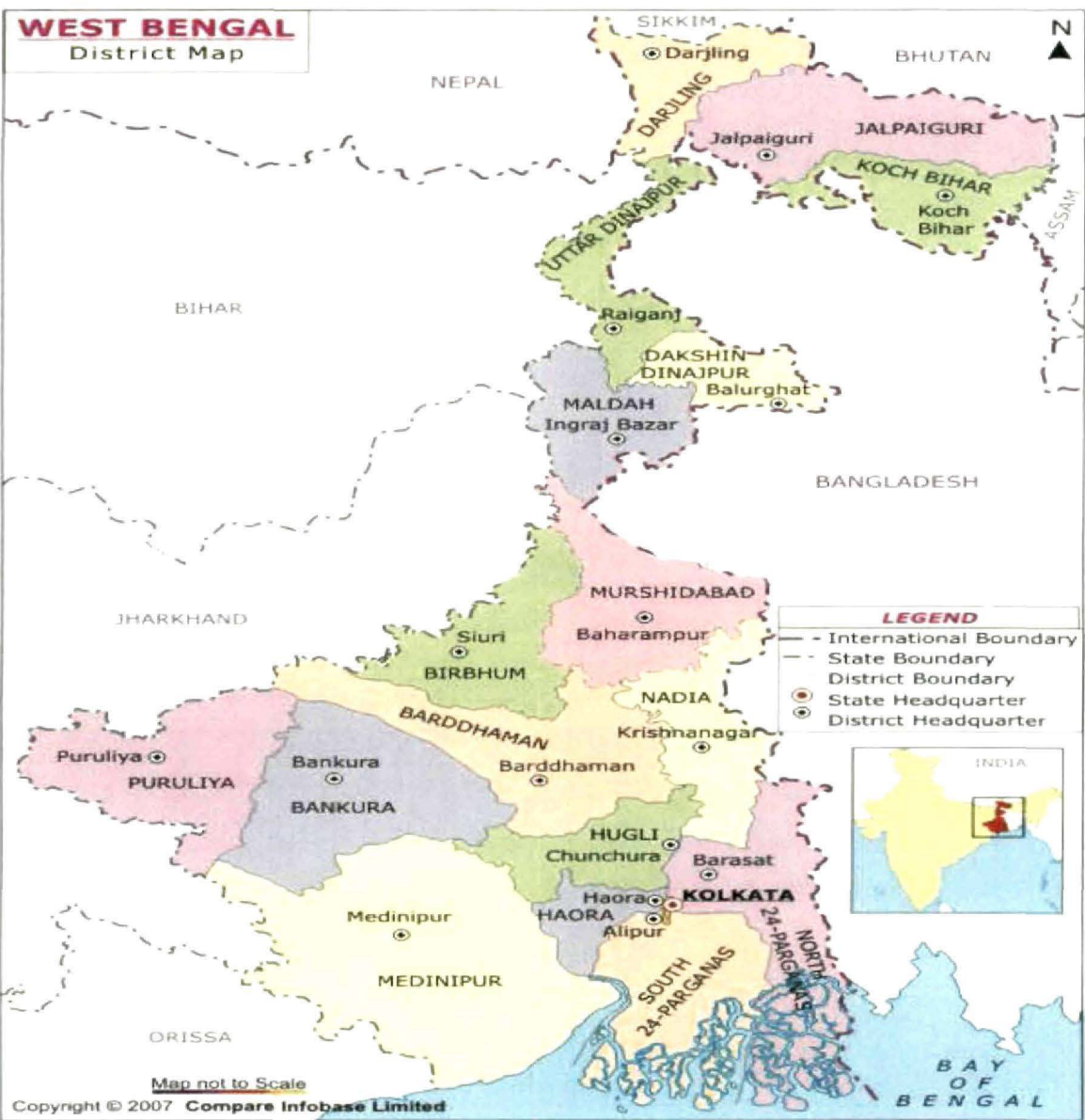
The studied area, Balasan Colony was located in the Sub Himalayan foot hill region beside the Balasan river. The said river had originated in the Darjeeling Himalaya from Lepchajagat peak ($27^{\circ}3'5''$ N latitude and $88^{\circ}14'12''$ E longitude) at an altitude of 2261 meter. It traversed a distance of about 48.60 km to join the river Mahananda at New Jalpaiguri ($26^{\circ}41'36''$ N latitude and $88^{\circ}24'48''$ E longitude). The total basin area of river Balasan was about 367.42 sq. km bounded by latitudes $26^{\circ}40'$ N to $27^{\circ}3'55''$ N and longitudes $88^{\circ}7'$ E to $88^{\circ}25'$ E (Basu and

De, 1998:294). That the river Balasan after entering in the Terai, divides into two streams- one is called as new Balasan, joins the Mahananda just below Siliguri; the other branch old Balasan, continues southward and passes out of the district to join the Mahananda lower down in the Purnea district (O' Malley,2001:6). The present studied area, Balasan colony was located on the Balasan river basin, in its flow under the Atharokhai Gram Panchayat of Matigara block in Darjeeling district. The detail administrative set up of the studied area is as follows. The studied village is named as Balasan Colony which is under the Tari or Tarijot mouza (J.L. no- 68). It is under the Atharokhai Gram Panchayat of Matigara Block. This is under the Sub Division of Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad of Darjeeling District in the state of West Bengal, India.

The location of Matigara block is $26^{\circ} 43' 0''$ N to $88^{\circ} 23' 0''$ E It is to be mentioned here that in the Tari mouza there were a number of villages like Balasan colony, Promadnagar, Palpara (little portion), Jyotirmoy colony, Ramkrishna jot, Helapakri. The total area of Tari mouza was 120.45 hectare,¹ and among the settlements Balasan colony is the oldest and biggest one comprising of an area of 36 hectare (Records of Atharokhai Gram Panchayat, 2007). Regarding the surroundings of the Balasan colony, Simulbari, Tindharia and Darjeeling Himalayan region are located to the North; Matigara, Khaprail are located to the South; Siliguri is situated in the East and Bagdogra, Naxalbari, Panitanki as well as Bihar are located to the West. Nepal is located to the North – west. The studied area is located beside the National Highway 31 which played the key entrance to the gateway of the Siliguri town. Through this way the prime communication of trade, commerce and tourism industry over the entire Northeast India was being executed. Besides it, the N.H.31 is the only transport communication between North Bengal to South Bengal and other adjacent states of India like Assam, Bihar. Moreover it is the sole transportation between India and other international countries like Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. However, from economic and communicational perspective the location of the Siliguri town as well as the studied area had a very significant resemblance. The geographical maps related to the studied area are mentioned below sequentially-

¹ Hectare: The hectare is a unit of area, defined as being 10,000 square meters. 1 hectare = 10 000 m²

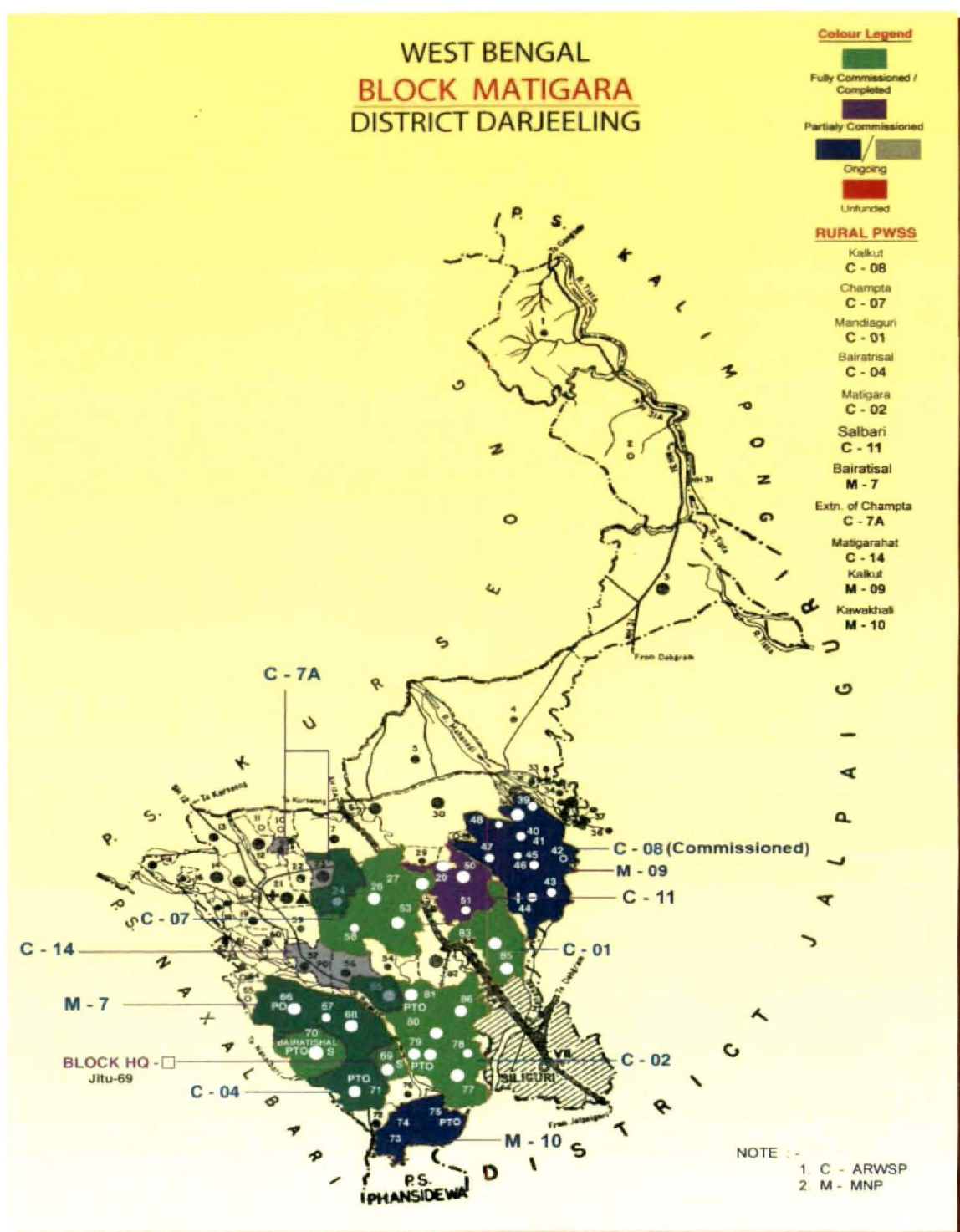
Map 1: MAP OF WEST BENGAL



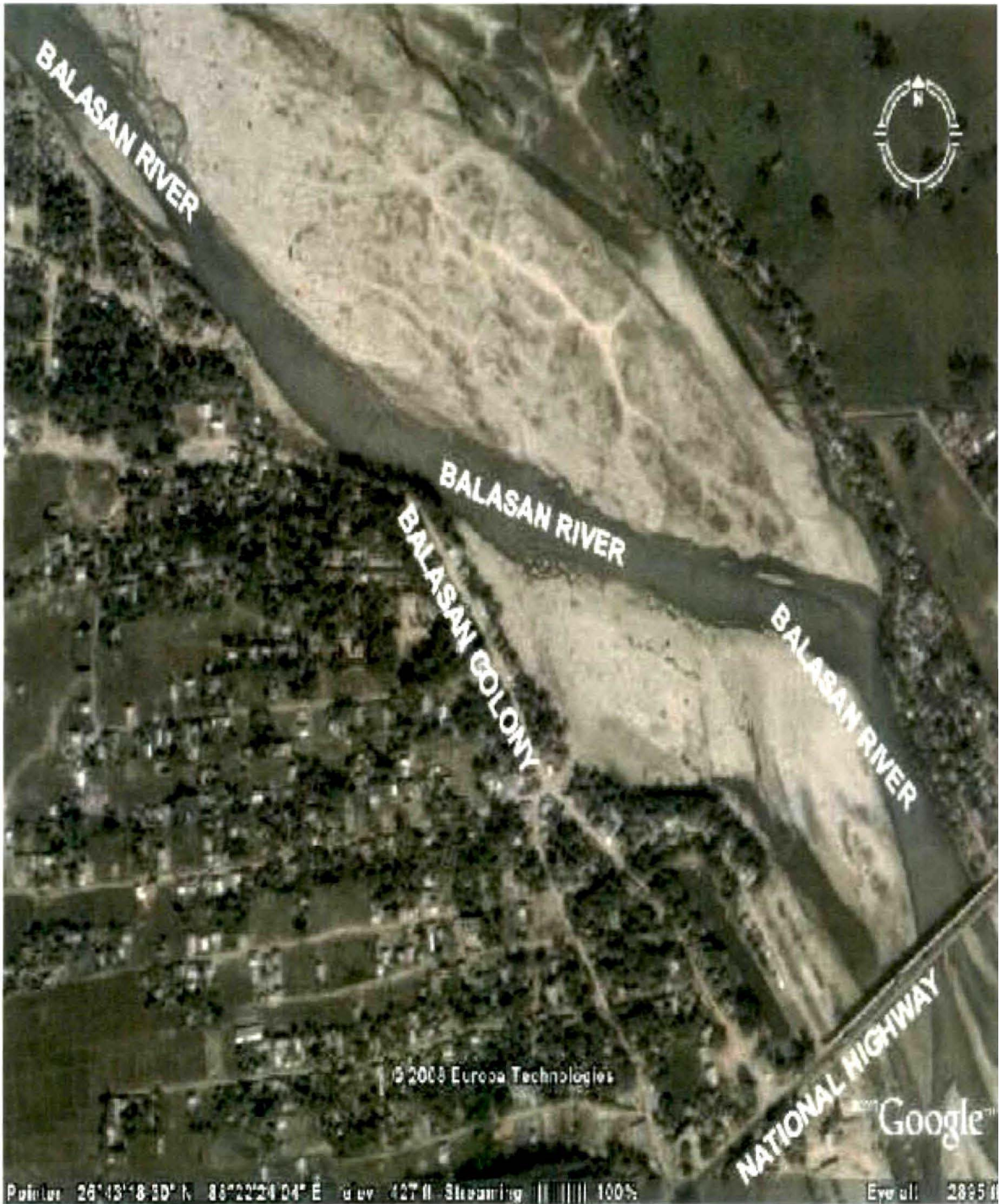
Map 2: MAP OF DARJEELING DISTRICT



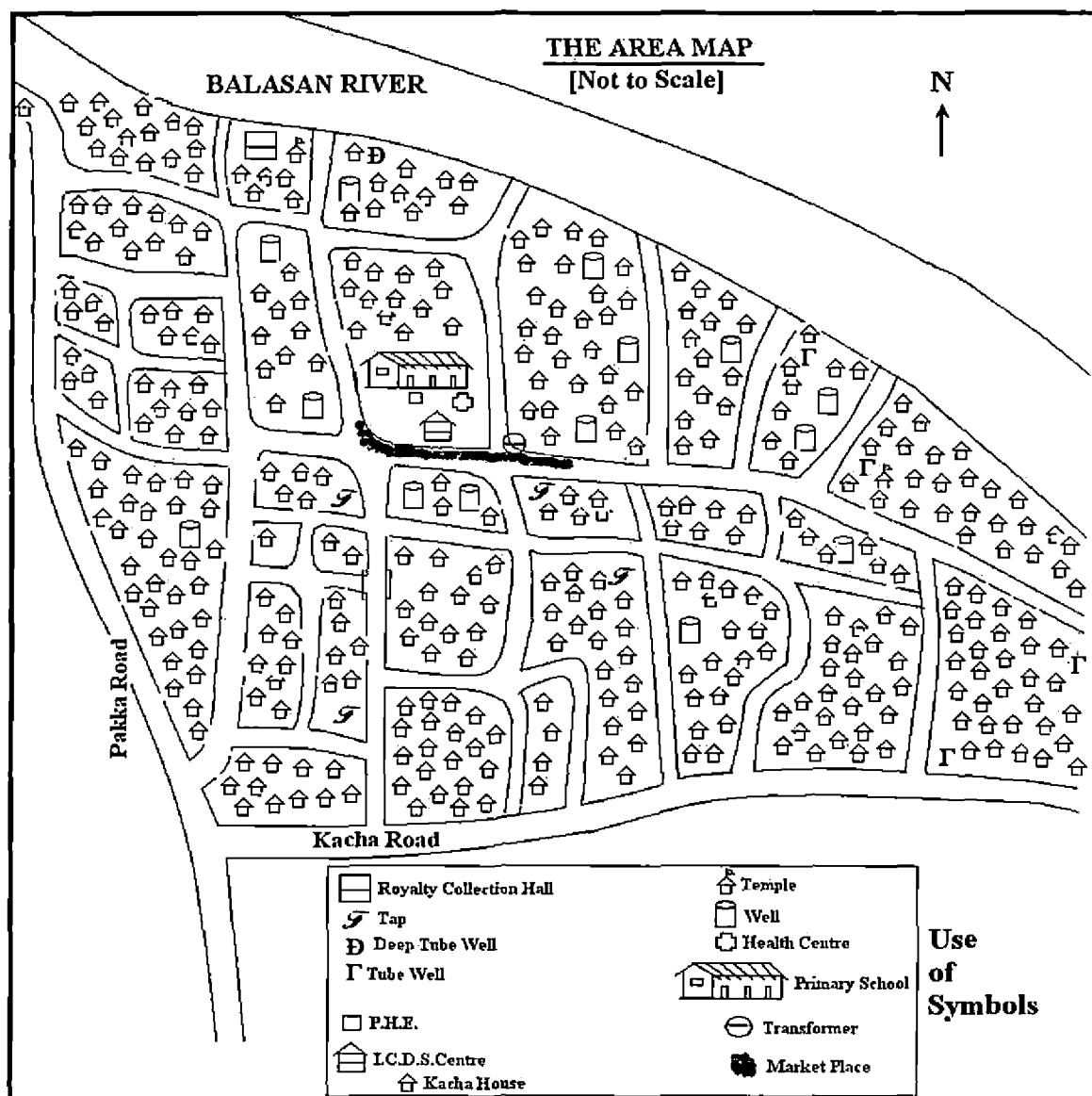
Map 3: MAP OF MATIGARA BLOCK



Map 4: AERIAL MAP OF BALASAN COLONY



Map 5: AREA MAP OF BALASAN COLONY



Geology and soil type: The geological formation of the Darjeeling district is consisted of unaltered sedimentary rocks, confined to the hills on the south and different grades of metamorphic rocks over the rest of the area. The foothills are made of similar but well cemented and more compact alluvial detritus consisted of soft, grey, massive sand stones, mud stones, shales, mottled clays, conglomerates and sub ordinate bands of earthly limestone and lignite. The rocks are of Tertiary age and have been included in the Nahan stage of the Siwalik system of the outer Himalaya. The material is laid down along the foot of the rising Himalaya by an old river system draining the young mountains and is incorporated in the foothills during the latter stages of uplift. Resting over the Siwalik bed is a group of still older rocks consisting of coarse, hard sand stone sometimes silicified into quartzites (O'Malley, 2001:6). Being located at the foothills and on the river bed, the studied area was mostly sandy and rocky. The prevalence of silica was mostly noticed on the land rather than clay or soil. It was mainly due to the fact that the Balasan river in its flow from the high hills carried the natural resources in the form of stone, sand and boulder which got deposited on the river bed since long.

Climatic condition: Weather conditions in different parts of the district had shown a wide variation and their diversity was not only due to the differences of altitude but also due to the configuration of mountains. It deflected winds and effected rainfall and temperature locally to an appreciable extent. During the period of November to May upper winds over the Himalayan region were predominantly westerly. In the pre monsoon months, a southerly air from the Bay of Bengal brought moisture in land in varying quantities. The impact of this current on the cool north- easternly current gave rise to local storms in the plains of Bengal and was with a diurnal convection of air between the hills and the plains at the foothills, the main cause of the frequent local storms which took place in the district during March, April and May. Hailstorm occurred throughout the region during the said months. During the rainy season precipitation was heavy throughout the monsoon months and the average rainfall was 135.60 inches. In the Darjeeling district temperature varied with the altitude. In the foothill region the maximum temperature was 40 degree centigrade and the minimum temperature was 3 degree centigrade. Spring began in March when

there were often strong winds. In the month of June the monsoon began and for three months Darjeeling was exposed to heavy monsoon rain and was usually shrouded in mist. In September a change was expected. The rain gave way to showers which become less and less frequent. During the months of winter from December to March fog occurs (O'Malley, 2001:14-21). However, in the studied area during the period of summer there occurred scorching heat waves due to prevalence of sand and stone. During the period of monsoon the river Balasan got over flooded and the water had a heavy tide, as it is passing to the downward from the high hill region.

Flora and Fauna: The richness and variety of the plants and vegetation of this district are the result of a number of physiographic, climatic, edaphic and biotic factors. The configuration of mountains and hills of the district and the impact upon them of strong moisture laden monsoon winds from the south greatly influenced the character of the vegetation from place to place. The entire Darjeeling district had near about 4,000 species of flowering plants, 300 ferns, and many non flowering plants. In the plains, communities of tall grass *Khagra* (*Saccharum arundinaceum*) and developmental association of *Sishu* (*Dalbergia sissoo*) and *Khaer* (*Acacia catechunoides*) sometimes mixed with Black Sirish (*Albizzia odoratissima*) and Sirish (*Albizia procera*) cover open river banks and adjoining open areas. In swampy areas, groups *Phragmites karka* are met with. The tree association is mainly of *Sal* (*Shorea robusta*), *Sidha* (*Lagerstroemia parviflora*), *Sindure* (*Mallotus philippensis*), *Arjun*, *Bahera*, *Haritaki* (*Terminalia* sp.) *Madar* (*Erythina variegata*) (O'Malley, 2001:22-23). Particularly in the studied area small grass can be found in an isolated fashion because mostly the river bed is made of sand and stones. The trees are mostly Coconut (*Cocos nucifera*), Betel nut (*Areca catechue*), Mango (*Mangifera indica*), Jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophylla*), Banyan (*Ficus bengalensis*). There are a few flowering plants like hibiscus or *Jaba* (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*), marigold or *Gada* (*Tajetis patula*), wax flower or *Tagar* (*Tabernaemontana divaricata*), Butterfly pea or *Aparajita* (*Clitoria ternatea*). The studied area was located on the river bed and mostly made up of sand, stones where the presence of soil is hardly to be found. As a result, the scope of vegetation and formation of kitchen garden was a rare occurrence.

On the other hand, the faunal variation of the studied area was quite common with other plain land zones. The prevalence of dog, cat, goat, cow, buffalo were mostly to be noticed. Among the birds' crows, pigeons, doves, sparrow, hens, ducks etc. are mainly observed. During the rainy season, few types of venomous snakes came to the studied area with the tide of water. Among the amphibians, frogs were quite abundant. The tide of the water in the Balasan river was quite noticeable and the concerned people were always engaged in the collection of natural resources from the river. It was not a well suitable habitation for the various types of fishes and they were hardly to be noticed here.

Local market: In the Balasan colony, adjacent to the primary school, there was a very small local market. It was made up of only a few shops of grocery, stationary products, tailoring, cycle repairing, dressing garments etc. There were three tea stalls in the colony and one of them was associated with a sweet shop, it was the biggest one and located adjacent to the primary school. It was a place of public gathering in the evening. In the Balasan colony there were two western medical stalls and one homeopathic medical stalls. All those had a good transaction of medicines among the common mass and in this regard the western medical stalls bore a special emphasis. In the market of Balasan colony very little amount of vegetables and fishes were found. Although they were a little bit cheap from the outward market but their quality and freshness were quite poor. Moreover, the market of Balasan colony was not at all provided with daily livelihood requirement. For this purpose the studied people mostly had to depend on the *haat*² or weekly village market, commenced on Tuesday in Matigara.

Educational institution: In the Balasan colony there was a primary school. Most of the children of the colony were pursuing their primary education in it. Considering the education in high school, the students had to go to *Shivmandir*³ or other distant places because there was no high school in the studied area. During the study there was an ICDS⁴ and a *Sishu Siksha Kendra*⁵ in the colony.

² Haat: In Indian villages a local market is organized once in a week. Here people can purchase their essential commodities at a moderate price. Even they can purchase by exchange of goods too. It is known as *haat*.

³ Shivmandir: A location adjacent to the studied area at a distance of around 1 km named after the temple of Lord Shiva.

⁴ ICDS: Integrated Child Development Scheme, a special developmental programme of Government of India. It is related with the educational and social development of children particularly in the poverty stricken families.

Health care facilities: In the studied area there was only a health sub centre. People with their ailment were mostly dependent on it. But the concerned sub centre was not provided with adequate medical facilities or other pathological instruments. In this regard, often in serious cases the patients of the studied area had to go either to Matigara Primary Health Centre located at a distance of around four kilometers from the studied area or directly to North Bengal Medical College located at a distance of more than six kilometer from the studied area. Regarding pathological tests and other clinical diagnosis, they had to depend on the concerned centres located at a farther distance from the studied area.

Water sources: In the Balasan colony there were four tap line connections, however two were functional, four tube wells and thirteen wells. The tap line and tube wells were for the common usage. Most of the wells were common accessible while only a few were used individually for domestic courses. These were established primarily under the initiative of the local Panchayat of the studied area. Meanwhile, due to the influence of a local doctor, few years ago the World Bank provided monetary support to the local Panchayat of the studied area to establish a PHE for purified drinking water under the observation of Dutch engineers. But the villagers could not get the concerned facility due to malfunctioning of the machine since half a decade. Despite the above mentioned sources of water, often in many cases the studied people directly use the water of the Balasan river for their household courses and even sometime for drinking.

Means of communication: The path within the Balasan Colony was mostly made up of narrow lanes of sand and stones. On the other hand, the road which passed through the Balasan bazaar to the outside areas was also similarly constructed. The huts within the colony or the individual dwelling houses were not demarcated from their adjacent houses with distinct boundary. In most of the cases, communication between two adjacent huts could be made easily through the courtyard. The people often crossed the river by walking to go to other end. Among the common dwellers of the colony the prime means of outside communication was the bicycle and in many case they used the rickshaw too.

⁵ *Sishu Siksha Kendra*: A mission of the Government of India, related to the education of children in rural areas.

Settlement type: The Balasan colony was a densely populated area. The huts were very close to one another and were arranged continuously along the both sides of the ways. Throughout the entire colony there were no such vacant places or discontinuation of settlement. It would be rather very tough to demarcate a house from the other or to identify it as a separate entity. Moreover, due to such congestion of the household, the prevalence of improper sanitation, sewage and drainage system was a common phenomenon in the entire studied area. Most of the houses were located adjacent to the Balasan river and only a few houses were a little bit distant from the river in comparison. Even most of the houses were so much close to the river that their household courses were often being executed with the river water.

Playground and recreational sectors: In the studied area, due to huge population density, there were hardly any vacant places as a playground for the children. Most of the children and even the teenagers seldom used to play in the primary school ground. There was a big play ground adjacent to the Balasan river where most of the youths and the adults played a number of games if they rarely got any leisure period. Mainly the youths and the young cumulatively approached to build up a local club in the studied area which was situated on the primary school ground. The middle aged males and females were very much busy with their work throughout the entire day time and they had a very mere scope to spend in leisure. Generally the male folk spent their leisure time in the evening by gossiping and playing cards as well as by several other means. On the other hand females had a very mere scope for it even after the dusk due to their household courses. The older male generation of the colony was also very much attached with the work throughout the entire day. Their means of recreation was to sit together in the tea stalls and spent their times by several other means. The older females were mostly engaged in their household courses after the dusk. A number of religious celebrations used to take place in the primary school ground. In the big ground located on the river bed, the major merriments of the common people were happened during the festive days along with local fairs.

Brief demographic aspects of the studied area: The studied area namely Balasan colony was located in Tari mouza (area code 00040400) of Matigara block (area code 0009) in Darjeeling district (Area code 01) of West Bengal (State code 19).

According to Census 2011 the population of Darjeeling district was 1842034. The total population of Matigara block was 1,29,326 among which 68004 were males and 61322 were females. Among the total population of Matigara block, the literate population was 71006 among whom 43505 (61.27%) were male and 27,501 (38.73%) were female. Among the total population of the block the total workers were 47063 (36.40%). Among them the main workers were 41625 (32.20%) and the marginal workers were 5438 (4.20%). The total working population was engaged in a number of activities like cultivation (5.20%), agricultural labour (4.0%), household industry works (2.20%) and other works (88.60%) (Census, 2011).

Further in the Tari mouza, there were total 10037 people among whom 5047 were male, 4990 were female and the sex ratio was 989. The household size was 4.9. Among the total population, 3818 (47.20%) were literate. Out of total literate population 2482 (60.60%) were male and 1336 (33.40) were female, while the gender gap in literacy was 27.2. Out of total population the working population was 4455 (44.40%) among whom the male were 2845 (56.40%) and the female were 1610 (32.30%). Among the total working population the main workers were 3933 and the marginal workers were 522. The working population of Tari mouza could broadly be categorized into cultivation (3.0%), agriculture labour (0.90%), household industry (9.60%) and other worker (86.50%) (Census, 2011).

During the field work from 2006-2013 it was reported from the local Panchayat that there were total 1079 number of families covering the areas of Promadnagar, Balasan colony, Ramkrishna jot, Jyotirmoy colony with a population of 5895. Among these settlements, the Balasan colony was the largest area and it was mostly populated. It was broadly divided into two sections, viz. (i) *ucha* or upper Balasan colony which was comparatively far from the river bed and (ii) *nicha* or lower Balasan colony which was comparatively very much close to the river bed. The population structure and sex ratio of the studied area is represented through the following tables.

Table 3.1: Distribution of population on the basis of age and sex

Age Group (in years)	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
0-4	180	48.52	191	51.48	371	100
5-9	102	48.34	109	51.66	211	100
10-14	85	57.43	63	42.57	148	100
15-19	75	58.14	54	41.86	129	100

20-24	73	50.69	71	49.31	144	100
25-29	68	51.91	63	48.09	131	100
30-34	51	48.11	55	51.89	106	100
35-39	46	56.1	36	43.9	82	100
40-44	48	51.06	46	48.94	94	100
45-49	32	46.38	37	53.62	69	100
50-54	40	61.54	25	38.46	65	100
55-59	15	50	15	50	30	100
60-64	19	57.58	14	42.42	33	100
65-69	8	66.66	4	33.33	12	100
70 and above	8	66.66	4	33.33	12	100
TOTAL	850	51.92	787	48.08	1637	100

Source: Field Study

Table 3.2: Distribution of the population on the basis of sex ratio

Age Group (in years)	Male	Female	Sex Ratio
0-4	180	191	1061
5-9	102	109	1068
10-14	85	63	741
15-19	75	54	720
20-24	73	71	972
25-29	68	63	926
30-34	51	55	1078
35-39	46	36	782
40-44	48	46	958
45-49	32	37	1156
50-54	40	25	625
55-59	15	15	1000
60-64	19	14	736
65-69	8	4	500
70 and above	8	4	500
TOTAL	850	787	925

Source: Field Study

In the entire Balasan Colony there were total 357 families with a population of 1793 and among them 931 were males, 862 were females and the sex ratio was 925. Among them 325 families were involved in the stone based occupation. The present study has been done on all of the 325 families who were involved in the stone based occupation and it was their major source of earning. However the total population of the studied families in the Balasan Colony was 1637 among whom 850 (51.92%) were males and 787 (48.08%) were females, while the sex ratio was 925 (Table 3.1 and Table 3.2). Most of the concerned people were involved in the stone crushing economy irrespective of any age or sex biasness. The formation of Balasan Colony and the detail socio-economic and socio-cultural analysis of the concerned people are described simultaneously in further.

By demography we primarily mean the statistical or numerical representation of human population and their different socio-economic and livelihood indicators. In any anthropological research it is very essential to know about the demographic composition of the studied population to get a brief about the different socio-economic parameters and probable cause of emerging social issues. The brief demographic feature of the studied area is represented below through the following table-

Table 3.3: Demographic profile of the studied area

Demographic criterion	West Bengal	Darjeeling	Matigara Block	Tari Mouza
Area (in Km ²)	88,752	3,149	143	120.45 hecter
Population	91,347,197	1,842,034	129326	10037
Male	46,927,389	93,47,96	68004	5047
Female	44,420,347	9,07,328	61322	4990
Sex Ratio	947	971	901	989
Density of population	1029	585	904	930
Literate population	62,614,556	13,28,218	71,006	3818
Literacy rate	77.08	79.92	64.23	47.2
Total worker	36,53,8878	6,99,972	47,063	4,455
Work participation rate	40	38	36.4	44.4

Source: Census of India, 2011.

It is to be mentioned here that the studied people in the Balasan colony were all belonged to the Rajbanshi community, which was the numerically dominant scheduled caste group of North Bengal. In this regard, before discussing their issue of migration it would be quite relevant if their earlier settlement, as well as socio-economic and socio-cultural life can be discussed in brief.

Historical Background of the Studied People

Rajbanshi- The Dominant Scheduled Caste Group of North Bengal: In North Bengal after absorption of Hinduism through the process of Sanskritization (Kshatriyaization), some indigenous groups were initiated into the caste system and through this process some mongoloid communities have entered in Bengal caste society. A caste known as Rajbanshi Kshatriya has emerged through this process. Their physical characteristics are mainly fair, yellow, darker and black skin, their nose is flat, tip of nose is broad, high cheekbones and thick lips, eyes are generally small and slightly oblique. This caste has a definite position in the local Hindu caste society. The Rajbanshis were a heterogeneous group as there

were segments among them whose social background and attributes of culture were based on the Sanskritization process (Mondal, 2007:38). Previously they were the tribal Koch but gradually they got the status of caste population (Doshi and Jain, 1999). They were considered as the largest group of scheduled castes of North Bengal. The Rajbanshis lived in almost all the districts of North Bengal. They were primarily agriculturists. Some were involved in petty business, a few were in service sector and a large section of them were wage earners. They considered themselves as a Kshatriya Varna and worshiped Hindu Gods and Goddesses along with some folk deities (Mondal, 2007: 138). They were very much influenced by Vaishnavism and their folk tradition was very rich. They had their own dialect (*Bahe*). Due to agro-based economy they mainly followed the joint family pattern. The kinship bond among the kin members was very strong, and interaction with neighbourhood was full of affection and co-operation. The community sentiment was very much prevalent in their whole society.

The Rajbanshis were found throughout the undivided Bengal from a prolonged period and it was mainly in Rangpur, Dhaka, Dinajpur; Purnea in Bihar; Goalpara in Assam. In the present West Bengal they were mainly concentrated in Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling (Terai Region), Malda, and North and South Dinajpur districts. Different census records highlights the distribution of Rajbanshi population in West Bengal as mentioned below-

Table 3.4: Census record of Rajbanshi population

Census Year	The Rajbanshi population
1872	290,584
1891	30,508
1901	939,291
1911	1,218,346
1921	1,165,141
1931	1,209,612
1941	826,640
1951	742,619
1991	2839481
2001	3,386,617
2011	3,801,677

Source: Sanyal, 1965:1; Census 1991, Census 2001, Census 2011

Table 3.5: Scheduled Caste Population in North Bengal

District	Total Population	Schedule castes Population	Percentage	Rajbanshi population
Darjeeling	1846823	317275	17.18	163,391
Jalpaiguri	3872846	1458278	37.65	922,603
Koch Bihar	2819086	1414336	50.17	1,063,369
Uttar Dinajpur	3007134	807950	26.87	498,004
Dakshin Dinajpur	1676276	482754	28.50	260958
Malda	3988845	835430	20.94	159456

Source: Census of India 2011

Socio-Cultural Life of the Traditional Rajbanshis

The Rajbanshis were mostly agricultural people. Their villages were not found inside the forests but in the open space in the middle of their agricultural land. They preferred to build their houses on their own lands, rather than selecting a common land to build a village for a group of persons having their cultivated lands elsewhere. The traditional Rajbanshis had their own means of cultural heritages in every aspect. These were discussed below in brief-

Formation of Household: When a Rajbanshi bought or took settlement of a plot of land for house building, he called a *panijar* (Rajbanshi pandit) to see if the land would be suitable for the purpose. He came and drew some figures on the earth to determine the position of the stars and other astrological factors. If the reports were favourable then the owner was advised to build a house. There was a common saying about the plan of house- *Areca* on the north, open on the south, ducks (Pond) on the east, bamboo on the west. Hence an areca grove on the north served as a wind break. Refreshing wind came from the south and hence it should be kept open. The pond was the prime source of water for the household and thus it should be kept in the east to get the ample sunshine. Western setting of the sun was not good for health and the storm came from the western side. Hence a bamboo grove should have grown in the western side. A Rajbanshi house had two portions- an outer portion and an inner fenced portion.

The outer portion was the biggest portion of their house. It was the parlour, guest room, meeting place and business room. The posts, stringers and purlins of a straw hut were all made of bamboo. The walls were made of bamboo mats called *chatai*. The doors were usually an opening on one side of the greatest length of

the front wall. The door cover was made up of a bamboo mat encased within a bamboo frame. The door latch is also made up of a piece of bamboo. The opening of the bamboo was considered as the window. In the Rajbanshi villages there were plentiful of bamboo bushes. The requirements of their household implements could be achieved at close vicinity and without any sort of financial expenditure. At a fair distance from the dwelling rooms the cattle bier was located, made up of thatched hut and earthen floor. Its walls were made up of bamboo splits. It was present in every household. The presence of cattle wealth in almost every household reveals the fact that the concerned people could easily accumulate the fodder for their animals. On the contrary, they could have the access of animal protein in their regular diet. In almost all the cultivating houses granary was present in one corner of the courtyard whose floor were made up of bamboo platform and roof made up of straw. Further, on one side of the outer yard, two very small huts of bamboo enclosures could be seen. Between them, the northern hut facing the south contained the image of goddess Kali and the one which was placed to the right angles of the former was for *Monosa devi* or snake goddess.

The inner apartment consisted of four separate huts on four sides with a courtyard in the middle. The *Bastu ghar* was located at the northern side facing southward is reserved for the family deity. The whole area was plastered with a cow dung solution. The raised platform thus made forms the seat of the deity. In it a decorated bamboo wrapped in red coloured cloth represents the house hold deity. Usually nobody slept in this room. The cooking hut was located on the southern side of the yard facing north, having a floor area of 108 square foot. The sleeping huts were made on the eastern and western side of the yard. At the north-east corner of the inner yard there was a space for tulsi plant (*Ocimum sanctum*) raised on the earthen platform. At one side of the inner yard there were two earthen woven to boil the paddy for the daily use and other household purposes. They had no latrine in their household. The people generally went to the farthest distance in the open field or jungle for this purpose. Usually they had an open well in one side of their courtyard. In every Rajbanshi household the kitchen garden was present in which they could cultivate a number of mucillagenous plants, garlic, chilly, radish, brinjal, onion, sweet gourd, white gourd, gourd, pumpkin, cucumber and so on (Sanyal, 1965: 22-27). The said vegetables could be a part of

their daily diet. They had plentiful of opportunity to consume the fresh and nutritive food within their own premises without any sort of financial expenditure or dependency on market. The refuses of the households and cattle were heaped to the back side of their houses and at a farther distance from the living quarters to prepare the compost. In this way the household of the traditional Rajbanshi people were made up, where they had an ample opportunity to live in a healthy and pollution free atmosphere.

Dress and Ornaments: The Rajbanshi male wore only a loin cloth while engaged in cultivation work, but while went out of the village they wore full cloth and a shirt to cover their body and in the winter they wore a chuddar. The adult women wore one piece of cloth called *phota*⁶ tied around the chest which hangs upto the knees. They were all hand woven and dyed in red and blue. The married women with husband living did not always use vermilion on their fore head nor did they wear iron bangles on their wrist. The women with husband living could be identified by the conch shell bangles of 8-12 pieces fixed together. But the widows if got remarried they were not permitted to use conch shell bangles or any sort of vermilion. The women used several silver ornaments which were rather the specialities of their material culture and were not seen any where else in Bengal. Rajbanshi men usually did not wear ornaments. Some of them were found to wear a thin silver ring on the right index or little finger. Their women used variety of ornaments which were mostly made up of silver and were usually thick and heavy. The surplus money was deposited in the form of ornaments. They had a number of ornaments for their head, ear, nose, neck, finger, wrist, hand, arm, waist, leg and foot. All of them were not always worn. Many of them were reserved for ceremonial occasion (Sanyal, 1965:37-39).

Daily Livelihood: An adult Rajbanshi male cultivator woke up from bed before the sun had risen and after that he went to the cattle shed, took the agricultural implements and went to the field for ploughing. When the sun rises a little bit, around 8-9 a.m. he came back with the domestic cattle like cows, bullocks to take rest for a little while and to have some food either with puffed rice and molasses or the rice cooked in the previous night. It was not the custom of the Rajbanshi Hindus to have the food carried to the field. A Rajbanshi cultivator would never

⁶ Phota: In the villages of Bengal women wore a piece of cloth, which covers their body from chest upto knee.

touch any food until he washed himself clean after his field work. He went to the field again and worked until he can bear the heat of the sun. After returning home he took his bath and lunch. Then he took rest for a little while and when the heat of the sun abates he went out to the field to work until evening. After the tiffin with tea and puffed rice, he went on gossiping and other merriments in the evening with his fellow neighbourhood. A Rajbanshi woman of a village woke up from bed before the day break. She washed her face with cold water. She took a broom and swept the house. Then she put some paddy in an earthen pitcher and poured some water. She then set fire to the woven and allowed the paddy to boil. Thereafter she plastered the floor of the kitchen with a bundle of jute dipped in the cow-dung emulsion. Then it was the time for her to prepare food for husband and the children. When the men had gone out for the ploughing for the second time the women had to busy to cook the rice etc. which was believed to be nutritious and tasteful for them. They also prepared chattered rice (*tsura*) and puffed rice (*muri*) at their home. The adult males were served with food at noon. The adult women and daughters never took food in presence of adult male. The women never tilled the land with plough but they helped the male with allied agricultural works.

After taking her bath she smeared the *thakurbari* or *tulsi mancha*⁷ with cow dung emulsion. The women also looked after the kitchen garden and collection of fuel. The children had their tasks too. The boys after getting a little elder helped their father in agricultural works while the girls were mainly busy with their mother in household courses. The elder people did not go to the agricultural works but they looked after the young in the houses.

Living conditions: A Rajbanshi cultivator led a very simple life. A common Rajbanshi male took bath every day in all season and smeared his hair with oil occasionally. Every day after bathing he washed the cloth for more than one day except his acute illness. A Rajbanshi woman was also very clean in her habit. She must took bath every day before her cooking and also came back from the toilet. She wore the *phota* without any other dress and wore a fresh cloth regularly after the bathing. Besides she often cleaned her with locally available materials.

⁷ Tulsi mancha: It is the sacred place for the Rajbanshi families within their household territory. Here they kept the throne of their household deity.

Sleeping and Sitting: A simple Rajbanshi cultivator family prepared *machang* made up of bamboo or areca stem. Straw from the paddy plants was spread on the *machang* and a jute bed cover was laid on the straw. They had a few regulations on sleeping. The unmarried aged girls slept with the wife of father's elder brother or with the grand mother. She must slept separately from their parents. Generally they used bamboo made *machang* for the sitting particularly in shadow covered places while the crude chairs or wooden benches were used as a seat of honour for government officials and other very respectable person.

Cleaning of Cloths and Utensils: Generally they cleaned the cloths by locally made alkali produced from ash and straw. They cleaned their utensils with ash and soil. The exterior portion of the heavy utensils made up of bell metal, brass or iron were cleaned twice a week and their interior portions were cleaned daily (Sanyal, 1965:27-32).

Social Structure of the Traditional Rajbanshi Community

A poor Rajbanshi cultivator had a simple family. Among them the practice of joint family or extended family could be noticed easily. The family was patrilineal and patrilocal with recognition of social relations with the kin on both sides. The household contained the dependent members from the fathers' side and sometimes from the mothers' side also. Rarely a married son broke away from the family and lived elsewhere. The oldest man or woman of a family was the head, whom everybody was expected to obey (Sanyal, 1965:124). Among them a division of labour could be seen between the male and female which was ultimately related with their prime economic pursuit of agricultural works. The cumulative effort was to ensure the production of crop. They had a common sharing on the resources of daily livelihood. Among the agricultural Rajbanshi families the food and other common minimum resources of daily livelihood could be accumulated easily from their local environment without any sort of economic expenditure mostly. Ultimately a Rajbanshi cultivator family in the village was almost dependent on nature for their daily livelihood.

Among the traditional Rajbanshi families, the kinship based social interaction was very strong. The kinship based norms, regulations as well as its rules of avoidance was practiced by them very strictly to maintain their social regulations, customs, rather to sustain their social structure and social solidarity. The kin bound

relatives inhabited mostly in the same village or to the adjacent villages. They shared their joys and sorrows with each other. In almost every familial occasion all the kin members had a common participation and merriment. They uphold their relation not for the sake of any material interest but to maintain their familial integrity and affection to each other.

In a traditional Rajbanshi village almost all the families were engaged in agricultural work but any sort of competition or conflict over the economic pursuits could never be seen. Moreover, quarrel regarding the production of crop or any other allied issues was rarely to notice. Throughout the entire village social peace and communal integrity could be noticed. The entire village community participated altogether in each others joys with utter merriment. On the contrary they shared their sorrows with each other. The family and their kin members played the prime role in the psychological development of the children. They learnt the first lesson of their social and cultural heritage from the family members. The social interaction with the neighbourhood gradually developed the community consciousness among the children and it created fellow feelings among the members of the society. Being an agricultural community, the adult males were engaged in the field for the entire day, while the females were mostly busy in the household courses. Under this circumstance, children were kept by their grandparents. In a traditional Rajbanshi society co-operation, peace and social harmony was well prevalent. It is to be mentioned here that the headmen of the families in the village functioned as the village panchayat and disposed the issues related to quarrel and conflict under the domain of village Panchayat. However these types of contradictions rarely occurred. It is to be mentioned here that in the village panchayat women were not entertained at all (Sanyal, 1965:124).

Customs Related to Birth- Marriage and Death

(i) *Issues related to child birth:* When a married woman missed the menstrual courses then she was believed to be pregnant. She informed the matter to her husband and other elderly members of the family. In this period she was not considered unclean and she was allowed to go about her regular household works of cooking and allied courses. She might eat whatever she likes. But there were few restrictions on her during this period. She was not allowed to move alone at

night or to attend any funeral or to attend any post funeral ceremony. If she did then evil spirits may possess her. She should not move out from the houses on Tuesday and Saturday and she should not cross any river that might harm her baby in the womb or even cause death. On the other hand, the husband was restricted to carry a funeral bier or to kill or sacrifice any animal with own hand. He must not took any food in the post funeral ceremony. In case of any health problem during this period they never used any sort of allopathic medicine, rather they called an *ojha*⁸. During the period of sixth or ninth month they offered a prayer to the household *tulsi mancha* or *thakur bari*. Generally they used the living room as the lying-in room. The birth was successfully completed by the mid-wife and immediately after birth the child was allowed to get a touch of the bare earth to take the blessing of the mother earth. Then the umbilical cord of the child was cut with the thin and freshly prepared green bamboo split. The cord was tied up with a fine rope made of jute. After cutting off the placenta, a hole was made inside the room. Then the mother covered the placenta with a plantain leaf then puts it inside the hole and covers it tightly. The placenta was not buried outside the hut. The child was washed with cold water and mustard oil. The mother after a little rest cleaned the rooms with the emulsion of cow dung. She took bath and cleaned her blood stained cloths with hot water. However, she was not allowed to touch the well and the water for the said purposes was drawn by the other woman of the house. During labour pain and child birth the mother was not given any food. After four to five hours of child birth she was given fried rice with juice of ginger or boiled rice with black pepper. During this period she was not given rice at night and fish, milk for a week. She mainly took puffed rice or chattered rice in the said period. After about a week from 7th to 9th day, a village barber was called. He foremostly cut a little hair of the village headman. Afterwards, he shaved the hair of the child with a razor and the nails of the mother were paired. These were covered in plantain leaf and dipped under the plantain tree. Then the mother took a ceremonial bath from the pond and changed her clothing. Then some *Ganga*⁹ water or water dipped with basil leaves was sprinkled on her and the child as well as on all the objects of the lying- in-room which made the uncleaned period over.

⁸ Ojha: In the villages of India ojha is the traditional magico-religious healer. The villagers were depended on him for the ailment of different diseases. He used local medicinal plant resources for the same. He even could redress the venomous effects of the poisonous snakes.

⁹ Ganga: It is the longest and mythologically most scared river of India.

Even the father of the child remained unclean for these days and he was not allowed to do the field work. The barber also made him purify by shaving the hairs and cutting the nails. Then he took bath and wore a fresh cloth. He got sanctified with the sprinkling of tulsi leaf dipped water and purified thereby. Meanwhile, the child was fed by breast milk for two to three years, even in some cases it was continued upto five years. The grand parents selected an auspicious day and the mother took her child to the local temple of *Lord Shiva*¹⁰ in the village where the name of the child was given by the *Adhikary*¹¹. Often the entire ceremony was being performed in front of the *thakurbari* or *tulsi manch* along with the offerings and other concerned rituals by the priest. The first rice feeding ceremony took place during the sixth to ninth month of age of the child. The maternal uncle had the first claim to officiate the ceremony. The rituals were performed under the supervision of *Adhikary*. These rituals were celebrated with utter enthusiasm by the close kin members, neighbours along with music, dance and other rituals altogether (Sanyal, 1965:61-64, 68, 71-73).

(ii) *Issues related to marriage*: The Rajbanshis were generally endogamous in the rules of marriage. But in many cases they ha formed marital relation with the Meches, BabuKoch, Dhimal and caste Hindus. In most of the cases they practiced the monogamy but Polygyny was also common among them. The practice of marrying elder brother's widow was not uncommon. Regarding the age at marriage about half a century ago the marriageable age of the girl was 16 and 17, while that of the boy was 21 and 22. There was always a bride-price attached to a girl and as such marriage by purchase was the rule. Among the Rajbanshis the marriages were organized on the basis of negotiation. It was generally settled by the parents or by the elders of the family. The matter of consent did not arise at all. Previously the mother of the boy or an elderly woman of the family used to go to the girl's house to talk about the marriage, but in many cases the father of the boys went to the girl's house. Before starting to go to the girl's house for talking about the first negotiation of the marriage, a cow worship ceremony was done. They had a number of rituals in the marriage from the *adhibas*¹² to the *bashi bia*¹³ (rituals

¹⁰ Shiva: He is the most powerful God according to Hindu mythology, who is also known as the destructor.

¹¹ Adhikary: He is the local priest of the Rajbanshi community.

¹² *Adhibas*: According to the rules of Hindu marriage *adhibas* is the concerned rituals which are performed before the day of marriage.

after the day of marriage). In the entire marriage ceremony the kin members, other relatives and neighbourhood enjoyed with utter merriment. It was a rare happening that any of the close kin member was absent in the marriage ceremony. Particularly the female folk enjoyed a lot with the newly married bride and a strong kinship attachment was being formed between the bride and her relatives of in-laws. Meanwhile, divorce was a simple affair. There was no question of any maintenance allowance because the women were economically independent too. Divorce occurred very smoothly and not overburdened with complications like caste- Hindus. After the marriage, the newly married bride had to follow strict restriction on her movements in front of her male- in- law. She never sat beside her father-in-law or elder brother-in-law. These restrictions were mainly imposed to abide by the kinship norms of avoidance (Sanyal, 1965:88-117).

(iii) *Issues related with death*: When a man was about to die then he was made to drink a little amount of water from the *Ganga* or the water in which a few tulsi leaves were dipped. He was allowed to die in the bed room. After death the corpse was brought out and laid on the ground on a jute or reed mat which was spread near the *thakur bari*. The place where the body was to be laid is first cleaned, besmeared with cow dung emulsion and sprinkled with water in which a few basil leaves were dipped. The head of the corpse was always placed in north. After the death, friends and other relatives prepared a bamboo bier. The body was placed on the bier with crosses of ropes passed round the body. Normally the sons and very near relatives carried the body to the adjacent river. The Rajbanshis burnt their dead body. Generally in case of death due to cholera, snake bite, small pox, suicide, children before teething the bodies were buried. During study they burnt the dead bodies except in the cases of the children before teething. They made the pyre made up of wood or bamboo. After having bath, the corpse was laid fully stretched on the pyre with the face towards the sky and the head towards the north. The eldest or the youngest son of the deceased took a torch of the jute sticks and ignited it. Then they dug up the frontal bone. Before coming back to the home they took their bath in a nearby pond or river. They must had to touch the fire lit by other people and be sprinkled on the head with water on which a few basil leaves were dipped. On the third or twelfth day the frontal bone was taken out and broken

¹³ *Bashi bia* : According to the rules of Hindu marriage bashi bia is the concerned rituals which are performed after the day of marriage.

into eight pieces to form the miniature of a human being and some offerings were made. The son who lighted the pyre was laid on the earthen floor for twelve days and he wore the same cloth for the said period. On this very day, a village barber was called and the head was shaved. The purification ceremony of the body in the burning ghat was performed and the cloth was changed. A number of rituals were performed in the said occasion. On the thirteenth day the *sraddha*¹⁴ ceremony was organized in the house of the deceased in presence of an *Agrodani Brahmin*¹⁵ (a Brahmin of lower order than priest) with a number of rituals for the peace of the departed soul. In the evening of the same day the close kin members and other relatives were invited for the feast with rice, fish and meat. However, with their permission the sons of the deceased and the others were allowed to take non vegetarian food as well as their mourning period was over. After the death of the father, the eldest son became the familial headman and everybody should abide by his advices. But their mothers also took part to decide the familial matters along with the eldest son.

The social structure and social organization of the traditional Rajbanshi society was based on strong kinship bondage and community consensus. They had a strong in-group feeling and their community sentiment was continued through generation after generation. Being an agricultural community, land was their prime property and their entire family had an affiliation with the agricultural work. They practiced joint family system because it required a hard manual labour to cultivate the crops. They entire family worked as the production unit and they equally shared the common resources. Even, when the aged persons became physically weak to work regularly, they were not neglected by the other family members because they had the access over plentiful of resources. On the other hand, their all sorts of livelihood requirements could be accumulated from the nature very easily without any sort of strenuous effort or economic expenditure. Their access over natural resources was so much plentiful and its production was such in a good level that they could celebrate their familial occasions and warmly welcome their near and dear ones without any sort of financial constraints. They had the tradition of joint family system, strong kinship

¹⁴ *Sraddha* : According to Hindu rituals after the purification, it is the religious performance with a prayer for the peace of soul to the deceased body.

¹⁵ *Agrodani Brahmin* : According to Hindu religion the Ogrodani Brahmins are categorically lower than the priests and they are primarily involved with the rituals related with death.

based social interaction and it was the fundamental aspect of their social structure and social organization.

Economic Feature of the Traditional Rajbanshis

The anthropological study of economic organization is a focal point for discovering the relationship between material and non material aspects of the environment and human behaviour as well as the social system within which it is exchanged and redistributed as cultural goods and services. The economic organization is treated as a link between the material base to culture and social structure. The traditional economic organization of the Rajbansi people is mentioned below-

i) Agriculture: The Rajbanshis were primarily agriculturist. They mainly produced paddy (*Oryza sativa*). This was their prime source of food as well as prime source of income. They mainly cultivated *aus* and *aman* variety of paddy. The division of labour in the family was very much related with the agricultural work. In every Rajbanshi family the agricultural implements bore a special attention among the possession of material cultural implements. Each of them had some definite function and mostly these were made up of wood and iron. From the local bamboo bushes or other trees they could get the required wood or bamboo. To conduct the agricultural work, most of the families had their own cattle wealth. The entire work almost depended on monsoon water. The produced agricultural crops were the prime source of food for the most of the families. The production of paddy was quite proportionate according to the familial need. Beside the preparation of rice from the paddy, a number of other food products were also prepared from the rice by the women folk in their own household. Among the other agricultural crops mustard and varieties of pulses deserved some special attention. They also produced different types of vegetables both in their agricultural field and in their kitchen garden adjacent to the huts. All these sorts of activities provided them the major sources of their food. Regarding the items of daily feeding they mostly depended on local resources rather than the expensive market based products. Along with several agricultural crops they also cultivated a number of cash crops like jute, tobacco, betel nut, betel leaf etc. These cash crops were their major source of income and a number of varieties could be noticed according to the region wise distinction. The leaves of the jute were also used as food item and the

dried up jute sticks were used as fuel and building material for their fencing and thatching of the houses. The betel nut and betel leaf deserved a special attention because it was closely related with their cultural heritages. These were used in a number of religious performances as well as they welcome the neighbours and guests to their houses with a betel leaf and betel nut. The agricultural activities were done not merely for their food and income but it was very much associated with their rituals and cultural performances too. The entire agricultural work was done with the involvement of all family members and every member of the family had an equal access of the produced agricultural crops. The practice of joint family system, its norms, values and customs as well as common sharing had a very close affiliation with their economic pursuits and daily livelihood requirements altogether.

ii) Fishing: In the village areas there were a number of pond and river. These sources of water provided the Rajbanshi people an ample opportunity for fishing. This was not only a mere sporting event for the said people but also a part of economic life of the villagers. They mostly caught the fishes to sell and they also took it as a food item. To catch the fishes they had a number of implements made up of bamboo. These bamboos were mostly collected from their own territory. They had a number of fishing nets fixed to a bamboo cross and tied to a bamboo pole. The fishing implements were very important aspect of their material cultural possession. Even in many cases the families had their own wooden boat and they went to the river to catch the fishes. The boats were also primarily made up of wooden materials available from the surrounding environment. Meanwhile, the Rajbanshi families were primarily depended on agricultural production for their food but the varieties of local fishes collected from adjacent rivers and ponds provided them ample opportunity to accumulate animal protein regularly without any sort of financial burden.

iii) Spinning and weaving: Among the Rajbanshi people of the villages spinning and weaving were a common occurrence. The women of the household were generally involved in this work. Jute strings from fibers were made at home for making household articles of use. They generally used ordinary handlooms for weaving their daily usable cloths. Their different types of spindle were made up of bamboo and they were manually operated by hand. The raw materials got changed

according to the items they were going to prepare. They used both cotton and jute strings in this purpose. Most of their weaving implements were made up of bamboo and they could easily avail the adequate repairing of those from the locally available bamboo bushes. They had the loom to weave both the cotton and jute cloth. The prime material required for weaving were jute and cotton. They got the jute in their own village as it was cultivated. On the other hand the cotton was either cultivated in their own village or they collected it from neighbourhood areas. The concerned people could easily avail their requirement of dress and other garments by utilizing their locally available resources as weaving implement and raw material. Moreover, as the women folk of the families were involved in it, thus any sort of financial burden or dependency on market was not noticed among them.

iv) Animal husbandry: The Rajbanshi cultivators domesticated bullocks for ploughing and cows for milk production. The people consumed milk and prepared a number of milk products from it. All of these were ultimately used as their source of diet. Even in many cases they sold the milk and milk based products. Goats were also reared by them primarily for the meat. The ducks and the hens were commonly reared by the people because they were the source of both egg and meat. They also domesticated hogs but it was primarily for the business purpose.

The economic life of the traditional Rajbanshi people was mostly dependent on the natural resources. Their major economic pursuits were primarily confined within own village territory. The daily livelihood requirements of food, dress and shelters were mostly accumulated from the surrounding environment within own village and in this regard they were least dependent on the expensive market based products. Meanwhile, the resources were quite plentiful to meet the demand of the people and all of the members had an equal share on it. It was the fact that economic scarcity was still present among them, but the security of the common minimum livelihood requirements of food, dress and shelter had not faced any serious challenge which might rather create an adverse impact on the surveillance of the community.

Religious life of the traditional Rajbanshis

The Rajbanshis worshiped nature gods and goddess such as the goddess of rivers, god of the forest etc. They worshiped ghosts and made offerings to them for their propitiation. They were mainly *saiva*¹⁶ but the impact of Saktism¹⁷, Vaishnavism¹⁸, Buddhism, Tantraism¹⁹ can also be observed among them. They also believed in witchcraft. They worshiped Lord Shiva (*Mahakal*), *Bisahari* (*Manasa*)²⁰, *Durga*²¹, *Kali*²², *Laxmi*²³, *Narayan*²⁴, the sacred Basil plant and took part in *kirtans*²⁵. They also performed *Dharma Thakur puja*²⁶, *Chandi puja*²⁷. They had a strong faith in the transmigration of soul. There were certain divine orders among the Rajbanshis who were respected and held in high esteem by the people. The village priest was called as *adhikary*. In some sense his office was hereditary. The *adhikary* belonged to two classes namely the *paddhari* who was the priest of first order and could initiate disciples. He conducted marriage, funeral ceremony and other religious festivals. His credential was that he possessed the copper chakra. The other one was the *kantulsi* who worked as an assistant to *paddhari* for some years and then he might perform rituals independently. Further, the *deosi* performed worship in the temples and the *deori* worked as an assistant in the temple. *Deodha* performed *homa* or fire sacrifice and other rights belonging to Tantraism. In the traditional Rajbanshi society exorcist were present. They were not strictly priests but their assistance was sought in times of trouble when the

¹⁶ Saiva: According to Hindu mythology the Saivas' are the worshipper of lord Shiva.

¹⁷ Shakta: According to Hindu mythology the Saktas' are the worshipper of mother Goddess.

¹⁸ Vaishnav According to Hindu mythology the Vaisnavs' are the worshipper of Lord Sri Krishna.

¹⁹ Tantrik: According to Hindu mythology the Tantriks are the worshipper of supernatural powers.

²⁰ Manasa: According to Hindu mythology Manasa is the Goddess of snakes.

²¹ Durga: According to Hindu mythology Durga is the most powerful Goddess and the wife of Lord Shiva.

²² Kali: Kali is another image of Goddess Durga and the wife of Lord Shiva.

²³ Laxmi: According to Hindu mythology Laxmi is the Goddess of wealth and wife of Lord Narayan.

²⁴ Narayan: According to Hindu mythology Narayan is the prime God. He protects the entire universe from the evil effect of the demons and other destructive forces.

²⁵ Kirtan: During religious occasions it is the musical forms of mythological songs where a large section of community participated.

²⁶ Dharma Thakur puja: Among the Rajbanshis the Dharma Thakur was treated as the main village deity.

²⁷ Chandi : According to Hindu mythology Chandi is worshipped as the form of Goddess Durga as the source of energy. She was worshipped for the safety and security of the village and its people.

influence of evil spirit was suspected. They belonged to two classes viz. *Dhami*, who was a Rajbanshi and was engaged to offer worship to village deities and *Ojha* who might not be a Rajbanshi and was engaged to exorcise powerful evil spirits and to perform necessary worship. They made the images of Gods and Goddesses with clay which were the conventional feature of the images as found in other parts of Bengal. Throughout the entire calendar year a number of religious festivals were present among the Rajbanshis of rural Bengal. Among these, number of pujas were related to their major economic pursuit i.e. agriculture. In the traditional Rajbanshi society the religious festivals were *Meceni khela*(worship of river *Tista*), *Madan kam* puja which was related to agriculture, Kali puja i.e. the worship of village goddess, *Dhorom* thakur puja or worship of Sun God, *Roa Gara* Puja which was performed during the first transplantation of paddy, *Satyonarayan Puja*, *Jitua Puja*, *Othai Pothai Puja* or the worship of road, *Goraknath Puja*, *Devi Puja* or Durga Puja, *Bhandani Puja*, *Lokhi dak* during the flowering of paddy, Manasa Puja or the worship of snake goddess, *utthan akadasi*, *Dhan kata* puja when the paddy got ripen, *Naya khawa* or the *nabanna* i.e. the new rice ceremony, *Siva ratri* or puja of Lord Mahakal or *Mahadeb*, *Dham Puja*, *Bisua Puja* to hunt the spirit, *Chorok puja*, *Hudum deo puja* to protect the draught, *Tista Buri puja* or worship of river Tista, *Saleswari puja* or the worship of forest God. Along with these, few specific worships were also present among them. The religious festivals and rituals were associated with a number of musical performances like song, dance etc. In these songs their social and political matters were mainly highlighted. Even in the said occasions numbers of festivals were celebrated within their houses. In those festivals kin members and the neighbourhood took active participation as well as enjoyed with utter merriment. The religious festivals were not confined within community merriment but mostly they had a close affiliation with the nature. They prayed to god for the better and prosperous living of their close kin members and fellow neighbourhood. They got humble to the nature for the heavy showers which will make plentiful of crop production and would fulfill their common livelihood requirements in a sufficient manner. They concerned people were very closely attached with the forest and forest based natural products. They worshiped the forest to protect their livelihood. Forest provided ample resources to avail their other material requirements which was necessary for their survival. They also worshiped the river to redress her turbulent effect as well as to provide plentiful of

fish production. The Rajbanshis worshiped the cattle wealth with utter dedication, because they had a strong faith that the physical fitness of their cattle was a prime essential factor for the better crop production. Moreover, the cattle and other sorts of domestication provided the major sources of animal protein to them without any sort of dependency on expensive market based products.

The religious festivals and the rituals of the traditional Rajbanshi people were closely related with the environment and nature. It was also for the betterment of their livelihood and happy, prosperous life for all of their community members. They worshiped their Gods for ample source of production to meet up with the requirement of daily life. Those cultural heritages and the concerned rituals were executed generation after generation merely with any sort of alternation. Their religious festivals were celebrated altogether by the community members. Even the household rituals were performed with kin members and neighbourhood. In this regard, the religion played a key role in the social interaction of the concerned people. It hold the fellow feelings among the kin members and neighbourhood. The social norms, regulations and customs were quite inter-related with the religious aspects which were abided by the community members. As a result, in the traditional Rajbanshi society religion played a key role to keep solidarity and community integrity.

From the overall discussion it may be summarized that the traditional Rajbanshi families were completely the dwellers of the rural society and were far from any other urban attraction. They were mainly dependent on agriculture and most of them cultivated their own land. Along with that a number of other economic sources were present but they were totally dependent on the locally available natural resources. The concerned people mainly practiced the joint family system. The prime decision making authority of the family was the senior most member. The kinship based social interaction was very strong and the practice of norms and regulations related with it were executed by all the community members. Their prime economic pursuit i.e. agriculture was performed by all the family members with specific division of work on the basis of age and sex. Behind the economic productions, all of the family members had their role to play and their cumulative effort provided the equal security of food and economy to all the family members. Their social integrity provided the base of their livelihood security. Moreover, from the locally available resources their shelter and dressing materials could be

easily accumulated. In this regard, the concerned people could easily avail their livelihood requirements without any hardship. Meanwhile, their domestication, ponds and rivers were the prime source of the animal protein and regular security of their food and nutrition. Further, it provided them the security of least financial expenditure and a mere dependency on costly market based products. It is the fact that the Rajbanshi people who inhabited in rural areas were economically poor but in their daily life they did not face any hard struggle for survival. On the other hand among the neighbourhood no competitive mind was prevailed regarding the accumulation of common minimum livelihood. Whatever they produced or accumulated from their surrounding environment they utilized it equally among the family members to lead a peaceful life. In the said society, conflict or quarrel among the neighbourhood was a rare happening; if such incident took place then it was solved under the authority of the local Panchayat rather than any administrative influence. Their social ceremonies were not only confined within their household premises rather these were shared by all of their close kin members and neighbourhood. They had a strong fellow feeling and they always participated in each others joys and sorrows. Their religious festivals were not merely for their merriment but it was noted with the prayer of devotion for the betterment of the entire community members and a prosperous well being for every one. All of their community members participated in the religious festivals with utter enthusiasm; even mere household rituals were also celebrated in co-operation of neighbourhood and close kin members. The religious festivals were very much related with their social solidarity and community integration. From the overall discussion it can be stated that the traditional Rajbanshi people who dwelled in the rural areas were quite peaceful with full of affection, co-operation and social integrity. They obeyed their social customs and cultural traditions. Ultimately, their livelihood was very simple and they were not exposed to any struggle for their survival. They had a permanent settlement, stable economic pursuit and minimum security of their daily livelihood requirements. It can be said truly that the traditional Rajbanshi society was mostly confined within their village territory and were far from any urban impact.

Displacement and migration of the studied people

In earlier discussions it became quite evident that ever since the independence, India has been facing the problem of migratory population particularly from Bangladesh. The people who were migrated from Bangladesh left their settlement, economy and all sorts of common minimum livelihood. In search of new means of livelihood they started to settle down in different parts of North Bengal. A section of them was settled on the Balasan river bed in the Balasan colony, where the concerned study has been done.

The studied people were completely roofless and resourceless in condition. Earlier they were agriculturist in occupation and land was their prime wealth inspite of cash money. But when they lost their land it suddenly freezed their all sorts of daily livelihood requirements and they were forced to search new sources of income. At that time the matter of settlement and source of earning emerged as a major problem. On the contrary, the Siliguri town got started to flourish as the largest urban centre of North Bengal. Besides a number of new working oppurtunities, the urban construction works were on a rapid progress. In this regard, there was a huge demand of raw materials like stones, sand, and boulders for the construction works. Meanwhile, adjacent to Siliguri town, the Balasan river with its flow from the hills carried out plentiful of natural resources like stones, sand, boulders which were quite appropriate as raw materials for the urban construction works. The studied people who were in search of resettlement as well as source of income, found this scope as their best possible alternative to start a new way of life. The studied families were all migrant and most of them were migrated from Bangladesh. The other families were migrated from different places of North Bengal to the studied area. The studied families directly came to the Balasan river bed form their earlier settlement. All of them were the dwellers of villages before migration and after migration they came to the adjacent places of Siliguri town. This process of migration started from the decade of 1970's due to the political turmoil in Bangladesh and most of the studied families got migrated in between the period of two decades i.e. from 1970 to 1990. But the same process was also continued after 1990 and it was going on. It is to be mentioned here that the political turmoil in Bangladesh during 1971 was the prime cause of migration for most of the studied families. During this period, there took place violent clashes among the distinct religious communities and the insecurity of livelihood

prevailed through the entire nation. In this circumstance people of the minority community were forced to flee from their native places by leaving their settlement and almost all sorts of daily livelihood requisites for the sake of their life. This political turmoil effected to the backbone of the rural economy worstly. Their prime occupational pursuit i.e. agriculture suffered a major setback because at that time there prevailed a fatal conflict regarding the forceful capture and authorization of the agricultural and homestead land. It particularly happened to the people of the Hindu communities and it was continued for a long time even after the political turmoil was over. Further, there was a very little scope for the people of the rural societies to get involved in other occupational pursuits because such opportunities were very much confined in the entire Bangladesh. The severe political turmoil emerged into acute socio-economic crisis in the entire nation and the scope of earning for the people of the rural areas became very much limited. It turned into acute economic scarcity for them and became very hard for them to accumulate their common minimum livelihood. The political crisis and allied communal tension spread out into the depth of rural society due to which the economic backbone of the entire rural society went into a disastrous condition. The people who were involved in the traditional agricultural occupation were forced to loss their cultivable land, domestication and household belongings. They became landless, roofless and resourceless while it turned out as rather impossible for them to accumulate a fold of rice. In Bangladesh they neither had the security of life nor had any source of income for their livelihood. The entire adverse condition forced them to leave their birth place and migrate to other areas for the sake of survival (Table- 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, and 3.11).

Table 3.6: Distribution of the families on the basis of migration

Total migrant	Total non migrant	Total family
325	--	325
100.00		100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 3.7: Distribution of the families on the basis of period of migration

Period of migration					Total family
1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	After 1999	
1	116	119	54	35	325
0.31	35.69	36.62	16.62	10.77	100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 3.8: Distribution of the families on the basis of status of migration

Status of migration				Total family
Continuous	Step	Rural-Urban	Urban -Urban	
325	--	325	--	325
100.00		100.00		100.00

Table 3.9: Distribution of the families on the basis of cause of migration

Cause of migration		Total family
Political unrest	Lack of occupational pursuit	
167	158	325
51.38	48.62	100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 3.10: Distribution of the families on the basis of place of migration

International		National		Total family
Bangladesh	Others	West Bengal	Others	
298	-	27	-	325
91.69		8.31		100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 3.11: Migration to Balasan Colony from districts of West Bengal

Districts of West Bengal				Total family
Cooch Behar	Jalpaiguri	Dinajpur	Darjeeling	
6	14	5	2	27
22.22	51.85	18.52	7.41	100.00

Source: Field Study

New Occupational Involvement, Formation of Balasan Colony and Emerging Issues

After displacement and migration, the question of resettlement and new occupational pursuit was the prime requisite for the studied people. Naturally they were looking for such a place which would provide them both the scope of habitation and a source of income. But there were a number of issues in this regard which deserved a special attention such as-

- i) How they got the information about their present settlement?
- ii) How did the new comers managed a place of habitation in the studied area?
- iii) Was there any administrative record of their settlement?

- iv) Whether they had any national identity till date, even after such a prolonged settlement?
- v) Whether any sort of emerging inconveniences had arisen for the studied people?

The following case studies will illustrate the factors more clearly-

Case Study 1: Ramesh Chandra Barman of 60 years got migrated from Bangladesh during 1971. He had a three membered family during the study. He came to the studied area along with his wife during the last phase of 1971. They were one of the first groups of migrant in the Balasan Colony. He stated that their earlier residence was in the village of *Mymansingh* district. There they had two bighas of agricultural and one bigha of homestead land. Agriculture was their prime occupational pursuit. But the severe political turmoil of Bangladesh had created all sorts of adversities to their means of livelihood. He remembered with utter grief that they had to loss their land, settlement and everything. He fearfully remembered that often bombing occurred in their village during night and the people started to flee to save their lives. They also did the same and came at first to their relatives in Matigara. From them they came to know about the natural resources of Balasan river and during the month of May they came and started to settle down on the Balasan river bed. He remembered that at that time only four families resided there. They gave the name of the present settlement as Balasan colony. He stated that their own adjustment and contemporary political influence helped them to build up this settlement. Gradually he accepted the stone crushing work as the mode of occupational pursuit. He further could not resist his annoyance to state that although he was residing since the formation of the settlement but till date his family was residing as a refugee. They had no Government official record related with the settlement and even they were devoid of from ration card. Although they got their voter identity very recently but it was documented with a number of mistakes. He told that his family came here as a refugee and still they were the same; because they had no Government authorization. He had tried a lot for the ration card both in the Panchayat and block level, but there were hardly anyone to pay a little attention to his words. He exclaimed with grief sorrow that after displacement he and his family members as if had lost even their identity as a human being.

Case Study 2: Mohini Barman of 70 years got migrated from Bangladesh during 1972. He had a six membered family during the study. He stated that he came to the Balasan colony with his wife and two children in 1972. Earlier they were resided in the village of *Pabna* district and there they had six bighas agricultural land and two bighas of homestead land. However, the severe political turmoil ultimately turned into communal violence. He shattered with fear to remember that often the miscreants came to their villages with fire arms and severe conflict took place. Soon the settlements of the Hindus were burnt into ashes. He broke into tears and stated that one of his son was shot dead and one of his daughter was kidnapped by unidentified persons. After three days her dead body was recovered from adjacent village. She was physically assaulted and it was quite hard for Mohini to tolerate the incidence being a father. During the contemporary period, the Hindus had no social security, and it forced them to escape from Bangladesh without any penny pence. Mohini told that he had a few cousins in Jalpaiguri, who often went in earlier to their settlement in Bangladesh. From them, he had listened about the Balasan river and its natural resources. After the displacement, Mohini came with his family members directly to Balasan river bed and started a new means of settlement. He remembered clearly that during that period the said region was quite vacant and only 12 to 15 families were settled during that period. It was completely based on local understanding. He could easily remember that at that moment they had nothing of their own. Government provided them tarpaulin and bamboos and with it they had started their settlement. The contemporary political party provided them various implements to get involved with the stone crushing work. He further remembered that they were devoid of from required utensils; and they had to cook a very little by collecting a very little fuel from adjacent areas. Their poverty was so severe that they hardly paid an attention to the starving people who. He stated that at that moment they were settled on the sand dunes of river. But severe soil erosion occurred due to flood. All the families joined each others hand and the formulation of the present settlement occurred long before 25 years ago. At the new settlement a few political conflict arose regarding the occupancy of the land. However the contemporary Panchayat solved the problem and the concerned people were provided with bamboo, tarpaulin and fencing to build up the huts. He further started the work and from his mere savings gradually built up the settlement. He had a deep resentment to

state that his settlement had no administrative affiliation and till date none of his family members were provided with ration card. He ironically stated that although administrative authority had assured him to provide the same for a number of times but those were far to meet up with implementation. His experience had made him to felt that as his family had no administrative affiliation, so they had to face all sorts of inconveniences related with any government official works.

Case Study 3: Bipin Barman of 45 years got migrated from Jalpaiguri district during 1975. He had his parental settlement there and they maintained joint family system. They had 10 bighas of agricultural land and 2 bighas of homestead land. Afterwards the familial conflicts became a common phenomenon regarding the division of the land property. Soon the problems got more complicated and the entire family had to face a severe economic crisis. He exclaimed that in such circumstances his father called the meeting of their traditional political authority and he was completely deprived from his share. As a result his studies were dropped and he came to the studied area during 1975. At that time there were 30-35 families. He could remember those days of struggle and soon started to work in a jute mill. But soon he left the job and started to do the stone based work. His settlement had no adequate government documentation. In earlier his family was enlisted in the BPL level, but there occurred a number of mistakes and ultimately the name of his family from the BPL list had been chalked out. With frustration he exclaimed about his repeated trial to get a ration card but all his efforts were repeatedly went into vain. He even stated that the political authority had a plan to uproot the concerned people and some urban construction would be made there. He had sorrow to state that they were the migrants and till date they were yet to get any administrative affiliation. His tone denoted a psychological fear that if they were displaced from the Balasan colony, then had no more alternatives would be left in their hand.

Case Study 4: Ukil Barman of 45 years got migrated from Bangladesh during 1980. He had a seven membered family in the Balasan colony. On their issue of early settlement, he stated that in the *Rajsahi* of Bangladesh they were in a well-to-do condition. They maintained a joint family system and their traditional familial occupation was agriculture. But during 1970's there took place severe political turmoil in Bangladesh and soon it turned into communal tension. He

remembered with fear that the Hindu families were severely tortured. Moreover, dacoity and theft became a very common phenomenon and they kept vigil for nights after nights. His eye got moistened to remember that one such a day, a group of miscreants came to their house in night and tied all the members with rope in the courtyard. The looted all of their personal belongings and blazed their entire agricultural land with fire. It severely told upon their economic holds and their common minimum livelihood had to face an utter challenge. In earlier a number of his known families started to settle down here and started the stone crushing work. He further said that from them he was informed about this occupation and readily came here in 1980 for the sake of survival. Contemporary political party gave his family the land of settlement and helped in all sorts to start the stone crushing work. During that period there were near about 100 settled families in the concerned area. At that time they were resided on the sand bank of the river. However, latter on massive fold took place and it forced them to shift over to the upper portion of the river bed. He remembered that since that period the population of the Balasan colony gradually started to increase. He had a grief sorrow that in spite of his dwelling for near about thirty years, till date his settlement had no administrative authorization and it was totally recognized as a vested land. He was spending his valuable days of life in an utter fear that if Government thought to uproot their settlement then they could do it easily and nothing could be done in their favour. He explained very clearly that there lied an acute discrimination over the distribution of *patta* in their settlement. Further, he accepted the truth that on regular occasion he gave subscription to the local political wing and it had reduced any scope of chaos related with the settlement of his family. Meanwhile, although they had voter identity but it had a number of mistakes but he his family members did not get the ration card till date. His anger exclaimed that different government official sectors paid a mere attention to their words and they treated them only as a resourceless refugee, even after their prolonged settlement here.

Case Study 5: Yudhistir Barman of 32 years got migrated from Bangladesh during 1985. Mr. Yudhistir Barman along with his parents migrated from the *Pabna* district of Bangladesh in 1985. He had two bighas of agricultural land and the concerned work was his prime occupational pursuit. He remembered that

when the political conflict took place in the erstwhile East Pakistan, their basic economic resource had to face all sorts of inconveniences. Gradually it became hard for him even to fulfill the common minimum livelihood. Through radio he came to know about the Balasan colony and the stone crushing occupation. Then he came to the studied area and further local political party provided him the settlement on a donation of Rs. 1000/-. Earlier the colony was quite vacant and its two zones were easily visible. He also stated that however, since the last decade the population got immensely increased and till now the people were coming. He expressed grief sorrow that neither they had any administrative affiliation nor their settlement received any Governmental recognition. He stated that his personal life started in the studied area and the stone crushing occupation was his only occupational pursuit. He always spent the moments with fear that as they were dwelling in the vested land, so they always had the fear to get uprooted at any moment.

Case Study 6: Subhas Barman of 50 years got migrated from Cooch Behar during 1990. In the Balasan colony he resided with a five membered family. They came here from Cooch Behar district. Earlier they did agricultural works. But the severe flood of 1990 had severely told upon the fertility of their land. For near about six months they had no scope of income and it created an acute financial crisis to the family. He had an idea that in Siliguri there were plentiful of working opportunities. He sold his entire property and came to one of his cousin in Dabgram. However, his cousin became unhappy to greet him. He informed him about the working scope of Balasan river bed. In the last phase of the year he brought the land at an expense of Rs. 3500/- from the owner. The local political party also claimed a donation of Rs. 1000/- from him and he also paid the same. In this way he spent all of his savings. In this settlement he had a few relatives but hardly any sort of close interaction was maintained. He said with sorrow that his family was an unauthorized migrant. He was residing on the vested land; although a few years ago some patta was distributed, but he lamented over his misfortune as he became deprived from the same. On the other hand, when BPL survey occurred in earlier his family was enlisted but that was cancelled and it was yet to be conducted further. He briefed very clearly that administration paid a least attention to their words. He helplessly exclaimed that they were forced to obey

the directions of the local political party; frequently they had to provide different subscriptions from their very little amount of income, otherwise they would get uprooted at once. In every sector, whether it was the block office, the office of the Panchayat pradhan or the medical college, no one paid a little sympathy to their grief.

Case Study 7: Pulin Barman of 55 years got migrated from Mymansingh district of Bangladesh during 1995. They had a joint family system and they did agricultural works on two bighas of land. After the political turmoil of 1971, a number of allied incidences started to emerge very rapidly. Due to communal factors, there crops were burnt into ashes and their pond water was poisoned. Moreover, his younger bother was stabbed by some unidentified person and a hand of his father was slewed; so he became physically handicapped. At that time a number of his near and dear ones were settled here. During this turmoil all of his relatives came to the studied area but his father was quite reluctant to leave their parental house. After the mishap of his father, the entire familial responsibility was bestowed upon the shoulder of the informant. He stated that he worked as a share cropper and agricultural labourer in the land of others. But that mere income was quite disproportionate to fulfill the common minimum livelihood requirement. The crisis forced him to take a debt of Rs. 4000/- from the local moneylender. However, he was cheated on the condition of interest and in total the entire amount raised upto Rs. 10,000/- . Afterwards in 1992 his father passed away. He stated that from 1980's he often came to the Balasan colony to his relatives. Further, they advised him to come there. Then he sold the land in Bangladesh but hardly had any cash in hand; because the amount was almost equivalent with his amount of debt. He remembered with grief sorrow that during the said period one of his children was suffering from serious illness, but he hardly had any scope to provide him the treatment; soon he passed away. In such a disastrous condition he came to Balasan colony with only Rs. 2000/- in hand. Since then the population of the area started to get increased by leaps and bounds. He stated local political wing provided him the place of settlement on a donation of Rs. 1500/-. But then he had no Government authorization related with the settlement. He mentioned very clearly that although there were several official beneficiaries for them but in its implementation there were alarming

discrimination and it made his family very much deprived of every perspective. Even the higher administrative authorities paid a least attention to their word. He accepted the truth that then people were coming to the studied area but they had to inhabit on the sand bank of the river because there was merely any vacant place left in the colony.

Case Study 8: Shankar Barman of 30 years had a four membered family in the Balasan colony. They got migrated from Jasohar district of Bangladesh during 2000. They had two bighas of agricultural land and they were totally involved in agricultural works. But political conflict was a common occurrence there. Particularly the religious minorities had to face all sorts of discrepancies. Even they could not get the adequate price of their crops. It created an acute financial crisis for them. He could remember easily those fearful days when his house was repeatedly being broken up and when they were regularly beaten up by unidentified persons. His sister and her husband resided adjacent to their settlement. He (brother-in-law) was stabbed violently by miscreants in his house in 1999. It frightened them a lot. Many of his close relatives were settled in Balasan colony since long. Mr. Barman agreed that according to their advices he came to the Balasan colony in the year 2000. He was unable to sell the land in Bangladesh; rather it was forcefully grabbed by his neighbourers and in turn they offered him a mere amount of Rs. 4000/-. At that time there were more than 300 families in the colony. He communicated with the local political wing and gave them a donation of Rs. 2000/-. It provided him a square feet to settle down. He revealed the truth that for resettlement he had taken a bank loan and yet to refund it in full. He expressed utter annoyance related with their un-authorization of settlement and lack of national identity. He stated that when he had to go to some government official sector, he got mentally prepared to face all sorts of unpleasant behaviour.

Case Study 9: Mahen Barman of 50 years got migrated from Khulna district of Bangladesh during 2005. The informant had a seven membered family in the studied area. They were associated with agricultural works on two bighas of land. As they were the religious minority, often their crops were being stolen during night or those were charred into ashes. In such a situation he decided to sell the land but could only managed an amount of Rs. 3000/-. He finally came to the

studied area in 2005, when near about 350 families were settled. At first he built a settlement of bamboos and canes on the sandy bank of the river. Although he had a good number of relatives in the colony, but nobody among them had shown any interest to bring them in their own settlement. Further, he requested the local Panchayat for a number of times to get a settlement. Ultimately in the end of 2006 he got a settlement in the colony by providing them a donation. He stated the fact that although it was quite hard for them to provide regular donation to the political wing but such disobedience might result an adverse impact on their settlement. He realized that although agriculture did not provide a huge amount of profit, still they could easily manage a fold of rice from local resources. But in the stone crushing such opportunities were seized. He had a bitter experience when he tried to enroll his child in school. However, it was solved by the local Panchayat. During the study, they had no administrative authorization of their settlement and were treated worsely by the higher official in a number of occasions.

Case Study 10: Brojen Barman of 50 years got migrated from Pabna district of Bangladesh during 2008. The studied family of the informant was comprised of five members. Earlier they were resided in sand bank of river Mahananda and were involved in the work of day labourer. But the massive flood of 2006 grabbed all their personal belongings and even washed away their settlement. Then he came to the Balasan colony where near about 400 families were settled. He expressed his sorrow to state that the local Panchayat had refused his prayer to provide a settlement within the colony. He and the other family members were resided on the sand bank of river under the tarpaulins. His eyes got moistened to state that they were struggling to survive without any administrative support. His daughter in law was pregnant and was in a very serious condition, but the Panchayat or higher officials paid a least attention. He was still unknown that how long they would spend their life in such a situation. He further stated that they had no scope to establish a new settlement because neither he had money, nor any other means of occupational pursuit.

From the above all case studies it can be summarized that the political turmoil and lack of socio-economic security forced the concerned people to leave their ancestral land and property. Merely for the sake of survival they were forced to get displaced and got a scope of resettlement in the studied area. However, they

had no documentation related to resettlement and were facing a number of administrative obstacles in different circumstances. Meanwhile, in case of the other studied families the situations were not much different. It can be taken into account that issues of political turmoil and consequent displacement as well as refugeeism created a major impact on the affected people irrespective of their caste identity. Simultaneously it does not distinguish between the rich and poor. It can be noted that every studied family became the victim of a socio-political turmoil and co-related displacement. All of them were completely uprooted from their permanent settlement and stable traditional caste based occupational pursuit. They had lost their close kin members or they became scattered from one another. Even in some cases they had lost their spouse and children. Every members of the studied families had lost their nationality, identity and fundamental rights of being a human. Being almost resourceless, they were searching for common minimum alternative means of livelihood for their survival. Gradually they got the information about stone crushing occupation. It provided them the scope of resettlement and alternative means of economic pursuit. It was the only scope of resettlement left for them and they readily accepted it. In many cases the concerned people got here remarried and started a new familial life. Even they got separated from their traditional joint familial practice and established his own family. The Balasan river bed and its natural resource gave them a raise of hope to sustain their livelihood. On the other hand the concerned people also looking after some oppurtunities to get stabilize because the trauma of political turmoil and its resultant factors had exhausted their physical strength and mental peace. Thus they got settled down in the studied area and gradually became affiliated with the stone based and stone crushing work. From the field study it could be revealed that the studied people were mostly settled agriculturists in earlier. Their previous land holding pattern is represented through the following table.

Table 3.12: Distribution of the families on the basis of land holding pattern before migration

Purpose	Land Holding (in bighas)					Total family
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9 and above	
Agriculture	245	37	15	10	18	325
	75.38	11.38	4.62	3.08	5.54	100
Homestead	302	20	3			
	92.92	6.15	0.92	-	-	

Source: Field Study

Most of the studies families (86.76 %) had quite a reasonable amount of agricultural land even upto four Bighas and the others had more than that. Thus in earlier there prevailed a socio-political stability which had also provided a stable socio-economic condition and permanent occupational pursuit. Along with that most of the said families (92.92%) had the homestead land of 1-2 bighas while very few families had land upto 3 to 4 bighas (Table 3.12). Thus there settlements were also permanent in nature. However, severe socio-political unrest in Bangladesh and other factors forced the people to leave their permanent settlement and stable economic pursuit. Although they were not economically rich but earlier the agricultural produces and other natural resources provided them the daily livelihood requirements. Being an agricultural community the studied people were devoid of any sort of cash and for them the land was the sole resource. However the sudden crisis forced them to get displaced from their native land; even the contemporary situation hindered them to sell their land. Thus they came here as completely landless and resourceless in condition. In that situation they were urgently needed to survive by any means. Meanwhile, at that moment Siliguri started to get flourished as the largest urban center of North Bengal and huge amount of raw materials like stones, sand etc were needed for several constructions. The same demand could also be noticed in several other districts and states adjacent to Siliguri town. In such a situation the natural resources of Balasan river attracted the studied people because it could easily meet up with the availability of raw materials required for urban construction. Moreover, this new working opportunity was neither required any sort of machinery or technical skills nor it required any sort of financial investment to start up; what it required was only the ability of hard manual labour. The studied

people readily accepted this working opportunity and they started to collect the stones, sand, boulders from the Balasan river. Further, they started to break up the stones and boulders into several requisite shapes and sizes related with the urban construction work. In this regard, the stone crushing work provided them a source of income to avail the common minimum livelihood. In this context their generation wise can be represented through the following table.

Table 3.13: Distribution of families on the basis of generation wise occupation

Generation	Occupation					Total family
	Agriculture	Day labour	Stone crushing	Others	None	
Grand Father	325 100.00		-	-	-	325 100.00
Father	294 90.46	28 8.62	3 0.92	-	-	
Ego	-	-	322 99.08	3 0.92	-	
Ego's Child	-	-	191 58.77	72 22.15	62 19.08	

Source: Field Study

It is to be mentioned here that due to displacement, migration and struggle for survival the studied people got totally shifted over from their traditional caste based occupation of agriculture to a new occupational pursuit i.e. the stone crushing work. Among the studied families, in all the cases, the grand parents of the egos were related to agricultural work. However, in the studied families all the egos were involved in the stone crushing work either primarily or secondarily while in 191 (58.77%) cases the child of the egos were involved in the stone crushing work (Table 3.13). It can be noted that in between the parental generation and the generation of descendants, there took place a complete shift over from the traditional caste based occupational pursuit of agriculture and the studied families who were associated with stone based occupation had almost forgotten their knowledge of cultivation. During the study it was noticed that the stone based occupation was the prime source of earning for most of the studied families and they were primarily depended on it to accumulate their daily livelihood requisites.

Besides the scope of an economic pursuit, the Balasan river bed was also very important from another perspective. The concerned people were mostly roofless and were completely devoid of any sort of permanent settlement. In those circumstances, the vested land of the Balasan river provided them the opportunity of resettlement without any sort of financial expenditure or against some mere donation. Further, the studied people got started to settle down directly on the sand bank surrounded by the flow of the Balasan river by their own local adjustment along with the contemporary political support. In this way the Balasan colony was formed in 1977. In those days the colony was quite vacant. The contemporary local Panchayat took the leading role regarding the settlement of the migrated people and the formation of the colony. They gave tarpaulin sheet, polythene and bamboo fencing to the concerned families to build up their settlements. Further, the *Sardars* who were related with the stone crushing work, in consensus with the local political wing provided iron implements, bamboo baskets and other essentially required particulars to the concerned people for the stone crushing work. Even, in a number of occasions they supplied food to the newly settled families. In this way, with the initiative and co-operation of the authorities of local political party and *Sardars* of the stone field, the migrated families were able to find their means of resettlement and new sources of income as well as gradually they started to adjust with their new means of livelihood. At that time there were 25-30 families who were inhabited on the sand bank of the said river and it was persisted upto 1982. In those days the vested land located on the comparatively high areas was a delta like feature because the Balasan river and one of its tributary flowed through both the ways and the location of the colony lied in between them. Moreover, it was covered with forests and there was no settlement at all. In the studied area, flood was a common occurrence in every year during the rainy season. In such a situation the concerned people were forced to take shelter in adjacent highland areas. In those days the river was mere 15 feet in breadth. But due to repeated floods, the lands located within its flow gradually started to get eroded and the river got expanded in its breadth. In 1983, there took place a massive flood in the Balasan river which almost ruined up the contemporary settlements located on the sand bank of the river. It forced the people to search for alternative land on the comparatively higher areas adjacent to the river. Moreover this flood severely told upon the river banks and the adjacent

areas were also under the threshold of erosion. In this regard, there was an urgent requirement to provide adequate embankment of river for the sake of existence of the contemporary settlement. In that situation the local Panchayat and the common mass decided in consensus to do the needful for the construction of the embankment. The local Panchayat took a subscription of Rs. 200/- from each family for this purpose. During 1986-1987 the embankment was completed and also a small dam was built up. It resulted in the fact that the tributary of the river within the colony gradually got weaker and the main Balasan river became deeper. As a result, its capacitance for the storage of water also increased a lot. Meanwhile, the families who came to the vested land of the high areas started to clear up the jungles and got settled according to their own local adjustment along with political consensus. Further, onwards from 1984 a large number of people started to come to the colony and got settled here permanently. In this area the first official survey was conducted in 1992 and the *patta* or official record of land holding was provided to a few families but most of the families did not get it. Such official record was not distributed further but the work was still going on. The entire Balasan colony was divided in two sectors namely ucha or upper Balasan colony and niche or lower Balasan colony. Among them the inhabitants of the lower Balasan Colony were all involved in the stone crushing work either primarily or secondarily. On the other hand a few families of the upper portion of the colony were associated with shop keeping. In this way the migrated families got anew occupational pursuit and new place of resettlement on the Balasan river bed. However related to resettlement, or for urgent familial requirements, construction of huts among the studied families 54 (16.62%) families had taken loan. It was mostly taken from the *Gramin* bank or from local money lenders to redress their inconveniences (Table 3.14).

Table 3.14: Distribution of the families on the basis of resettlement by loan

Yes	No	Total Family	If Yes					Total
			Purpose		Source		Amount	
			Repair of house	Others	Gramin Bank	Others	More than Rs. 1000/-	
54 16.62	271 83.38	325 100.00	42 77.78	12 22.22	26 48.15	28 51.85	54 100.00	54 100.00
								0

Source: Field Study

The studied families were all migrated and got the resettlement on the vested land of Balasan river bed. But near about all of them were devoid of any sort of official records related with their resettlement and occupancy of the land, under the Panchayat, block or sub divisional administrative level. Even most of the inhabitants of the colony had not their own ration card, although they were dwelling in the area since the last three decades. The issues of their voting identity and ration card facility is represented through the following tables.

Table 3.15: Ration card facility to at least one member of the families

Sex	Category			If yes how long		
	Yes	No	Total population	Less than 3 yr	More than 3 yr	Total
Male	74 8.71	776 91.29	850 100.00	57 77.03	17 22.97	74 100.00
Female	51 6.48	736 93.52	787 100.00	39 76.47	12 23.53	51 100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 3.16: Issue of voter identity card among the studied people

Sex	Category			If yes how long		
	Yes	No	Total population	Less than 3 yr	More than 3 yr	Total
Male	318 75.36	104 24.64	422 100.00	276 86.79	42 13.21	318 100.00
Female	279 73.04	103 26.46	382 100.00	233 83.51	46 16.49	279 100.00

Source: Field Study

From the field study, it was revealed that among the total studied population a very few of them had their own ration card while most of them had become the beneficiary merely a year ago (Table 3.15). They repeatedly sought the appeal to higher administration for the provision of ration card but all their efforts went into vain to focus the attention of the authorities over their problem. It is to be mentioned here that among the studied families there were 422 males and 382 females who attained their age (as directed by Indian Constitution) to opine the electoral franchise. Among them 318 (75.36%) male and 279 (73.04%) female had their voter identity card, while a larger section of them got it only a year ago (Table 3.16).

Meanwhile, during the field study it was noticed that there were a number of irregularities in most of the voter identity cards and the concerned persons were in communication with the local Panchayat to redress the faults. Further, it is to be mentioned here that in the year 2002, a B.P.L survey was done in the Balasan colony but it was not conducted properly and most of the studied families were not enlisted in it although the standard criteria mentioned by the Government of India applicable in case of the studied families. In this concern, under the initiative of the local Panchayat, the said survey was conducted again in the year 2007 but the result was yet to be settled. From the overall circumstances, it can be stated that the studied families were dwelling in the Balasan colony since a decade or more but they had no proper administrative authorization. There were no official records regarding the personal land holding in the Balasan colony whereas the entire situation was getting managed under the influence of local political party. On the contrary, it was also true that if Government wants to uproot the studied people from their settlement then the common mass had no way to highlight their authorization and demand over their land. Although a few families were the holder of the *patta* but most of the families were completely devoid of this facility. Further, the ration card and voter identity proof were the very important documents related with the nationality in India. In spite of that most of the families were completely debarred from those facilities. The entire situation made an acute identity crisis for the studied people. They had no legal authenticity regarding their citizenship as an Indian. Moreover, as they had no adequate permission related with their settlement, so they were always under stress that any administrative action might tell upon their habitation and it would again force them into roofless and resourceless in condition. Meanwhile, they went to the administrative authorities in a number of occasions regarding their issues of voter identity and for the Indian citizenship through ration card. But the higher officials had seldom paid any attention to them and most of their efforts went into vain. Even whenever they went to higher administrative or legal authorities, it had only given them inattentiveness and humiliating behaviour. The studied people had their own personal identity and authority over the land and resources when they were settled in Bangladesh. Although they got the chance of resettlement after the political turmoil but till date they were treated as the roofless and resourceless refugees. They had no identity of their own and the

people of the outside areas knew them only as an occupational group who were related with the stone based work on Balasan river bed. They had no individual identity as an Indian citizen in the surrounding society rather they were known only as a working labour to the outer world. However in the studied area even a child was facing the problem of his identity by birth and the issue of identity crisis had become a community matter for them.

The overall scenario of the Balasan Colony can be analyzed from multidimensional aspects. Due to major socio-political crisis the people were forced to get displaced from their early settlement and ultimately they lost all round well being. Their simple way of livelihood had to face utter constraints to survive. Naturally it affected on their traditional socio-cultural system a lot. They are mostly undocumented and unauthorized migrants. As a result they are devoid of administrative facilities like rationing, voting, proper justice. They came here as disintegrated and still now they are on the way of disintegration. It may be said that the political factor can obviously lead towards the displacement of a well established community, on the way disintegration. Most of their traditional cultural pattern had changed. With the changing dimension of time their stable life security was totally got disbalanced more than 50 years ago and still now they are facing the consequent result. In the studied area, the studied families belonged to the Rajbanshis, the dominant scheduled caste community of North Bengal. The early settlement of the studied families were in Bangladesh. They were the villagers and their prime occupational pursuit was settled agriculture. They were far from urban accessories and their livelihood was confined within the village. Their daily life was deeply co-related with the surrounding environment. They utilized the natural resources as raw materials to fulfill their requirements like food, dress and shelter in daily livelihood. Although they were not economically wealthy, but their livelihood was quite secured because they could easily accumulate their common minimum essentialities from the surrounding environment without any financial expenditure. Agriculture was their prime economic pursuit and in this regard the entire family was related with the work. Their family type was joint in nature and strong kinship bondage was prevailed among the family members. They always participated in each others will and woe. They had their own traditional cultural practices and it was enculturated through generation after generation. They had a number of religious festivals

among which a few were related with their traditional agricultural occupation. All of those festivals were celebrated by the entire community members and those were primarily performed with a prayer for the betterment, safety and protection of the entire community. Their social life was very much peaceful and co-operative. Earlier the social life and the associated cultural practices of the studied people were not merely confined among the community members rather it was very much associated with the surrounding nature and all other living objects as a whole. Ultimately, during their earlier settlement in Bangladesh, the studied people had their own social security and they had the scope to perform their traditional cultural heritage. Earlier their arrangements of activities were organized by keeping in view the broader interest of the community inspite of any individual's vested desire. The productions from the land and the resources collected from the neighbourhood were equally distributed among the members of the family. All of the family members were collectively involved to fulfil the essential requirements for the purpose of their common minimum livelihood. In this regard the issues of individual betterment and personal sharing were strictly forbidden. In earlier they had a strong community consensus and in their livelihood peace, harmony and co-operation was always prevailed.

Ever since the independence, India has been facing the problem of migrated population particularly from Bangladesh. Further during the political turmoil of Bangladesh in 1971, this influx reached to the optimum level and a huge section of people took shelter in several districts of North Bengal located in the Indo-Bangladesh border region. The people were almost devoid of their common minimum sources of daily livelihood. They were urgently needed any sort of economic pursuit for their survival. In such a condition a section of the migrated people came to the bed of the Balasan river. The said river was provided with a plentiful of natural resources like stones, boulders and sand. Those could supply the demand of raw materials required for the urban construction in Siliguri and adjacent neighbourhood areas. The concerned people started to collect the natural resources from the river as well as started to break up the stones and boulders into different shapes and sizes according to the requirement. On the contrary, they were able to get involved in a new economic pursuit which was commonly known as the stone crushing occupation. In this way they were totally shifted from their traditional agricultural occupation to a new occupational pursuit. Moreover, the

vested land of the Balasan river provided them an opportunity of resettlement. The concerned people by their own local adjustment and along with the help of the local political authority started to resettle on the vested land of the Balasan river and in this way they established the studied settlement named as Balasan Colony. In the earlier days there were only a few families in the colony but gradually with the passage of time, more and more people got started to migrate here from Bangladesh and during the study it was noticed that there was almost no vacant place in the colony. In this way the Balasan river provided an opportunity of resettlement and new occupational pursuit to the migrated, roofless and resourceless refugees. Although the concerned people were able to find here an alternative means of livelihood, but most of the studied families had no official records regarding their establishment of settlement on the vested land of Balasan river. Further, most of studied people had neither the voter identity card nor the ration card which could authenticate their Indian citizenship or any sort of personal identity authorized by the Government of India. The concerned people were known to the outside world by virtue of their occupational pursuit. The higher administrative authorities had seldom paid any attention to their inconveniences and even the concerned people could find a mere opportunity to state their problems to the authorities. They tried a lot to collect the authorized document of Indian citizenship according to proper official procedure. However, all of their efforts went into vain. It is to be mentioned here that due to socio-political turmoil, displacement and migration their settlement and economic organization became seriously affected. Within the period of two generations the entire scenario of their daily life had almost changed in totality. They were completely shifted over from their traditional caste based occupation of settled agriculture to the stone based work. Further, due to displacement and migration their social life and allied cultural practices had changed a lot. In this regard, in front of the greater human society the studied people had no identity on the basis of their traditional socio-cultural heritage. Even they had no personal identity as a citizen of this country. They almost lost everything. Even after the resettlement they were leading their livelihood in a state of psychological insecurity related with their identity crisis and unauthorized settlement. But they were yet to find any sort of assurance from the higher authorities to redress their inconveniences. Ultimately, it can be stated that they came here as a group of refugee people and

further became treated as the same by the nation, state and entire administrative authority.

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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 flourishing 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 dam 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 dams 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 dams 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}

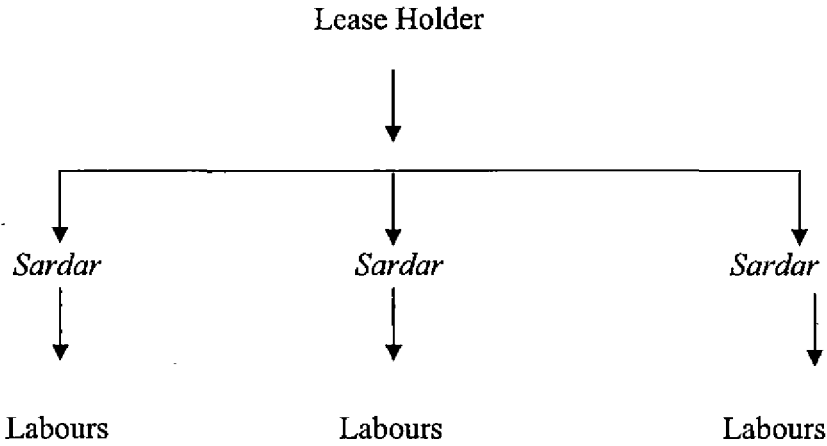
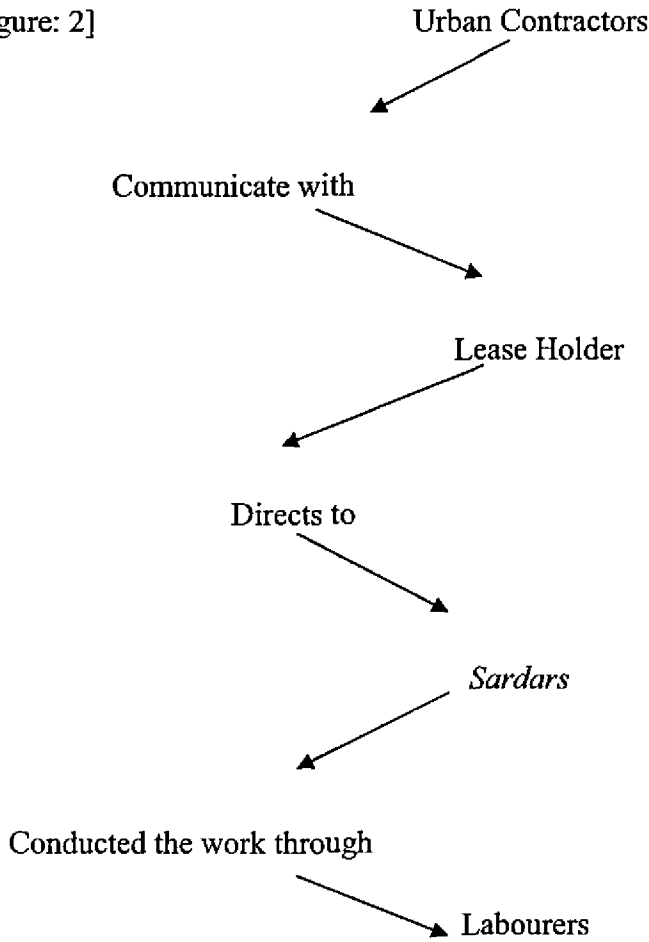


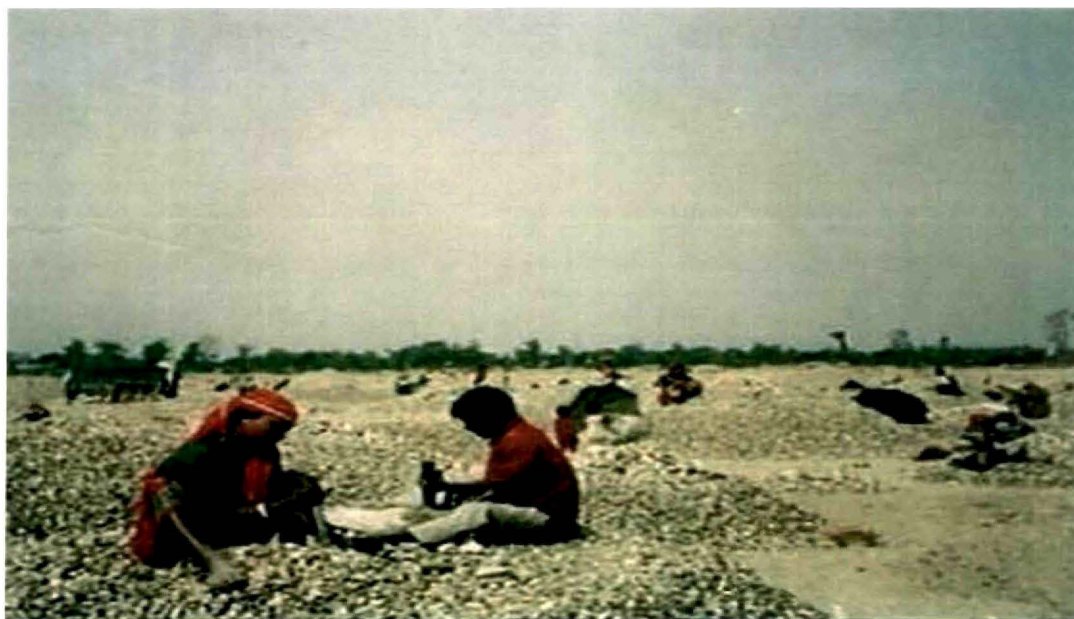
Figure: 2]



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) **Jhajhri 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 dug 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 opportunities. 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 89.72	26 10.28	253 100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 4.10: Category of the child worker

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

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 up then 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 for 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 reason 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 inspite 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	-	-	-	-	3 100.0 0	-	-	3 100.00
Total	27 6.46	29 6.94	81 19.38	144 34.45	76 18.18	34 8.13	27 6.46	418 100.00

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 break 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 up to 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ 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]

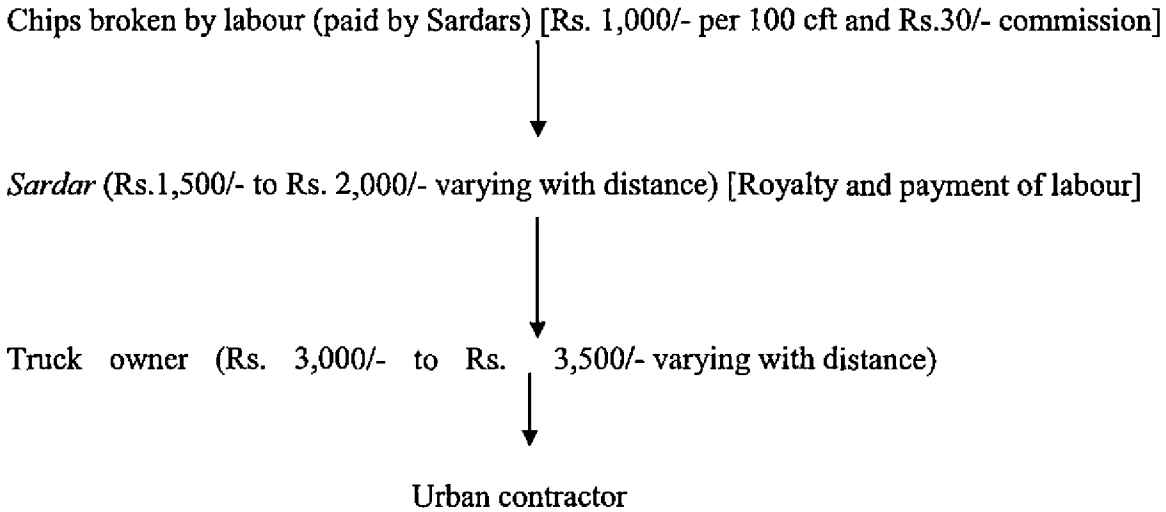
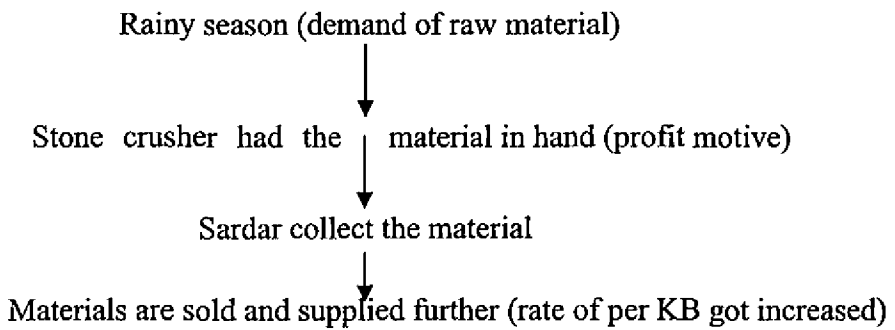


Figure-4]



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 month (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 desperately 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 opportunity 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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CHAPTER V

SOCIAL LIFE OF THE STONE CRUSHERS

Society can be looked upon as a process, as a series of interactions between human beings; each person stimulating another person and responding to the stimuli from the other person. No social life is possible without such interaction. Thus the whole human society and each group in the society can be viewed as the manifestation of the social processes between the interacting members. Ultimately a society is no more than a union of individuals, all of whom have their own special needs and interests. If a society is to survive it must succeed in balancing the self interests of its members against the demands of a society as a whole (Haviland, 1970:48). From Anthropological consideration of societies, the culture of a society is comprehensive not in the sense that includes the totality of human culture, but in the sense that it contains cultural pattern sufficiently diversified to enable the group to fulfil all the requirements of social life. Society emphasizes the human component, the aggregate of people and the relations between them. Culture emphasizes the component of accumulated resources, immaterial as well as material which the people inherit, employ, transmute, add to and transmit (Dash, 2004: 42-43).

The economic organization of the studied people was completely depended on the stone based occupation. The said occupation was intimately related with the maximum utilization of river based natural resources. On the other hand duration of work was a very crucial aspect related to the studied occupation. Thus the entire family even the children worked as a production unit irrespective of any age and gender biasness. The stone based occupation was associated with a number of works like collection of stones, sand and boulders from the river, isolation of different materials, breaking up of stones according to the demand of requirement, loading them to the vehicles etc. It could be noticed that both the males and females were equally associated with the work and any division of labour related to this arduous work could not be noticed. Among the studied people more working hand could generate better scope of earning and for that purpose they were involved in every aspect of the stone based work. However, their level of earning was very poor and in most of the families more than two

children were dependent upon two earning members. Obviously it had reduced their scope to provide the livelihood requirements for the family members at proportionate level. Poverty was an integral part of their livelihood and it might have certain impact on the socio-cultural aspects of their livelihood.

It was observed that the stone based occupation and the concerned working environment was significantly associated with the socio-cultural life of the concerned people. The studied people awoke early in the morning and after refreshment the concerned male folk took a very little breakfast and went to the river bed to start their daily work. On the other hand, the concerned women folk got involved in their household courses. Such involvement with the household courses was completed by them very soon and readily went to the river bed to start the work. Along with the parents, the concerned children also went to the river bed for the same. During the field study it was seen that often the studied people took their bath and washed their clothes in the tide of river water. Even in many cases they took their lunch and washed their utensils on the river bed. The new occupational involvement incorporated different iron implements to their material cultural aspects. Meanwhile, their traditional occupational pursuit and allied technological implements were completely obsolete. It is to be mentioned here that the socialization of the children primarily occurred with the help of their parents. When a child often went to work with his parents in the river bed, he gradually got acclimatized with the working environment. Further, with the passage of time he started to develop different level of interactions with different types of people who were affiliated with stone crushing work and had a regular interaction with the concerned workers. It was observed that the social behavior of a child was quite influenced by the activities of their parents. In this regard, their occupational involvement had a major role in their socialization process. In the studied families the concerned parents culturally assimilated their children with the working environment and social environment. The cultural expressivity of the studied people actually configured the expressivity of their learned behaviour and result of behaviour. On the other hand their cultural practices and modes of social behaviour would ultimately reflect that how far their rights to social life were secured. It would reveal the fact that upto what extent the concerned people could meet up with their basic needs to sustain their common minimum livelihood. These aspects will be discussed one after another.

Social structure and social organization of the studied people

A society is an organized, interacting aggregate of individuals who follow a given way of life (Herskovits, 1955:305). A society is no more than a union of individuals, all of whom have their own special needs and interests. If a society is to survive it must succeed in balancing the self interest of its members against the demands of the society as a whole (Haviland, 1970:48). It is composed of a population, organized on the basis of time, place and interests. Ultimately human being collectively forms the social life. It is based upon family, marriage, kinship, economic organization, political organization and religious organization. Each of them has their own standardized role in the life of human being. All these aspects are interrelated to each other.

Family: The Human family is a group composed of a woman, her dependent children, and at least one adult male joined through marriage or blood relationship. The particular form taken by the family is related to particular social, historical and ecological circumstances. Households are task oriented residential units within which economic production, consumption, inheritance, child rearing and shelter are organized and carried out (Haviland, 1970:246). The family fulfils vital functions that cannot be carried out as efficiently by other groups. The basic functions of the family may be performed with varying degree of effectiveness from culture to culture, and the details of the ways in which families within different culture systems carry out these functions produce remarkably differing results in the individual personalities of children and adults (Hoebel and Frost, 1976:319). Family is the smallest unit of every society throughout the entire world. In a family, the children were nurtured with love and compassion. It is the smallest unit of production and reproduction. Unless there is family, the continuation of society would be impossible. There are wide variations in the structure of families all over the globe; however the most common family type is composed of husband, wife and their offspring. In this regard, the following case study will help us to know about the family structure and its function among the studied people.

Case Study 1: Sri. Jaguna Barman aged 75 years was an inhabitant of the studied area lived with his wife, Asobala Barman aged 70 years. They were earlier settled

in the Pabna district of Bangladesh. His father had five brothers and he had four brothers and three sisters. They were well established agricultural family. They had a joint family and in their household total 32 members were dwelling during that period. He remembered that during those days they had nothing of their own or personal belongings. Everyone had to share every object with each other to live peacefully. Their prime occupation was agriculture and all the family members collectively did the work. The entire production was the common resource of sustenance for them. None of the member had any scope to claim their personal sharing from the agricultural produces. His father was the eldest male member of the family and his opinion was the last word for every member to obey. Even after his death, they maintained their joint family system. However, when the political turmoil started during 1970s, his kin members decided to leave the native land Bangladesh for the sake of survival. He lamented to state that it had broken their joint family and from common sharing they became focused on individual sustenance. They got separated from each other and started to find about their individual settlement separately. He came to the Balasan colony in 1973 along with his two sons and a daughter. A few days latter his younger brother Jagalu also came in the studied area and established his own settlement with his wife and three sons. He stated that although they were settled in close vicinity but their struggle for the sake of resettlement had provided a very little scope for regular communication among them. None of them could have any affiliation to share their economic resource or to live altogether. Even their children who had played together in the courtyard, gradually started to forget about their close kin relatives because onwards from resettlement, they became an allied working hand for their parents. Mr. Barman stated that he worked very hard for the sustenance of his family members and in such economic scarcity he gave the marriage of his daughter. Further, he had also established the family of his two sons. He remembered with sorrow, that just after a month of marriage, on both the occasions his sons expressed their desire to establish their own settlement and particularly they had shown an utter reluctance to bear the unnecessary economic expenditure of Jaguna and Asobala. At that time Jaguna became much aged to conduct hard manual labour. He stated that both of them worked together everyday and whatever they earned; it could provide a little scope of sustenance for them. Sri. Barman lamented that when he was young, he had a number of near

and dear ones on whom he could depend; then in the fag end of his life except his wife, he had no one else to whom he could trust.

Among the studied people, generally a family was constituted by the husband, wife and their unmarried children.

Table 5.1: Distribution of family according to family type

Family Type			Total family
Nuclear	Joint	Extended	
234	82	9	325
72.00	25.23	2.77	100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 5.2: Distribution of family according to family size

Family Size (in number)			Total family
1-4	5-8	9 and above	
136	179	10	325
41.85	55.08	3.07	100.00

Source: Field Study

In the studied area most of the families (72 per cent) were nuclear in nature while one fourth of them were the joint families and a very few were extended families (Table 5.1). Considering to the family size it was observed that in most of the cases (55.08 per cent) the families were comprised of five to eight members and there were nine or more members in certain (3.07 per cent) cases (Table 5.2). The average family members were five in number. Further, on the basis of mode of formation the studied families had a range of variation.

Table 5.3: Distribution of the families according to their mode of formation

Mode of family formation			Total
Entire family migrated	Remarried	First married	
57	34	234	325
17.54	10.46	72.00	100.00

Source: Field Study

It was a fact that the studied families were displaced and migrated from their early settlement. Among the total studied families, the familial head of around 18 per cent families had the scope to bring away his every family member in the new settlement and in certain (10.46 per cent) cases, the head of the family came alone to the Balasan colony for initial settlement. In such cases, they kept their other family members to the residences of in-laws and were supposed to take them to the new settlement within a shorter duration. However, with the passage of time,

after getting re-settled in the Balasan colony and initiation of a new economic pursuit, they had hardly found any further mental affiliation to their early settlement as well as family members. Latter on, they got remarried in the Balasan colony and started a new familial life. In case of 72 percent families the concerned individuals got married in the Balasan colony and started their familial life accordingly. In most of the cases those individuals were child when they came to the Balasan colony along with their parents. Latter on, they grew up in the studied area and started their own familial discourse (Table 5.3).

Basically the families were task oriented residential units within which economic production, consumption, inheritance, child rearing and shelter were organized and carried out. In the studied area, the natural resource was the only source of income which could provide the basic requisites related to the common minimum livelihood of the studied people. However, with the gradual decrease of natural resources as well as continuous increase of population in the studied area, an economic scarcity among the studied people got increased. It affected their family structure very much. During the study it has been reported that when the young generation of the families got married and thereafter they had a few children, the economic burden of the concerned families got increased more. It might be due to the fact that the said generation was the prime earning member of the concerned families while as their parents gradually got aged, so they could not work much harder as they did earlier. Ultimately, it reduced the level of monthly familial income among the studied people. Such economic scarcity had raised the thought in the mind of the young generation that they should earn only for their wives and children; while they showed a reluctance to bear the livelihood burden of their aged parents or of any other family members. It made the younger generation to establish a separate family, while their aged parents were left to manage their livelihood by own means.

Table 5.4: Distribution of change in family type

Mode of change				Total family
Always joint	Earlier nuclear but now joint	Became nuclear after migration	Got nuclear after marriage of son	
6	76	102	132	325
1.85	26.15	31.38	40.62	100.00

Source: Field Study

From the field study it can be revealed that among the total studied families only a very few (1.81 per cent) families remained joint in nature even after their migration and resettlement. Further, many (26.15 per cent) of the families, came to the Balasan colony as a nuclear family after their migration. Later on, the parental generation of the said families gave birth to their children in the studied area; further their children got married and during the study, they were co-habiting with each other. Meanwhile, displacement and migration had a serious impact on the family structure in the studied area. It has been reported that many (31.38 per cent) of the families were joint in nature before their migration. The parental generation used to stay along with their brothers as well as with a number of their married children. Both primary and secondary kin members resided in a common shelter as well as shared a common hearth and purse. However, due to sudden political turmoil and thereafter the displacement had forced every member to look after the alternative means of sustenance in a quick succession. In such cases an individual had the chance to think about only for his wife and children instead of any other family members. As a result, their traditional joint family system was broken up and they started to live in a nuclear family after their migration. After the marriage of their sons, familial consensus was disturbed very much regarding the fulfilment of familial requisites and source of income. The married sons felt their prime responsibility to accumulate the livelihood requirements of their spouses and children. However, their little working and less earned aged parents often became a liability for them and mostly married sons became quite reluctant to manage the common minimum livelihood for their aged parents. In this regard, they got separated from their parents after marriage and formed their own nuclear family. Such cases could be observed among a greater section (40.62 per cent) of families (Table 5.4).

Every society has its own socio-cultural fabric which is sometimes influenced by extraneous factors. Social and cultural aspects consist of different institutions of the society which works within the network of broader society. Institutions include family, marriage, kinship, economic, political set up, religious institutions etc. Socio-cultural aspects of the society influence upon many human action, on the other hand, many extraneous factors such as political turmoil also acts upon the socio-cultural aspects of a given society. In the studied area, displacement, migration and its consequent factors may seriously affect the social and cultural

aspects of the studied people particularly in case of their families. It is to be mentioned here that the traditional culture of the studied people was primarily folk based. In their traditional joint family system face to face interpersonal relationship hold the major base for the familial structure. In such families an individual had the scope for first hand contact with their parents and grand parents. The familial and allied socio-cultural traditions gradually carried forward from the grand-parental generation to the generation of the descendants. Ultimately through family their socialization process, enculturation and personality formation gradually developed. The eldest male member was the supreme authority of the family. Due to the practice of joint family system, there were senior male members who could make discussion with the eldest male member over different familial matters. All the other family members were supposed to obey his decision. It would have maintained a strict familial discipline and if any of the members had disobeyed it then it would be regarded as an offence. As a result, the juniors had to obey and depend on the seniors or their parents for different concerned matters. Parents were the decision maker of their children in every perspective while the children had no scope to disregard the decisions or to oppose them. Due to parental authority the teenage or the younger generation almost had no scope to commence any illegal offence or anti community activity like alcoholism, gambling etc. If the people had committed such offence then the concerned person even his entire family would have been socially segregated. The joint familial income was collectively spent for the fulfilment of common minimum livelihood of all the family members. Their basic needs were properly maintained and everyone had the social security related to daily livelihood. In this regard, the universal function of the family was maintained very much when the studied people or their parents were in their earlier settlements. However, just after their displacement, migration and resettlement a major change could be noticed in the familial aspect. The scarcity related to their economy and livelihood, had made the people self centric irrespective of thinking about their brothers, sisters and many other kin members. It made the social bondage and inter-personal attachment, affection much looser. After resettlement the concerned people started to earn by themselves. With their own earning, the people had to fulfil their common minimum livelihood by themselves. The collective familial income and its collective distribution among

the family members got reduced to a lot. As every body was a self earner here, so they were least bothered on the decisions and desires of their most elderly and other senior family members. They were much interested to take their decisions own. Their income gradually became separate and it was no more a common resource rather it became their individual accessibility only. It made the concerned people, to provide more emphasis to their individual aspirations. It made them to spend their money according to personal desire in multifarious ways. The authority and role of the senior family members gradually started to loss its rigidity and justification. The younger generation could have the provision to get much affiliated with a number of illegal and anti community activity like alcoholism, gambling etc. However, in a number of cases the senior male members of the concerned families had also an affiliation with such activities. Thus, when the elderly members of the family and locality had done mischievous things then he hold a very limited social position to advice the younger generation for their betterment. Ultimately, a total social disintegration was raised after their displacement, migration and resettlement in the studied area. It was noted that the family size of the studied people got reduced due to displacement and complete breakdown of traditional agriculture based economy. It is to be mentioned here that due to economic scarcity and lack of proper settlement, their traditional joint family system might get started to change rapidly into nuclear family system. So, the number of nuclear families gradually got increased. Due to displacement, they had lost their prime source of income that is land. Thus the scope to pursue traditional agricultural occupation became very much reduced which also affected the value system of the traditional joint family system. Meanwhile, most of the parents advised their children to join with them in the stone crushing work instead of their regular education, rejoice and merriment. Even poverty and economic scarcity had snatched the rejoice, cheerfulness and smile of the studied people. It was telling upon the socialization and personality formation of the children as well as of other people too. These inconvenient social circumstances and severe economic crisis altogether had created a mental distress as well as psychological pressure upon them.

Marriage: Marriage is the institution that defines the interpersonal relationships that determine the form and pattern of the mating pair in the association we know as the family. Marriage is therefore culture complex (Hoebel and Frost,

1976:301). It is a relatively more universal and major social institution, because it fulfills one of the most important function of the society that is reproduction with some degree of social regulation over sex relationship. Marriage and family are complementary concepts- marriage is an institution; family is the association that embodies the institution. Marriage and family are the cultural superstructure upon a biological foundation (Lowie, 1950:87). Marriage is a transaction and resulting contact in which a woman and a man are recognized by society as having a continuing claim to the right of sexual access to one another and in which the women involved is eligible to bear children (Haviland,1970:219). There are two principal motives for marriage- the universal object of forming a family and the constant need for co-operation in the daily routine of life. Marriage is a communion of adult male and female who by reproduction assist in continuation of the society. Every society permits adult male and female to get married so that societal norms may not be violated. Except this system, there would emerge social disorder; so it is an essential union for the continuation of society and social order. It is the recognition of connubial relationship between men and women.

Table 5.5: Distribution of male population according to marital status

Age group	Unmarried	Married	Widower	Total
15-19	75 100.00	-	-	75 100.00
20-24	39 53.42	34 46.58	-	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	-	47 97.92	1 2.08	48 100.00
45-49	-	31 96.88	1 3.12	32 100.00
50-54	-	39 97.50	1 2.50	40 100.00
55-59	-	15 100.00	-	15 100.00
60-64	-	18 94.74	1 5.26	19 100.00

65-69	-	8 100.00	-	8 100.00
70 and above	-	7 87.5	1 12.5	8 100.00
Total	114 23.6	364 75.36	5 1.04	483 100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 5.6: Distribution of female population according to marital status

Age group	Unmarried	Married	Widow	Separated	Total
15-19	23 48.15	28 51.85	-	-	54 100.00
20-24	-	70 98.59	-	1 1.41	71 100.00
25-29	-	63 100.00	-	-	63 100.00
30-34	-	54 98.18	-	1 1.82	55 100.00
35-39	-	35 97.22	1 2.78	-	36 100.00
40-44	-	36 78.26	8 17.39	2 4.35	46 100.00
45-49	-	33 89.19	4 10.81	-	37 100.00
50-54	-	20 80.00	5 20.00	-	25 100.00
55-59	-	13 86.67	2 13.33	-	15 100.00
60-64	-	8 57.14	6 42.86	-	14 100.00
65-69	-	3 75.00	1 25.00	-	4 100.00
70 and above	-	1 25.00	3 75.00	-	4 100.00
Total	26 6.13	364 85.85	30 7.08	4 0.94	424 100.00

Source: Field Study

It was revealed that in between the age group of 15-19 years, near about 52 percent female got married. It may be because of the fact that the concerned parents were quite worried about the social security of their daughters. On the other hand, the demand of dowry was a great matter of concern for them. So whenever they had a little bit of economic convenience or favourable circumstances, the marriage ceremony was conducted. On the other hand, the

male population had attained their marital life in cent percent cases, only after attaining the age of 25 years. It was primarily because, the age of the concerned male folk became fully affiliated with the stone based work and became a self earner. In due course of time only through own earning capability he could establish his own nuclear family after marriage.

Among the total studied families except very few (1.23 per cent) families, most of the (98.76per cent) families had at least one couple. So far as religion is concerned, the studied families were married within their own religious group. Among the total studied families the instances of inter caste marriage could be noticed in case of a few (6.15per cent) families. In this concern, except few love marriages, all the mates were selected within own caste group in case of negotiation marriages. Meanwhile, in case of inter-caste marriages, the couple had selected themselves. In such cases all the brides were from the studied families and they fled along with their mate belonging to other caste, community or ethnic group. Among such cases they were married in the families who came from Bihar and Nepal in case of 5 (25 per cent) families each. Further, in case of 10 (50 per cent) families they were married in the families of Pal (potter) community of Palpara located adjacent to their locality, whose traditional occupation was to make different earthen materials as well as idol of Hindu Gods and Goddesses. The age at first marriage of the concerned people is represented through the following table.

Table 5.7.: Distribution of ever married population according to age at first marriage

Sex	Age group (in years)				
	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	Total
Male	--	16 4.34	330 89.43	23 6.23	369 100.00
Female	89 24.18	225 61.14	54 14.67	--	368 100.00
Total	89 12.08	241 32.70	384 52.10	23 3.12	737 100.00

Source: Field Study

Data revealed that among the ever married population, the most attainable age of marriage for the males were in between the age group of 20-24 years, whereas in case of females it was 15-19 years (Table 5.7). However, there were a few

emerging problems related to their marriage. A few case studies were discussed below in detail-

Case Study 1: Smt.Santi Rani Barman aged 65 years was an inhabitant of Balasan colony since 1980. Her husband passed away four years ago and during the study she was living along with her daughter, Malati aged 20 years. Smt. Santi Rani Barman could not work much due to her ill health condition and their monthly income was only Rs.1, 200/- per month. She stated that for the sake of common minimum livelihood she had taken a public loan of Rs.5,000 from a local money lender and was yet to repay it in full. Her daughter had attained the marriageable age but her economic scarcity created as a great hindrance in this regard. Even she had tried to develop her daughter's marital relation outside of her locality. However, those people were quite reluctant to develop any sort of affinal relationship along with them. It was primarily because of the fact that the outsiders knew very well that such poverty stricken people had not the capability to arrange their desirable amount of dowry. She also tried to give marriage to her daughter in the Balasan colony but the related marital expenditure and the required amount of dowry became a hard task for her to manage. Ultimately it had created an acute frustration and mental depression on her.

Case Study 2: Sri. Aashina Barman aged 57 years had a five membered family in the studied area. He had a monthly income of Rs. 2,000/-. He stated that he had a public loan of Rs. 3,000/- from the *Sardar* which he was unable to repay till date. Under that severe economic crisis he had arranged the marriage of her daughter Jharna (22years) in the year 2007. The family of the groom demanded the dowry of Rs. 6,000/-. On the day of marriage he had managed to pay an amount of Rs. 4,000/- to the father of the groom and promised to pay the rest amount within a year. However, he was unable to keep his words within the stipulated schedule. On the other hand the in laws of Jharna started to misbehave with her and even she was frequently beaten up by her husband. Further, in the year 2009, they left Jharna back to her parental house along with a daughter and told Aashina that they would not except her as a daughter-in-law in near future.

Case Study 3: Sri. Jogina Barman aged 60 years had a six membered family in the studied area. He had a monthly income of Rs. 1800/-. He stated that even to

earn a fold of rice was a very difficult task for them. Often he had to take loan from the *Sardars* and other local money lenders. His elder daughter Rita (22 years) had attained the age of marriage and he was trying to do the ceremony in a quick succession. However, in earlier for four times she was preferred for marriage by different families but latter on those processes were withheld because Jogina was unable to accept their demand of dowry due to his poverty. Further, his next daughter Gita (19 years) had also attained the age of marriage. Ultimately such burden had created an acute frustration and mental depression on him.

Case Study 4: Sri. Suren Barman aged 57 years had a four membered family in the Balasan colony since 1985. His wife was ill and so he along with his two daughters had to do a lot of hard work on the river bed to collect a fold of rice. His elder daughter, Mala (22 years) had attained the age of marriage. However, with a mere monthly income of Rs. 1,800/- , it became a hard task for Suren to arrange her marriage. On the other hand on the river bed a number of outsiders used to come from different regions. Once a truck driver of Bihar had proposed Mala to go along with him but she refused and complained the matter to the *Sardar*. He advised Mala and Suren to mutually solve the problem. Again, the concerned person had threatened Mala to abscond if she did not accept his proposal. Suren was very much frightened in this matter and he was quite frustrated also due to the bitter truth that he was not in a position to arrange her marriage quickly.

Case Study 5: Sri. Bhola Barman aged 56 years was an inhabitant of the studied area since 1990's. He had a three membered family and his monthly income was Rs.2,200/-. He was very much interested to educate his son Dipen (25 years) and educated him upto XIIth standard. He had a preference to bring her daughter-in-law outside from the locality. He expressed his view that the women folk of the colony were uneducated and it would also make their future generation uneducated. However, a number of his marital proposal was refused by different families dwelling outside the colony. The parents of the bride were quite well aware of the fact that the people of Balasan colony were quite economically distressed. They knew very well that their daughters would have to do the same laborious work in near future if they were married in the Balasan colony. They

were more cautious to prevent the life of their daughter to get spoiled. It created a major problem for Bhola to find a suitable bride for his son.

Case Study 6: Sri. Bishnu Barman aged 60 years was dwelling in the Balasan colony since 1980. He was able to arrange the marriage of his eldest daughter Gita two months ago. He exclaimed with sorrow that twice in earlier her marriage was almost finalized but due to severe economic crisis and co-related issues it could not be materialized. He further took a loan of Rs. 3,000/- from the neighbouring money lender and somehow organized it. He stated that in earlier a marriage ceremony was associated with numerous rituals. All kin members and neighbours used to get assembled even before three to four days before marriage to conduct the rituals properly. The material cultural items related with such marital rituals were quite abundant within their village and those were easily available. However, after their displacement and further resettlement most of the material cultural items particularly certain plant resources were absolutely unavailable within their colony or adjacent areas. He had to purchase them from the market and those were quite expensive. In that circumstance he decided to reduce the marital rituals to a certain extent to minimize the expenditure as much as possible. Again, his economic condition was absolutely unfavourable to arrange warm reception of their kin members and neighbours for a number of days. During the marriage ceremony he invited a few kin members and neighbours to avoid undesired expenditure.

From the above studies it may be noted that a number of obstacles were intimately associated with their marriages. The probable reasons behind such emerging problems related to the marriage were primarily due to economic scarcity and un-documentation of the studied people. In this context, their acute economic crisis and uncertainty of livelihood had forced them to give first priority to survive rather than to execute value system. Meanwhile, it has been reported from the separated women that they failed to provide the dowry to the grooms' family. Even sometimes the husband had left their wives because he could not provide her common minimum livelihood due to economic paucity. The situation was so worse that quarreling was a regular phenomenon between a wife with her husband and in-laws. Further, the parents of the bride were facing a severe hindrance to fulfil the demand of dowry of the grooms' family due to their

poverty. Again, the parents of daughter were very much interested to settle her marital life outside of their locality to save her from laborious stone based works. Unfortunately, there was more demand of dowry which was beyond their capability. Ultimately, their dream was far to meet up with the reality. On the other hand, the parents of the bride who were dwelling outside of Balasan colony were also not interested to establish any sort of affinal relation with the families inhabited within the colony because of the fact that they were well known about the poverty of the stone crushing people. They knew very well that if their daughter was married in Balasan colony then she had to do such works which she had done never before. Further, social insecurity created a major hindrance related to the marriage of their daughters. The senior members of colony opined their view that the younger generation paid a very little attention to the opinion of their parents. They select their mates by own and often they get fled with each other. Ultimately it had created severe social insecurity for the young girls who had attained their marriageable age. Again, in the concerned work field a number of people belonging to different caste communities and ethnic groups had to come regularly from different regions. On the other hand the young girls of the studied families had to work regularly on the river bed. Often they had to face a number of indigent proposal from the outsiders. Although they informed the matter to their *Sardars* but they could not take any serious step. The Sardars had the fear if the outsiders became unhappy due to their behaviour then it would worsely effect their entire economic pursuit. Under such circumstances the parents of the girls always tried to arrange their marriage at an early age. Even in many cases it was before their attainment of 18 years. It was known from the senior members of the colony that such marriages were not abided by the governmental regulations. They told that the government would not protect their girls from any untoward incidence. Even a few days ago, some unknown women trafficking rackets had attempted to kidnap a girl from the locality but it was somehow prevented. So they were primarily aware about the security of their daughters. It is to be mentioned here that the concerned parents did not bothered about any sort of discussion about the matter with their daughters. In most of the cases their teenage daughters were not physically or mentally matured enough to start a marital life. Still such an important decision was imposed upon them by the male folk without any sort of their consensus.

Table 5.8: Distribution of ever married female population according to the pregnancy

Yet to become pregnant	Presently no children due to death of early child	Mother of one or more child	Total married female
16 4.02	12 3.02	370 92.96	398 100.00

Source: Field Study

It is to be mentioned here that among the total married female, most of the (92.96 per cent) females had one or more children while a very few (3.02 per cent) female had no children due to death of their children (Table 5.8). The number of children among the studied mothers are mentioned below.

Table 5.9: Distribution of studied mothers according to number of their present children

1-2 children	3-4 children	5-6 children	More than 6 children	Total studied mother
185 50.00	149 40.27	32 8.65	4 1.08	370 100.00

Source: Field Study

Further out of total 370 studied mothers more than 90 per cent had 1 child to 4 children and the remaining had more than 4 children (Table 5.9). Meanwhile it is to be specifically mentioned here that as per the Government regulation, age of 18 years had been standardized for the marriage of a girl. However, among the total 370 ever became mother, 85.42 per cent female gave birth of their first child even before attaining 18 years of her age. It is to be mentioned here that they had a desire of more children as it might generate more workforce for them to support their families. Due to economic scarcity they were not much sure whether a child would survive or not; thus they always preferred to procreate more work force for their familial income.

It is noteworthy to mention that the male folk had imposed their sexual right over the concerned female folk. It was the fact that, the female folk had to silently abide by and entertain all the desire of their husbands. Although the females were also an earning member of their families but the males were the prime earners. The female had no authority to keep their earned money into own hand. In every aspect of livelihood they were dependent upon the male folk of the society. It was also noticed that due to economic scarcity and insecured livelihood, the ritualistic

performances related to the marriage got reduced a lot. On the other hand, in the past, during any marriage ceremony, almost the entire village community celebrated with rejoice and merriment. However, due to their displacement and gradual economic scarcity they were not in a position to bear the expenditure of the ceremony so elaborately after their resettlement. The concerned family head could arrange the marriage of their adult sons and daughters with utter difficulty on account of continuous crisis in the family both in economic and relational terms. In the marriage ceremony the gathering of the kin members and neighbours as well as altogether merriment were no more observed and it remained confined only within a few families. Ultimately, the institution of the marriage was not only deviated from its functional aspect rather the social foundation of it became very feeble.

Kinship: Kinship is a matter of social organization and it is not instinctive. It is a social relationship based on real and putative consanguinity. All kinship derives from the existence of one or more families (Dash, 2004:88). By a kinship system Radcliffe- Brown (1959) meant “a network of social relations of the kind just defined, which thus constitutes part of the total network of social relations”, which he calls social structure. In its kinship network the rights and duties of relatives to one another are defined by social relations. In different stages of life cycle kinship has an important bearing as an individual to carry on his activities (Dash, 2004:89). Basically, kinship is relationship of individual within a group and it is a larger organization than family. Kinship may be blood related or maritally established. Kins are the members who are nearest to the family. Kin members generally play a crucial role in the Right-de-Passage and the allied social ceremonies associated with it. The kinship based social relations helps an individual to get rid from many social difficulties in his daily livelihood. In this concern, in the studied area, except a few love marriages, generally the affinal kinship relation was mainly confined within the families of their own caste group. In this regard both consanguinal and affinal kin members of the studied people were mainly scattered at the Balasan colony or adjacent areas. In most of the cases, the studied people of the Balasan colony were known to each other and there persisted a cordial relationship among them. Most of the studied people had their early settlement in Bangladesh and they felt proud regarding this identity.

Every studied family was mostly busy with their own earning and they were very much reluctant to tolerate the interference of neighbourhood in the familial matters. In the studied area, the relationship among the family members and the kin members were more or less peaceful and friendly but they had no in-depth informal interaction as it was in earlier. On different familial and social occasions their very close kin members and adjacent neighbours used to come. While in earlier days a mere household festival or occasion like first rice giving ceremony or marriage would turn up almost into a community matter. During the study such occasion had remained only within the domain of a very few kin members and relatives. The obvious reason behind this situation was displacement, economic scarcity and lack of social security as had been noticed among the studied people.

Case Study 1: Sri. Monglu Barman aged 69 years was residing in the studied area since 1975. He had a four membered family and the monthly income was Rs. 2000/- per month. He stated that he had three brothers and two of them were also settled in Balasan colony while another one was in adjacent place. He explained that he had a number of kinsmen but the mere scope of income and little space in the house was a major hindrance for him to allow the kin members to pay a regular visit at their house. It was quite impossible for him to share the same room along with the kinsmen. So the adequate maintenance of kinship based social relations was hardly possible for him. Again for the sake of livelihood they had to spend their entire day in work. So, it was also rather not possible for him to accompany the kinsmen. He mentioned very specifically that with a mere source of income they could hardly manage a square meal for themselves. So, to provide food for the guests was nothing but an additional burden for them. He further stated that they had no authorized settlement and they were dwelling their livelihood as an undocumented migrant. So, in such a mental distress and social insecurity, their maintenance of social relationship with the kin members was nothing but a liability for them.

Case Study 2: Sri. Jagat Barman aged 67 years had a five membered family and he was dwelling in the colony since 1973. He had three uterine brothers and one sister. Earlier they were settled in the Pabna district of Bangladesh and they had a joint family of 18 members. His father was the eldest brother. All his other uncles

and cousin brothers shared a common hearth. They grew up altogether and they had a very strong kinship bondage. However, during the political turmoil of 1971 His father, one uncle and two cousin brothers were kidnapped. Somehow the others members fled from there with lives in their hands. They lost their sister on the way because she was also kidnapped by unidentified people. At first they came to Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal in the house of their relative but soon they found difficult to be a burden over them. For the sake of survival he came to the Balasan colony with his mother and gradually got resettled. Two of his brothers went to Cooch Behar for the scope of work. The struggle for survival almost separated them from one another. They last met with each other around ten years ago when their mother demised. During the study they had no communication in between. Even when Jagat Barman organized the marriage of his son and daughter, he could not find the justification to invite his brothers. He stated that after some fearful experience some how he got the scope to earn a fold of rice. According to him in earlier the agricultural occupation was sufficient for their familial sustainability. However, the stone crushing work was not at all profit generating and through it they could hardly manage their common minimum livelihood. Thus he had given the priority to hard working and possibilities of more earning rather than focusing much attention on kin members. Particularly due to displacement, migration as refugees and economic scarcity, the rituals related to different socio-cultural functions and festivals were reduced a lot. Even in many cases it did not allow them to invite their kin members even for a shorter duration. Different familial and community occasions, festivals, cultural functions were also decreased. As a result, not only the kin members but the villagers also had a mere scope to gather altogether on such occasions. Further, in earlier they used to assemble in every ceremonial occasions of their kin members and neighbourhood. There they could share their will and woe altogether and they had a fellow felling. During the study, it was observed that such earlier spirit of enjoyment and common sharing was reduced to a large extent. In the past, mostly they lived in joint family but due to economic scarcity and individual means of livelihood it got broken and turned into a nuclear one. During the study almost every individual had their affiliation with the work and everyone could earn something. Particularly, the young males were also earning equally along with their parents. They could manage their personal means of livelihood in any way

with such earning. They were quite less bothered to abide by the decisions and dislikes of their parents. In this way, the senior most male members lost their authority over the family while the younger members could take their personal decisions by own means. Even during the establishment of their affinal relations in some cases the opinion of the parents were completely ignored. In many families the youths and adult children were affiliated with a number of illicit activities but their guardians had nothing to say as they were not bothered about their dislikes.

It is to be mentioned here that the prime emphasis of the studied people was focused to utilize the natural resources at the utmost level. Among them economic value became the prime one instead of social value. Further, it had also told upon their conjugal life. In many cases the males who were staying outside from their residence got engaged in extramarital sexual affairs. The kinship based relations which execute the affection, integrity and closeness among the relatives are important and very essential part of social organization. Its violation tells upon the social organization and their function as a whole. Ultimately, due to economic scarcity they had to struggle hard for their earning and it had forced some of the studied people to stay away from their family quite often. The important relationships which were essential for a rejoiced social life were disrupted very much in the studied area. In this context, particularly the children were getting debarred from the development of emotional responses like love, affection and security from their family. On the other hand, the younger generation was unable to execute their conjugal life properly. The aged persons were often neglected and even they did not get proper protection, co-operation and security from their family members and other kin relatives. The familial kinship bondage which was treated as the place of psychological relief station was getting deviated from its functional aspect. Both the productive and reproductive functions were not being fulfilled. In the overall context the entire situation was telling upon the function of their social structure and social organization as a whole.

Political life of the studied people

A culture is the integrated sum total of learned behaviour, characteristic of the members of a society embracing their total way of life- technological and ideological. Law is one aspect of culture, just as are kinship, subsistence patterns, language and art. Specifically, it has been stressed that in every society, human society must be narrowed down from its full range of potential variety to a moderately limited body of norms. Social control is exerted to guide the learning process of all members of society in the development of the appropriate behavioural customs. Custom consists of social norms and all social norms are sanctioned. Behaviour in accord with norms is usually narrowed. Social control consists of the entire gamut of rewards and dissuasions. Most societies include law within their systems of social control which is designed to achieve this end. Law is merely one aspect of culture, which employs the force of organized society to prevent, redress or punish deviations from prescribed norms. There are three basic features of law which denotes-

1. The legitimate use of economic deprivation or physical coercion.
2. The allocation of official authority.
3. The element of regularity or consistency. (Hoebel-Frost, 1976:286-287)

Radcliffe Brown (1940:1) speaks of political organization as "that aspect of the total organization which is concerned with the control and regulation of the use of physical force." According to Hoebel and Frost (1976:304), in every society, there must be an administration to maintain minimum law and order. In rural society, the concerned people form an administrative unit, in order to maintain the rules and regulation of the society, which ultimately forms political organization. These organizations may be elected bodies or it may be voluntarily selected.

In the studied area, it was known that in earlier they had their own traditional village Panchayat. It had the power and authority to control over different social issues as well as to maintain the village solidarity. However, after displacement and resettlement, the concerned people were not in a position to reform their traditional village Panchayat. It might be because of two prime factors, first the concerned people were primarily looking for their means of survival; and secondly, their issue of resettlement and alternative occupational pursuit was very much dependent upon the influence of contemporary political party. Certain

political factors forced the studied people to get displaced from their earlier settlement. Further, they came to the studied area as completely roofless and almost resource less in condition. By that time their caste and community based identity became completely insignificant and they were treated as undocumented and unwanted refugees by the local people. However, the contemporary local political wing provided them a scope of resettlement and involvement in a new occupational pursuit. It provided them a new way of hope and gradually they started to get resettled. However even after such prolonged duration most of their settlements remained unauthorized and during the study they were the undocumented refugees from the administrative point of view. Most of the families were devoid of *patta* or legal authorization about the ownership of their settlement. Meanwhile, it can be noted that if local administration desires to vacate the occupied land then it would not be possible for the studied people to legally establish any demand or right over their settlement. Further, only a very few section of them had individual ration card. Although the voter cards were issued against their names but most of them were meeting up with numerous errors. Thus, if their identity is concerned then they would be considered only as undocumented and unauthorized settlers who hardly had any legal right to their settlement. During the study it was found that most of the people had to face a lot of hardship in different Governmental official sectors particularly related with the admission of their children to high school or to get any beneficiary from modern medical institutions. It was only due to their lack of identity as an authorized citizen of this country and state.

Naturally, their obligations made themselves bound to abide by different local political influence. Consequently, the local political parties had played a major role to look after the existence of their settlement as well as they tried to provide minimum scope for common minimum livelihood to the concerned people. During the period of study it was noticed that the political organization of the studied area was under the control of Statutory Panchayat system. In the studied village, there were four Panchayats. They kept regular communication with the member of Panchayat Samiti. It was reported that the village administration particularly to the social matters were the prime concern of the local Panchayat and the senior members of the village. The traditional village Panchayat which was earlier comprised by senior members got merged within the authorization of

Statutory Panchayat system. The local administration of the village was controlled and different conflicts were solved by the Panchayat through rural *salishi* (rural court). In such meetings the decision making body was comprised of ten members, which included four village Panchayats, members of Panchayat samiti and the senior most members of the studied area. They listened the arguments of both the offenders and victim or justice seeker. The concerned decision of such body was taken as ultimate and it was to be abided by both of the concerned parties. Generally, the political organization of the studied village looked after the overall social administration. It is to be mentioned here that the Rajbanshis had their traditional political organization and the role of village head man was quite significant in it. However after displacement it was completely abolished and they came under the influence of modern political organization.

During the period of the study it was observed that the village Panchayat had a major role and functions in the context of social matters like marriage, death, funeral and village festivals as well as on the issues related to the implementation of different governmental schemes for the betterment of livelihood of the studied people. It was observed that the villagers foremostly brought their problems into the notice of local Panchayat, irrespective of going to any other senior most member of the society. Meanwhile, during the study, it was found that the studied people were supposed to be quite familiar with several modern political parties under Indian democracy. Ever since the formation of the colony its different social aspects were controlled by the modern political system. The different aspect of local political organization in the studied area was known from Sri. Bijoy Krishna Roy, Sri. Phanibhusan Roy, Sri. Jiten Barman and Sri. Ukil Barman. Among them the first two members were the local Panchayats and the last two persons were the senior most members of the studied area. Meanwhile, along with the local Panchayat, there were some allied sections which kept a close look on the local socio-political aspects. They were under the authority of local Panchayat. These organizations were local women forum (*Mahila samiti*), youth forum, village education committee comprised of eleven members, women education forum (*nari shiksha samiti*) comprised of seven members and two local village committee or *Gram Sansad*, each comprised of fourteen members. Among them there was Gram Panchayat, opposition member, secretary, president and senior, locally respected members. A different political party also existed in the

political domain of the studied village but they were not elected for Panchayat membership. Ever since the formation of the colony its different social aspects were controlled by the modern political system. These aspects are discussed below in brief.

When the people came to the studied area earlier, there were immense crisis to survive. People even lived under the tarpaulin on the river bed. The contemporary local political authority provided them the scope to get involved in the stone crushing work. Even they supplied them the stone crushing implements. The density of population at Balasan colony was quite higher than their earlier settlement in Bangladesh. In this regard the local Panchayat played a major role in the establishment of the present settlement. It was established on the basis of stone based occupation. The entire operation of work and the selling of raw materials were under the authorization of the State Government. They called the tender within certain duration of time. Accordingly the official authorization was provided to the elected person. Every such tender had the duration of 10-15 years. The region of Balasan colony was under the tender of two persons. They had involved a few persons who conducted the work in the studied area and were popularly known as the *sardars*. The entire work was conducted along with the consensus of local Panchayat. They collected the royalty and deposited it to the Government as levy. The first official survey of this area was done in 1992 and the *patta*¹ was distributed to the land owners. However, all the houses were not provided with *patta* and the official works were going on. In this concern, the *Sardars* who dealt with the stone crushing work played a major role in it and in the formation of Balasan colony. Adjacent to the studied area in other settlements the people belonging to the Hindu, Muslim, Nepali and Bihari community were dwelling. They were living in a harmonious manner. No such incidence of ethnic conflict had been noticed among the concerned communities till date. The entire working environment of the Balasan colony was very much dependent upon social co-operation. The total work on the said river bed was conducted by the *Sardars*. Although they had a certain working area, but there was no permanently demarcated regional specifications or territorial occupancy. They conducted the work with mutual understanding. The other workers also conducted their work in

¹ *Patta*: The documents necessary for the ownership of a residential land is called as *patta*. It is a title deed.

a certain place. However, they could also work in a distinct zone but that should be done after the adequate discussion with the concerned *Sardars*. The workers primarily conducted the work with each others mutual consent. However, in many cases conflicts arose regarding their work. Often the said problems turned into their familial arguments. In such cases the local Panchayat and the concerned judgement body declared their decision. Certainly they punished the offender with a little amount of economic penalty or they had to do the stone based manual labour work in favour of the judgement seeker.

One of the major activities of the modern political organization in the studied area was to provide the beneficiaries of different Central Government schemes to the concerned people in the studied area. However, even before five years ago those beneficiaries were beyond the reach of the required persons and there occurred some other mismanagements. Afterwards, the contemporary Statutory Panchayat took the initiative to distribute the beneficiaries accordingly. The concerned Panchayat implemented the schemes like Indira Awas Yojana, Swampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojana, Kutir Jyoti Prokalpo, Rural Sanitation Mission, Mid Day Meal programme in primary school, Sishu Shiksha Kendra, Sishu Pathokrom, Integrated Child Development Service, Water supply, Road Repairing, Annapoorna Antordaya Yojana for the betterment of common minimum livelihood of the studied people. It was reported that during the study, under Indira Awas Yojana 20 houses were made and distributed to the people. Further, through the said scheme the houses of 25 families were repaired. The said huts were belonging to the families who were particularly belonging to the below poverty line (B.P.L.). The Kutir Jyoti Prokalpo was implemented since 2005. Through the said scheme, 130 families were facilitated with electricity.

The Statutory Panchayat was quite aware to redress the environmental pollution in the colony. In this regard, it seriously took the scheme of Total Sanitation Programme since 2005. Before that there were mere some small scale drive regarding the sanitation issue. The scheme was sanctioned on for the families belonging to the B.P.L. category. The Panchayat would select such a family and the concerned materials were provided to them readily. During the study 150 families were covered under the schemes among whom the base pan were supplied to 100 families. Some of them were also under reconstruction. Altogether total 40 families were fully covered under modern sanitation facilities.

It was realized by the Panchayat that during the summer an acute crisis of drinking water often arose. At that time the level of drinking water felt down rapidly. By the initiative of Panchayat 50 wells, five tube wells and two taps were established. Mainly the wells were established just in front of the lanes in most of the cases, which provided the scope for every family to use the water for household courses. Meanwhile, the Panchayat was trying their level best to provide purified drinking water to the common mass. The purification was mainly done before the start of monsoon or just on set of monsoon. Even the surroundings of every household and muddy drains of the colony were also purified on frequent basis.

One of the major initiatives of the concerned Panchayat was to increase the awareness of literacy among the common mass. It took the initiative that in every family the children belonging to the five years of age should come under regular schooling. The enrollment of students was gradually on progress since 2001. But the incidence of drop out was also quite common. It was supported by the Panchayat pradhan that the rate of drop out had reached to an alarming situation. The Panchayat took a serious measure to reinstate the children into academic domain. The village educational committee was also very much involved in redress the educational drop out of the children. On the other hand the Nari Siksha Samiti was trying to build up the educational awareness among the womenfolk. They were also trying to influence the women to send their children regularly to the school. Further, the local Panchayat was very much focused to regularize the schemes of Integrated Child Development Schemes (ICDS). The concerned members informed that they were trying to strengthen the ICDS which could bring a major impetus to educate the child. On the other hand the Statutory Panchayat was also very much interested to regularize the Mid Day Meal scheme in the primary school of the studied area. In this concern, the supply of rice and other particulars reached to the local Panchayat from Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad², through the Block Development office. Further, they sent it to the primary school. On the other hand the expenditure details was submitted from the primary schools to the local Panchayat. They officially submitted it to the Block

² Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad: It is the administrative body at the Subdivisional level of Siliguri. It was formed in 1986-87 period after the formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council.

Development Office and finally to the State Government. It is to be mentioned here that the youth federation in the village was also very much focused to prevent the irregular school attendance of the children.

The local Panchayat member informed that they were very much aware to improve the health situation of the studied area. He stated that the pregnant women were completely dependent on household treatment and they gave birth to their children in the houses. During that period the rate of child mortality was at an alarming stage. The Statutory Panchayat along with the local health sub center took a joint venture to create a mass awareness over the reproductive mother-child health issues. During the study it was noticed that the pregnant women went for the immunization of herself as well as for her children to the local health sub center or to the Primary Health Center or to the Medical College. The pulse polio camp was regularly organized in the studied area at more than one center. In this concern the concerned campaign was jointly organized by the local Panchayat and the local health sub center. The local Panchayat had organized a few health camps in the colony. There the members of Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad, medical practitioners came and tried to increase the level of health awareness of the common mass.

The Panchayat did not interfere among the marriage decision between the two concerned families. However if some problem emerged regarding the demand of dowry then the local Panchayats, with a few senior members of the village went for a joint discussion along with the concerned families to find out a solution. Even the local Panchayat took the initiative to collect subscription to help the father of the bride to conduct marriage ceremony. Such initiative of the local Panchayat could also be noticed to organize the funeral ceremonies and allied purification rituals for the family members of a deceased person. Besides these, it was reported that the local Panchayat played a major role to organize major religious festivals in the colony. Further, the social discipline during the said period was also the prime concern of the local Panchayat.

However, the chaos and conflict were a frequent occurrence among the members of the studied families. The prime causes were the gambling and alcoholism of the males in the studied families. Often it resulted in a number of incidences where violences occurred frequently against the female. A number of such cases were reported to the Mahila Samiti. They identified the persons who were

involved in the illegal selling of country liquor and hemp. To redress the problem they frequently brought the matter to the police and requested them to arrest the offender. However, the appeal was not taken into consideration for most of the cases. Even if arrested, they were discharged within a day or two. As usually, they started the same offence. The Mahila Samiti reported the incidence to the local Panchayat. He extended his co-operation and advised the head of Mahila Samiti to organize a mass protest. During the study, all of the members of Mahila Samiti ransacked five country liquor shops and beaten up the males who were playing. The overall incidence had created a social awareness among the children and female folk of the studied area against such illegal practices. However, after a few days the said activities started to occur again but it was executed behind the close door inspite of publicly practiced. The pradhan (head) of Mahila Samiti had reported that they had a plan to do the same once again.

It was reported by the local Panchayat member that in the forthcoming period they would try to facilitate the people more with implications of Government schemes. They had a plan to start a couple of ICDS. In the health sub centre, Panchayat took the initiative to provide the facilities of child birth to the reproductive women. The Statutory Panchayat had accepted the truth that the provisions of Government facilities were quite disproportionate according to the requirements of the people. It is to be mentioned here that the concerned people were very peaceful, harmonious and co-operative to their fellow neighbours in their early settlement. The entire community celebrated the village festivals and other occasions with great enthusiasm. Apart from these, the people of adjacent villages also participated and contributed donations whole heartedly. However, with the changing dimension of time the scenario started to change rapidly. During the study it was reported that the younger generation expressed a very little respect to their elders. Intra familial conflicts became a common occurrence. Every family was very much focused for the sake of their own means of survival. Such personally vested interests were ultimately creating a less harmonious and non co-operative neighbourhood relationships. As a result, inter-familial conflicts became almost a regular phenomenon. Meanwhile, in almost every household issues of domestic violence like wife battering, oral separation and dowry related problems had become almost a regular phenomenon. Moreover, due to displacement and further insecured economic pursuit, different chaos and conflict

started to take place. Gradually it reached beyond their household confinement and ultimately it affected a lot to their traditional value system.

It was reported that in different cases the Government facilities were not properly distributed among the needy families. Even in some cases the fund was not adequately utilized due to lack of unanimous decision among the Panchayat members and it became unexpended. Political organization is the prime aspect to maintain the social solidarity and community consensus. In the studied area, the modern political organization had played the major influential role over the entire social situation. After displacement and loss of traditional occupational pursuit they got a scope of resettlement in the studied area. However, till date their habitation was unauthorized and they were not getting enough support from higher administration or regional polity. Continuously increased level of workers and competition related to work had enhanced their poverty into manifold. Their common minimum livelihood became very much insecure. Even the sanctioned government facilities were quite disproportionate according to their requirement. The entire situation had severely told upon their intra-familial and neighbourhood relationship. Frequent quarrel, conflict and chaos took place of peace, co-operation and harmonious relationship. Ultimately all these factors had collectively told upon their mental peace to a large extent and the studied people were far away to from a joyful life.

Religious life of the studied people

All societies have possessed beliefs that can be grouped under the term religion. These beliefs vary from culture to culture and from time to time. Yet despite their variety, religion can be defined as any set of attitudes, beliefs and practices pertaining to supernatural power, whether that power be forces, goals, spirits, ghosts or demons (Ember and Ember, 2002:439).

A social function of religion is to sanction a wide range of conduct. In this context, religion plays a role in social control. Another social function of religion is its role in the maintenance of social solidarity. One other area in which religion serves a social function is education, like initiation rites one can serve to enhance learning and so help ensure the perpetuation of a non-literate culture (Haviland, 1970:383). However, the religious aspects of a society changes a lot if the other social factors get altered due to different circumstances. Such a situation could be

noticed among the studied people. After displacement and loss of traditional occupational pursuit, the matter of survival emerged as a major challenge for the studied people. Further, though they got a scope of resettlement but they had no opportunity to pursue their caste based traditional agricultural occupation. Gradually as the time went on, their livelihood in a new environmental circumference and their affiliation to a new occupational pursuit brought a number of remarkable changes to their traditional socio-cultural practices. It had a deep co-relation with their material cultural aspects and allied religious practices. After their resettlement and involvement in the stone crushing work, a number of religious festivals related to agriculture and cattle wealth became obliterated. Earlier their livelihood was very much dependent upon several nature based products. In this way, their rituals expressed a tune of devotion to the nature. The entire community celebrated the festivals for safety, security, prosperity and protection for all of their members. Such festivals were not at all an individual matter, rather the entire community sentiment became affiliated with those. In this regard, their worship for agricultural land, crop production and river bore a special significance. However, after displacement their scope to access nature based products from the surroundings became almost seized. Consequently after resettlement, religious festivals related to nature, its production and community sentiment had no more significance and justification for them, as it was in earlier. Gradually as the time passed on, a number of such festivals became completely obliterated from the domain of their traditional cultural practices. Even, the younger generation of the studied society had never heard of such festivals. On the other hand, the aged people could no more remember clearly about the rituals related to those. However, during the study it was observed that they had a number of religious festivals throughout the entire year which are discussed below in detail-

In Balasan colony several *pujas*³ were performed throughout the year. Those were performed in different months according to the months of Bengali calendar⁴. Those were conducted on a certain auspicious day as per the Bengali alumnac. In the month of Baisakh (April-May), on the very last day all the people took

³ Puja: The method of religious worship according to Hindu ritual is known as Puja.

⁴ Bengali calendar: It has twelve months namely Baisakh(April), Jaistha(May), Ashar(June), Shrawan(July), Bhadra(August), Ahwin (September), Krartik(October), Aghrayan(November), Pous(December), Magh(January), Phalgun(February), Chaitra (March).

vegetarian diet and offered the same to *Lord Sri. Krishna*⁵. In the month of *Jaistha* (May-June) *Janmastami*⁶ was performed. Any family could conduct the festival if they had any previous mental offering. On the other hand community worship was conducted on the school ground for two days. In the same month *Loknath*⁷ puja was done in home and a community ceremony was done in the local temple. In the month of *Asar and Shravan* (July-August), the *Jamaisasthi*⁸ ceremony was performed. Then came the *Rath yatra*. The holy Chariot moved throughout the entire colony and several rituals were performed. In the month of *Asar Amathi*⁹ puja was done on the auspicious day of *Ambubachi*¹⁰. Again in the month of *Shravan Jhulan* yatra was celebrated. In the same month *Manasa puja*¹¹ was performed by them to keep the family members safe from the poisonous snakes. In the month of *Bhadra* (August-September), the *Rakhi*¹² festival was celebrated in every household. In the same month *Bishwakarma puja*¹³ was celebrated both in certain houses and community wise. In the month of *Ashwin* (October), holy *Durga puja*¹⁴, *Laxmi puja*¹⁵ and *Kali puja*¹⁶ were celebrated by the entire community. During such festivals local fairs were organised as well as a number of games, including open gambling were played. At the end of *Kartik* (November) month, *Shitala puja* was organised community wise. It was also celebrated in every household. It is to be mentioned here that in the studied area measles, pox had much prevalence. So the common mass had a compulsion to obey the rituals of *Shitala puja*¹⁷, with the prayer to keep the evil forces away from the child which might cause such diseases. In the month of *Agrahayan*

⁵ *Lord Sri. Krishna*: According to Hindu mythology he is the God who protects the Earth from evils forces.

⁶ *Janmastami*: According to Hindu mythology on this very day Lord Sri Krishna took birth.

⁷ *Loknath*: According to Hindu mythology he was a saint.

⁸ *Jamaisasthi*: It is the occasion where mother in law performs certain rituals yearly for the prosperity of son in law.

⁹ *Asar Amathi*: According to Hindu mythology it is the worship of Goddess Kamrup Kamakhya.

¹⁰ *Ambubachi*: According to Hindu mythology it is the pollution period of Goddesses related to menstrual cycle.

¹¹ *Manasa*: According to Hindu mythology she is the Goddess of snakes.

¹² *Rakhi*: According to Hindu mythology it is the sacred tie of brotherhood.

¹³ *Biswakarma Puja*: According to Hindu mythology he the God of engineering works.

¹⁴ *Durga Puja*: According to Hindu mythology she is the Prime Goddess and it is the biggest festival for the Bengalis.

¹⁵ *Laxmi*: According to Hindu mythology she is the Goddess of wealth.

¹⁶ *Kali*: According to Hindu mythology she is another form of Goddess Durga.

¹⁷ *Shitala*: According to Hindu mythology she is treated as pox Goddess.

(December) *Nabanna*¹⁸ was performed but it was in a very small scale. In the month of *Pous* (January) the *Pous sankranti*¹⁹ festival was celebrated along with sweet dishes, rice cakes but in a very small scale. Further, in the month of *Magh* (February) a local village festival, named as *Naba Brindaban*²⁰ puja was conducted for four days in the colony school ground and there the sacred Hindu scripture was enchanted. Then, in the month of *Falgun* (March) *Holi*²¹ was celebrated. In the month of *Chaitra* (March-April), the *Chaita Devi* or *Basanti puja*²² was performed. On the day of *Chaitra Sankranti Charak puja*²³ was celebrated. In the same month one of their major festivals named as *Teesta Buri puja*²⁴ was celebrated. It was the worship of Balasan river and working implements, with the prayer for regular production of natural resources and security of livelihood for the family members as well as entire community.

Meanwhile, in earlier during most of their religious festivals community feast and *yatra* (drama/theater) were quite common. However, the entire scenario was started to get changed with the consequence of migration and reduction of earning sources. It was known that the frequencies of religious festivals and the merriments related to those festivals as well as social and cultural functions at household and village level were decreased considerably due to financial constraints of the concerned people. They were not in a position to bear the expenses of any recreation and merriment. It was reported that many of their traditional religious festivals were not celebrated in their present settlement; although some of the festivals were celebrated but it had lost its earlier importance. In most of the cases, the vested interest of a few had created distinctive opinion regarding the organization of the community festivals. Even the cultural programmes like *yatra* and annual games event had become completely obliterated from their contemporary livelihood.

¹⁸ *Nabanna*: It is a Bengali harvest celebration, celebrated with food, music and dance on the cultivation of new crops.

¹⁹ *Pous sankranti* According to Hindu mythology it marks the transition of Sun into Capricorn sun shine on its celestial path. Traditionally it has been one of many harvest days in India.

²⁰ *Naba Brindaban* According to Hindu mythology it is the worship of Lord Krishna and Devi Radha.

²¹ *Holi* According to Hindu mythology it is a spring religious festival of colours.

²² *Basanti puja* According to Hindu mythology she is another form of Goddess Durga.

²³ *Sankranti Charak puja* According to Hindu mythology it is a folk festival of West Bengal and Bangladesh to worship lord Shiva.

²⁴ *Teesta Buri puja* : According to Hindu mythology it is the worship of rivers.

Earlier the rituals related to agricultural land, *Gostho puja*, *Gajan* and *Charak mela* had a very special social significance among the studied people. Particularly the celebration of *Gostho puja* had the note of devotion for the prosperity of their cattle wealth. In their early settlement, along with the abundance of grazing land, domestication was quite common in every household. However, after getting resettled in the studied area, the concerned people could not find a separate grazing land around their close vicinity. Ultimately their scope of domestication was lost. Further, in earlier *Nabanna* and *Poush parban* were related to the harvestion of paddy and new rice consumption ceremony after harvesting the crop. On the contrary, after their displacement and resettlement, their traditional agricultural occupation became altered and consequently such affiliated festivals had lost their grandeur and many of them were completely abolished. It is to be mentioned here that the festival of *Rath Yatra* were celebrated in their earlier settlement with utter enthusiasm. On the other hand, in the studied area, although it was celebrated but it had lost its community participation and social rejoice. The worship of Goddess Durga took place in two different places within the studied area. It was primarily due to the fact that the community consensus was divided into distinct groups. Both of them were motivated by the vested interest of the common mass. Ultimately, it severely told upon the social solidarity related to the celebration of different religious festivals. In their earlier settlement, the celebration of Goddesses Laxmi was common to every household and it became almost a community festival. However, in the studied area, it was performed only by a few families while the others had faced acute financial constraints to execute it year after year. Again, the *Kali puja* also bore social significance for them. In the studied area, the youths' and youngs' were the prime organizer of the said religious festival. Under the domain of rituals, often they got involved in a number of illegal offences like gambling, alcoholism etc. Ultimately it told upon the community sentiment related to such festivals. To redress the said illegal activities, almost in every year there took place hot exchange of words between the puja organizers and the local political authority. Earlier their religious festivals and other social ceremonies were accompanied by a number of entertaining mediums and cultural programmes. In such occasions, close kin members and friends also joined from near and distant places. However, owing to their poor economic condition and lack of purchasing capacity for common

minimum livelihood, the studied people were not in a position to afford the expenditure of social occasions and religious festivals.

During the study, it was noticed that on Republic Day, birth day of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, birthday of Rabindranath Tagore and Independence Day mere cultural celebrations took place only at the primary school of the children but on the said occasions no community celebrations were commonly organized in the village by the studied people. As a consequence, their feeble economic backbone had created a lot of hindrance on their social interaction. Ultimately, it had told upon their social solidarity and community consensus. On the other hand, after resettlement their houses were not spacious enough, where a few guests could be accommodated for a day or two during the festive periods. As a result, most of the religious occasions were merely confined within the courtyard of the studied families. Meanwhile, it could be significantly noted that most of the studied families were lacking a separate consecrated space to regularly worship their household deity. In this regard, their traditional cultural value related to it was seriously violated. It is noteworthy to mention that the studied families were quite busy in very hard manual labour, for their sake of survival. In such a situation, they were not in a position to bore the extra liabilities and financial expenditure related to different religious festivals. The stone based occupation had become their prime source of earning. So, during this period, a few rituals had an affiliation with the said occupation. Their religious performances related to the *Teesta Buri* festival, had the devotion and prayer, that the Balasan river should become more resourceful and it might ensure a fold of rice in their daily livelihood.

Again, in the studied area there were a few small scale grocery shops. Their economic transactions were also very limited because their owners had a very little purchasing capacity. Such businessmen had a mere chance to celebrate the rituals related to *Akshaya Tritia* or *Poela Baisakh* (Mid of April) in a larger context with community participation. It had also seized the scope of social solidarity, unity and cohesion. The threat of severe economic crisis, poverty, insecure livelihood and probability of further displacement had always haunted their mental peace. It might have severely reduced the scope of social and cultural interaction among themselves and with others. They had a mere opportunity to share their emotions with neighbours. It was known that they often felt quite

lonely. Particularly the old aged people became more alone because displacement had detached them from their close kin members and neighbours. Their personal interaction and kinship based affinity were no more prevalent as it was in earlier. Further, their inability to bear the financial burden and lack of social solidarity had cumulatively reduced the scope of community merriment related to religious festivals and other social occasions. Moreover, the religious belief and practices had certain norms and value systems which played a key role for the cohesion of a society. However, overall socio-economic uncertainty had bounded the people to give prior importance to accumulate their common minimum means of survival, instead of being confined within the bindings of social norms, values and customs.

Educational scenario of the studied people

Education is regarded as the cradle of every society. It enlightens the knowledge of human being to lead a peaceful life. Education helps an individual to gain a good personality. It brightens the opportunity of an individual to achieve social and economic mobility. However, the achievement of education at the grass root level certainly needs the support of a stronger economic backbone which could meet up with the fundamental educational requirements of an individual. From the earlier discussions, it was revealed that the studied people were economically poor-in condition. Their monthly income could hardly fulfil their common minimum livelihood requirements. In this regard, for sustenance they became bound to lend money from local money lenders and other persons.

Table 5.10: Distribution of families on the basis of debt taken to deal with familial needs

Debt taken			Source			Amount (in Rs/-)		
Yes	No	Total	Sardar	Grocer	Total	Upto 1,000/-	More than 1,000/-	Total
307	18	325	250	57	307	13	294	307
94.46	5.54	100.00	76.92	23.03	100.00	4.23	95.77	100.00

Source: Field Study

During the study, it was revealed that around 94 per cent families got enmeshed into the web of debt in different times. The concerned families had a mere scope to ask for loan from their neighbourhood, rather they could approach to the *Sardars* or local grocers. Significantly it was noticed that they hardly approach to

any neighbour for debt. It was because of the fact that they were well known about each others constraints and most importantly subjugation to any neighbour was quite humiliating for them. Meanwhile, they used to return the loan to *Sardars* by breaking up additional amount of stone and to the grocers by returning in cash. In the cases where loan was taken, it has been reported that around 96 per cent families took loan of more than Rs.1,000/- (Table 5.10). Under such financial array, it might be a certain factor that the concerned people would have to face educational constraints. The following case studies can be taken into account to know about the situation in details.

Case Study 1: The family of Sanjay Barman aged 14 years, was comprised of his parents, two brothers, one sister. He was involved in the stone crushing work from the age of five years. He had a very keen interest to study and during the study he was the student of class VI of Shivmandir Atharokhai High School. However, he had to face several constraints to carry on the studies. As they had a larger family so he had to play the role of an additional earning member. Due to such involvement he could not attend school regularly and he was gradually lagging behind from daily academic curriculum. Lack of books was an additional criterion in his academic hindrance. He told his father for money to purchase the books; alas! his father replied that he would not bear any unnecessary expenditure from the mere familial purse. He had a private tutor last year but as they could not remunerate him monthly, so, he paid a least interest to guide Sanjay any more. On the other hand as he was a very irregular student, so his class teachers also became much reluctant to take any special care for him. Meanwhile, he was already disqualified for once in class IVth and once in class Vth standard. Again, his father regularly cursing him for wasting the time behind education irrespective of doing the stone based work primarily and often it created an issue of quarrel between them. He expressed with grief sorrow that he might leave up the study very soon.

Case Study 2: Mamoni Barman aged 13 years, had two younger sisters and parents in her family, at Balasan colony. During the study she was studying in the class Vth standard of Shivmandir Atharokhai High School. Simultaneously she had to look after the regular household courses and she was involved in the stone based work from her age of five years. Such working involvements reduced her

scope to attend the school regularly. The basic educational requirements like books, school dresses and writing materials were much lacking in her case. Again if she asked for those to her father, he clearly stated his annoyance for any worthless expenditure. Her parents stated clearly that with such a mere income they would not be able to manage the entire marital expenditure of their children. In this regard, she was advised to get involved as a full fledged worker inspite of wasting time behind studies. However, Mamoni had secured good marks year after year and on such basis she had applied for some Governmental assistance for her studies. But the entire procedure was quite complex and much time consuming. Meanwhile her proper identity became a matter of interrogation for a number of times on the said issue. Till the period of study she had not received any such assistance and gradually she became less interested. Even she could not get any help from her class mates if she got absent from the classes. During the study she grievedly expressed that with such multifarious inconveniences it became quite impossible for her to continue her studies and she planned to drop her studies from the next session.

Case study 3: Subho Barman aged 5 years had a 3 year old sister and parents was dwelling at Balasan colony. He was admitted in the primary school of the Balasan colony. During the study he was in the 1st standard. He had a few books but those were mostly torn up by the earlier users. In the morning his parents used to take him in the river bed and often they forgot about the schedule of school hours. During the study it was known that the parents of Subho could not guide his studies at home because of their illiteracy. It was known that they send their child to the school for having the food provided through mid day meal scheme, which could redress his hunger to some extent. He told that in most of the days just after the food he used to come back from the school and went to the river bed to work along with his parents. At the school in most of the time he could not properly understand the words of the teachers, even if he asked them to repeat once then they got angry. Due to lack of books, pencils, dress and school bag he could not generate much interest on the studies. Again, if they played loudly or speak loudly then the teachers used to beat up them with canes. All such circumstances never attracted him very much in the fore fold of education.

Case study 4: Jonaki Barman aged 5 years had a 3 year old brother, 1 year old sister and parents. During the study she was admitted in the primary school of the Balasan colony and was in the 1st standard. During the study she was yet to get any book from the school. She had only one pencil and one exercise book. However, she had no school bag; on the other hand she had only one set of dress which she wore both in her house and for the school. She told her father to give another copy and pencil. But he was quite reluctant for such expenditures, as he thought that poverty would not generate them adequate scope to continue her studies in near future. He emphasized gradually to get affiliated with the stone based work, which would ultimately provide the scope to accumulate a fold of rice for the family. She found it very difficult to follow the words of the class teachers. Again, she had not the scope to revise her studies in the home because her parents were illiterate and were unable to guide her. On the other hand if she went for mere enjoyments with their friends then the teachers cursed her a lot. All such factors created major hindrances for her future progress in education.

Thus from the above case studies it may be summarized that among the studied families multifarious socio-economic factors had much reduced their scope of education. Again in some cases the issue of their identity became a matter of concern for them as well.

From the field study, it was revealed that except 0-4 years of age group, among the studied population of Balasan colony, around 54 per cent were literate and 46 per cent were illiterate (Table 5.11).

Table 5.11: Educational background of the people

Sex	Educational feature		Total
	Illiterate	Literate	
Male	296	374	670
	44.18	55.82	100.00
Female	292	304	596
	48.99	51.00	100.00
Total	588	678	1266
	46.45	53.55	100.00

[Excluded 0-4 year. age group] Source: Field Study

According to Census 2011, the literacy rate of India was 74.04 per cent, while in West Bengal, it was 77.08 per cent. Meanwhile, in the studied area the literacy level was quite low (53.55 per cent). Among the total population, belonging to the age group of 15 years to more than 70 years of the studied area, only 42.11 per cent were literate while the rests were illiterate (Table 5.12).

Table 5.12: Educational background of the youth and adult

Sex	Educational background		Total
	Illiterate	Literate	
Male	267	216	483
	55.28	44.72	100.00
Female	258	166	424
	60.85	39.15	100.00
Total	525	382	907
	57.88	42.11	100.00

[Excluding 0-14 year age group] Source: Field Study

It was also revealed that among the adult, majorities were illiterate and it was more in case of females. It might be due to the fact that along with the stone based work, the female folk had a regular affiliation with their household courses. It provided them hardly any time to continue the studies regularly.

The educational status of the population belonging to 15-19 years of age group revealed the fact that in most of the cases (90.67per cent) their educational status was confined in between class Vth to VIIIth standard while in a few cases (4.00per cent) it was only upto the maximum level of IVth standard. However, in some mere cases (5.33per cent) they were educated upto secondary standard or more than that. Meanwhile, in the said age group there were no illiterate individual (Table 5.13). It is to be mentioned here that familial responsibility had forced the population belonging to the age group of 15-19 years to look after their bread and butter. In this regard, they had merely any scope to continue their studies regularly or to attend the school in its according schedule. They mostly got involved in different occupational pursuit throughout the entire day. In the studied age group, the concerned individuals had found it mere impossible to continue their studies regularly or to work accordingly for survival. Among the said age group, most of the people were dropped out from educational mainstream. Again, among the adult population it was noticed that the rate of illiteracy was on a gradual decrease. It might be due to the fact that the adult male members were the prime earner of their concerned families. It forced them to get focused more on their working involvement rather than to get affiliated with higher educational involvement. Particularly from the age group of 25 years, the adult male population of the studied families had a very minimum educational affiliation. After sudden political turmoil and displacement, they rather had a mere opportunity to get affiliated with the education either by themselves or by involving their children. Accordingly, the adult male population of the studied

area had a very little educational involvement. Most of the concerned male populations (55.28 per cent) were illiterate and only a certain section (44.72 per cent) was literate. Again, among the total literate population only a few (6.94 per cent) people had the educational qualification upto secondary standard or more. Most of the literate people had the educational confinement between class V to class VIII standard (Table 5.13).

Table 5.13: Distribution of the males on the basis of level of education

Age Group	Illiterate	If Literate			Total
		I-IV	V-VIII	IX- XII	
15-19	-	3 4.00	68 90.67	4 5.33	75 100.00
20-24	37 100.00	11 30.56	18 50.00	7 19.44	36 100.00
25-29	61 100.00	-	6 85.71	1 14.29	7 100.00
30-34	38 100.00	4 30.77	9 69.23	-	13 100.00
35-39	28 100.00	7 38.89	11 61.11	-	18 100.00
40-44	24 100.00	13 54.17	8 33.33	3 12.50	24 100.00
45-49	22 100.00	4 40.00	6 60.00	-	10 100.00
50-54	24 100.00	7 43.75	9 56.25	-	16 100.00
55-59	12 100.00	1 33.33	2 66.67	-	3 100.00
60-64	12 100.00	3 42.86	4 57.14	-	7 100.00
65-69	4 100.00	1 25.00	3 75.00	-	4 100.00
70 and Above	5 100.00	2 66.67	1 33.33	-	3 100.00
Total	267 100.00	56 25.93	145 67.13	15 6.94	216 100.00

[Excluded 0-14 years age group] Source: Field Study

Further, in the studied families the females also had major working involvements. It has been already mentioned that the concerned female both had to work in the household as well as in the stone based work and it could be noticed from their teenage. The educational status of the 15-19 year age group revealed the fact that in most of the (74.07 per cent) cases they were literate and in some (25.93 per cent) cases they were illiterate. Even among the literate population, the educational qualification got confined within the primary level. It was quite

evident that to earn a fold of rice they already gave up to continue their studies regularly or to attend the school in its according schedule (Table 5.14).

Table 5.14: Distribution of the Females on the basis of level of education

Age group	Illiterate	If Literate		
	Total	I-IV	V-VIII	Total
15-19	14 100.00	40 100.00	-	40 100.00
20-24	27 100.00	36 81.82	8 18.18	44 100.00
25-29	34 100.00	26 89.66	3 10.34	29 100.00
30-34	22 100.00	29 87.88	4 12.12	33 100.00
35-39	34 100.00	2 100.00	-	2 100.00
40-44	44 100.00	2 100.00	-	2 100.00
45-49	31 100.00	6 100.00	-	6 16.22
50-54	15 100.00	10 100.00	-	10 100.00
55-59	15 100.00	-	-	-
60-64	14 100.00	-	-	-
65-69	4 100.00	-	-	-
70 and Above	4 100.00	-	-	-
Total	258 100.00	151 90.96	15 9.04	166 100.00

[Excluded 0-14 years age group] Source: Field Study

Further, the rate of literacy gradually got decreased among the population belonging to the age group of 20 years and more. Particularly the adult female population of the studied families had a very nominal educational affiliation. Even in between the age group of 35-39 years, 40-44 years and 45-49 years, only two females were literate in first two age groups and six females were literate in the last age group respectively. Even their educational involvement was totally confined upto primary level. The aged female population belonging to the more than 55 years of age were completely illiterate and they even could not sign their name. Among the concerned female population a certain section (39.15 per cent) was literate and mostly (60.85 per cent) they were illiterate. Most of the illiterate women (68.22 per cent) even could not sign their names. On the other hand most the literate (90.96 per cent) had the educational involvement upto primary level only (Table 5.14). It was primarily because of the fact that quite from an early age the girl child used to play a crucial role in the economic perspective of the family.

On one hand she was directly involved in the household courses; on the other hand her earning played a crucial role to steam the vessel. Meanwhile, through self earning she helped her father to accumulate the amount gradually required for the forthcoming marriage. Again, after the marriage she had to continue the work along with her husband for the sustenance of a newly established family. Thus, poverty, necessity of livelihood and struggle for survival had collectively snatched almost every opportunity from the female folk of the studied area to give up their education and to conduct the stone based work regularly.

It deserves a special attention to mention here that among the adult females no one had the educational qualification upto secondary or higher secondary level in the studied area. Among the studied male population the feature of educational drop out was quite common. Even from their teenage and early adulthood, working involvement as well as familial duties and responsibilities had forced the male children to get dropped out from the educational mainstream even at the primary level. In between the age group of 20 -24 years, the concerned males became a full time bread earner for their families and even in many cases they had to start their own familial life. Regarding such affiliation the concerned males were dropped out from education in below class- I level and primary level respectively (Table 5.15).

Table 5.15: Educational dropout of the male

Age group	Status of Educational Drop out					Total
	Below	I-IV	V-VIII	IX -XII	Presently in education	
5-9	-	-	-	-	-	
10-14	-	-	-	-	85 100.00	85 100.00
15-19	-	3 4.00	-	-	72 96.00	75 100.00
20-24	37 50.68	11 15.07	-	-	25 34.25	73 100.00
25-29	61 89.71	-	6 8.82	1 1.47	-	68 100.00
30-34	38 74.51	4 7.84	9 17.65	-	-	51 100.00
35-39	28 60.87	7 15.22	11 23.91	-	-	46 100.00
40-44	24 50.00	13 27.08	8 16.67	3 6.25	-	48 100.00
45-49	22 68.75	4 12.50	6 18.75	-	-	32 100.00
50-54	24 60.00	7 17.50	9 22.50	-	-	40 100.00
55-59	12	1	2	-	-	15

	80.00	6.67	13.33			100.00
60-64	12 63.16	3 15.79	4 21.05	-	-	19 100.00
65-69	4 50.00	1 12.50	3 37.50	-	-	8 100.00
70 and Above	5 62.50	2 25.00	1 12.50	-	-	8 100.00
Total	267 47.00	56 9.86	59 10.39	4 0.70	182 32.04	568 100.00

Source: Field Study

It is to be mentioned here that in between the age group of 25- 49 years the concerned males were affiliated with formal education. However, their displacement and further inconvenient circumstances had created an acute hindrance to continue their studies. The concerned parents were more involved in find out an alternative means for survival rather to look after the education of their children. Even after their resettlement, lack of educational institution in the studied area and their bizarre economic condition were the major hindrance to continue their studies. Meanwhile, it was noticed that among the parental generation of the egos, particularly beyond the age group of 50 years, in some cases, the concerned males had the educational involvement upto the junior high school (class VIII) level. However, due to several inconvenient situation and unfamiliar socio-political circumstances they could not achieve higher education. Further, among the studied male population most of the (47 per cent) people were dropped out in primary level. On the other hand, except the children and teenage population, only a mere section (0.70 per cent) had attained the educational standard upto secondary level but before its formal completion they were dropped out from the educational mainstream (Table 5.15).

Among the female population of the studied area, the feature of educational drop out was quite common at an early age. During their teenage and early adulthood i.e. in between the age group of 15-19 years, the feeble economic backbone of the families and allied household activities had forced them to get involved as a production unit for her family rather to get confined only in the education. Further, in between the age group of 20-49 years the concerned families were involved in the education either in the below primary level or in the primary level. Afterwards the political turmoil and further displacement had seized every opportunity from them to continue their education. Even after resettlement they were also involved in the source of earning rather to restart the education.

Table 5.16: Educational dropout of the female

Age group	Status of educational drop out					Total
	Below class I	I-IV	V-VIII	IX -XII	Presently in education	
5-9	-	-	-	-	-	-
10-14	-	-	-	-	63 100.00	63 100.00
15-19	14 25.92	-	-	-	40 74.08	54 100.00
20-24	27 38.03	36 50.70	8 11.27	-	-	71 100.00
25-29	34 53.97	26 41.27	3 4.76	-	-	63 100.00
30-34	22 40.00	29 52.73	4 7.27	-	-	55 100.00
35-39	34 94.44	2 5.56	-	-	-	36 100.00
40-44	44 95.65	2 4.35	-	-	-	46 100.00
45-49	31 83.78	6 16.22	-	-	-	37 100.00
50-54	15 60.00	10 40.00	-	-	-	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	258 52.98	111 22.79	15 3.08	-	103 21.15	487 100.00

Source: Field Study

The aged female population of the studied area was dropped out from the educational mainstream mostly in their Nursery level (Table 5.16). It was primarily due to the fact that the concerned parents were quite reluctant to educate their girl children. Economic constraints and existing political turmoil were an additional criterion which reduced their scope of further studies. It is to be mentioned here that in comparison with the males, concerned females had least educational affiliation in the studied area. It was primarily due to the fact that quite at an early age, the girls became involved both in the stone based occupation as well as they had to look after the household courses and caring of their younger. After such multifarious working involvement, a mere time was left for them to carry on their studies. Ultimately, it was better to get dropped out the educational mainstream and to become primarily affiliated with the assigned works. Particularly among them, there were not a single individual who had attained the secondary level of education. It was mainly due to the fact that they

had a very little moment left for the studies after completion of their daily assigned works. It created an acute academic irregularity among them and they became bound to getting dropped out. However, their poor economic condition was also a crucial factor in this concern. They had a mere scope to bear the overall educational expenditures associated with the higher classes. Further, in between the age group of 20-34 years, very few (3.08 per cent) individuals had the educational affiliation in between Vth to VIIIth standard; but they were dropped out before attaining at least the secondary level. Although among them a few (21.15 per cent) individuals were involved in education during the period of study but it was not assured that they whether they could continue it for the next day or not. Among the studied female most (52.98 per cent) of the individuals were dropped out from education only in the primary level (Table 5.16). From the field observation it can be stated that for the poverty stricken families, education became next to luxury.

From the above all discussions it is quite evident that the rate of educational drop out was very high in the studied area. A number of factors were emerged as prime issues for their educational drop out. Due to emerging socio-political factors, they were forced to loss their early settlement and stable economic pursuit. It severely made them economically insecured. On the other hand, after their resettlement and involvement in a new occupational pursuit, the necessity of common minimum livelihood became their major area of emphasis. Their acute economic scarcity had hindered them even to accumulate their common minimum livelihood requirements. In this regard, it was quite unaffordable for the concerned people to bear the expenditure of education for their children. Moreover, during their earlier days of settlement, the studied area was devoid of any educational institution. If any one had the desire to study then he had to travel a distance of 5 kilometer to reach in Siliguri. It was reported that the studied people were dropped out from the educational mainstream mainly due to severe economic constraint of their concerned families (Table 5.17). However, it was more in case of males than the females.

Table 5.17: Cause of educational drop out

Age group	Cause of Drop Out								Total	
	Less economic opportunity		Guardians not interested		Self reluctance		Other factor		M	F
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
15-19	3 100.00	6 42.86	-	8 57.14	-	-	-	-	3 100.00	14 100.00
20-24	45 93.75	45 63.38	-	18 25.35	-	-	3 6.25	8 11.27	48 100.00	71 100.00
25-29	27 39.71	36 57.14	32 47.06	26 41.27	2 2.94	-	7 10.29	1 1.59	68 100.00	63 100.00
30-34	15 29.41	19 34.54	30 58.82	30 54.54	1 1.96	-	5 9.80	6 10.91	51 100.00	55 100.00
35-39	22 47.83	17 47.22	18 39.13	19 52.78	3 6.52	-	3 6.52	-	46 100.00	36 100.00
40-44	37 77.08	22 47.83	9 18.75	21 45.65	-	-	2 4.16	3 6.52	48 100.00	46 100.00
45-49	13 40.62	16 43.24	8 25.00	18 48.65	9 28.12	-	2 6.25	3 8.11	32 100.00	37 100.00
50-54	18 45.00	9 36.00	10 25.00	10 40.00	2 5.00	-	10 25.00	6 24.00	40 100.00	25 100.00
55-59	12 80.00	10 66.67	2 13.33	3 20.00	-	-	1 6.67	2 13.33	15 100.00	15 100.00
60-64	16 84.21	8 57.14	-	4 28.57	-	-	3 15.79	2 14.29	19 100.00	14 100.00
65-69	6 75.00	1 25.00	2 25.00	3 75.00	-	-	-	-	8 100.00	4 100.00
70 and above	3 37.50	1 25.00	3 37.50	3 75.00	1 33.33	-	1 33.33	-	8 100.00	4 100.00
Total	217 56.22	190 49.48	114 29.53	163 42.45	18 4.67	-	37 9.59	31 8.07	386 100.00	384 100.00

Source: Field Study

In case of 114 (29.53 per cent) males and 163 (42.45 per cent) females, the concerned guardians were quite reluctant to continue their studies. They had the notion that inspite of educational attachment if their children could work along with them then it would operate as an additional working hand for their families to enhance their monthly income. Such circumstances had intended the parents to acclimatize their children with the working environment and work organization from an early age. Even 10 years ago the studied area was devoid of any primary school. For minimum educational involvement, the concerned students had to travel a long distance. Such regular economic expenditure for traveling was quite unaffordable for the studied families. Ultimately it had reduced their scope of education. Again, when the concerned people were resettled in the studied area, the local issues and local people were quite familiar with them. It had hindered them to send their teenage daughters and wives outside from the studied area.

Accordingly, the guardians had a consensus that further education of their girl child would certainly be stopped. It has also been reported that certain males (9.59 per cent) and females (8.07 per cent) started to continue their education after re-settlement (Table 5.17). However, they were unable to become familiar with the social environments of their new educational institution. Cultural interaction and medium of communication also created a lot of hindrances for them during the earlier periods of their resettlement. It created all sorts of inconveniences for them to understand the lesson in the class. On the other hand, the teachers also had a little attention and affection for the children of displaced and migrated people. Ultimately the concerned people found it rather difficult to continue their education and very soon they were forced to get dropped out from the educational mainstream.

With the passage of time, the studied people gradually became familiar with the socio-cultural milieu of their new settlement. A primary school was built up in the studied area in the year 2000. The continuous effort of local Panchayat and implementation of different Government schemes had created educational awareness among the studied people. During the study it was observed that the studied people knew very well that the stone based work was their only source of choice to sustain the livelihood. However, they knew very well that the said natural resources would not be much abundant in near future and ultimately their occupational pursuit would have to face a severe constraint. Thus if their children had to look after some other occupational pursuit in near future, then education would be a very essential requirement for them to find out some better job opportunity. Meanwhile the reality was absolutely dissimilar from the earnest requisite. In the studied families most of (82.45per cent) the concerned children were literate and only a certain section (17.55per cent) were illiterate (Table 5.18).

Table 5.18: Educational background of the children

Sex	Educational Feature		Total
	Illiterate	Literate	
Male	29 15.51	158 84.49	187 100.00
Female	34 19.77	138 80.23	172 100.00
Total	63 17.55	296 82.45	359 100.00

(Excluded 0-4 Years age Group) Source: Field Study

Meanwhile all the children belonging to the age group of 5-6 years had the nursery level of education which was operated by the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), operating in the studied area. However, the educational continuation at the high school level was very less among them. From the study it was found that mere income of the parents could not meet up with the expenses related to educational requirements, transportation to school, remuneration for the private teachers etc. On the other hand sometime valid documentation of identity during enrollment of children was also not in their hand. Collectively such issues might have reduced their further academic progress.

Table 5.19: Distribution of the male child on the basis of educational status

Age group	If literate		
	I-IV	V-VIII	Total
5-6	17 100.00	-	17 100.00
7-8	37 100.00	-	37 100.00
9-10	13 81.25	3 18.75	16 100.00
11-12	10 90.91	1 9.09	11 100.00
13-14	74 96.10	3 3.90	77 100.00
Total	151 95.57	7 4.43	158 100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 5.20: Distribution of the female child on the basis of educational status

Age group	If Literate		
	I-IV	V-VIII	Total
5-6	20 100.00	-	20 100.00
7-8	24 100.00	-	24 100.00
9-10	7 58.33	5 41.67	12 100.00
11-12	3 33.33	6 66.67	9 100.00
13-14	7 9.59	66 90.41	73 100.00
Total	61 44.20	77 55.80	138 100.00

Source: Field Study

At the initial stages enroll their children. All the children in the studied families were enrolled in the formal schooling in class I level. However, in the latter phases of schooling, the number of regular students gradually started to get decreased. Further, in the secondary level, there occurred frequent educational drop out and they could hardly complete their formal schooling upto secondary or higher secondary level. During the field study it was observed that in the studied families, concerned children had to face several inconveniences to continue their education. These are discussed below in brief-

Problems associated with education

1) Impact of Working Involvement: In the studied area for the sake of common minimum livelihood the entire family worked as a production unit. The concerned children also had a working involvement along with their parents. Usually, they went to the river bed early in the morning and started to work. In the morning when they used to work along with their parents often their school hours would pass away. They could hardly remember it regularly or they had a least attention on it. Even during the school hours, they were least bothered and they merely had the patience to attend the full session of the school. For most of the days, after the completion of a period or two, the children hardly used to attend any further classes. They used to come directly to the river bed and again started to do the work along with their parents. Among the concerned families, all of the children were either had an irregular attendance at the school or they frequently used to flew away from the school during mid session (Table 5.21). Again, the concerned children were regularly involved in the work for quite a longer duration, thus, they got a mere chance to regularize their studies. It had ultimately resulted in poor academic performances in classes and examinations.

2) Economic constraints of the concerned families: The economic constraint of the studied families had resulted in an adverse impact on the education of their children. In the studied families, the parents were quite unable to provide adequate educational requirements to their children. The parents were quite unable to provide adequate educational requirements to their children (Table 5.21).

Table 5.21: Major constraints related to education

Monitoring of children		Attendance in school	Provision of educational material	Accessibility of private tuition			Total
Regular	Irregular	Irregular	Lacking	Yes	No	Discontinued	253 100.00
17 6.72	236 93.28	253 100.00	253 100.00	15 5.93	113 44.66	125 49.41	

Source: Field Study

The students were devoid of books, exercise books, pencils, erasers and school bags to meticulously organize their regular studies. Although according to government schemes the school provided them books in the primary level but in most of the cases those were torn and even did not contain all the chapters. In this regard, it became rather impossible for the students to study those books in their daily courses. Again, when a student could get the promotion in higher classes, it was necessary for him to submit the earlier books in the schools. In most of the cases they often lost one or two books; even whichever they returned, those were not in a proper condition to be academically utilized in further. In this regard, at the primary school of Balasan colony, the scarcity of books often emerged out. In most of the cases the students could not get their full set of books and it obviously hampered their studies a lot. On the other hand, after the primary level the students were needed to purchase their books from the market. The studied families who had to face an acute economic scarcity for their common minimum livelihood, found it almost impossible to secure the educational desire of their children. Although the children were also a secondary earning member of the families but with that mere income it was completely impossible for them to purchase the books for their studies. To conduct regular studies they must needed other educational requisites like exercise books, pencils etc. but their parents were economically not in a position to satisfy the concerned desires to all of their children. Most of the families had more than one student. Usually the parents used to buy a single copy of exercise book, a pencil and so on which they equally divided among their children. Ultimately, it would hardly provide educational requisites of the concerned children. Again, when the children further asked their parents for the educational needs within a few days, they got angry. Due to lack of purchasing capacity they could not provide the same to their children. It would seriously hamper the regular studies in a meticulous fashion. Again, as the students

had no school bags of their own, so during rainy season their educational materials often got wet and damaged in condition. In most of the cases, they could hardly use it in future for their studies. Even within their huts the penetration of water through the thatched roof and wall often drenched the educational materials severely. Meanwhile, it is to be mentioned here that in the high schools, students often became unable to pay their fixed annual fees and for that they were debarred from appearing in the examination. So, they were not promoted to higher classes. It severely told upon their desire of education and practically they became quite reluctant to bear the expenditures in the same class for another year. Ultimately they were dropped out from the educational mainstream and started to work permanently in the stone field.

3) Lack of monitoring to the students: In the studied area, lack of monitoring to the students emerged as a major constraint for their education. The head master of the Balasan colony primary school opined his view that regular practices of study in the household was the most essential factor from the educational perspective of a student. In this regard, the concerned parents would have to play a prime role to monitor their student children regularly and to practice their studies in the household. However, it created a major problem in the studied area. The concerned parents were very busy in the work and to accumulate a fold of rice for their families. They had a mere scope to think seriously about the studies of the children. Whenever, a little scope was managed, they would look after the studies of their children. However, it was a very seldom happening factor as well as it was totally irregular which was noticed only in case of 6.72 per cent families (Table 5.21). Ultimately, it would not help at all in case of the studied families to provide the educational requirements of their children. On the other hand, illiteracy of the parents and their educational inability created the major hindrance in the regular educational practices of the children which could be noticed among 93.28 per cent families (Table-5.21). In such cases, the illiterate parents had no capability to guide their children for the studies. Even they had a least desire to look after whether their children were studying or not. If they did not go to the school for a day or two then their parents would not curse them but if they did not go to the work for a day then the parents became quite dissatisfied with them. In some cases the concerned parents were earlier educated from Bangladesh but their old

educational curriculum was totally distinct from the educational contents of their children. In such cases, the parents became completely unable to guide the studies of their children. Particularly after the primary level, the students regularly faced such hindrances. To redress that problem private tuition could be an alternative solution. In this regard, the economic scarcity was their prime hindrance. In the studied area, very few (5.93 per cent) families had managed to provide a private tutor for their children while around 45 percent families were not capable enough to facilitate their children with such provision. Again, though the parents of nearly 50 percent families provided a private tutor for their children, but their economic scarcity reduced the scope to provide his monthly remuneration. In such cases, the concerned tutors had shown their reluctance to continue the coaching. Ultimately, the students became the worst victim. The head master of local primary school had admitted the fact that the concerned children had very poor educational responses in the classes. He committed the truth that with only three teachers it was almost an impossible task for them to regularize the lessons for every student. On the contrary, the student had no scope to learn the same from their parents or neighbourhood. In such cases, they could not properly complete their studies at all and they had no idea about the courses. Ultimately, they showed a very poor performance in the school examination. It was noticed from the primary school attendance registrar book that from class I to class IV, there was a continuous numerical decrease of the student year after year. Meanwhile from the I.C.D.S. centre it was reported that the parents enrolled their children in the primary school only to redress their hunger through mid day meal scheme. It could ultimately secure their desired requirements of food to some extent. Even often the mothers send their children to the I.C.D.S. centre just before their feeding, while the children did not participate in the academic activities for most of the time. Although the parents had an interest to educate their children but they had no capability to redress the emerging hindrances in this connection. It became quite evident that alike their parental generation, the youths and the children were also unable to achieve any formal educational degree. Their lack of education and lack of knowledge did not fulfill the desired requirements against which they could get involved in any urban based white collar government jobs by discarding their contemporary occupational pursuit. As a result, inspite of several inconveniences they had to do the same work generation after generation. Meanwhile, Article 21-

A, as inserted by the Constitution Act 2002 (Eighty- sixth amendment), facilitated for free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years, as a fundamental right (Shukla, 2008:211). Consequently the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, was enacted by Indian Parliament in the year 2010 (<http://www.childlineindia.org.in>). However, in case of the present studied area, such regulations would be unable to meet up with successful implementation, until the concerned children were relaxed from the burden to accumulate a fold of rice for the sake of their survival. On the other hand, the studied families should also have an economic backbone which could provide minimum educational requirements to their children.

Social problems in the studied area

Social life is the essence of Human life. It grows out of constant patterning of social interactions and relationships among human being as such. The economic life is a sub system of society (Nash, 1968:359). Economy is an important constituent of community life and plays a deciding role in the formation of societal and cultural structure of society (Vidyarthi, 1976:93). Thus if any sort of turmoil emerges in the society then it would ultimately result a serious impact upon the socio-cultural framework of the concerned society. In such circumstances, a number of social problems would be created. Actually a social problem has been defined as “a situation confronting a group or a section of society which inflicts injurious consequences that can be handled only collectively” (Reinhardt, 1952:14). Raab and Selznick (1959:32) stated that a social problem is “a problem in human relationships which seriously threatens society or impedes the important aspirations of many people (see, Ahuja,2003:2-3).” In this context, the studied area deserved a special resemblance from multidimensional aspect. Displacement, migration, unauthorized resettlement and struggle for survival seriously affected the economic life of the studied people in various ways.

Certain unwanted socio-political turmoil forced the studied people to get displaced from their permanent settlement and stable economic pursuit. Further, they got resettled in the Balasan colony and their struggle for survival began. Earlier they had horizontal and vertical pattern of joint family system with siblings as well as filial generations. Unwanted circumstances forced them to get

displaced suddenly. In a number of cases they had lost their spouses, siblings or became scattered from one another. Further, a number of people established their families in the studied area. During the study most of the families were of nuclear type. Their hard manual labour could generate a very little amount of earning. The concerned people were hardly interested to spend their precious earning for a number of persons except their wives and children. Economic constraint had made them reluctant to take some undesired familial responsibilities of aged parents or unmarried brothers, sisters. In the studied area, economic scarcity emerged as a major obstacle to conduct the marriage ceremony of their children. Particularly, to conduct the marriage of a girl was a major challenge for their parents. In one hand, it was the huge expenditure related to rituals and co-related feast; on the other hand it was the heavy demand of dowry from the side of the groom. In a number of cases even after finalization of words economic constraint hindered it to get materialized. It is to be mentioned here that the parents of adjacent areas were quite reluctant to arrange the marriage of their girls in a stone crushing family due to their poverty. On the other hand they also do not prefer their girls because her parents were not in a position to satisfy the demand of dowry claimed by the grooms' family. Further, due to displacement the kin members of the studied people became scattered from one another. After resettlement they became primarily affiliated with the stone crushing work. However, their hard manual labour generated a very poor level of income. It could hardly manage their common minimum livelihood expenditure and economically they were very poor in condition. Thus to maintain kinship based social relation and to perform different social rites frequently was an undesired economic burden for them. It had forced them to maintain minimum affiliation with their kin members. Again, to earn a fold of rice the children used to work regularly with their parents. It had reduced their scope to continue their studies regularly. Poverty was a major obstacle for the studied families to provide educational requirements for their children. Moreover, illiteracy of parents could not guide the academic courses of their children. Ultimately after a certain period of time due to economic scarcity and lack of infrastructural support they had to give up their studies. Thus, in the studied area the social problems had multidimensional aspects and different factors are co-related to one another in this concern.

Due to displacement remarkable changes were noticed in their economic organization. Their traditional agricultural occupation had no scope to get pursued. The purchased cereals could hardly accumulate their daily demands of food required for every members of the family. Again, they had a least opportunity to catch different types of fishes from the Balasan river due to its rocky surface and continuous activity of human being on the river for the collection of raw material required for the stone crushing work. Again, after displacement they were devoid of any agricultural land possession and in the resettled area any grazing land could hardly be noticed. Owing to these consequences, scope of domestication for studied people was reduced to a great extent. Ultimately it had seized the opportunity of getting animal protein and nutrition. On the other hand due to poverty most of them could not manage to purchase market based nutritious food. It is to be mentioned here that when the studied people were agriculturists, the produced crop fulfilled their prime source of daily food requisite while by selling the surplus amount they could manage to purchase other requirements. However, after resettlement they became totally depended only on the natural resources. Even in a number of occasions, to fulfil the requisites of common minimum livelihood, the concerned people became supposed to take loan from the local money lenders. It was also noticed that a number of government facilities were allotted in the studied area. However, those were not adequately constructed and equally distributed. On the other hand, they had a little scope to make adequate household infrastructure by their own expenditure. During the study, it was observed that the concerned people were almost roofless in condition. They were facing the agony ever since their resettlement. They were unable to get any sort of safety, security and protection which had ultimately made their survival totally insecure and on the threshold of obliteration.

Socio-political turmoil and poverty was the prime result of displacement. It worsen their permanent settlement, social and cultural life to a great extent. In this process, their traditional joint family pattern was broken up and it turned into nuclear in nature. The function as well as responsibilities and duties of the family members were forced to get changed. It was noticed that their disastrous economic situation also affected their marriage institution. The involvement of the kin members, community rejoices and social merriments got reduced to a large

extent. On the other hand, often in many cases the concerned parents missed the chance to finalize the marital relations of their daughters. It was primarily due to their economic inability to fulfil the demand of dowry and other material requirements of the groom. Further, limited scope of earning made it very difficult for the prime earner of the studied families to fulfil the common minimum livelihood requirements of every family member. So they failed to provide adequate economic and social security to their family members. Ultimately, the essential organizational part of the family, marriage and kinship were on the threshold of acute crisis and were repeatedly losing their functional importance. It means that the functional aspects of the society were getting changed which told upon their social structure and social organization. They lost the earlier value system of their society. For the sake of survival the concerned people were in a severe competition to access the minimum available natural resources. Their efforts were almost in vain and it gradually increased their poverty into manifold. Further, it can be noted that the concerned people earlier had their own traditional political organization. The village headman played a significant role in it and the oral verdict of such body was recognized as an ultimate decision for social control. However after displacement and resettlement it was completely abolished and during the study they were completely under the affiliation of modern political organization. It was noticed that always they had to obey the decision of the influential political persons in every circumstances otherwise it might be detrimental for them in certain ways. During the study it was reported that their local administration, economic organization, certain livelihood amenities, social occasion, religious festivals were controlled under the influence of modern political organization in a number of ways. It is to be mentioned here that due to displacement and alternation of traditional economic organization remarkable changes could be noticed in their religious organization. The studied person does not practice agriculture and agricultural land related rituals any more. On the other hand they had started to worship the river for regular supply of natural resources to sustain their occupation. Keeping in view of the above all consequences it may be said that the customary rules, regulations, norms, customs and obedience lost their earlier importance and the entire social solidarity became disintegrated. Even in a number of occasions, oral discussions were made by the higher administrative authorities to vacate the

studied undocumented settlement. In such incidences several uncertain questions were raised about their future settlement, livelihood safety, security and alike. In most of the cases, they failed to redress the constraints in each and every sector of their common minimum livelihood. As a result, the above all repeated situations had created an acute mental and psychological pressure on them and sometimes it might have turned into a stage of depression and they got psychologically weakened. These circumstances sometimes forced them to get involved in different social problems. Ultimately it created a number of chaos and conflict in case of the studied families. Among the studied families only very few families (3.69 per cent) stated that they were not involved in any sort of familial or neighbourhood conflict. On the other hand, majority of the families (96.31 per cent) were involved in multifarious conflict and chaos both within their families as well as with neighbourhood (Table- 5.22).

It has been reported that there were multifarious causes related to the conflicts among the studied families. Among those causes economic scarcity had emerged as the major cause of conflict which was noticed in case of around 60 per cent families. The studied families had a very poor level of monthly income. Their average family members were five in number. Due to lack of natural food resources like kitchen garden, agricultural food products and fresh water fishes, all the concerned families had to depend on market based food products. However, with that mere source of income they could not purchase enough amount of food which was proportionate to redress the hunger of all the concerned family members. So, in most of the cases they were hand to mouth in condition and the flame of hunger ever persisted in their stomach. Along with that their mere economic backbone provided a very little opportunity for them, to accumulate other common minimum livelihood like dress, shelter, education and health accessibilities. Although the females were also a major earning member of the concerned families but they had a very little authority over their own earning. The males were the prime earning members of the studied families and they also had the authority over the earning of their concerned female folk. Even, whatever the children also earned that was deposited under the authority of their father. So, ultimately the adult male members were the prime earning member of the studied families and they had the complete authority of entire familial income. All the other members depended on him for the sake of their common minimum

livelihood. However, the poor economic backbone was a great hindrance for them to provide the security of common minimum livelihood of every family member. In this regard, all of the family members always demand their daily livelihood needs and requirements to the adult males. On the other hand the adult males were not in a position to provide the same. It had always created an acute mental distress and depression for them. Again, the demand of common minimum livelihood and their lack of fulfilment always created chaos, conflict and quarrel between the prime earners with other family members. In many cases, the married females used to come back to her parental house along with her children because her husband could not provide minimum social security for themselves. The second major cause of their familial conflicts was the addictive nature of the adult male members in the concerned families (Table 5.22). It has been reported that even from early teenage the concerned children had a number of addictions like smoking, chewing of tobacco and pan masala (Table 5.23).

Table 5.22: Distribution of the families on the basis of conflicts

Cases of conflict		Cause of conflict				Total
Yes	No	Acute poverty	Illegal affairs	Addiction of husband	Others	
313	12	187	27	86	13	325
96.31	3.69	59.74	8.63	27.48	4.15	100.00

Source: Field Study

It is to be mentioned here that quite at an early age, the children of the studied families had a direct involvement in earning. Although they submit their lions' share of earning to the parents, but they kept a little amount in their own hand. With this amount they found their own way of mental refreshment. They were quite well known that their parents had not enough time and desire to keep a close watch over their daily activities. So, they could utilize their economic involvement in an adverse manner to some extent. Another major addiction of the studied people was gambling. During the field study, it was observed that on set of the adulthood, a male person of the family became very much fond of gambling. Again, as soon as the concerned people got older, they were not only confined to a certain type of addiction; rather they were addicted to diversified objects. It was noticed during field study that in between the age group of 10 years to more than 70 years, out of total 568 males, more than half (50.35 per cent) of the people were involved in a number of addictive practices like

consumption of alcohol, smoking, tobacco and pan masala chewing and gambling (Table 5.23).

Table 5.23: Distribution of the male population on the basis of addiction

Age group	People addicted to							Total
	Alcohol	Smoking	Alcohol, Smoking	Tobacco	Pan masala	Alcohol, smoking, Tobacco	Alcohol Smoking Pan masala	
10-14	-	13 15.29	-	29 34.12	43 50.59	-	-	85 100.00
15-19	-	29 38.67	7 9.33	13 17.33	26 34.67	-	-	75 100.00
20-24	-	16 21.92	33 45.21	-	24 32.88	-	-	73 100.00
25-29	12 17.65	26 38.24	28 41.18	-	2 2.94	-	-	68 100.00
30-34	-	-	26 50.98	-	-	7 13.73	18 35.29	51 100.00
35-39	-	-	29 63.04	-	7 15.22	-	10 21.74	46 100.00
40-44	-	-	27 56.25	6 12.50	4 8.33	-	11 22.92	48 100.00
45-49	-	-	23 71.88	-	-	3 9.38	6 18.75	32 100.00
50-54	-	-	29 72.50	-	-	4 10.00	7 17.50	40 100.00
55-59	-	-	7 46.67	-	3 20.00	2 13.33	3 20.00	15 100.00
60-64	-	-	6 31.58	-	3 15.79	-	10 52.63	19 100.00
65-69	-	-	2 25.00	-	3 37.50	3 37.50	-	8 100.00
70 and Above	-	-	1 12.50	-	1 12.50	3 37.50	3 37.50	8 100.00
Total	12 2.11	84 14.79	218 38.38	48 8.45	116 20.42	22 3.87	68 11.97	568 100.00

Source: Field Study

It is to be mentioned here that throughout the entire day the males were involved in arduous manual labour works. Despite that their disastrous economic condition could hardly provide any opportunity to fulfil their common minimum livelihood upto the desired level. Such inability had created an acute mental depression and frustration among the males of the studied community. Temporarily to get rid of such agony, consumption of alcohol and playing of gambling were found as the best possible alternative. In the studied area such incidences became a regular phenomenon. Those activities used to create the situation more aggravated. The prime earners of the families spent most of their earnings for such addictions. Even in a number of occasions they forcefully snatched the earning of their wives. When their wives asked for money to run the familial hearth then their husbands had

nothing in the hand to meet up with the requisite. It could create an acute quarrel between husband and wife because the wives often blame their husbands for the misuse of money behind such addictions inspite of providing a fold of rice to the children. However, the words of bitter truth did not sound nice to the concerned male folk. To express the anger they often started to apply violent physical force upon them in a drunken condition. Even their children could also have the same fate. In such incidences, often the males used abusive languages and illicit physical expression indicating to their wives and children. Such familial conflict and chaos became a regular phenomenon among every family which tremendously violated the healthy environment of a family. Another major cause of familial and neighbourhood conflict was the illegal affairs were reported from some (8.63per cent) families. Due to poverty and addictions the quarrel between husband and wife became a regular occurrence and such day to day phenomenon could create an adverse impact upon the affectionate bondage between husband and wife. In such cases, the males often used to express their less desire to stay with their wives any more. Often he used to share his feelings with some other women of the locality or with his younger sister-in-law. Ultimately, it was not entertained by their wives and familial quarrel broke out. However, the husbands paid a mere attention to the words of their wives. Either they almost separated them verbally or they used to forcefully drag her out from the houses. The victimized and humiliated wives further had no option inspite of returning back to her parental house along with one or two child. Again, the males who were involved in the night shift of work at a longer distance, used to keep their wives in the households. In such cases, the women folk could not share their emotions with their husbands as well as it had adversely affected on their conjugal life. In such cases, often they became emotionally weak to their brother-in-laws or other male members of their neighbourhood and gradually got involved in extra marital affairs. Their husbands soon became aware about such incidences and it turned into severe familial conflict. Moreover, if certain tender emotional attachment took place with some third person then obviously it had crossed beyond the familial courtyard and ultimately a severe chaos, quarrel broke out between two families of the locality. Here the elder member of the concerned families and the local Panchayat often played a major role. They would prefer to settle up the entire matter behind the close doors and it was completely hushed up within their own territory. Further, in

case of a few families (4.15 per cent) some other causes were responsible to create quarrel and conflict. In such cases, it has been reported that often a people used to steal the broken up stone of other people or they used to occupy the working area of other people. It could create a quarrel between two stone crushers. However, in a quick succession such personal exchange of words turn up into familial conflicts with frequent utterance of abusive languages and even physical assault (Table-5.22). In the studied area, the local Panchayat and its women wing took a major initiative to redress different familial and neighbourhood conflict. But their continuous struggle for survival and mental depression related to poor income level had severely hampered their mental peace. Even for a very simple reason they expressed tremendous anger and restlessness. In the studied area, familial and neighbourhood conflict became a regular phenomenon. In such cases, the children became the worst victim. Ever since their birth, they could notice poverty and hunger in every perspective of their livelihood. Moreover the unsocial activities like open gambling and alcoholism of their parents could create an adverse impact upon their tender mind. Almost regularly, they could see either his father or any one in the neighbourhood was violently beating his wife and uttering abusive languages. Their simple mind could easily catch up the words and in many cases they used such words ever since their childhood. Particularly the girl child quite from an early age knew very well that their social security would be challenged in a number of occasions and the studied area was not a secured one for a gradually grown up child. Quite from an early age the concerned children knew that their guardian had some other activities. In such cases they could grow up with a wrong notion about different kinship based social relations. Such familial and social intricacies could create an adverse impact upon the simple tender mind of the children. Gradually their simple psychology became more complex and slowly but steadily they got enmeshed into the nexus of multifarious social problems.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy to mention here that the genesis of the psychological problems of children is to be traced from the disturbance of parent-child relationship, at any stage of development of the children. The psychological or emotional stability of a child is dependent upon feelings of security provided by the parental love and affection. Another fact which has been stressed in recent times is emotional needs of the child, the fulfilment of which not only helps in physical development but also in the development of an adjusted personality of

the child. His behavioural pattern as a child and also as a grown up individual is molded by the emotional environment at home and outside the home, when parents, brothers, sisters and other kins may support the making up of stable personality of the child or produce aberrations in his total personality. Parents are the giving end for the child and by virtue of their age and experience they give the child different form of tender, love, affection, security, recognition, appreciation and facilities for games. Generally, children fulfill the emotional needs of love and affection, sense of belonging, sense of responsibility towards others, sense of sacrifice and protection, sense of security in their future life (Singh and Pothen, 1982: 44-45 and 81-82). In the studied area, the livelihood conditions of the concerned people were quite poor. The economic status of the parents was mostly below poverty line and it resulted in the lack of parental attention towards the children. Even though the parents might like to devote time with their children, they were unable to do so due to pressure for earning the daily bread. The deviant behaviour of the children was quite common under these circumstances, which was accepted by the parents also as a normal pattern. In the studied area only 22.13 per cent families could look after the daily cleanliness of their children. It is to be specifically mentioned here that only in case of 42.29 per cent families the children were regularly fed by their mothers; on the other hand 14.23 per cent families they were fed by their elder brother and sister while in 43.48 percent the concerned children managed to fed by themselves. As the concerned parents were mostly involved in hard manual labour, throughout the entire day, so the care of their children during the said period was a major issue of concern for them. It has been reported that in case of around 19 per cent families the concerned children were not monitored by their parents during working hours. Further, in case of around 54 per cent families the concerned children were taken to the river bed by their parents. Still they remained busy with their work and their children could roam about carelessly. Even in few cases (5.14per cent), the parents used to keep their children under the monitoring of their neighbours (Table 5.24).

Table 5.24: Issues related to the rearing of the children

Category			Total
Daily cleanliness	Parents do regularly	56 22.13	253 (100.00)
	Mostly by elder children	103 40.17	
	Children manage themselves	94 37.15	
Regular feeding of child	Regularly done by mother	107 42.29	
	Mostly done by elder children	36 14.23	
	Children manage themselves.	110 43.48	
Care of the children during work	Parents take to the river bed	136 53.75	
	Under the monitor of grand parents	56 22.13	
	Under the monitor of neighbours	13 5.14	
	No monitoring at all	48 18.97	

Source: Field Study

Meanwhile from the field study it was noticed that during illness only the parents of around 2 percent families had the scope to remain with the child. Around 94 percent families could not provide adequate food and medicine regularly to their children. It is to be specifically mentioned here that none of the concerned families could provide regular medical consultancy to their children during illness (Table-5.25).

Table 5.25: Care of the child during illness

Remain with the child for most of the time		Provide adequate food and medicine regularly		Regularly Provide medical consultancy		Total
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	253
5	248	16	237	-	253	100.00
1.98	98.02	6.32	93.68		100.00	

Source: Field Study

In the studied area, the poor economic condition of the concerned families and their regular struggle for survival created a major hindrance to look after the desire of their children. It was reported that after day long manual labour. Most of the parents (81.82 per cent) were often felt a lot of mental irritation to tolerate even the little mischief of their children. During the study, the concerned families

having children, accepted the truth that the familial chaos, conflict and quarrel as well as their neighbourhood conflict resulted in an adverse impact upon the tender mind of their children. It has been reported that the children of around 74 per cent and 86 per cent families had a mere scope to get proper affection from their grandparents and from neighbourhood respectively (Table 5.26).

Table 5.26: Issues related to the children

Category				Total
Fulfillment of Desire	Yes	--		253 100.00
	No	253	100.00	
Mischief of the Child	Harshly Beaten	207	81.82	
	Affectionately advised	46	18.18	
Familial conflict has an adverse impact upon children	Yes	-		
	No	253	100.00	
Social surrounding has an adverse impact upon children	Yes	-		
	No	253	100.00	
Affection from grand parents	Yes	187	73.92	
	No	66	26.09	
Affection from grand neighbourhood	Yes	36	14.23	
	No	217	85.77	

Source: Field Study

Thus from the overall discussion it can be revealed that in the studied area multifarious social problems were persisted. Poverty lack of fulfilment of common minimum livelihood and severe struggle for survival were the major hindrances of their livelihood. In that circumstance, their familial peace was violated seriously and it severely told upon the socialization process and personality formation of their children. It is noteworthy to mention here that familial and social environment plays a major role in the gradual mental development of a child. However, in the studied area, ever since the birth, a child could notice severe economic crisis, familial quarrel, exchange of abusive languages, unsocial activities as well as conflict with neighbourhood. All the circumstances had told upon their proper social-psychological development. Ever

since childhood they had lost cheerfulness, joy and merriment while they became quite arrogant as well as ill tempered.

The dimension of time is always changing and along with that the livelihood of the human being cannot remain static. Today with the rapid influx of globalization we are progressing towards the threshold of a new era of advanced techno-economic development, modern livelihood accessibilities and a number of other conveniences which will collectively pave our way for overall societal betterment. But on the other hand, there are a huge section of people who are poor, marginalized and are struggling in every perspective of their livelihood. The studied families of the Balasan colony were in such a situation. Their present livelihood condition was not emerged in a day or two but there were a number of factors which had forced them to remain in such a condition. In Bangladesh they had their own land, settled means of livelihood and stable economic pursuit. They were not economically wealthy but their livelihood was quite protected in the lap of nature. By accumulating the natural resources they could easily avail their right to food, shelter and to live in a healthy and safe environment. In early settlement, they had the right to nationality, individual dignity and pursuance of social and cultural practices. However, displacement and migration had left a major impact on their right to social security, individual dignity and right to life. The overall adverse circumstances forced them to leave the settlement as a roofless and resourceless migrant. Further, they started to resettle in the Balasan colony with new hopes and aspiration. However, after the resettlement in the Balasan colony they were gradually enmeshed into a number of inconveniences and still now struggling for their survival. The concerned people had no legal right to their settlement. They were the undocumented refugees and had no authentic administrative identity at all. They were simply known as an occupational group among the common mass but they were not known on the basis of their own individual social or cultural identity.

Due to displacement mostly they became separated from their siblings and cousins. It broke their traditional joint family system and after resettlement mostly they preferred the nuclear family type. On the other hand during the period of migration and further uncertainty of resettlement they became scattered from their kin members and their kinship bondage reduced a lot. Earlier they had a strong kinship affiliation which played a significant role in different familial occasions.

However, after displacement it could be hardly noticed. Meanwhile poor level of earning had made them quite reluctant to pursue any unwanted economic expenditure related with kinship based rights and social obligations. Even in most of the cases poverty emerged as a major obstacle for them to conduct the marriage ceremony. It was noticed that the parents of the girls were least interested to establish any marital relation with a stone crushing family because they were well known about their poverty and economic insecurity. On the other hand, the parents of a girl among the studied families were also unable to establish any marital relation outside because they could not fulfill the demand of dowry claimed by the parents of the groom. Thus they had to face a number of obstacles to conduct any marriage ceremony. Poverty had reduced their scope to organize the marriage ceremonies within a minimum limit which is confined mostly among the family members and by reducing certain rituals. It is to be mentioned here that earlier the studied people had their own traditional political organization and the village headman had a significant role in it. However after their displacement it was completely abolished. Again during the study they were associated with the modern political organization and their socioeconomic livelihood was markedly controlled under the modern political influence. Due to displacement they had lost agriculture based occupation. Significantly different rituals and religious festivals related to agricultural land and cattle were no more practiced by them. On the other hand they used to worship the river for a regular availability of natural resources for their livelihood sustainability.

Further, after the resettlement a strong economic backbone was their prime need. But the stone based occupation was unable to provide them the concerned requirement. From the studied settlement they had no scope to accumulate the natural food resources related to their daily livelihood. On the other hand economic scarcity was a great hindrance for them to depend on expensive market based food products. They had to face severe struggle for their survival. Poverty and the pressure of familial requirements forced the children to get involved in the stone crushing work from an early age. It severely told upon their education. Along with that the economic scarcity had hindered the parents to provide adequate educational requisites to their children. Meanwhile, secondary level of educational institution was absent in the settlement and it became a co-related factor responsible for the rapid educational drop out. Due to several

inconveniences and particularly economic fragile had confined their educational development mostly within primary and secondary level, and in this regard, the situation of the females was very grim. With the help of education and appropriate familial guidance as well as through the enculturation and socialization, a child can learn to obey the social norms, values, customs and obedience. It helps to develop his personality and humanitarian quality, but here it was seriously affected. Intra familial and inter familial conflicts, addictions, offensive activities were a common occurrence in the studied area. By birth a child observed acute poverty, undesired activities, addiction, conflict and serious competition for survival which affected on their mind. It turned them out as adamant in nature and involved them as frequent practitioner of those activities, which did not get any social sanction or could not be entertained by the society. The personality formations of the children had got diverged. They became less responsible to their familial as well as social obligations and duties. Again, most of their traditional cultural practices were changed.

Form the overall circumstances it can be stated that due to displacement a severe socio-economic and socio-cultural crisis were emerged out among the studied people as well as it exposed them into an insecure circumstance. The studied people were completely devoid of from the basic attributes of fundamental human rights related to their settlement, nationality, standard of living and basic right of education which they should deserve simply by virtue of a human being. They were dwelling in a close proximity from the biggest urban centre of North Bengal, Siliguri but they were far away from the modern urban accessibilities. Their labour was the prime raw material for the continuous urban flourishing, but they were debarred from the basic attributes of human rights in every perspective of their livelihood. If the present situation gets continued then only the forth coming period will tell us about their fate and mere chances will be left even for their survival.

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CHAPTER VI

HEALTH SITUATION OF THE STONE CRUSHERS

Introduction

Every culture, irrespective of its simplicity and complexity, has its own beliefs and practices concerning diseases. No culture works in a meaningless fashion in its treatment of diseases. Every culture evolves its own system of medicine in order to treat diseases in its own way. This treatment of disease varies from group to group. It has been noted that in the rural areas, the belief in the interference of a supernatural agency is particularly strong in the context of health and disease. Most of their socio-cultural activities revolve around Gods and Spirits. They identify the supernatural powers with group of powerful forces and deities which control and influence the happenings in the community. It may be pointed out that disease and treatment, particularly in the simple societies cannot be properly understood in isolation. Health and treatment are very much connected with the environment, particularly the forest ecology. The health care system and traditional treatment are based on their deep observation and understanding of nature and environment (Chaudhuri, 2003: 17-24). Health, like happiness is an illusive concept. It has been defined in a number of ways. However, among such definitions the followings are widely accepted as mentioned below-

Dubos 1968, defined health as, “a modus vivendi enabling imperfect men to achieve a rewarding and too painful existence, while they cope with an imperfect world.”

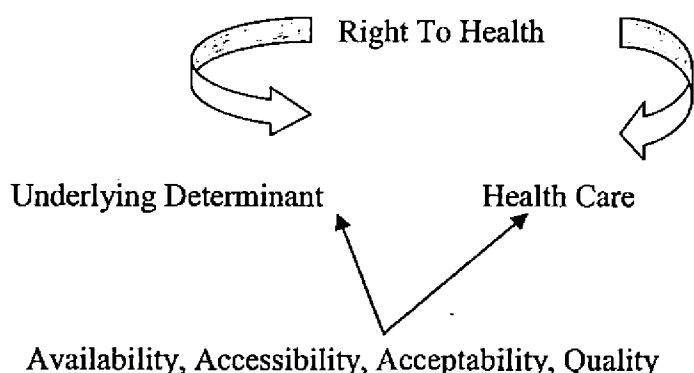
World Health Organization 1948, defined Health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity.” (Park, 2013:13).

In recent years, a new philosophy of health has been acquired, as stated below-

1. Health is a fundamental human right.
2. Health is the essence of productive life and not the result of ever increasing expenditure on medical care.
3. Health is inter-sectoral.

4. Health is an integral part of development.
5. Health is central to the concept of quality of life.
6. Health involves individuals, state and international responsibility.
7. Health and its maintenance is a major social investment.
8. Health is a world wide social goal.

Basically, “The Right to Health”, is associated with the underlying determinants and health care, along with Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Quality. The underlying determinants incorporate water, sanitation, food, nutrition, housing, healthy occupational and environmental conditions, education, information etc. Again, by Availability, the functioning of public health and health care facilities, goods and services as well as programmes in sufficient quantity is meant. By Accessibility, non discrimination, physical accessibility, economic accessibility and information accessibility is meant. By Acceptability, it is meant that all health facilities, goods and services must be respectful of medical ethics and culturally appropriate as well as sensitive to gender and life cycle requirements. By Quality, it is assumed that the health facilities, goods and services must be scientifically and medically appropriate and of good quality. It can be represented through the following diagram-



(Source: www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs323-en.pdf)

Anthropology and Health- The Theoretical Perspective: The concept of health, disease and treatment vary according to the culture of different communities and ethnic groups. In every culture there is a repository of values and belief systems built around important life experiences viz. birth, illness, disease and death. In such circumstances, the traditional healers had to find a means to prevent misery. Traditional way of treatment is inevitable among the simple societies. The

traditional medicine can be stated as the sum total of all knowledge and practices, whether explicable or not used in diagnosis, prevention and elimination of physical, mental or social imbalance and relying exclusive on practical experiences and observation. Their traditional medicine is of various kinds like Folk medicine, Ethno medicine, Ayurveda, Unani, Sidhha and Nature Care, which differ from each other in term of tools, techniques, ideas and beliefs (Banerjee and Jalota, 1998: 18-19). In Medical Anthropology, the examination of health issues extends to include knowledge, meaning, social behaviour and biology generally related to well being, suffering misfortune, life cycle and survival (Millard, 1992: 3). In this context it is to be mentioned here that disease refers to a psychological alternation that impairs function in some way. Illness is used to describe the subjective experience of symptoms and suffering and it motivates changes in behaviour to alleviate this discomfort.

In this context, it is to be mentioned here that Social Medicine may be defined as a Study of an ill person within his environment with the aim of identifying, classifying and rectifying the causal factors of disease to regain health and later on promote and preserve health. The three important constituent of social medicine are-

1. Disease has a social cause in addition to the pathogenic agents.
2. Social causes have diversified inter-relationships. They include education, religion, economic status, beliefs, traditions and customs. This may be termed as the social etiology of disease.
3. Social therapy needs to be designed and applied keeping in view the social etiology in a given situation. Social medicine is concerned with the health and disease in the population, cultural patterns among groups and various standards of living, social and economic status.

In this context, particularly in India along with the ethnic and cultural diversity, the folk medicine and indigenous knowledge of health care system are quite variable from one another. Meanwhile before analyzing in detail about the health situation of the studied people, a brief overview on Indian health scenario and adequate Governmental plan bears a special resemblance.

National Health Scenario-A Brief Overview: The United Nations Millennium Development Goals Report 2006, has categorically fixed the following targets within the year 2015, as stated below-

Goal 1: To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and to make it half between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 per day.

Goal 4: To reduce child mortality, reduce it by 2/3 between 1990 and 2015.

Goal 5: To improve maternal health, reduce by ¾ between 1990 and 2015.

It is to be mentioned here that during the 12th Plan outlet (2012-2017) total 2.5 per cent of GDP has been estimated for the health expenditure. According to the National Rural Health Mission 2005-2012, the special emphasis has been given on-

1.It aims at effective integration of health concerns with determinants of health like sanitation, hygiene, nutrition and safe drinking water.

2.Universal access to public health services such as women's health, child health, water, sanitation, hygiene, immunization and nutrition.

However, irrespective of several schemes and Governmental planning, the fruitful implementation are yet to reach in the grass root level in case of many communities and in rural or even in semi-urban areas. Often in such cases either the infrastructure is quite disproportionate with the desired requirement of the concerned people or acute poverty of the people become a major obstacle for them to avail the accessibilities of modern health infrastructure. Ultimately, whatever the cause may be, it had generated a major challenge related to the health situation of the people. In the context of present Study, it has been already noted that the, stone crushing people were dwelling their livelihood in acute economic scarcity. They had to struggle in every aspect to avail the common minimum livelihood accessibilities. In this regard, their livelihood, occupation, economy, settlement and overall struggle for survival might be associated with their health situation as a whole. Thus, it deserves a special significance to analyze the overall health situation of the studied stone crushing people, from the socio-economic and socio-cultural perspective as a whole.

In the studied area there was only a health sub centre. People with their ailment were mostly dependent on it. But the concerned sub centre was not provided with adequate medical facilities or other pathological instruments. In this regard, often

in serious cases the patients of the studied area had to go either to Matigara Primary Health Centre located at a distance of around four kilometers from the studied area or directly to North Bengal Medical College located at a distance of more than six kilometer from the studied area. Regarding pathological tests and other clinical diagnosis, they had to depend on the concerned centres which were located at a farther distance from the studied area. In the Balasan colony there were two western medical stall, one homeopathic stall and there was two quacks. Further, the studied area one traditional medicine man and one magico-religious healer was also present.

Cultural perspective of Health, Disease and Treatment among the studied people

Among the studied people the concept of health had a wider spectrum. According to them a good health condition was directly associated with physical well being and smooth functioning of different physical organs. It could give them physical energy to conduct their arduous labour work properly. They sated that the stone based work was their only source of income and it needed a lot of physical labour. Thus a person should be in a good health condition to conduct the work. According to them although the physical health was the primary aspect, but along with that mental peace, harmonious social relation as well as working environment and livelihood infrastructure were also directly associated with the good health condition and physical well being. They stated that inter familial and intra familial quarrel could hardly make a man mentally peaceful. In such a situation it would not be possible for him to conduct his work properly. Again if the working environment remains unhygienic in condition then a person could hardly conduct his work for long and frequently he might get suffered with a number of ill health conditions. On the other hand, the place of dwelling must have certain common minimum scientific amenities otherwise it might tell upon the well being of the dwellers. Further, the settlement or locality must have certain well equipped and well functioning western medical institutions or health care facilities which could provide initial treatment to redress any sort of their ailment. Thus, according to the studied people health has multidimensional aspect which was associated with physical condition, social environment and institutional infrastructure. Further, they stated that, any sort of ill health

condition which could resist them to conduct their manual labour work properly might be recognized as a disease. It might be due to two primary causes; according to them a good health condition was intimately related with certain livelihood practices like cleanliness of body through regular proper bathing, cleanliness of cloth, taking the food within a specific schedule and having physical rest according to the requirement. Any sort of its alternation might create a number of ill health condition and diseases. Again, as their settlement was adjacent to the river bed and crematory ground thus the concerned people believed that always they had a chance to be the victim of a number of supernatural agencies. Even sometime the aged male or female could influence them to do the harm of their neighbours in jealous. It could generate certain abnormal activities to the affected person and his health condition could get deteriorated within a very short period. Regarding the treatment, the concerned people were primarily depended on the local quacks. According to them, quick remedy against minimum financial expenditure was their priority otherwise it would be detrimental for their work. They were quite reluctant to consult with the doctors because they were outside the locality at a farther distance and they hardly listen in detail about their ailment or allied circumstances. Further, if a person suffer from any disease or misfortune created by supernatural agencies then only the traditional healer could cure him. It was noticed that the studied people were very much psychologically depended on the traditional medicine man named as Sri. Upen Das and magico religious healer Sri. Monglu Barman. It can be stated that, among the studied people concept of health, disease and treatment was intimately associated with their occupational, social and cultural perspective.

Supernatural belief: It has been observed from the earlier studies that the belief of interference of supernatural agencies is widely noticed in the context of health and disease. According to their belief different Gods, Goddess and spirits were connected with different diseases. Even the maintenance of health and hygiene in the daily livelihood context was guided by the belief in supernatural agencies. Such agencies might have benevolent or malevolent effect, but their existence were reported in various circumstances. In the studied area, the concerned people had their own supernatural belief regarding rights of passage, health, diseases and treatment. Birth, marriage and death were surrounded by various rituals and many

of them were observed due to faith upon supernaturalism. For better health, they believed on supernatural power that could prevent them from various health hazards. Further, a pregnant woman has to follow many restrictions, doing certain activities and refraining from others. She was bound to obey those regulations for the better health of herself and the baby. Some rituals also protected the new born babies from the malevolent effect of evil eye of supernatural agencies. *Kajol tika* or black mark on the forehead was auspicious in this context. Some specific diseases and symptoms were realized as the resultant effect of different supernatural agencies. Pox and a few cases of physical, mental disorder were under such issue.

Role of different deity: A significant role of different religious Gods and Deities can be observed in the context of health and disease. In most of the cases they were benevolent in nature and action but a continuous appeasing was necessary for such activities, otherwise malevolent effect could be executed at any moment. There are deities in every religion and it plays a crucial role for the well being of the concerned people. As most of the activities of human being were influenced by the role of different deities, so there was a definite role of a deity in the context of human health and occurrence of diseases and even in the treatment of those ailments. They had conception about benevolent and malevolent character of deities and it was reported that benevolent deities could play some malevolent roles due to dissatisfaction through appeasing procedures.

Masan or Lord Shiva was the supreme God of them and had a great impact upon their daily life; it controlled their entire well being. Social security and physical well being of the studied people were very much depended upon him. To redress the malevolent effect of any evil spirit or supernatural force, the worship of Masan was very essential. *Garam* was the most powerful village deity. It was a combination of many deities enshrined in a merge temple erected on the outskirts of the village. *Garam* was a curious combination of deities of all faiths forming one omnibus village deity. It was worshipped on all ceremonial occasions for the safety and security of the studied area. By worshipping *Garam*, it was believed that the studied area would remain protected from the evil eyes of the outsiders or supernatural agents. Goddess Sitala had the protection power from the disease called pox. Appeasing of that deity was necessary for curing the above said

disease. The role of Goddess Manasa was very crucial for the studied people. It has been reported that Goddess Manasa had the controlling power of disease possession. Role of the deity became very crucial when an individual was beaten up by the snake and she must be worshipped for the prevention of such disease. The following table is summarizing the fact in more detail-

Table 6.1: Role of different deities

Deity	Character	Significance in health	Field observation
1. <i>Masan</i>	Benevolent and supreme God	Controls healthy and prosperous life	Offerings were necessary for the recovery from any disease and misfortune.
2. <i>Garam</i>	Benevolent and protective from evil super natural agencies.	Protects the entire village. It also protects the villagers from disease and misfortune.	It is worshipped in other social occasions also.
3. <i>Devi Sitala</i>	Benevolent but possessed with the power to give malediction.	Influential upon the disease pox and it can be controlled by worshipping her.	Reported by all the villagers and worshipped in every household.
4. <i>Devi Manasa</i>	Benevolent but can turn into malevolent also.	Very crucial for the treatment from snake bite cases.	All villagers worshipped in their households.
5. <i>Chauni puja</i>	Malevolent and it particularly effects the female folk. It is a female evil spirit.	It attacks the expectant mother or the new born.	All villagers worshipped in their households.
6. <i>Thakur Bosa</i>	Benevolent and is performed in the household level.	When the family deity was believed to left the house in disgust, the deity is to be called back or reinstalled.	Reported by the studied people.
7. <i>Modon Kam</i>	Benevolent and performed in the community level.	The worship is finished before the sun set. It is for the welfare of the village specially to ward off epidemics.	The ritual emblem moves in every household and finally is performed in the field during evening.
8. <i>Teesta BuriPuja</i>	Benevolent but can turn into malevolent also if not appeased properly.	It is for the security of the entire village and prosperity of a family.	Villages performed it individually and community wise.

Source: Field Study

Concept of Soul and Ghost: Concept of soul and spirit is intermingled with human life. Tylor in his book *Primitive Culture* (1871), defined soul as the unsubstantial human image, and is made up of a sort of vapour like substance, which is impalpable, invisible but it has power." It is indestructible. It may also be defined as a sort of elixir of life. From the primitive point of view, there are two kinds of soul in man i.e. the body soul or the fixed soul or the fixed soul or the shadow. The body soul animates the body and pervades the whole of it. But the soul matter concentrates in certain parts of the body viz. hair, nail, blood, sputum, heart, lung etc. even the personal name is also a part of the body soul. The shadow or the free soul is defined with breath and shadow of the human being. It is harmless and independent of the body. When a man sleeps it come out of the body and wander in different places. Dream is a form of hallucination through which man reveals the past and anticipates the future. If the free soul gets injury in the time of its outside wandering, it causes illness to its possessor. The primitive conception of disease and illness due to soul loss is derived from this notion.

Among the studied people it was believed that soul was only a malevolent character. It could capture specifically the children and women. When a woman was pregnant she had an acute chance to get attacked by the soul. Even it could attack the aged male or female. The victimized person felt illness and even it could be fatal if not treated properly. According to them evil spirit and evil wind could capture the brain of the victim and the symptoms were severe headache, abnormal eyesight, irrelevant talking etc. Every activities of the effected person would get controlled by the evil spirit. The concept of charming arrow had a deep faith in their mind. Through this process one could capture the soul of another person and anything could be done with it. The effected person felt deep ailment and even it could be fatal through extensive practice of this process. Meanwhile in the studied area, the concept of evil eye was much prevalent. It was believed that the eye sight of a few women could create a lot of harmful effect to others. Particularly it affected the children very much and they became the sufferer of numerous health problems. It was commonly believed that the women who were infertile or those women who had no child due to death of the earlier ones possessed such evil eye sight which could create a lot of harmful effect to the

others. The stone crushing people had a number of super natural belief and faith on magico religious factors and witchcraft. These are mentioned below-

Table 6.2: Different super natural beliefs

Super Natural belief	Affect
1. <i>Bhut</i>	It was a male spirit and came to the household through doors, windows etc. It could attack both male and female at any time of the day. The attacked person was seized with a sense of fear and begun to shiver.
2. <i>Pettani or Poiri</i>	If an unmarried woman died she became a <i>Poiri</i> , while if a pregnant woman died she became <i>Pettani</i> . They generally used to attack the children. When a child was attacked he passed stools of various colours stop the breast feeding and gradually became weak and ultimately died.
3. <i>Rokto Kali</i>	It was a female spirit and could attack both male and female. The attacked person became red, his tongue protrudes, he talked irrelevant and got high temperature.
4. <i>Rakhhos Masan</i>	It was the most dangerous male spirit and could attack at any time to the males. The affected person tried to consume burnt wood, charcoal, avoid cooked food, developed diarrhoea, passed urine unconsciously in the bed.
5. <i>Mogor</i>	It was an extremely dangerous male spirit. It attacked to any male or female in the night. The affected person became red in colour and suffered from acute chest pain.
6. <i>Gaheli</i>	It was an evil wind and it could create paralysis in body or it could snatch the baby from the womb of the reproductive mother.

Source: Field Study

Magico-Religious performances: The control of supernatural forces by means of compulsive formulae is known as magic. In his book "The Golden Bough", Frazer (1922) classified the magical formulae into two broad categories- 1) Like produces like (Homeopathy or imitative), 2) Once in contact always in contact (Contagious). Homeopathic or imitative magic is based on the principle of imitation while the contagious magic is based on the principle of contact. Magico-religious performances are a typical activity, which combine the magical procedure on the base of religious platform. It occupies a prominent place in the arena of treatment of disease and related misfortune in the human life. The studied people strongly believed that the charming arrows could create lot harm in the livelihood of the people. It mainly generates numerous health problems and

even it may be fatal. The different types of charming arrows and their malevolent effects are mentioned below-

Table 6.3: Charming arrows and their effects

Charming arrows	Affect
1. <i>Baro Gopaler Ban</i>	Caused headache with burning sensation in the body and the victim died with a few hours.
2. <i>Tepa Ban</i>	It swells up the abdomen and excretions were seized, which caused death ultimately.
3. <i>Hawa tepa Ban</i>	It accumulated wind in the abdomen and the victim died.
4. <i>Meheri buri Ban</i>	It created madness to the victim.
5. <i>Masna Ban</i>	It generates ulcer to the whole body of the victim.
6. <i>Dzuguni Ban</i>	As it was applied, a vulture appeared in the sky and it used to create harm to the womb of the reproductive mother.
7. <i>Borom Ban</i>	It generates cloud in the sky and the victim is died due to thunder.

Source: Field Study

In the studied area, the magico religious performer represented a certain typical physical activity, magical spell, sacrifice of hen etc. All of his activities were under the positive way of performance because those were performed for the well being of the people. Such magico-religious activities in the studied area were performed either in the house of the disease affected people or in the house of the traditional magico-religious healer. He used different types of magical spells for different purposes. There were specific enchanting related to the remedy of evil spirit, evil wind, charming arrow or snake bite. Even he sprinkled some holy water on the head of a person, or spelt the enchanting by keeping his hand on the head of a person who wished to remain protected from such malevolent attack or unwanted situation. Generally any magico-religious performance was preferably practiced in the dusk period. Use of a typical broom was noticed at the time of such performance to ward off the evil spirit from the living body. Use of black or white mustard seed, vermilion, oil, red or black thread was also needed to perform such activities. The magico religious healer applied *Tel Pora*¹ and *Dzol Pora*, to prevent the malevolent effect of evil spirits or misfortunes related to health. It was sprinkled on the head and body of the victim in case of *Dzol Pora*; whereas in

¹ *Tel pora*: Application of sanctified oil provided by the traditional healer.

case of *Tel Pora* it was both sprinkled on the body and rubbed on the affected portion of body. It was spelt like-

***Tel pora* mantra (enchanting):**

*i dzu dzu bi dzu dzu phennar asil dziu
monte hang- kinu monte pang-kinu
swoponer telete phennar dziu bosanu.*

[Come my friendly spirits, my client (name) has a disease due to a bad spirit. I recall you in my mind, I think of you in my mind. Do please come snatch off the bad spirit from the man and deposit it in this pot of oil].

***Dzol pora* mantra (enchanting):**

*Kal kal norsing bekare dhae
Sun sun norsing bire katha
Norsing hunkare chil matlir bir
Pats bhaier matha kun kun mathili
Chotsea chots mukha khedea korim dur
Hula kape huli kape akase indro kape
Dev deva sur por hoste korim dzor
Ap hoste korima sap
Char bao batas dev distan
Phennar soril charia dza tui
Sorgok nagia.*

[The black giant Norsing speeds up and you all hear the valour of Norsing. I have the strength of the gods and the giants. You the bad spirits taking possession of my client must leave him at once and go to the heavens].

The healer stated that it was necessary to utter the said spell for three times at a stress. Worship of Devi Manasa was performed in every household to keep protected from snake bite. It has been reported that in some extreme cases, the affected person was tied up with a rope by the healer, his body was thrashed with the broom and mustard, neem branches were frequently touched with his body. In that entire activity, the mustard and neem branch was used as anti witch and were used to offer threat to the witches. Again, in a number of cases the magico-religious healers stated that animal sacrifice could prevent the malevolent effect

of the evil spirits. Particularly, when an individual was attacked by *Bhut*,² *Pettani*³ or *Gaheli*⁴, then he could be cured only through the way of animal sacrifice in the form of hen or pigeon. Mustard seed, vermilion, neem and mustard oil were allied requisites. It is to be mentioned here that the sacrificed animal was tabooed to be consumed by the people. The entire performances were conducted after the dusk and before the dawn. When the entire performance was over, then the magico-religious healer collected them altogether and sank them in the river water. During that time, he should not be accompanied by anyone else. Meanwhile, if someone saw him to sink the said objects in the river water, then it was believed that the evil spirit would attack him at once.

Life cycle Rituals: Numerous rituals, restrictions and beliefs are associated with the three major phases of life cycle i.e. birth, marriage and death.

Birth: When a woman became pregnant, she was not allowed to go alone at night or to attend any funeral. She could not eat on any purification ceremony. Strict imposition was imposed upon her for not to cross any river. She was restricted to go outside on Tuesday and Saturday. She must not sit on her legs. She was restricted to take her bath in the river water and to submerge her waist or womb under the river water. Her husband on the other hand was forbidden to carry a funeral pier or not to kill any animal. A pregnant woman should always carry a bit of iron in her possession to ward off an attack of evil spirits. The living room was smeared with an emulsion of cow dung in water and parturition took place inside.

Marriage: On the day of *adhibas*⁵, the empty unornamented pitcher was filled up with water from the Balasan river. A borderless white cloth was spreaded over the pitcher. After it was filled up, they first used to go to the place of the village deity and poured some water there. Then some water was poured to the place of household deity, like the Goddess *Manasa*⁶, *Tulsi*⁷ and the *Kali*⁸. It remained covered to avoid the contamination of the effect of evil eye. In the marriage

² *Bhut*: The male ghost.

³ *Petni*: The female ghost.

⁴ *Gaheli*: The evil wind which can take the image of a bird and create complications during pregnancy.

⁵ *Adhibas*: A part of Hindu marriage ritual conducted just before the day of marriage

⁶ *Manasa*: Hindu goddess of snake.

⁷ *Tulsi*: Auspicious plant according to Hindu mythology and ritual.

⁸ *Kali*: A Hindu goddess.

ceremony, mango tree, plantain leaf, *Tulsi* plant, cow dung and turmeric were essentially needed.

Death: The studied people followed the Hinduized method of cremation of dead body. After the cremation, the party returned home. The burning rope of straw that was taken from home was carried by the son, who lit then pyre and deposited in the room where the person died. Before entering home, they used to take a bath outside. They were supposed to touch a fire lit by other man, with either a bundle of paddy straw or dried jute sticks and be sprinkled on the head with water in which a few basil leaves have been dipped. Such rituals could consider them as clean and they were admitted into the house. It has been reported that the fire of the straw ropes prevented evil spirits from entering the room in which the person died and the soul of the dead could rest in peace in the hut where it stays until the fire was removed. Meanwhile, according to their belief if a man died due to some unnatural incident, then the soul became a malevolent ghost. The soul of a great sinner became a *Surdeo*⁹ who was said to suck the blood of the people. If a wicked woman met with unnatural death *Pettani*, then she particularly attacked the woman. Again, the soul of dead pregnant woman or if any one died during child birth, became a *Poiri*¹⁰. She is believed to attack and harmed the reproductive mother and her child.

According to the studied people and through the in-depth Study and analysis of the researcher it was found that they used different types of things in different rituals, which reflected the necessities of those things in daily life for better health and better protection of the studied people. These are mentioned below-

Table 6.4: Use of different objects used and their significance

Name	Occasion	Reason
1. Turmeric	Birth, marriage, death	Antiseptic and protection from evil spirit.
2. Neem	Birth, death	Antiseptic, protection from skin diseases, protection from evil spirits for the child and to the followers attending in funeral pyre, protection from contamination.
3. Mustard oil	Birth, marriage and death	To protect skin, to prevent evil effect, mixed with turmeric and

⁹ *Surdeo*: An evil spirit according to the belief of local people.

¹⁰ *Poiri*: An evil spirit which causes complications during pregnancy.

		vermilion was regarded as auspicious.
4. Banana leaf	Birth, marriage and death	Better for health and hygiene to serve food on it, remedy for insect bite and minor injuries.
5. Basil leaf	Death	To avoid contamination and to prevent evil effect.
6. Betel leaf and betel nut	Birth, marriage	Mouth freshener and to appease the God.
7. Earthen pot	Birth marriage and death	Anti infectious and hygienic for consuming food, prevent the effect of evil sight.
8. Use of fire	Birth marriage and death	To destroy surrounding germ and evil spirit. Also used as an antiseptic.
9. Cow dung	Birth marriage and death	Antiseptic, hygienic and protection from any evil attack.
10. Bathing before rituals	Birth marriage and Death	For purification of body, mind and soul

Source: Field Study

It can be noticed that the use of turmeric was very prominent in their social occasions. The concerned people were well aware about its beneficiaries. It was necessary for the new born babies and the concerned mother being an antiseptic. Further, it was protective in case of spreading infections from a dead body and also a preventive medium of evil effects. According to the traditional medicine man of the studied area turmeric was very much curative for the remedy from the disturbance in liver, problem of throat etc. Application of neem was particularly noticed during birth and death rituals. It was primarily used to prevent the effect of evil spirits. However it was considered as inauspicious in case of marriage. According to the traditional medicine man, it was protective and germ killer. In their daily livelihood discourse, mustard oil was earnestly required. When it was mixed with turmeric and vermilion then it could treated as a very auspicious object to perform different rituals. In the livelihood of the studied people basil leaf had a very prominent significance. In every household the tulsi mancha or basil herb platform could be noticed. It was considered as a very auspicious object in every social ceremony, as it was a prime medium to prevent the evil effect of souls and spirits. In the marriage ceremony betel leaf and betel nut was required for some religious purpose as well. The above Study about the occasion centering the life cycle of the studied people unfold their idea about basic concept of health and the role of different herbal medicines in their social occasions. Such interaction between livelihood and herbal medicine generated an opportunity to

secure their life to a certain context and to prevent the supernatural effects after death.

Role of the villagers: Health, disease and treatment also reflect the social solidarity of a community or a village. Illness and consequent treatment is not always an individual or familial affair. The decision about the nature of treatment may be taken at the community or village level also. There were some taboos related to specific diseases. Further some festivals were also celebrated in a community to ward off the malevolent effect of an evil spirit and to seek the blessing of God to proceed a smooth and good way of life. In the studied area, the village level festivals were collectively celebrated by them, although the enthusiasm got much reduced. Such festivals were collectively celebrated for the safety and protection of their livelihood. It took place to protect themselves from evil spirits. Another prominent village level participation was recorded in the context of taboos regarding the diseases viz. pox and measles. At the time of occurrence of those two diseases, all the villagers obeyed the rule to consume vegetarian diet. The married women during this period were advised not to wear red sarees. After the completion of prescribed pollution period and worship of Devi Sitala, the entire village life became normalized. Even if some occasions were prescribed earlier, then it was to be postponed due to emergence of such disease. Village level participation was also recorded at the time of *Manasa puja* or *bisohori puja* celebration. As they felt Goddess Manasa could save the entire village from any evil eye or from the danger of poisonous snakes. So, they altogether participated for appeasing her. Meanwhile, interestingly it was noticed that whenever a villager was running through the misfortune of snake bite and treated by the village ojha, then all the villagers obeyed and respected taboos for his remedial purpose as well as for their own security. Further, in any case of evil spiritual effect, the adult female members of the neighbourhood collectively framed a consensus about the probable cause of disease and its remedial method. Thus although the health sufferings were an individual or familial matter, still in certain aspects it became a community matter particularly for the safety and social security point of view.

Community knowledge base: In the studied area along with the traditional healing practices and role of quacks the concerned people also had certain knowledge to redress the ailment of different diseases and injuries. It was transmitted generation wise through oral tradition and completely based upon those resources which were easily available within the locality and even within their household. During the work if an individual became injured with the iron hammer on his finger then he used to collect the leaves of marigold or *Colocasia esculenta*. They used to squeeze their extract and rub it on the injured portion to clot the blood and to reduce the pain. During the work if their eyes got injured with the stone chips then they used to collect the leaves of *pathorkuchi* (*Brophyllum pinnatum*) plant and smeared the extract on the injured eye to reduce the pain. Further if their hand or leg became injured and swelled up they used to paste the hot admixture of turmeric and lime for a quick recovery. If their children suffered from high fever then they used to put a piece of wet cloth on their forehead to reduce the body temperature. It was noted that in the studied families if anyone was suffering from measles, jaundice or pox then they used to fumigate the hut with incense and coconut shell smoke. They smeared the hut and courtyard with cow dung and water to prevent any further infection. They never consumed any food during the period of solar or lunar eclipse because they believed that the food might get contaminated with certain evil effect which even might be fatal for them.

Health situation of the Stone Crushers

According to the definition of World Health Organization, the good health of a people is not merely associated with the physical wellbeing, but it is intimately associated with the mental and social wellbeing. In this context, by mental health it may be assumed that a human being must lead his livelihood in a peace full manner with out any scarcity, tension and trauma. Again, by social health it is assumed that being a social animal, a human being must lead his livelihood in peace, affection, and co-operation with his family, cultural domain, as well as his fellow neighbourhood. So, in the context of the present Study if the over all health situations of the stone crushing people is to be analyzed then obviously their presently settlement, livelihood condition and local environment is to be taken into account.

Studied people and their settlement: The livelihood of the studied people was intimately associated with the stone based occupation. Their economic organization was solely depended on the natural resources of the Balasan river. Their common minimum livelihood requisites could be accumulated through the earning generated by the stone based occupation. To provide economic security for the family members the said occupation should be regularly conducted by the concerned people. For the said purpose it was earnestly required that they should live adjacent to their work field and conduct their work regularly without any unnecessary wastage of time. In the studied area the concerned people and their families used to live in a very limited territory. Their huts were constructed very adjacent to one another in a quite congested manner. Even those huts were not properly ventilated and were lacking of other basic amenities. From dawn to dusk they earn their livelihood against rigorous physical labour. Obviously after such arduous labour the body and mind demands a period of leisure and relaxation, in the household. However the house hold pattern and local environment were not quite favorable for them to avail such leisure. During the formative period there were a very few household in the studied area. However, decade after decade the population gradually started to get increased with in a limited territory. As the people established their settlements primarily on the basis of local adjustments, thus obviously the studied area became very much congested and densely populated. In the studied area there were an enmeshing number of lanes and bi-lanes. All such ways were associated with the almost uncountable number of huts of the stone crushers on both sides. Such lanes were even so narrow, that it was rather difficult for a person to walk along with another. Such dense congestion of the locality did not provide the scope to establish a properly ventilated spacious household. The huts of the stone crushers were quite small in size and its construction was very unhygienic. It was observed that if both the doors and windows of the huts were closed and someone stays inside, then it become rather difficult for them even to take their respiration properly. Further, as the population gradually started to increase in the studied area, the local vegetation was cut down to provide them the place of settlement. During the period of Study, it was noticed that in the studied area the number of trees were very few and even the shrubs were quite scarce. As a result, the natural breeze could hardly be found in the colony. It is to be mentioned here that as the studied area was established

on the bank of the river thus the soil type was mostly made up of sand, stone and boulder. Gradually with the sunlight the soil surface of the colony became very hot. Even if some wind was generated from the river then usually it carried the sand, dust particle and a hot wave. Again, in the evening the absorbed heat was radiated by the sand and stones with in the colony and thus even after the sunset, it took a prolonged time for the reduction of warmth in the studied area. After the day long hard work, the tired body and mind of the concerned people demanded a quiet rest. However, in such an adverse local environment it become rather impossible for them to remain confined within their houses. Even after the dusk it took a long time for the decrease of temperature and as a result only a very little moment was left for the studied people for their leisure. It is generally assumed that house hold and local environment is the place of emotional, mental and social security. In the context of present Study, it represented a different perspective. It has been already mentioned here that in the studied area the neighbor hood interaction was not very much peaceful and harmonious. Among the people there always persisted some sort of jealousy and conflict. Thus they had a minimum scope to share their agony of sorrows with any neighbours or friend for a mere mental relaxation. The river bed is the symbol and witness of their day long arduous work; further when they returned to their huts, its poor infrastructure symbolized their lack of common minimum livelihood resource, acute scarcity and poverty all along. It could easily represent the harsh reality that all of their day long effort turned into a vain and it created an acute mental stress and frustration for them. Their livelihood condition had snatched the rejoice and smile from their faces. Always they were leading their livelihood along with the stress and social insecurity to a great extent.

Livelihood condition, household infrastructure and its impact on health

It has been already revealed that the economic condition of the studied people was quite poor in condition. Poverty emerged as a major obstacle for them to accumulate their common minimum livelihood requisites in proportionate to their requirements. Thus, it might also have a major impact on their livelihood condition, food and overall health aspects. These are analyzed in detail. Among the studied families all the huts were made up of soil corrugated tin and bamboo. Their roofs were thatched either with straw or with tin. The following table can

reveal their feature of dwelling room and the number of family members dwelling in the rooms.

Table 6.5: Distribution of families according to number of rooms and dwelling members

Number of rooms			Total family
One	Two	More than two	
297 91.38	21 6.46	7 2.15	325 100.00
Number of family members	Number of dwelling rooms		
	One	Two	More than two
1-4	136 41.85	18 5.54	-
5-8	161 49.54	3 0.9	-
9 and above	-	-	7 2.15

Source: Field Study

Their socio-economic condition had hardly provided them to live in a convenient manner. Nearly all of the total studied families (91.38 percent) dwelt their livelihood within a sole room (Table 6.5). Even within a single room upto eight family members dwelt together. Their economic scarcity might be a major hindrance to provide their family members a sufficient space of habitation. Again, it may be noted that such congested dwelling could hardly provide a favourable environment to a child related to his proper socialization, psychological development and personality formation.

Most of the families had at least 5 members, thus all of them were forced to live within a single room in most of the cases. Regarding the proper mental and psychological growth of the children and adolescence, they need their own privacy and adequate space for development. However in case of the studied people such opportunities were completely absent. It was reported that in such cases often the married couple faced utter difficulties to maintain their private sharing. Being co-habited with the parents in a single room often the children become familiar with the course of personal discussions of their parents and it generated an adverse impact on their personality formation and proper psychological developments. Again as the children were gradually grown up and became bound to co-habit with their parents, thus the married couple and the parents had to maintain their personal relation under numerous obligations. It might generate some sort of mental stress for them or emotional stress as well.

Further, in case of all the families the infrastructure of the houses was in a very poor condition. During the field Study it has been reported and was observed that irrespective of any climatic condition, their house hold infrastructure could hardly provide a scope of secured living for them. The multiple pores on the roof and wall allowed the shower to get penetrated which used to drench and damage their mere belongings like books, bed etc. The earthen floor and walls used to get swelled up and damaged due to absorption of moisture by the soil. In such situation often it used to become almost impossible for their dwelling. However their economic conditions were so poor and due to that neither they could repair their huts regularly, nor they had the capacity to purchase a plot of land to stay in outside of the colony. The concerned houses were too small and low in height. Thus particularly during the summer they become quite suffocating even for respiration when multiple members were present with in it. Thus inspite of several inconveniences they were compelled to adjust with the obstacles for survival. Further, the features of basic amenities related to their household can be represented through the following table (Table 6.6).

Table 6.6: Feature of basic household amenities

Drainage system		Total family
Present	Absent	325
18	307	100.00
5.54	94.46	
Position of kitchen		325
Within dwelling room	Outside of dwelling room	100.00
306	19	325
94.15	5.84	100.00
Toilet facility		
Present	Absent	325
28	297	100.00
8.62	91.38	
Electricity		325
Present	Absent	100.00
15	310	
4.62	95.38	

Source: Field Study

It can be noted that due to economic scarcity as well as lack of proper administrative support most of their huts were devoid of basic scientific amenities. Due to lack of drainage system the water utilized in multifarious regular livelihood discourse could hardly had the scope of proper evacuation. Thus the dirty water got logged in many places of the studied area. In this concern, often foul smell emerged out from them. It is to be mentioned here that

particularly during the monsoon, almost the entire Balasan colony became a pit bog, all sorts of polluted garbage were floated through the water.

Further, among the families who did not have the toilet, the concerned adult members generally select the river bed for the related purpose. However, their children utilized the household surroundings for such purpose and in most of the cases it remained unclean. Thus lack of proper sanitation, sewage and drainage could easily make the local environment much polluted. In the entire studied area foul smell and mud logged ways could be noticed quite frequently. Again most of the studied families (96.31 percent) were devoid of the utilization of electricity in course of their daily livelihood. Thus after the dark, they had to depend completely on kerosene lamp or candle. However, if they did not have the money to purchase them, then after sunset they had to spend their livelihood incomplete darkness in the hut. Meanwhile their economic condition forced all the members to depend on a single source of light. It has been reported by the colony health Sub Centre workers that within a congested hut, the emitted gas of kerosene were quite unhygienic, on the other hand as a mere source of light was shared by a number of person, thus it could generate an adverse impact on the eye sight as well. The feature of drinking water facility and their method of purification can be represented through the following table-

Table 6.7: Source of water for drinking and household purpose

Purpose	Source of Water					Total family
	River	Well	Tube well	Tap	PHE	
Drinking	6	277	22	16	4	325
	1.85	85.23	6.77	4.92	1.23	100.00
Household	127	169	23	6	-	325
	39.08	52.00	7.08	1.85		100.00
Purification of drinking water						Total family
Yes			No			325
39			286			100.00
12.00			88.00			
Methods of drinking water purification						Total family
By cloth			By boiling			
33			6			39
84.61			15.38			100.00

Source: Field Study

Among the total studied families, in most of the cases (85.23 percent) they consumed the drinking water from the well and in a very few case (1.23 percent) they utilized the purified drinking water of PHE. It is to be mentioned here that in

the studied area there was specific time of water supply on every day. However, during that time they remained totally engaged with their occupational pursuit. So they had hardly any scope to leave the work for a few hours and come back to their huts to collect the tap water. Thus for them the easily available sources of water was from the river and well remained as the only alternative for daily livelihood purpose. Further, regarding the household courses they were mostly depended on local wells and river water respectively (Table 6.7).

Again from the PHE they had to purchase water against a nominal monthly amount. However, in a disastrous economic condition, they were quite reluctant to obtain such provision and were completely depended on easily available natural water sources. In the studied area the tap water supply was present. However, for the studied people, during their busy schedule of work, could merely have the scope to fetch such water. In the studied area most of the wells were shared. As it was completely lacking from proper drainage, thus all sorts of water usage remained logged around the well and might become the key birth place of a number of germs and parasites which could generate fatal disease. It has been reported by the most of the family members (86.77 percent), that the open wells of the studied area were seldom purified or disinfected since a couple of years. Thus obviously they had to consume the unpurified and polluted drinking water. During the field Study it had been reported that most of the studied families used to consume the water without any sort of household purification. Even a very few families who used to purify the water, they used to do it merely by cloth (Table 6.7).

It was primarily because of the fact that they had to purchase the expensive fuel from the market. They used to utilize the expensive fuel only for the purpose of their cooking without anything else. It had forced them to consume the unpurified drinking water in most of the cases and it might generate the frequencies of many water borne diseases among them. In this context, their use of cooking fuel could be represented through the following table-

Table 6.8: Use of cooking fuel

Wood dust	Cow dung cake	Coal	Kerosene	Total family
237	67	17	4	325
72.92	20.62	5.23	1.23	100.00

Source: Field Study

It can be noted that the studied families were mostly depended on less costly fuel available within their locality. Even the female folk used to prepare the cow dung cake in the huts to meet up with their requirement of fuel. Again, most of the studied families were depended on wood dust as the prime source of fuel, while some were depended on cow dung cake (Table 6.8). Both of the fuel was to be purchased by them from the other local people or adjacent locality. However the other sources of fuel were beyond their purchasing capacity. It was observed that in the studied area within such congested huts if the smoke emitted fuel was utilized then it might generate some sort of respiratory problem for them. However the acute poverty of the studied people had prevented them to look after any sort of alternative and they had to compromise in every circumstance.

During the field Study, when the daily livelihood of the concerned people was closely observed, it was noticed that onwards from the dawn they had a mere scope to look after themselves. They woke up quite early in the morning. After making themselves refreshed very quickly, they used to start their work in the river bed as early as they could. They had a very little scope to look after their hygiene and proper cleanliness. They used to spend the entire day in the stone filed. Most of the time they used to take their bath in the dirty water of the river. It was often noticed that during the bath they used to wash their clothes only with the dirty river water. Meanwhile their economic condition had reduced the opportunity to purchase any marketized products for them to even properly wash their clothes. Again, the working atmosphere of the river bed was also very dirty and polluted one. The entire river bed was provided with sand, dust, mud and other foul smell. Along with that there was the continuous emission of smoke from the vehicles. During the summer the sand and stone of the river bed became tremendously hot. Again during the rainy season it was filled up with water. In such cases they used to do the work by getting completely drenched. As a result the moisten body gradually got dried up by itself. It was reported by the staffs of the colony health Sub Centre that such factors could generated a number of skin diseases for them. The general health awareness of the studied people can be represented through the following table-

Table 6.9: Distribution of the families on the basis of general health awareness

Scientific means of sanitation		Take food by washing Hands		Take lunch in dusty stone field		Participate in health camp		Follow advice of health staffs		Total
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	325
12	313	23	302	298	27	36	289	17	308	100.00
3.69	96.31	7.08	92.92	91.69	8.31	11.08	88.92	5.23	94.77	

Source: Field Study

In most of the families the concerned members used to take their lunch in the dusty and polluted stone field. They had a mere scope to come back at their huts for lunch, rather it would be an unnecessary wastage of time for them. In such cases they even did not washed their hands before consuming their food. Most of the families had not participated in any health awareness camp. They were unaware about the health related government policies and programmes through media or any other source as had been noticed in 91.08 percent cases. The concerned people were mostly devoid of general health awareness (Table 6.9). It might be due to the fact that their arduous working affiliation could hardly generate any leisure period for them to participate in any other affiliation rather than their work. Time was a crucial factor for them to consume a fold of rice. Thus they were quite reluctant to spend their valuable time in other affiliations irrespective of their works. Further most of the time they spend on the dusty and polluted river bed. In such a polluted environment they use to consume their food, they used to take their bath and even drank the river water. Thus the concerned people were very much exposed to an unhygienic working atmosphere and through food and water their might be an acute chance of contamination for them. Thus their working environment, livelihood condition, settlement pattern were not supportive enough to generate the feature of good physical health and proper mental as well as psychological development for them. Again, during the field Study it was observed that the studied people used to take their bath mostly in the river water. However, it was done in a quick succession and hardly they had the time to clean their body properly during the busy working involvement. Even in a number of cases they used to take the bath in the evening just before coming back to their home. Similarly they used to clean their children also within a very short period and even sometime they did not manage the time of their regular bathing. On the other hand economic scarcity reduced their opportunity to use bathing soap and allied antiseptics regularly. It was noticed that most of the families used

to refresh their mouth in the morning only with water. Again most of the studied people had only one set of dress and only a few of them had two sets of dresses. They could hardly clean their clothes because if they wash them then they would have nothing to wear further. In most of the cases during the bathing it used to get automatically rinsed and further dried up in their body. Economic scarcity had reduced their scope to purchase market based products for the regular cleanliness of their clothes. Thus their dresses were quite filthy and shabby in looking as well. In their daily life they neither had the scope for physical cleanliness nor they had the scope to clean their dresses properly. The colony was itself quite dusty due to the works related with stone, sand etc. Consequently their huts were also quite dusty and shabby in looking. In the studied area as most of the families were lacking from sanitary means, they used the household surroundings and the river bed as a suitable place for this purpose. Lack of proper drainage system often used to create acute water logging, foul smell around their huts and any sort of heavy shower generated the colony into a mud plunged settlement.

Figure 6.1: Source of drinking water in the studied area



Quality of daily food and nutrition

The right to food is fundamental human right. The right to food is to ensure that all people have the capacity to feed themselves in dignity. Hunger is defined by the Hunger Task Force (2003) as “ a condition, in which people lack the basic food intake to provide them with the energy and nutrients for fully productive

lives.” The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) has defined the absence of hunger as “access by all people at all times to enough nutritionally adequate and safe food for an active and healthy life (FAO,2000:1).” Hunger is most directly apparent in inadequate food intake and a poor diet and is directly related to malnutrition. Hunger is both a cause and an effect of poverty. It holds back economic growth and limits progress in reducing poverty. The United Nations Millennium Development goals have set their first goal to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger to halve between 1990 and 2015. Still hunger continues to be a global tragedy. About 870 million people are estimated to have been under nourished in terms of dietary energy supply in the period of 2010-2012. This figure represents 12.5 percent of the global population or one in eight people (FAO,2012:8).

An international comparison of India’s hunger indicators presents a dismal picture. As quoted in the Nutrition Report of 2009 of the National Family and Health Survey 3 (NFHS3), the average percentage of undernourished children under five years for 26 Sub-Saharan African countries was 25 percent, about half the Indian average of 46 percent. A third of India’s adult population has a Body Mass Index (BMI) of less than 18.5 (the number below which are declared malnourished). In 2005-06, more than half of women aged 15-49 years suffered from anemia (55.3 per cent).

India is the worst performer in terms of low birth weight and underweight among the SAARC (South Asian Association For Regional Co-operation) countries. Nearly half of India’s children under three are malnourished, a very high percentage (21.5 percent of babies in India are born with low birth weight, child malnutrition is higher in rural areas, the prevalence of anemia among adolescence girls is very high and anemia among children has increased over the years (India Human Development Report, 2011: 6-8, 120-123).

Meanwhile the feeding schedule and feeding category of the studied people can be represented through the following table-

Table 6.10: Feature of daily feeding schedule

Category	Yes	No	Total family
Break fast (6-7 am)	27 8.31	298 91.69	325 100.00
Lunch (3:30-4:00 pm)	325 100.00	-	
Tiffin (7:00 pm)	19 5.85	306 94.15	
Dinner (9:00 pm)	325 100.00	-	

Source: Field Study

Table 6.11: Types of food consumed

Category	Daily	Once in a week	Once in a month	Occasionally	Total family
Rice, pulse and vegetables	325 100.00	-	-	-	325 100.00
Egg, soyabean	-	187 57.54	129 39.69	9 2.77	
Fish, meat	-	56 17.23	247 76.00	22 6.77	
Fruit , milk	-	164.92	297 91.38	12 3.69	

Source: Field Study

During the field Study it has been observed that the quality and type of daily food and nutrition was quite simple among the stone crushing people. Before migration the concerned people accumulated their resources of food and nutrition from the locally available natural products. They were primarily agriculturist and the source of their prime staple food i.e. rice was generated by themselves only. On the other hand, through domestication of animals, poultry birds and local water bodies they could easily avail the animal proteins like milk, egg and fish. Further their homestead land was quite bigger and they had the ample scope of kitchen gardening which could generate the source of daily consumable vegetables for them. Ultimately before migration, although they were not economically rich but they had the scope to accumulate their food from their own surrounding natural resource which could sustain their livelihood to a great extent. However the entire scenario was rapidly altered after their migration. Due to it they lost their traditional agricultural occupation and it completely reduced their scope to generate the prime staple food by themselves. Along with that due to lack of agricultural land, they had

no more scope to cultivate pulses and other vegetables. Again due to such scarcity, the source of animal fodder and grazing land also became reduced. Ultimately it had seized their scope of domestication of animals, poultry birds as well as accessibilities of animal protein within the courtyard. Further, after their resettlement the huts were established on a very limited territory. On the other hand the land surface contained stone and sand but not the soil. Thus it had seized every scope to cultivate the kitchen garden and simultaneously it eliminated their opportunity to generate the supplementary food products. In the studied area local streams and channels were completely absent. On the other hand the Balasan river was also not provided with fishes and other consumable water bodies. In such circumstances they had a least number of opportunity to consume the fishes or other water bodies as a source of their food. From the above all circumstances, it can be easily revealed that in the studied area the concerned people had a very little scope to accumulate a fold of rice with the help of natural products. They had to steam their vessel by accumulating the market based food products. In most of the cases, they had an average five membered family and obviously the demand of prime livelihood requisite i.e. food was quite extreme among them. However, the acute economic scarcity was a major hindrance for them to purchase the expensive market based food products. In such cases the demand of the food and the accumulated amount was quite misappropriate to each other. Among the studied people along with acute poverty, hunger had also become a part of daily livelihood. All the studied families could hardly manage a fold of rice twice in a day. On the other hand in a very few cases they could manage breakfast and tiffin as observed in merely 8.31 percent and 5.85 percent cases respectively (Table 6.10). It was noticed that they used to take their food after long gap of hours in between. They used to have their breakfast quite early in the morning and throughout the entire day they remained busy in the stone crushing work. The arduous working schedule had hardly left any leisure period for them to take lunch at a proper time. Thus for long duration they used to remain in an empty stomach and had to conduct their hard manual labour. Economic scarcity might have reduced the scope to have some tiffin in the evening for most of the families. It had been noticed that after lunch most of the families could avail dinner after 6 to 8 hours. Although the concerned people were busy with hard manual labour throughout their entire livelihood but they could hardly manage proportionate amount of food for their every family member.

Economic burden might be a major obstacle for them to consume animal protein often or to consume the food after specific period of time. All the studied families could hardly manage rice, pulse and little amount of vegetable curry everyday. While 76 percent families and 91.38 percent families could hardly consume fish or meat and even fruit or milk once in a month (Table 6.11).

Further, with that mere amount of food resource a number of family members had to redress their hunger. It was unable to meet up with the desired amount and most of the people had to strive with hunger. The female folk provided the larger share of food foremostly to the prime earning member of the families and next to their children. Ultimately, a very little amount was left for them to consume. It is quite significant to mention that according to Gopalan and Balasubramanian 2004, stated the Recommended Dietary Allowances for the Indians, and net energy Kcal/d were 3800 Kcal/d and 2925 Kcal/d for heavy working men and women respectively. Further to accumulate such energy they had specified the required amount of protein, fat, calcium, vitamin and amino acids. However, the concerned sources of food were quite expensive. Due to economic constraint it was rather impossible for the studied people to consume them regularly and if not once in a week. Although they were engaged in a very arduous manual labour but they had a very little opportunity to accumulate the required level of energy through food as per requirement. According to the Doctors of Matigara PHC and North Bengal Medical College it might have some other impact on their physical health condition.

However during the field Study it was reported that acute poverty had reduced the scope for them to purchase the expensive market based food products. On the other hand the locally available food resources were also scarce for them. Further, the doctors of the Primary health centre and Medical college reported that the hard manual labour related with the stone crushing work should be supplemented with proper nutritive food. However, if it is lacking then it might tell upon their physical health and they might be vulnerable to a number of diseases and ill health condition. Collectively the entire scenario had provided very least opportunity for the studied people to obtain adequate amount of food that might be proportionate to their heavy work load. The studied people conducted such a hard manual labour without proper food and nutrition. It might had reduced their resistance of the body to a great extent and frequently they became vulnerable to a number of diseases. In this regard, the following case Study can elaborate the fact in more detail-

Case Study 1: Ashina Barman aged 60 years had a six member family in the Balasan Colony. They were entirely depended on the stone based work. He stated that before migration they had the daily consumption of food through the locally available agricultural produces. After migration and resettlement they had no more scope of such food resources. On the other hand poor income provided a mere opportunity for them to purchase the desired amount of food products from the market. In most of the days they remained hand to mouth in condition and hunger became a part of their daily life. Further, he stated that hungry stomach made them physically weak to conduct the heavy work. However, to earn a fold of rice irrespective of any physical weakness they had to conduct the work regularly. He expressed with grief sorrow that often his grandson demanded more food to his son or daughter in law. In most of the cases they became very angry and to suppress their incapability the child was violently beaten up by them.

Case Study 2: Prabhati Barman of 36 years, had a four members family in the studied area. She was living along with her three children. Her husband left them three years ago and then she was the only earner of the family. During the Study she got suffered with acute fever and dysentery, which made her physically very weak. Although, she used to go to the river bed for work, but her physical weakness hindered her to go for heavy work load. Meanwhile, it reduced her scope to earn more and with that mere earning she could hardly manage a fold of rice for the family members. Again, her children demanded continuously for getting more food from their mother but she had no scope to provide the same. Sometime she became so much angry with her inability and frustration that when her children demanded for food or anything else, she started to beat them violently. Further, she took some loan from the local grocer but she was unable to repay it till the date. Looking after the scarcity of food in home she went to the grocer to purchase some rice and pulses in loan. But the grocer readily refused her to give any more loan in cash or kind, until the previous one was repaid. She stated that mere income and acute price hike of consumable goods created all sorts of inconveniences related to their survival. She had to purchase all sorts of common minimum livelihood from the market but she had almost no money in her hand. Her livelihood along with the children was facing every sort of inconveniences.

However, in case of the other families also the situation is no more different. Poverty was a common factor for the every studied families. On the other hand their scope of purchase was also very limited. Thus to consume adequate amount of nutritive food was merely impossible for them and hunger, under nutrition had become a part of their daily life.

Again, most of the families used to send their children to the ICDS and the school to get the meal. It has been reported by the ICDS workers that the food provided through such schemes could become a supplementary source for them. During the field Study it was frequently noticed that the children brought some utensils to take the food to their household and the food was shared by a number of their family members. From the overall discussion it can be noted that along with the economic scarcity, food and nutrition had also become a very scarce object for them. The parents were unable to provide proper nourishment to their children, while they were also lacking the proper food in proportionate to their hard manual labour. Ever since their resettlement such a situation had started and it became a generation wise on going process.

Figure 6.2: Mother feeding a child on the river bed



Reproductive mother-child health issues

Although India has made an appreciable progress in improving the overall health status of its population but it is far from satisfaction. The pace of decline of infant

and child mortality on one hand and maternal mortality on the other hand has been quite low. The health problems of mothers and newborns arise as a result of synergistic effects of malnutrition, poverty, illiteracy, unhygienic living conditions, infections and unregulated fertility. At the same time, poor infrastructure and ineffective public health services is also responsible for low inadequate obstetric care. The national average of MMR is 254 per 100,000 live births (SRS-2004-06), which in itself is very high compared to the international scenario like Sweden (5), USA (24), Brazil (58) and even in neighbouring countries like Bangladesh (340), Pakistan (260), Sri Lanka (39) and Thailand (48). In 2012 the infant mortality rate was 44 in India and in West Bengal it was 32 (Annual Report 2012-13: i). The maternal mortality ratio of India was 212 in 2012 (Annual Report 2012-13: i).

Looking through the lens of hunger and poverty, there are seven major areas of discrimination against women in India. India has exceptionally high rates of child malnutrition, because tradition in India requires that women eat last and least throughout their lives, even when pregnant and lactating. Malnourished women give birth to malnourished children, perpetuating the cycle. Females receive less health care than males. Many women die in childbirth of easily prevented complications. Working conditions and environmental pollution further impairs women's health. Families are far less likely to educate girls than boys, and far more likely to pull them out of school, either to help out at home or from fear of violence. In studied area the issues related to the reproductive mother child health bears a special significance. Within the familial periphery poverty reduced their scope to accumulate a fold of rice. On the other hand due to several social circumstances the parents were desired to give the marriage of their girl children quite at an early age. As the women were associated with the reproduction, thus to attain such capability, it is an urgent need that they should have an adequate physical as well as mental maturity. Obviously poor nutritional background as well as early age of marriage might generate a number of hindrances to their reproductive mother child health aspects. It was an obvious factor that during pregnancy period the reproductive women must be provided with adequate food and nutrition. It can be represented through the following table-

Table 6.12: Feature of food and nutrition before and after child birth

Category	Frequency of food consumption		Total ever become mother
	Daily	Once in a week	
Rice, pulse and vegetables	382 100.00	-	382 100.00
Egg, soyabean	3 0.79	379 99.21	
Fish, meat	-	382 100.00	
Fruit, milk	-	382 100.00	

Source: Field Study

However all the ever became mother of the studied area were completely depended on mere rice, pulse and vegetables, while they could hardly manage to provide them animal protein, fruit and milk once in a week. The acute economic scarcity had reduced the scope of the concerned families to provide proper nutritious diet to them. (Table 6.12). Even after the child birth the situation remained the same if not worsen. Out of the total ever became mother, all of them had the scope to consume rice, pulse and vegetables for them. Again once in a week they could consume animal protein, fruit or milk (Table 6.12).

The concerned families were quite well aware that the pregnant women were required a special care and proper nutritious diet. But their poor level of income could merely provide any opportunity for them to avail it. Meanwhile it can be noted that the reproductive mother child health aspects are being facilitated by the Government of India through Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). The functional situation of ICDS in the Blasan colony can be represented through the following table-

Table 6.13: Food and medical facility from ICDS during pregnancy

Provision of food and nutrition			Provision of medical facility		
Yes	No	Total ever become mother	Yes	No	Total ever become mother
56 14.66	326 85.34	382 100.00	30 7.85	352 92.15	382 100.00

Source: Field Study

It can be noted that only 14.66 percent pregnant women were provided with proper food and nutrition through the ICDS, while only 7.85 percent were provided with adequate medical facility during their pregnancy period (Table 6.13). From the field Study it has been found that huge sections of population were not properly aware

about the facilities of ICDS provided to the reproductive mother. The ICDS staff reported that the centre was facing acute shortage of working staff and it became difficult for them to provide regular facilities to every one. Further, according to them in a densely populated area like Balasan colony only one ICDS could hardly meet up with the requirement of the people. It has been reported that the ICDS of the Balasan colony were not meet up with adequate infrastructure or supply of medical kit to provide the desired facilities to the reproductive mothers and the concerned working staff had no adequate knowledge about medical courses and vaccinations of women. It has been reported to their higher authority but no action was taken further. Thus immunization drop out of the expecting mothers could be frequently noticed. Among the studied families the feature of medical care of the pregnant women can be represented through the following table-

Table 6.14: Type of medical care before or after pregnancy

Category	During pregnancy	After pregnancy
No check up	293 76.70	346 90.58
Western medical	45 11.78	-
Quack	14 3.66	6 1.57
Traditional healer	30 7.85	30 7.85
Total	382 (100.00)	382 (100.00)

Source: Field Study

Among the concerned families the females who became ever mother, most of them (76.70 percent) had not gone through any sort of medical check up before their pregnancy. Further, among them only 11.78 percent had gone through western medical check up during their pregnancy. Again in some cases they went through the check up from local quacks or traditional healers. Further after the child birth most of the females (90.58 percent) had shown their reluctance for any sort of check up while only a few proffered to consult with quacks, traditional healers or they followed indigenous methods. Significantly after the child birth they did not prefer any sort of consultancy with the western medical practitioners (Table 6.14).

It was primarily because of the facts that during the period of child birth a woman had to keep herself abstain from the stone based work for a certain period of time.

Such lack of involvement obviously reduced their monthly income quite a lot. Thus it was a prime requisite for the family that the concerned women folk should resume to their work very soon to support their familial income level. In that circumstance, if they spent most of their post pregnancy period behind the medical check up then it might increase their familial economic burden into manifold. Thus after the pregnancy period they hardly prefer any sort of medical check up. Even if it was done, it was solely within the locality and without much economic burden. In case of the studied families, the frequent medical check up primarily needed two basic things, first the involvement of time and secondly the purchase of prescribed medicine. For the poverty stricken stone crushing people, hardly any moment is left for them to go for frequent medical check up from their busy working schedule. Again they could not afford to purchase costly medicine from the market. Therefore they were less interested for any such check up; however if they thought about it, then they would rather prefer the local quacks or traditional medicine man who were easily available within the locality as well as provided the medicines against nominal amount. In this context their place of liberation and aspects of midwifery practices can be represented through the following table-

Table 6.15: Feature of liberation place and role of mid wives

Liberation Place			Cared by		Total ever become mother
In home	In P.H.C. and Medical College	Home, PHC	Midwife	Health staff	
348	29	5	353	29	382
91.10	7.59	1.31	92.41	7.59	100.00

Source: Field Study

In the studied area, institutional delivery was a very rare practice. Primarily the households were preferred as the place of liberation. It was mainly because of the fact that it could save both their time and money. Otherwise to attend regularly at the nearest PHC of Matigara would ultimately create a lot o undesired economic expenditure for them. On the other hand during the said period of liberation, the wives were unable to attend in their works. Moreover, if the husbands also waste their valuable time of work in other ways, then the economic scarcity of the concerned families would be much aggravated in condition. Thus they used to prefer the household practices of liberation. It is to be mentioned here that such cases were mostly taken care of by the locally available midwives. Generally they

did not demand any money but some gifts were offered to them from the concerned families. However, they hardly maintain any sort of western hygienic method or application of any western antiseptic method.

According to the report of the staffs of colony Health Sub Centre, health awareness related to the reproductive mother child health aspects were very less among them. From the field Study it was observed that among the studied people the cultural tradition was to select the household as a place of liberation in the presence of midwives. They did not change their usual clothes, nor washes their hands, nor boiled the string of the bamboo strip nor even washed them with plain hot water; in fact no hygienic liberation measures were taken by them. Further a number of food taboos and prohibitions were imposed upon them. During the field Study it has been reported that a few newly became mothers requested their husbands and in laws for institutional delivery, but it was not given adequate importance as they were not desired for unwanted economic burden and wastage of time.

The feature of pre delivery immunization status of the reproductive mothers can be represented through the following table-

Table 6.16: Immunization status of ever became mother

Immunization Status		Total ever became mother
Immunization dropped	No dose taken	
25 6.54	357 93.46	382 100.00

Source: Field Study

Among the studied people it was significantly noticed that none of the ever became mother had completed their entire course of pre child birth immunization. Even a few of them had taken only one dosage and further it was dropped (Table 6.16). During the Study the concerned mothers reported that for immunization they had to wait upto the arrival of the medical staffs at the health sub centre. However, they used to come according to their official working schedule. In the mean time almost half of their working day used to be over and for the remaining period they could hardly do a productive or purposive work. In many cases it was reported that the elderly females had a strong faith that the western medicine and the immunization often told upon the proper development of the womb and they forced their reproductive mothers not to opt any sort of such treatment. It was significantly

noticed that none of them was found who had completed the entire course of immunization.

During the field Study it was also reported by the mothers that after the immunization often fever comes and it made them physically weak. However, in such an ill health condition, it could be difficult for them to work regularly. Thus it was better to avoid the immunization for the sake of earning. Most of the females in the studied area had more than one children. They had given the child birth in the consecutive years without maintaining adequate birth interval. In most of the cases the male folk imposed their desire of more children, while the females were quite reluctant for it. It might be due to the fact that more working hand could definitely enhance their better scope of familial earning to some extent In such cases the males suppressed the sexual and reproductive rights of the females to a grater extent.

Another major issue that was related with the reproductive mothers of the studied area was their regular working involvement during the pregnancy period. Although, during such period the rest was advisable, but it was not in the fate of the stone crushing women. The following table can represent the fact in more detail-

Table 6.17: Working schedule of the women during their pregnancy period

Working hours			Total ever become mother
1-4	5-8	More than 8 hr.	
42	287	53	382
10.10	75.13	13.87	100.00

Source: Field Study

It is to be mentioned here that among the studied people during the pregnancy period it was a taboo for the concerned women to cross any river or to take bath in river. She was restricted to sit on for long duration and to roam outside the house after the dusk. Further, she must avoid to go to any river bank where dead bodies were used to get cremated otherwise their pregnancy might met up with different complications generated by different evil supernatural agencies. She must not take bath in the river water and her womb certainly must not get submerged under water. Earlier they strictly maintained such pregnancy related cultural taboo. However after their involvement in the stone based occupation such taboos were no more obeyed by them. The studied women folk for the sake of earning even during their

pregnancy period regularly used to collect the raw materials from the river and they used to cross it if required. During the work mostly they took the bath in the river water because they hardly had any time to come back to their hut. It can be noted that adjacent to the river bed the crematory place of the dead bodies were located and after the cremation the charred debris were either put in the river water directly or they remained scattered on the river bed. For the sake of earning an expected mother could hardly abide by their cultural taboo and went to the river bed; where she had to get in contact with the river water and other malevolent supernatural agencies. To conduct the stone based work she had to sit for prolonged period. Throughout the entire day she had to work and she could hardly return home before the dusk. Further, it can be noted that a pregnant woman was strictly restricted to take any food beneath the open sky as it might get affected with evil wind. However, the studied women had to do it regularly because they hardly had any time to come back to their hut for food by wasting valuable period. Economic scarcity had forced the pregnant women to work under nay circumstances. During such work and for the sake of common minimum livelihood requirements she became compelled to ignore the strict pregnancy related taboos according to their cultural belief and practices. They agreed that it was a very difficult task to remain engaged with heavy work load during this period. However, the hunger of their children and scarcity of livelihood requisites had forced them to forget about their labour pain or other physical obstacle during the work. The following case studies would elaborate the fact in more detail-

Case Study 1: Madhabi Barman aged 17 years was a dweller of the studied area. During the present Study Madhabi gave birth to her first child. She was living along with her husband in the studied area. They collectively earned the common minimum livelihood for their families. At that time she was in the 6th month stage of pregnancy and complete rest was advised for her. However, she stated that after the child birth more economic expenditure was required for them. Thus if she took rest then ultimately it would reduce their familial income. Regularly she used to go to the river bed for the stone crushing work or she used to do it in the house. She stated that fatigue ness quickly comes to her during the work and often she felt tremendous pain. If it occurred then she used to take rest for a little while and again started the work. Poverty was a major obstacle for them to accumulate proper

nutritious diet or medical check up during pregnancy. She was advised for immunization by the local health workers and accordingly she had taken a few. However, the busy working schedule and continuous thought about the uncertain future kept the other things away from her life. She expressed her sorrow and anxiety related to the upbringing of their children in such a bizarre economic feature.

Case Study 2: Minu Barman aged 20 years was pregnant for the first time during the Study. She was associated with the stone crushing work along with her husband. With the mere earning they could hardly manage their common minimum livelihood. When she became pregnant, she was taken to the colony health sub centre to know about the particulars required to be obeyed during such period. The health staffs advised her to take adequate rest and properly nutritious food. Further, she was advised to take regular immunization as per the prescribed schedule. During the Study, she stated that for the sake of survival it was merely impossible for her to go for complete bed rest without working. Thus she went to the river bed regularly for work. Further, with the poor level of income it was merely impossible for them to manage nutritious diet during the pregnancy period. Often she felt acute weakness and did her work under utter hardship. Meanwhile due to busy working schedule she used to forget about to take the immunization according to the prescribed schedule.

Case Study 3: Sulata Barman of 27 years had 3 children. During the Study her son Probhat passed away at the age of 5 years in a road accident. Both Sulata and her husband Probhat went to the river bed regularly for work. Their children used to go to school. Afterwards when they came back, either they went to the river bed to join their parents in work or used to play in the colony with other children. Due to busy working schedule their parents could hardly pay any proper attention to them. It is to be mentioned here that in the Balasan colony, frequently heavy vehicles entered to load up the stones. They used to pass through the narrow lanes of the colony to go to the river bed. One day when Probhat was playing in the colony with his other friends, he suddenly ran away on the mid of the street. From the opposite side a truck was coming at a high speed. Unfortunately Probhat felt in front of it and soon was lumped into the pool of blood. He died on spot and gave no chance to his parents to do any mere treatment for him.

Case Study 4: Jonaki Barman aged 21 years had one child during the Study. She had another child named as Mala before 6 months, but she passed away at the age of 4 years. Actually her baby was suffering from high fever and diarrhoea since a week. She took her to the local quack for the treatment. He gave him saline and medicine but her condition gradually became worsen. She was advised by the health staffs of the colony health sub centre to readily admit her in the North Bengal Medical College. Unfortunately, from there her parents were advised to purchase a lot of injections and medicines from the outside stalls. At that time she had almost no money in her hand. Her husband tried to collect some money from others by taking loan but all his efforts became fruitless. Although she was admitted to the Medical College for two days, but due to lack of required medicine her condition gradually became grim and she passed away. During the Study Jonaki stated with sorrow that Mala passed away only due to their acute economic scarcity as well as lack of proper care from the health staffs of the Medical College.

Case Study 5: Sujata Barman of 23 years had two children during the present Study. Again she became pregnant but unfortunately it was unable to meet up with the success. For the sake of livelihood even at the 6th month stage of pregnancy, she was supposed to conduct the work regularly. During the present Study, one day she was engaged with the loading up of stones to the vehicles. Might be due to arduous work in an empty stomach or fatigue ness, suddenly everything became blurred in front of her eye. She met up with head nausea and felt down from basement of the truck to the ground, which had nearly 5 feet of height. She readily became senseless and lots of blood stated to get discharged from her lower abdominal region. Readily she was taken to the Matigara Primary Health Centre. There the doctors declared that the baby within the womb was dead and her life was also in danger. She was further referred to the Medical College on an emergency basis. There she was admitted for one week and her life was saved anyhow. However, doctors advised her husband Bijoy that for the safety of her health it was advisable if she does not conceive any child more.

Case Study 6: During the period of Study Minoti Barman aged 29 years had a seven member family. She had three daughter children and her four children were dead. She stated that her husband and in laws was very much desired for the boy and thus they repeatedly forced her to conceive. According to her reproduction

generated a lot of physical stress to her body to earn a fold of rice she had to work regularly in the river bed. On the other hand she could not get proper food and nourishment. As a result her second child by birth become very feeble and died at the age of one year. Further she had committed the fact that due to lack of proper care her fifth children passed away at the age of three years. She went to the work by keeping the baby to the grandparent. Soon she was informed that the baby was behaving abnormally. She readily took the baby to medical college with the help of neighbours but on the way the baby expired. Further the doctor had reported that the cause of death was due to consumption of some poisonous rubbish. Her another child died at the age of 4 years due to diarrhoea. They had started the treatment through the local quacks but gradually the condition become deteriorated and the baby passed away.

However these were not a few isolated incidences, rather a common tale of almost every stone crushing household. In the studied families both the males and females were the production units and collectively through their earning somehow the familial needs were maintained. So, if during pregnancy the female folk used to keep themselves away form the work, then it would jeopardize their entire economic feature. It was reported that they did the work either on the river bed or in their households. In such a physical condition often they started to feel fatigue. Under such circumstances they took rest for a little while and regenerated to the work. It can be stated that the hand to mouth in condition had absolutely affected the reproductive rights of the female folk to give the birth of their children in a proper way.

Another crucial issue that was observed in the studied area was the factor of child mortality. It can be represented through the following table-

Table 6.18: Incidences of fetal loss and child mortality

Mothers who had fetal loss and child mortality		Total ever became mother
216 56.54		382 100.00
Both fetal loss and child mortality	Only child mortality	Mothers who had fetal loss and child mortality
19 8.80	197 91.20	216 100.00
Number of child mortality for a mother		Mothers who had fetal loss and child mortality

1 child	2 children		3 children	4 children	216	
46	126		32	12	100.00	
21.30	58.33		14.82	5.56		
Age of the children at the period of death					Total cases of child mortality	
Below 1 year	1-2 year		2-3 year	3-4 year	4-5 year	442
256	136		8	26	16	100.00
57.92	30.77		1.81	5.88	3.62	
Cause of child mortality as stated by the mothers						Mothers who had fetal loss and child mortality
Heavy work load during pregnancy		Lack of proper food and health care facility			Lack of proper care to the child	
19		120			77	216
8.80		55.56			35.65	100.00

Source: Field Study

In the studied area the cases of child mortality and fetal loss was highly prevalent. Among the total ever became mother quite a larger section had lost their child before or after their birth or even both. Further, most of them had lost more than one child and even some of them had lost four children. During the Study from the studied families total 1557 cases of child birth, 442 cases of child mortality and 19 cases of fetal loss has been recorded, ever since the formation of Balasan colony. Thus in the studied area there were total 461 cases of child mortality and fetal loss which was about 30 per cent out of total pregnancy cases even since the initiation of the studied settlement. Out of total cases of child mortality infant mortality was mostly noticed and in around 89 per cent cases children were died before completion of their 2 years of age (Table 6.18).

During the Study it was reported that there were multifarious factors behind such high rates of child mortality and fetal loss. To earn a fold of rice even during the period of pregnancy the concerned women were regularly engaged with hard manual labour. The concered doctors of Matigara PHC stated that during the pregnancy period arduous physical labour might have a detrimental effect on pregnancy and it might cause fetal loss. Further most of the concerned women stated that during their pregnancy as well as before and after child birth they hardly had any provision to consume nutritive diet due to their poverty. They stated that the baby in the womb could get their nutrition through the mothers only. Thus if mothers remained malnourished then the child would be malnourished as well. Consequently they would have lesser immunity. Ever since their birth they were very weak with lesser body weight and would be vulnerable to a number of diseases and ill health condition which often became fatal to their survival. Further, it has

been reported that after the birth of a child his proper development needs adequate care, protection and emotional security from their mothers. However, poverty had forced the mothers to gave their first preference to work by leaving their babies from the lap. Otherwise their children had to die in hunger. In most of the cases the new born babies were kept under the care of their elder brothers and sisters. Often it became difficult for them and they became vulnerable to a number of diseases. Again in some cases they used to pick up some poisonous rubbish that became fatal to them. Meanwhile, when a child started to walk then they often used to get outside of their huts if not properly monitored. It can be noted that in the Balasan colony heavy vehicles used to move frequently related to the work. Unfortunately a few child remained unnoticed and came in front of the vehicles which became fatal. On every such incidence their parents were engaged in the work and they remained unattained for long. Meanwhile within the Balasan colony the health sub centre had a very minimum infrastructure. It could not provide them any scope of treatment to their children if they were seriously ill. On the other hand, the nearest Primary health centre and the medical college would require both the transportation cost and the engagement throughout the entire day without their occupational involvement. On the other hand they hardly had the purchasing capacity of medicine from outside market. In that circumstance they could prefer the treatment of their children within their locality and through different traditional method. In many cases they remained unsuccessful or partially successful and even some cases became fatal.

On the other hand, ultimately the children who remained survived their status of immunization can be represented through the following table-

Table 6.19: Immunization status of the children

Immunization status		Total children
All doses taken	Immunization dropped	
77	676	753
10.23	89.77	100.00

Source: Field Study (Included 0-15 years age group)

Table 6.20: Cause of immunization drop out

Immunization status		Total children
Advice of others	Busy in work	
79	597	676
11.69	88.31	100.00

Source: Field Study (Included 0-15 years age group)

It can be noted that out of the total children a very little section had completed all the doses and a few were continuing their doses during the Study. However, a very large section of them (around 90 per cent) had discontinued their immunization (Table 6.19). The following case studies could focus some major insights on it-

Case Study 1: Ratna Barman aged 20 years had a one year old boy. She gave the birth at Matigara PHC due to certain complications. After the delivery the doctors and the health staffs of the PHC advised her to regularly immunize the child through the colony health sub centre. She communicated with the health staffs of the sub centre and they gave them an immunization card. She was briefly told by them about the immunization schedule and their functions. Unfortunately she was unable to understand it properly. At the initial stages she took the child regularly for immunization but after some doses the gap of duration increased. In the mean time she became more affiliated with the work and completely forgot the immunization period. After a few month she went there with the baby and was told by the health staffs about their inability to give the immunization of already passed period. Thus due to her working affiliation the immunization of the children became irregular and it was dropped. During the Study it was recorded through the card that within one year her baby's immunization was dropped for three incidences. On being asked about such irregularities she stated that in their poverty stricken family busy working schedule and hunger hardly provided any scope for other livelihood aspects.

Case Study 2: Abha Barman aged 25 years had one son named as Biltu of 3 years and one daughter named as Sandhya of 2 years. They had a joint family since last 15 years. She gave birth of her both children in the hut under the care of mid wife and aged female members of the family. During her pregnancy she could not taken any vaccine in both the cases. But latter on she came to know about the importance of child immunization and took her son for the same. He was given an injection along with the immunization card. However after a few hours the boy started to suffer from high fever. Abha's mother in law asked about the matter and Abha told her the fact in detail. She became very angry and scolded Abha for ignoring her opinion. She categorically stated that these artificially prepared medicines were always detrimental for the children. Henceforth they should not be given any such

immunization. Abha somehow managed for their pulse polio oral vaccines but afterwards she never took them to the health sub centre for any more immunization. From the concerned families it was reported that the parents had their prime thought related to their earning and work. They could hardly remember the exact time schedule of the immunization of their children. However, when it came to their remembrance they took their children to the colony health sub centre. However, the health staffs advised the parents to immunize their children as per the schedule of next dosage, instead of providing any back dated course. Again, in certain cases particularly the grand parents and elderly neighbours influenced the newly became mothers that immunization was an artificial medicine and it might create high fever and stomach upset to their children. In such circumstances it was believed that the children might get weakened or even they might die. Such fear had influenced the newly became mother to avoid the immunization of their children as well as to save them from undesired illness (Table 6.20). Meanwhile it can be noted that from the colony health sub centre or through any Governmental sources hardly any initiative had been taken to create proper awareness related to reproductive mother-child health immunization and their significance. Thus the concerned families never took the matter seriously and the rate of immunization drop out was very high and it was afraid that in near future those children might be vulnerable to a number of diseases. Even it was noticed in case of pulse polio. Meanwhile, if pulse polio was dropped then the health staffs used to roam throughout the locality to find out the dropped children. But their efforts went into vain because every time they had to see their absence in the huts.

Further the feature of family planning can be represented through the following table-

Table 6.21: Status of family planning

Idea about family planning		Total couple
No idea	Aware about family planning	
25 6.87	339 93.13	364 100.00
Status of acceptance		Total couple having the idea
Not accepted	Accepted western methods	
313 92.33	26 8.07	339 100.00

Source: Field Study

It can be noted that most of the families had the idea of family planning and its importance from different sources. However a few of them had accepted it. It might be due to the fact that for their occupation and little bit more earning they needed more number of working hands including the children. Thus if family planning was accepted then it would obviously decrease their number of children as well as working hand. Certainly it was not their desire. For their economic security as well as survival they found it better to avoid family planning method and to keep a frequent availability of their working hands. However if sometime unwanted pregnancy came then they used to go for abortion.

Disease and treatment of the stone crushers

In India communicable diseases, maternal, perinatal and nutritional disorders constitute 38 percent of deaths. Non communicable diseases account for 42 percent of all deaths. Injuries and ill defined causes constitute 10 percent of deaths each. About one quarter of all deaths in the country is due to diarrhoeal diseases, respiratory infections, tuberculosis and malaria (Annual Report, 2011:21). Health problems and diseases are an inseparable part of every society and the stone crushers were not an exceptional for them. During the field Study it was noticed that all of the studied people were suffering from a certain ill health condition, occupational injuries and diseases.

The categories of their diseases, occupational injuries and health sufferings had been divided into two broad types viz. 1) Frequently occurring diseases (F.O.D.) and occupational injuries and 2) Long term diseases (L.T.D.) and occupational injuries. By frequently occurring diseases and occupational injuries, it was meant about those types which occurred often among the stone crushing people and temporarily get cured. On the other hand, by long term diseases and occupational injuries, it was meant by those diseases, with which the concerned people were continuously suffering for at least six months. Meanwhile, it is to be mentioned here that in the Balasan colony there were only one health sub centre. It had a very little infrastructure and it could hardly provide all the medicines required for the preliminary treatment. It had only one male and one female health assistant. It was lacking with any sort of child birth facility or admission of patient even in emergency. It had only one sweeper on contractual basis. Further the colony had

two quacks with their western medical stalls, one homeopath doctor, a traditional medicine man and a magico-religious healer within the locality. The stone crushing occupation, working atmosphere and livelihood condition might have a direct impact on their different types of diseases and occupational injuries. However, the studied people were primarily depended on the locally available traditional or western medical facility for their different types of diseases and occupational injuries. The following case studies will elaborate the facts in more detail. Meanwhile the sample of case studies were selected depending upon the types of diseases, health problems and occupational injuries, age of the patient or sufferer, duration of the ailment or suffering, economic condition of the concerned family and method of treatment.

Case Study 1: Biltu Barman a child of three years resided in the studied area along with his parents. Since last one month he was suffering from high fever. It continued for two to three days at a stretch and then he became normal. Again after two to three days the fever regenerated. When the fever occurred his parents noticed hysteria in the body along with abnormal eye sight and abnormal physical activities. His parents had no idea behind such happenings and they got frightened. However, one aged female of their neighbourhood advised Biltu's mother Malati, that he was affected by some evil wind. They readily took Biltu to the local magico-religious healer. He stated that some of their neighbour had influenced the evil wind to create ill health condition of Biltu. He advised to conduct a ritual with animal sacrifice. Further, he prescribed *Dzol pora*¹¹ for Biltu four times in a day. The concerned families organized the requisites to conduct the ritualistic performance by the healer. On the selected auspicious day, the performance was conducted by the healer. During the said period he advised some taboos related to the food. However, the entire expenditure was bestowed upon the shoulder of Biltu's father Madan and they had to pay Rs. 100/- to the magico-religious healer as an honorium. As his income was low so he lend money for the continuation of his sons treatment. However after such performance Biltu was recovered from his sufferings.

Case Study 2: Minoti Barman, aged four years lived with her parents and grandparents in the studied area. Since last one month she was suffering from high fever. It occurred in every week and continued for four to five days. During the

¹¹ Dzol pora: Sanctified water as provided by the traditional healer.

period of her suffering continuous saliva secretion was noticed from her mouth and her eye ball used to get fixed. Further, she talked less words and often started to cry. Her parents got frightened after looking the situations. Her grandparents predicted that Minoti was attacked by some evil spirit, and if necessary action was not taken then it might be even fatal for her. They took the child to the local magico-religious healer and begged for her life. The healer stated that some of their neighbour influenced the evil spirit to do their harm out of jealousy. He assured her recovery against some strict performances. He prescribed the root of one tree which was supposed to be tied up on her arm and that was to be collected by his father only. He had to collect it after midnight but before the dawn and no one was supposed to look him during the work. He collected it and came to the healer. He made it sanctified and tied it to her left hand with a red thread. Further, the healer selected one day to conduct a magico-religious performance. Minoti was laid down on a plantain leaf and the healer smeared her body with sanctified oil, vermilion, mustard and broom. After the performance Minoti was recovered. However, her parents offered the healer one kilogram of rice and one hen as honour.

Case Study 3: Dipen Barman was a four years old child and was suffering from acute dysentery including serious stomach ache. Along with that he started to vomit for five to six times in a day. His father Badal realized that it might be due to the effect of evil eye and so he was taken to the traditional healer. They had a very clear idea that such types of diseases should not be cured by any modern medical method. He was given one bottle of syrup to consume four times in a day at least for one month. Again, continuous check up was advised to her in every week. He was recovered after about one and half month. To conduct the entire treatment, the concerned family had to manage some minimum financial expenditure from their own means.

Case Study 4: Abha Barman of five years of age met up with a very critical ill health condition. Suddenly she became suffered with acute dysentery and vomiting. Her stool appeared green in colour and it took place 13 to 14 times in a day. After continuous suffering from two days her body met up with convulsion and allied symptoms of respiratory problems was also noticed. Her parents became sure that

she was affected by the evil spirit *Rakhos Masan*¹² and took her with complete psychological dependence to the traditional healer. He gave her syrup to consume three times regularly. Further, he tied up a root and leaves to her waist with a black thread. The healer prescribed a taboo on non vegetarian diet, moving outside the courtyard after dusk. Again, she was restricted to put his head to the west side while sleeping. The entire treatment continued for a fortnight and thereafter she was recovered.

Case Study 5: Indrajit Barman, a five year old boy often used to play with his friends when his parents were busy in the work. One day his parents noticed that his entire body showed the eruption of allergy. His body temperature gradually got increased and it became red in colour. Such portions also had a burning sensation and pain. His parents took him first to the colony health sub centre. But there was no required medicines and they referred the case either to the Matigara Primary Health Centre or to the North Bengal Medical College. However, due to economic constraint it became very difficult for the patient party and they consulted with the local traditional medicine man. He gave the parents of Indrajit a paste of herbs. He advised to smear it four times in a day and to be continued for ten days. Further, he restricted to consume hot foods, particularly garlic, meat and egg. Again, he gave a bowl of sanctified water. He was advised to take bath by mixing a little bit of that water continuously for seven days by adding a few basil leaves in it. His parents obeyed the particulars and he was recovered with a fortnight.

Case Study 6: Manjita Barman of four years attended a funeral right ceremony along with her grand parents. Onwards from that night she felt irritation on her body and from the very next morning her entire body was covered with allergy along with high temperature. Being frightened her parents took her to the local traditional healer and stated about the entire phenomenon. The concerned healer became sure that Manjita was attacked by some evil spirit or evil wind. He gave Manjita a sanctified locket to tie up on her waist with a black thread. Again, he gave a sanctified plant root which was supposed to be touched with the food or drink before she consume it. She was strictly advised not to cross the courtyard and to maintain the advised food taboo. Meanwhile she was advised not to wear any black

¹² Rakhos Masan: An evil spirit causing illness.

dress. Further, the healer gave her herbal paste to smear on the body for seven days. After observing the entire prescribed feature, Manjita got cured after ten days.

Case Study 7: Alorani Barman a 27 year old female was suffering from some sort of gynecological problems since last one month. She was not sure about the specific reason behind such problem. She was advised by her mother in law to consult with the traditional healer. She went to the magico-religious healer who stated that the evil effect of *Gaheli*¹³ was noticed on her and it might generate an early infertility to her. He gave her a pot of sanctified water to consume regularly and to perform certain rituals twice in her house with animal sacrifice. Again, she was advised with some food taboo and restrictions over normal livelihood discourse. However, after following and observing the entire particulars she was yet to get any recovery from her sufferings. Again she could not think about thorough modern medical treatment because she knew it was very expensive and it beyond their capability.

Case Study 8: As reported by his wife, Uttam Barman aged 37 years was suffering from high fever since last two months. During such high fever his body started shivering and he screamed out in fear. Even during night while sleeping, he tried to go out from the room and responded to some imaginary calls. His family members guessed that behavior resulted due to some effect of malevolent spirit or charming arrow. His wife Lata stated that Uttam was the prime earner of the family and he was very enthusiastic to work. Their adjacent neighbours were quite jealous related to his work and earning capability. Out of such jealous, some of the neighbour might have influenced the evil spirit or applied the charming arrow to do harm on his health. Their target was successful and the economic condition of the studied family became jeopardized. She took her husband to the magico-religious healer who confirmed the affect of a charming arrow on Uttam. He gave him a sanctified locket to be tied up on his right arm with a red thread. Further, he prescribed some herbal medicines and food taboo. After three days he performed some magico-religious performances by offering a pair of hen. On the other hand the economic expenditure behind such rituals was bestowed upon the shoulder of Uttam. In this poor economic situation it was very difficult for them to manage it. Again, they had a deep psychological faith upon the healer and the result of treatment was awaited.

¹³ Gaheli: An evil spirit who looks like a bird and creates major complications during pregnancy.

Case Study 9: Kumari Barman, aged 35 years was suffering from some gynecological problems since last two and half months. White exudation was the main problem of her disease along with some other particulars. She was not sure about the cause of her trouble but guessed about the effect of some evil factors. She had a deep psychological faith upon the traditional healer that only he can solve her problem. The traditional medicine man gave her an extract of plant roots. The said medicine was supposed to be taken twice in a day for a week. Further, she was given a pot of sanctified water and was advised to mix it during taking her bath for a week. She was advised with some food restrictions particularly the non vegetarian diet. After the treatment she met up with physical recovery. As a token of honour she gave a hen and some vegetables to the healer.

Case Study 10: As reported by his mother, ten year old boy Manab Barman was suffering from measles since three months. His entire body became covered with measles and he had high body temperature. His parents quickly recognized the case as a blessing of Goddess *Sitala*¹⁴. According to their faith only the traditional healer had the capability to cure him. The traditional medicine man conducted the sanctification every day with ritually purified water. Further, consumption of hot food, oil, onion, garlic and animal protein was strictly prohibited for him. He advised the family members to keep the household clean and everyday it should be fumigated with the holy smoke. Everyday in the evening a special offering was mandatory in the basil altar on the courtyard. By abiding such restrictions carefully, Manab got cured after a fortnight and Manab's father offered a honourium of Rs. 200/- to the traditional medicine man.

Case Study-11: Charan Barman aged 52 years was suffering from acute chest pain and physical injury since last three months. Particularly during night the problem became so acute that he could hardly take the breathing normally. Again, even in the day time during the stone crushing work, often he could not see properly and everything became blurred in vision. Sometime he felt some head nausea and often he felt down on the river bed. The other senior members opined their view that due to the long exposure to the river bed some evil wind might have created some disturbance in his body temperature and balance. He went to the traditional medicine man. He gave him a medicine and organized magico- religious

¹⁴ Sitala: Hindu Goddess causing the diseases like measles, pox.

performance. Along with other objects a goat was also offered for sacrifice to conduct such activity. Further, he gave the patient a sanctified locket and advised him to keep it under the bed and it should not be misplaced. The economic expenditure associated with the rituals and allied activities was to be bore up by the patient and his family. However during the Study it has been reported that his suffering was yet to be recovered completely.

Case Study 12: Sarala Barman, aged 42 years was living in the studied area since last twenty years. Her primary occupation was related to the stone based work. One day when she was working suddenly her right eye got injured with a large piece of stone. Within a very short period it got swelled up with intolerable pain. She tried to wash the injured place with cold water and applied some indigenous method to redress the injury. She continued it for two days but all her efforts went into vain. Then she went to the local traditional medicine man. He gave her a medicine in the form of a paste prepared from the leaves of different herbal plants. She was advised to smear it over the injured places thrice in a day and to be continued for ten days. However, during the period of treatment she was restricted to go outside in the dust and to conduct work. On the other hand as she was refrained from work due to treatment, it created acute financial crisis for her family. Meanwhile to run the family, earlier she took a loan from the local *Sardar* and in the mean time he wanted the money to be refunded. In this circumstances, the burden of debt, scarcity of food and acute financial crisis provoked her to leave the rest and to rejoin the work. As a result her infection got contaminated with dust, sand etc and the injured place became more critical in condition. During the Study it was noticed that she had almost lost the vision of her right eye. Further, she stated that once she went to the Matigara Primary Health Centre and the case was referred to the North Bengal Medical College as it became very critical. She expressed her inability to bear such a huge amount of medical expenditure behind the treatment and it was quite obvious that gradually she would be blind on her right eye.

Case Study-13: Montu Barman aged 45 years was dwelling in the studied area with his family since last 15 years. His family was completely depended on the stone based work. One day when he was working suddenly the iron hammer slept out of his hand and it banged upon the fore finger of his left hand. It was so severe that the nail of the finger was completely removed and his finger was in the pool of blood.

His wife washed the finger with cold water and tied it up with a portion of cloth. He applied the extract of some locally available plants to heal the wound at the best of his knowledge. But within overnight his injured finger became swelled up with acute pain. Then he went to the local traditional medicine man. He prescribed the paste of herbs to be smeared on the wound twice regularly for seven days. However, during the said period he was advised not to go to the work because the sand and dust would make the injury more critical. He exclaimed with sorrow that if in his poverty stricken family the prime earning member became out of work, then all the other members would have to die in hunger. Within three days acute crisis of food emerged in his family and the hungry faces of the children provoked him to go for the work. His injury got contaminated with the dust, sand etc and it swelled up more. During the Study it was noticed that he was working by tying up a knot on the injured finger and by tolerating the severe pain out of it. Once he went to the Matigara primary health centre, but they referred it as a critical case to the Medical College. The concerned doctors of PHC was afraid that soon it might generate gangling and if not his injured finger was to be amputated to prevent any further critical contamination.

Case Study 14: Amia Barman, aged 39 years was living in the studied area since last twenty years. His primary occupation was related to the stone crushing work. One day when he was working suddenly his left eye got injured with a large piece of stone. Within a very short period it got swelled up with intolerable pain. He tried to wash the injured place with cold water and applied some indigenous method to redress the injury. He continued it for two days but all the efforts went into vain. Then he went to the local traditional medicine man. He gave a medicine in the form of a paste prepared from the leaves of different herbal plants. He was advised to smear it over the injured places thrice in a day and to be continued for ten days. However, during the period of treatment he was restricted to go outside in the dust and to conduct work. On the other hand, being the prime earner and as he was refrained from work due to treatment, it created acute financial crisis in his family. Meanwhile to run the family, earlier he took a loan from the local Sardar and in the mean time he wanted the money to be refunded. In this circumstance, the burden of debt, scarcity of food and acute financial crisis provoked him to leave the rest and to rejoin the work. As a result, the infection got contaminated with dust, sand etc

and the injured place became more critical in condition. During the Study it was noticed that he had almost lost the vision of his left eye. Further, she stated that once he went to the Matigara Primary Health Centre and the case was referred to the North Bengal Medical College as it became very critical. He expressed the inability to bear such a huge amount of medical expenditure behind the treatment and it was quite obvious that gradually he would be blind on his injured eye.

Case Study 15: Bhabesh Barman, aged seven years, used to play sometime with his friends after coming back from the school, in absence of his parents. His parents were busy in work and actually at that time no one was there to monitor him properly. During the Study one day he was bitten by a mad black dog on three different places. He became faint in fear. His parents rushed to the hut and sprinkled water to bring back his sense. Although, he woke up but he started to behave abnormally. From the evening his body temperature gradually arose and he shivered with fear frequently. His parents became very much frightened and on the very next morning took him to the local medicine man. He examined the symptoms and injuries of Bhabesh thoroughly and opined his view that the evil spirit got transformed into the feature of that black dog to do the harm. However, he assured the parents of Bhabesh that their son would get cured very soon. First, he took out the poison from his body with the help of a brass made vessel by touching it to the wounded place and then tied a sanctified locket on his neck with a red thread. He lied down Bhabesh on a plantain leaf. Further he took a pot of water and uttered some enchanting to it. Then he sprinkled the water throughout his entire body. He gave a paste of herbs to be smeared over the injured places four times regularly for three days. By observing such treatments Bhabesh became cured within a week.

Case Study 16: Jonaki Barman aged 10 years used to work regularly with her parents on the river bed. During the Study one day she went to the river to collect the stones. Suddenly she fell into the river water with a fearful screaming. She was taken out from the water by her parents and others. The people noticed that on her left leg there was the sign of snake bite and gradually her body was getting blue in colour. The injured place was strongly tied up with a piece of cloth and she was readily taken to the traditional medicine man. He observed the patient carefully and stated that it was the bite of a poisonous snake, which could be fatal if the extreme level of treatment was delayed. The healer readily started his method of treatment

and first laid her down on a plantain leaf. At first he smeared some black mustard around her body to prevent the interference of evil effects. Thereafter, he thrashed the body of Jonaki with the sacred broom and fumigated the holy smoke. Further, he took two conch shells and touched it with the injured place to suck the poison from the wound. Thereafter, he smeared a paste of herb on the injured place and over his forehead. The entire treatment took near about four hours and she gradually recovered. However for one month she was advised not to eat any meat, milk and banana. She was strictly restricted not to cut the hair upto one year.

Case Study 17: Biren Barman aged 37 years was primarily associated with the stone based work. He had a six member family in the studied area. During the Study it was reported that he was suffering from fever, cold and cough for a few month. However, he ignored the matter and was associated with the normal course of livelihood. Suddenly, he noticed that along with his cough blood emerged out and whenever he was coughing, he felt a sense of pain in the throat. He noticed such factors for a week but he kept it hushed up from the family members as they might get frightened. One day when he was eating suddenly he started to vomit and with it blood emerged out in a higher concentration. It was noticed by his wife and then he committed the entire truth. He was readily taken to the local traditional medicine man. After thorough examination, he stated that it was the effect of evil wind which penetrated into his body during his prolonged exposure to the river bed. The healer gave him a syrup to consume thrice in a day for a fortnight. Meanwhile a number of food taboos were imposed upon him and he was strictly prohibited to go to the river bed for working. Even he was advised not to go outside of the hut in the night, because he might get attacked again by the evil wind. It had completely reduced his scope to conduct the work regularly. Within a very short period the entire family met up with acute financial crisis and it provoked Biren to start the work again. He stated that during the work he felt physically very weak and his problem was continuing. Meanwhile one of his friend advised him that such symptoms were of tuberculosis and to get cured it required a long duration modern medical treatment with proper diet. He stated that prolonged affiliation behind the treatment would definitely reduce his scope of regular earning and it might generate more economic crisis for his entire family. He had left his survival upon the fate and destiny.

Case Study 18: Mahendra Barman aged 55 years was suffering from high fever cold and cough since three and half month. One day he noticed that blood was coming out with the cough and there was acute pain in his throat. He went to the local health sub centre and they collected his sputum. Further from the report he was confirmed by the health staffs that it was a case of tuberculosis. He started the Direct Observation Treatment (DOTs) from the sub centre. During the period of such treatment he was advised by the health staffs to take complete rest and nutritious animal protein was prescribed for his diet. However, he was the prime earner of the family and due to such critical disease the entire economic feature of the studied family was seriously affected. With this poor level of income, it became merely impossible for them to manage the costly animal protein for him. He was consuming the medicine regularly but it created acute physical weakness for him. During the period of Study, already he had completed one month course of medicine but remarkable recovery was yet to be noticed. The health staffs told him that near about six months would require for his complete recovery.

Case Study 19: Manju Barman of 31 years was suffering from high fever since last two months. She was so weak that even it was hard for her to walk properly. Along with high fever she was suffering from frequent vomiting. She went to the local quack for the treatment. He gave her three bottle of saline and medicines for a week. However, she was not recovered from the ailment and then she went to the local health sub centre. The health staffs gave her some medicines and advised her to communicate with them further for more medicines. However, she went there for three times for the medicines but all the time she was stated that the medicine was out of stock. Meanwhile her health suffering became more critical and ultimately from the sub centre she was referred to the Matigara PHC. There the doctors after clinical diagnosis advised her to get admitted for long duration treatment. Unfortunately her economic condition was quite inappropriate for such prolonged treatment. Ultimately during the Study, she dropped out her treatment and yet to get recovered.

Case Study 20: Bishnu Barman of four years was suffering from acute diarrhoea for more than a week. He became very weak and almost lied in bed completely. His parents took him to the local quacks and he prescribed a few bottle of saline along with a few medicines. However, he was not recovered properly and gradually the

condition became more critical. Then his mother took him to the local health sub centre. From there she was advised to readily admit Bishnu at the Matigara PHC. The doctors of the Primary Health Centre stated that it was a case of poisonous contamination. He was admitted there for three days and recovered completely. However, in those days, both of his parents could hardly do any work and ultimately it created a bizarre economic condition for them. Bishnu's father Jiten Barman stated that for a poverty stricken family like them, any case of disease or ill health condition was an additional economic burden which created a number of correlated inconveniences as well.

Case Study 21: Mahua Barman of four years used to stay alone in the house when her parents were busy in the work. One day suddenly her mother saw that she was picking up some rubbish from the ground and licking that. After three to four hours of the incidence, suddenly she started to vomit and discharged liquid stool. Overnight she discharged the stool for more than ten times with vomiting. Very next morning she was taken to the local quack and he immediately gave her an injection. Although she recovered a little bit but again from the evening the complications started. At that time both the colony health sub centre and out patient door of PHC was closed. Then they went to a private doctor who advised for immediate admission to hospital or nursing home. However, they had a mere scope to abide by his direction due to economic constraint. Next day she was taken to the medical college and she was admitted there for three days. However, they had to purchase most of the medicines from outside. To conduct her entire treatment more than Rs. 1,000/- was spent and her father managed the money by selling his wife's silver made ornaments during marriage.

Case Study 22: Promod Barman aged 35 years had a four member family in the studied area. His primary occupation was the stone based work and even sometime he did the work at night. He had absolutely no fixed schedule of lunch and dinner. In a number of days he used to take the lunch in the dusty and polluted stone field, as well as he could hardly maintain any hygienic concept. Even during the work if he felt thirst then he consumed the river water directly. During the Study he met up with acute dysentery and high fever. Within two days he became almost unable even to get down from the bed. His family got frightened and called the local quack. The quack readily gave him an injection but unfortunately his entire body

became swelled up. Then he was directly taken to the Matigara Primary Health Centre. The doctors stated that his condition was very grim as that injection had crossed the expiry date and became poisonous. Then he was admitted there for seven days and gradually recovered. However, during the said treatment, he had to purchase most of the medicines from the market. During the treatment, the valuable time was spent without the work and it severely told upon the income of the entire family. Again, the allied burden of medical expenditure made their economic condition feeble. Her wife took a loan of Rs. 1,500/- from the Sardar to complete his treatment. The entire treatment recovered him completely. Although, he came to the home after recovery but he was not happy because he got landed into the burden of debt.

Case Study-23: Manoj Barman aged seven years was associated with the stone based work along with his parents. During the Study he was suddenly suffering from high fever with acute ear pain. Gradually it became more severe and even he could not sleep overnight for the pain. Foremost his parents applied some indigenous method for a few days but it was hardly meet up with any fruitful recovery. Then his parents took him to the local quack. He gave him an ear drop with some medicine. Although it gave him a partial recovery, but again after a week it emerged severely. Thereafter, he was taken to the PHC where the doctors stated that his ear passage was blocked with the sand and dust particles, which created swelling of the ear and fever. His ears were washed for three times and he was given a new ear drop. For the entire treatment the total expenditure was Rs. 700/- . His father borrowed it from the local money lender and he was yet to repay it.

Case Study 24: Dulali Barman was a six year old girl. She was associated with the stone based work along with her parents. During the Study it was reported that she was suddenly suffering from high fever with acute ear pain. Gradually it became more severe and even she spent sleepless night for the pain. Her parents applied certain local knowledge to prevent the ailment for a few days but it was completely gone into vain. Then she was taken to the local quack. She was given an ear drop with some medicine. Although she got recovered to a certain extent but soon it got relapsed. Thereafter, she was taken to the PHC where the doctors stated that her ear passage was blocked with the sand and dust particles, which was the root cause of the problem. Her ears were washed for two times and she was given a new ear drop.

For the entire treatment the total expenditure was Rs. 500/- . Her father borrowed it from the Sardar and she was yet to repay it.

Case Study 25: Manju Barman aged 27 years, had a five member family in the studied area. Her primary occupation was the stone based work. She had absolutely no fixed schedule for lunch. In a number of days she used to take the lunch in the dusty and polluted stone field by hardly maintaining any hygienic concept. Even during the work if she quenched her thirst with the river water directly. During the Study she met up with acute dysentery and high fever. Within a couple of days she became almost unable even move. Her family got frightened and called the local quack. The quack readily gave her an injection but unfortunately it was unable to redress her ailment and her entire body became swelled up. Then she was directly taken to the Matigara Primary Health Centre. There the doctors stated that her condition was very grim as that injection was not at all related to her suffering. There she was admitted there for seven days and gradually recovered. However, during the said treatment, she had to purchase most of the medicines from the market. During the treatment, her valuable time was spent without any work and it severely told upon the familial earning. Again, the allied burden of medical expenditure made the condition feebler. Her husband took a loan of Rs. 1,500/- from the Sardar to complete her treatment. The entire treatment recovered her completely. Although, she came to the home after recovery but she was not happy because their shoulders were loaded with the burden of debt.

Case Study-26: Jyogeshwar Barman, aged 52 years was associated with the stone based work for more than 30 years. Six months ago, one day during the work suddenly a big stone chips bashed to his left eye. It was readily swelled up with a lot of blood secretion. He washed the eye with cold water and smeared the extract of some locally available plant. However he was not recovered at all and the pain was increasing to the intolerable level. He went to the quack for a quick recovery. He was given an eye drop and medicine for 10 days. However, irrespective of getting well his complications became more critical. Then he went to the local health sub centre and he was further advised to go to the medical college directly. After a thorough examination the concerned doctor stated that he had almost lost the vision due to severe injury and initial wrong treatment. For curing it either he should be admitted continuously for one month or he had to go for regular check up

for at least three months. Jyogeshwar had chosen the second option. However after a few initial check up, he realized that going to the Medical College periodically was a very hard task for him; because, it needed a whole day for the travel and check up, whereas he had no scope to work on that very day. Again, such travel was associated with additional expenditures. Ultimately, the entire treatment could result a more economic burden inspite of any fruitful recovery. Within one month he dropped out the treatment and during the Study he reported that he could not see anything with his left eye.

Case Study 27: Bipin Roy Barman of 42 years was primarily associated with the stone based work. He used to work regularly for more than 8 hours. He stated that lot of physical labour was needed to do this work and to conduct the same proper food was very essential. However, their poor level of income was a major hindrance to it. Again, to conduct the work, always he had to be present in the dusty and polluted working atmosphere. During the period of Study, for more than two months he was suffering from acute chest pain and respiratory problem. Earlier he ignored the matter by thinking that due to heavy lifting of stones some partial muscular pain might have occurred. However, day by day it started to get increased rapidly. He consulted with the local quacks and was advised for an X-ray. According to the X-ray report the quack gave him quite an expensive medicine. He managed very hardly to purchase it but still there was no sign of recovery. On the other hand his ailments were getting more complicated. Then he went to the PHC with the X ray report and earlier medicines. The doctors stated that his respiratory tracts and lungs became congested with the sand and dust particles as the X-ray report was reflecting. He was prescribed a nasal drop, some medicines and regular check up. However, behind the said treatment Bipin spent more than Rs. 500/- from his own. During the days of treatment his working involvement was severely hampered and if any more further check up was required then it would ultimately tell upon the valuable working hours and the scope of earning. He stated that time is a very crucial factor for the sake of his earning. He completed the prescribed course of medicine only. He was very reluctant to go for continuous medical check up. Ultimately his entire treatment procedure was partially completed and he was recovered to a certain extent.

Case Study 28: Bijon Barman aged 42 years had a six member family in the studied area and was associated with the stone based work primarily. According to him numerous diseases and occupational injuries was a commonly happening factor in this work. However his case was an unfortunate incidence of destiny. One day when he was loading the stones to the truck, suddenly his leg was slept from the sleeper. He fell down upon a boulder from near above 5 feet and his spinal cord, waist met up with tremendous injury. He was directly taken to the medical college, where it was referred as a case of spinal cord dislocation. He was needed an urgent operation but the financial expenditure became a major hindrance. There after by following a number of formalities and with the special recommendation of the local Panchayat, the operation was done in free of cost. However, he remained admitted there for more than one month and when released, he was advised to take a number of medicines. Meanwhile, a few of the medicines were not present in the medical college. It is to be mentioned here that at the time of discharge doctors advised him to keep abstain from any sort of hard manual labour work like stone crushing, stone loading etc in near future. During the Study he was completely a non earning member of the family. His wife Probha managed very hard to run the family and simultaneously she was looking after her ill husband.

Case Study 29: Basanti Barman of 41 years was primarily associated with the stone based work. She used to work regularly for more than 8 hours. She stated that to conduct such an arduous labour proper food was very essential. However, their poor level of income was a major hindrance to it. Again, to conduct the work, always she had to be present in the dusty and polluted working atmosphere. During the period of Study, for more than one and half month she was suffering from acute chest pain and asthmatic problem. Earlier she ignored the matter by thinking that it might be a partial muscular pain. However, day by day it started to get increased rapidly. She consulted with the local quacks and was advised for an X-ray. According to the X-ray report the quack gave her quite an expensive medicine. She managed very hardly to purchase it but still there was no sign of recovery. On the other hand her ailments were meeting up with more complications. Then she went to the PHC with the X ray report and earlier medicines. The doctors stated that her respiratory tracts and lungs became congested with the sand and dust particles as the X-ray report was reflecting. She was prescribed a nasal drop, some medicines

and regular check up. However, behind the said treatment Basanti already expended more than Rs. 600/- from her own. During the days of treatment her working involvement was severely hampered and if any more further check up was required then it would ultimately tell upon the valuable working hours and the scope of earning. She stated that in the context of survival, time was a very crucial factor for the sake of her earning. Thus she completed the prescribed course of medicine only. She was very reluctant to go for continuous medical check up. Ultimately her entire treatment procedure was partially completed and she was recovered to a certain extent.

Case Study 30: Bibhuti Barman aged 45 years had a six member family in the studied area. His primary occupation was stone crushing. According to him numerous diseases and occupational injuries was a commonly happening factor in this work. However his case was a very unfortunate incidence. One day he was traveling by the truck to unload the stone in a distant place. When the vehicle was moving through the slope of embankment, suddenly he fell down from the truck and rolled downward for more than seven feet. His right leg got broken into three pieces. He was directly taken to the medical college. But the financial expenditure emerged as a major hindrance for his treatment. Somehow it was managed and he remained admitted there for more than one month. Further he was advised to take a number of medicines. Meanwhile, certain medicines were not present in the medical college. It is to be mentioned here that at the time of discharge doctors had advised him to keep abstain from any sort of hard manual labour work like stone crushing, stone loading etc in near future. During the Study he was completely a non earning member of the family. His wife Atashi was somehow managing the familial purse, whereas she had to look after her ailing husband as well.

Case Study 31: Atul Barman of 75 years had a six member family in the Balasan colony. He came to the studied area during 1970's and since then was associated with the stone based work. He stated that a human being could have a good physical health if he possessed a good mental health or if he had cheerfulness in life. According to him, the stone based work, working environment, were itself responsible for a number of diseases and occupational injuries. He stated that human being would have different physical ill health condition and it was a very natural phenomenon. However, the livelihood condition and the social environment

was responsible for mental distress and psychological disturbances for him. It mostly affected the older person like him very much. He expressed with grief sorrow that he was living very happily with agricultural work in Bangladesh. Although they were not much rich but still they had the resource to accumulate proper food and other common minimum livelihood for their family members. After their displacement all sorts of social insecurity occurred in their livelihood. During the Study, they were treated as an undocumented migrant. He went to different Governmental sectors in a number of occasions for the ration card, voter identity etc. However, in every time he faced all sorts of ill treatment, hatred and less attraction of attention. None of his minimum requirements were fulfilled although he had every right of such demand as per Governmental regulations. Further, he expressed that the stone based work ultimately generated a poor level of income for them. With that mere income it was rather impossible for him to provide the desired common minimum livelihood for the family members. Throughout the entire day he was engaged in hard manual labour and when he came back to home in the evening, always there was a continuous pressure upon him to fulfill the demand of the family members. When he expressed his inability to provide such desired objects, it created acute quarrel between him and other family members. It generated acute mental distress for him and his mental peace became very much disturbed. Often his sons used to quarrel with him in abusive language when they became alcoholic. Even he noticed his grand children to imitate some abusive words and to look after the play of gambling by other people in and around their houses. The entire scenario created a deep psychological and mental distress for him because he could not tolerate such disintegration in his familial life. However, he was not the capable to prevent it, rather than to accept it silently. Further, he stated that the neighbourhood relationship between them was very much jealous and there was less trust and peaceful dependence among them. He exclaimed with sorrow that after day long arduous labour and struggle for existence, a physically fatigued man desired mental peace in his house and social life. However, often in the evening related to some very simple issue tremendous quarrel broke out between his family with the neighbourhood. It used to snatch completely the mere scope of mental peace and he became completely mentally distressed. His mental exhaustion was more than the physical fatigue ness. He stated that after displacement, resettlement and new source of income, gradually the entire

economic and social circumstances had snatched the smile from his face. He was living with utter disgrace and cheerfulness never came to his mind even in imagination.

From the above all case studies it may be summarized that the studies people were affected by a number of diseases, ill health condition and injuries. Those were directly associated with their occupation, working environment and livelihood condition. Prevalence of such diseases and ill health conditions could be noticed among the individuals of any age group. However, such ailments could create an obstacle to their regular work. Quick recovery against minimum financial expenditure was their requirement. Thus at initial stages always they preferred local quacks and traditional healers for a faster recovery. However when it got complicated then they became compelled to go to western medical institutions and consultation with doctors. Meanwhile, if their recovery period became longer then just after some initial recovery they preferred to drop the treatment otherwise it would be very much detrimental for their work and familial sustenance. It can be noted that in most of the cases economic scarcity became a major hindrance for their treatment and ultimately they were forced to take debt from different local sources. Thus diseases, ill health condition, occupational injuries became part of their daily life and it created an unwanted economic burden for them.

Figure 6.3: A Woman engaged in hard labour with injured finger



Among the studied families the distribution of disease affected people can be noticed through the following table-

Table 6.22: Sex wise distribution of the diseases affected people

Total number of people affected by different diseases and occupational injuries			Total population		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
850 100.00	787 100.00	1637 100.00	850 100.00	787 100.00	1637 100.00
Sex	Only by F.O.D. and occupational injuries	Both by F.O.D. L.T.D. and occupational injuries	Total		
Male	267 31.41	583 68.59	850 100.00		
Female	282 35.83	505 64.17	787 100.00		
Total	549 33.54	1088 66.46	1637 100.00		

Source: Field Study (F.O.D.= Frequently occurring diseases; L.T.D= Long term diseases)

It can be noted that the stone based occupation, working environment and livelihood condition had affected the health situation of all the studied people in Balasan colony. In most of the cases they were suffering from both the frequently occurring and long term diseases and occupational injuries (Table 6.22). The detail discussion is as follows.

In the studied area the children were also associated with the stone based work and they were also equally exposed to the working environment and livelihood conditions. The cases of frequently occurring diseases among them could be noticed through the following tables-

Table 6.23: Frequently occurring diseases, occupational injuries among the male children

Age group	Diseases					Occupational injuries	Total
	Fever	Cold and cough	Dysentery and Diarrhoea	Allergy	Ear infection		
0-4	82 45.56	64 35.56	26 14.44	5 2.78	3 1.67	-	180 100.00
5-9	57 65.52	11 12.64	7 8.05	2 2.30	-	10 11.49	87 100.00
10-14	53 62.35	10 11.76	5 5.88	4 4.71	4 4.71	9 10.59	85 100.00
Total	192 54.55	85 24.15	38 10.79	11 3.12	7 1.99	19 5.40	352 100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 6.24: Frequently occurring diseases, occupational injuries among the female children

Age group	Diseases					Occupational injuries	Total
	Fever	Cold and cough	Dysentery and Diarrhoea	Allergy	Ear infection		
0-4	87 45.55	63 32.98	29 15.18	7 3.66	5 2.62	-	191 100.00
5-9	52 57.14	12 13.19	11 12.09	2 2.19	3 3.29	11 12.09	91 100.00
10-14	47 74.60	7 11.11	3 4.76	2 3.17	-	4 6.35	63 100.00
Total	186 53.91	82 23.77	43 12.46	11 3.19	8 2.32	15 4.35	345 100.00

Source: Field Study

It can be noted that during the work often the mothers used to take their little children along with her to the river bed. Further, as they gradually grew up they started to get affiliated with the stone based work. During summer they were exposed to scorching heat and moist environment. In monsoon they frequently got drenched and in winter they had to collect the stones, pebbles from the cold river water and even their wet clothes dried on their bodies. It might be a major cause that often the children had to suffer from fever, cold and cough. Further, the concerned children were regularly exposed to the dirty and polluted working atmosphere. Their exposure to dust, scorching heat might be a factor that often they had allergies and infection of ear. Again, when the concerned children were on the river bed related to their work or with their mother and feeling the thirst, then often they used to drink the river water directly. Again, even in their huts also they used to drink the river water. As the river water was dirty and polluted thus it might be a factor that the cases of dysentery, diarrhoea were much prevalent among them. Further, it can be noted that quite from an early age the children had to economically support their families and they had to get involved with the stone based work like collection of stones and pebbles from the river water and their breaking. Often such working involvement created occupation related injuries to them particularly on their hands and eyes (Table 6.23 and 6.24). However, it was also believed that certain supernatural agencies were also responsible for a number of frequently occurring diseases and ill health condition. Further among the adult males and females the prevalence of frequently occurring diseases and occupational injuries can be represented through the following tables-

Table 6.25: Frequently occurring diseases and occupational injuries among the adult males

Age group	Diseases			Total
	Dysentery and Diarrhoea	Allergy	Both occupational injury and fever, cold- cough	
15-19	11 14.67	7 9.33	57 76.00	75 100.00
20-24	6 8.22	5 6.85	62 84.93	73 100.00
25-29	7 10.29	9 13.24	52 76.47	68 100.00
30-34	4 7.84	6 11.76	41 80.39	51 100.00
35-39	9 19.57	5 10.87	32 69.57	46 100.00
40-44	7 14.58	9 18.75	32 66.67	48 100.00
45-49	4 12.50	7 21.88	21 25.62	32 100.00
50-54	9 22.50	3 7.0	28 70.00	40 100.00
55-59	5 33.33	1 6.67	9 60.00	15 100.00
60-64	8 42.11	4 21.05	7 36.84	19 100.00
65-69	2 25.00	-	6 75.00	8 100.00
70 and above	2 25.00	1 12.50	5 62.50	8 100.00
Total	74 15.32	57 11.80	352 72.88	483 100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 6.26: Frequently occurring diseases and occupational injuries among the adult females

Age group	Diseases			Total
	Dysentery and Diarrhoea	Allergy	Both occupational injury and fever, cold- cough	
15-19	7 12.96	3 5.56	44 81.48	54 100.00
20-24	9 12.68	5 7.04	57 80.28	71 100.00
25-29	9 4.29	7 11.11	47 74.60	63 100.00
30-34	3 5.45	7 12.73	45 81.82	55 100.00
35-39	5 13.89	3 8.33	28 77.78	36 100.00
40-44	9 19.57	4 8.70	33 71.74	46 100.00
45-49	7 18.92	3 8.11	27 72.97	37 100.00
50-54	3 12.00	3 12.00	19 76.10	25 100.00
55-59	2 3.33	3 20.00	10 66.67	15 100.00

60-64	3 21.43	2 14.29	9 64.28	14 100.00
65-69	1 25.00	-	3 75.00	4 100.00
70 and above	1 25.00	1 25.00	2 50.00	4 100.00
Total	59 13.92	41 9.67	324 76.42	424 100.00

Source: Field Study

It can be noted that the adult male members were the prime earning members of their families. Further, the adult female also played a significant role in the familial income along with the males. Even in certain cases if the males were unable to continue their work due to certain ill health condition then the responsibility of the entire family came to the shoulders of adult females only. Naturally for most of the time they had to remain affiliated with the stone based work and working atmosphere. It can be noted that an adult male or female labour might remain associated with different categories of stone based occupation like collection of raw materials, their breaking, loading into vehicles etc. Thus they had to remain directly associated with the moist and polluted working atmosphere in every climatic exposure. On the other hand, due to prolonged work the chances of different occupational injuries on eyes, hands etc. became much higher. Obviously for most of them fever, cold and cough and minor occupational injuries became an integral part of daily livelihood. Even the dusty and polluted working atmosphere as well as their bathing to the uncleaned dirty river water might have created skin allergy to them in a number of cases. On the other hand their direct consumption of uncleaned river water, without any boiling might have made them vulnerable to diarrhea, dysentery in a number of cases. Thus it can be stated that the studied occupation, their working environment and livelihood condition might have created a number of ill health condition and occupational injuries to them and rather it became a part of their daily livelihood. However, it was also believed that due to their exposure beside the river, different types of winds and other supernatural agencies, they frequently get affected with different diseases and ill health condition.

Again, the frequently occurring diseases and occupational injuries often became complicated due to lack of proper treatment, lack of adequate care and ignorance. In such cases those ultimately turned out into long term sufferings for the concerned people. Particularly in case of the children it can be represented through the following tables-

Table 6.27: Long term diseases among the male children

Age group	Long term diseases						Total
	High fever, cold and cough	Anemia	Diarrhoea and Dysentery	Ear infection	Snake and dog bite	Measles	
5-9	4 26.67	-	4 26.67	2 13.33	2 13.33	3 20.00	15 100.00
10-14	37 43.53	5 5.88	24 28.24	6 7.06	4 4.71	9 10.59	85 100.00
Total	41 41.00	5 100.00	28 28.00	8 8.00	6 6.00	12 12.00	100 100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 6.28: Long term diseases among the female children

Age group	Long term diseases						Total
	High fever, cold and cough	Anemia	Diarrhoea and Dysentery	Ear infection	Snake and dog bite	Measles	
5-9	5 27.78	-	5 27.78	4 22.22	2 11.11	2 11.11	18 100.00
10-14	17 26.98	15 23.81	18 28.57	6 9.52	3 4.76	4 6.35	63 100.00
Total	22 27.16	15 18.52	23 28.40	10 12.35	5 6.17	6 7.41	81 100.00

Source: Field Study

It can be noted that the children were regularly exposed to the working atmosphere in every climatic condition. Often the parents ignored their frequent fever, cold and cough or at the maximum level they used to take them to local quacks. However, they hardly became properly cured and even at that condition their mothers could hardly had the time for their proper care. Even they used to take them in the river bed during their work. Ultimately it might have increased their sufferings into manifold and they became the sufferer of high fever, with

severe cold and cough. It can be noted that in between the age group of 10-14 years boys were more vulnerable to fever, cold, cough than the girls. It might be due to the fact that at this stage the girls had to look after the household courses in absence of their mothers. On the other hand the boys were more associated with the stone based work on the river bed. It has been already stated that the studied families mostly consumed the river water for drinking and it could create diarrhea, dysentery to them. However, even during the said disease parents could hardly take any adequate precaution or proper medical care for their children. However, the concerned children became severely suffered and even sometime it became fatal. Further, it was told by the concerned mothers that their children were suffering from anemia. It was told to them by the colony health sub centre staff that their height-weight ratio was quite disproportionate according to their age due to their lack of proper nutrition. However, it was noticed that the girl children were more anemic than the boys. It can be noted that the mothers were little bit preferring their boys. It might be due to the fact that the girls would get married after a certain period of time but the boys would be staying for long and would look after their parents at their older age as well as economically support them. Further, in the studied area a number of cases related to snake bite could be noticed. Often the poisonous snakes could be noticed in the colony which used to come through the river water. On the other hand, children also used to collect the stones from the river. During such collection or if they remained unattended then the children became the victims of snake bite and mostly it became fatal. Thus both their working place and place of settlement were quite risky from the context of survival also. Again, from the field Study it was found that a number of children were suffering from ear infection. At the initial stages mostly they consulted with the quacks of local medical stall or applied certain indigenous methods. However, in many cases their ailment did not get fully cured and after a certain period of time it used to become severe with inflammation of ear and mucus secretion. In such cases the concerned parents agreed and the local quacks opined their views that their exposure to dust particles both in the work field and in the settlement was the prime cause of such ear infection. It was noticed that the children were often vulnerable to measles. From the field Study it was found that quite from an early age the children of the concerned families were regularly exposed to a hot, humid and dusty working atmosphere. Either, such children

were associated with the work or their mothers used to make them lied down upon a piece of cloth in the stone field adjacent to them. They could hardly tolerate such scorching heat regularly and became vulnerable to the diseases like measles. Again it was more prevalent among the boys than the girls. The concerned mothers stated that a boy was a matter of jealous particularly to those neighbourhood families who had girls only. In such cases they might have a cruel intention to influence the malevolent super natural agencies which could create illness to their boys. Under such circumstances the parents could be mentally disturbed and might be less focused to their normal course of works as they were expected to be. On the other hand definitely it would generate an unwanted economic burden for the concerned families related to their treatment as well as their inability to participate in the work regularly. Thus the stone crushing occupation, its working atmosphere and their settlement had been a major causal factor of their different diseases and ill health conditions. Even in a number of cases it emerged out as a major challenge to their survival as well. On the other hand merely they had any alternative opportunity. However, it was also believed that due to their exposure beside the river and different types of winds, they might get affected by different supernatural agencies causing certain ill health condition to them. The entire situation had made them vulnerable to multifarious diseases and ill health condition which rather became an integral part of their daily life. Further the adult males and females were the prime earning members of their respective families. They used to remain exposed in the working atmosphere for longer duration and thus they might have the chances to become vulnerable to different diseases, ill health condition and occupational injuries. It can be represented through the following tables-

Table 6.29: Long term diseases and occupational injuries among the adult males

Age Group	Diseases					Occupational injuries	Total
	High fever, cold and cough	Diarrhoea and Dysentery	Anemia	T.B.	Chest pain, respiratory problem and asthma		
15-19	17 22.67	26 34.67	4 5.33	-	-	28 37.33	75 100.00
20-24	15 20.55	23 31.51	3 4.11	-	-	32 43.84	73 100.00
25-29	12 17.65	20 29.41	2 2.94	1 1.47	5 7.35	28 41.18	68 100.00
30-34	11 21.56	10 19.61	2 3.92	7 13.73	10 19.61	11 21.57	51 100.00

35-39	4 8.70	3 6.52	2 4.35	3 6.52	13 28.26	21 45.65	46 100.00
40-44	3 6.25	4 8.33	3 6.25	2 4.17	17 35.42	19 39.58	48 100.00
45-49	-	2 6.25	-	1 3.12	8 25.00	21 65.62	32 100.00
50-54	3 7.50	2 5.00	-	3 7.50	13 32.5	19 47.50	40 100.00
55-59	1 6.67	2 13.33	-	2 13.33	6 40.00	4 26.67	15 100.00
60-64	2 10.53	1 5.26	-	3 15.79	8 42.11	5 26.32	19 100.00
65-69	-	-	1 12.50	2 25.00	2 25.00	3 37.50	8 100.00
70 and above	-	-	-	1 12.50	4 50.00	3 37.50	8 100.00
Total	68 14.08	93 19.25	17 3.52	25 5.18	86 17.81	194 40.17	483 100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 6.30: Long term diseases and occupational injuries among the adult females

Age group	Diseases						Occupational injuries	Total
	High fever, cold and cough	Diarrhoea and Dysentery	Anemia	T.B.	Chest pain, respiratory problem and asthma	Menstrual problem		
15-19	17 31.48	15 27.78	3 5.56	-	-	7 12.96	12 22.22	54 100.00
20-24	18 25.35	23 32.39	4 5.63	-	-	9 12.68	17 23.94	71 100.00
25-29	13 20.63	16 25.40	3 4.76	-	6 9.52	17 26.98	8 12.70	63 100.00
30-34	9 16.36	18 32.73	2 3.64	3 5.45	5 9.09	8 14.55	10 18.18	55 100.00
35-39	9 25.00	4 11.11	1 2.78	1 2.78	6 16.67	6 16.67	9 25.00	36 100.00
40-44	9 19.56	5 10.87	-	2 4.35	10 21.74	3 6.52	17 36.96	46 100.00
45-49	2 5.41	2 5.41	-	4 10.82	9 24.32	5 13.51	15 40.54	37 100.00
50-54	3 12.00	1 4.00	-	1 4.00	10 40.00	-	10 40.00	25 100.00
55-59	-	-	-	1 6.67	5 33.33	-	9 60.00	15 100.00
60-64	2 14.29	2 14.29	-	2 14.29	2 14.29	-	6 42.86	14 100.00
65-69	-	-	-	-	2 50.00	-	2 50.00	4 100.00
70 and above	-	-	-	-	2 50.00	-	2 50.00	4 100.00
Total	82 19.34	86 20.28	13 3.07	14 3.30	57 13.44	55 12.97	117 27.59	424 100.00

Source: Field Study

It has been already reported that their working environment was not adequately hygienic. On the other hand for the sake of survival they had to utilize the time of work at the utmost level irrespective of any climatic condition of summer, monsoon and winter. Again in certain cases the males used to go outside during the night for unloading of raw materials. Thus to steam their vessel they bothered least about the climatic condition or their physical rest. However it told upon their health and they became frequently vulnerable to high fever, cold and cough. At the initial stages they mostly ignored it to save their time of work and to avoid the unwanted expenditure. Maximum they used to consult with the local quacks of the medical stalls for a quick recovery. However, in a number of cases it created more complications and they became severely affected. Such cases were beyond the infrastructural capacity of colony health sub centre or any traditional healers. It compelled them to go for western medical institutional check up. Further, their remuneration against work was very poor and it could hardly fulfill their adequate demand of food. Thus among the concerned parents tendency of anemia could be noticed. It was detected by the doctors of the Matigara PHC during their pathological tests. Usually the female folk first prefer to nourish their husband and sons; then the remaining portion was shared between the daughters and mother. It was primarily due to the fact that the males remain engaged in more hard work than females and they should have first preference over food. Thus the females were mostly affected by anemia. Further, they mostly used to take their lunch in the dirty and polluted working atmosphere. Before lunch they hardly wash their hands properly with clean water and it was regularly done with the dirty and polluted river water. Again, they were primarily depended on dirty and polluted river water to quench their thirst. Its regular practice might be a major cause that they became vulnerable to acute diarrhea and dysentery. Even some cases became so critical they had to remain admitted to the medical institutions for a number of days. Further, their work was intimately associated with a number of occupational injuries on fingers, eyes and legs. At the initial stages they often ignored it and went on regular works by tying up the injured places with a piece of cloth. However, those wounds used to meet up with dust, sand and dirty water. Very soon they became infectious and much complicated with inflammation, swelling up and mucus secretion. Even in certain cases the concerned people had permanently lost their vision of an eye or their fingers were supposed to get

amputated to prevent further complications. Such occupational injuries became a common occurrence for the studied people and both males and females were equally vulnerable to it. It is to be mentioned here that among the total 483 adult males who were suffering from different long term diseases or occupational injuries 27 (5.59 percent) persons had lost their complete or partial vision of any one eye, in 8 cases (1.66 percent) their fingers were amputated and in 5 cases (1.03 percent) they were facing hardship to walk properly. Again, among the total 424 adult females who were suffering from long term diseases or occupational injuries 24 (5.66 percent) individuals had lost their complete or partial vision of any one eye, in 7 cases (1.65 percent) their fingers were amputated and in 5 cases (1.18 percent) they were facing hardship to walk properly. Thus the occupational injuries were not only some incidental cases but often it had a major detrimental impact on their physique as a whole. They opted the studied occupation to survive but unfortunately it possessed a major challenge in every aspect of their livelihood and even it was making them physically handicapped.

Further, it can be noted that the stone crushing occupation required a lot of arduous physical labour and on the other hand they could hardly get proper nutritive food. On the other hand always they were exposed to a very dirty and polluted working atmosphere where they could hardly breathe in a fresh air without foul smell. A people who was associated with the stone based work in Balasan colony continuously for 5-10 years regularly used to feel chest pain, respiratory problem and further they became the patient of acute asthma. Meanwhile, the ultimate fate of their prolonged occupational involvement was the susceptibility to tuberculosis. According to the health staffs of the colony health sub centre and the doctors of Matigara PHC hard manual labour without adequate food had reduced their physical resistance against frequent fever, cold and cough. However, its long continuation had ultimately resulted into tuberculosis among them. It can be noticed that the males were more affected by tuberculosis than females. It might be due to the fact that the males were more affected to alcoholism, use of tobacco etc. which had rather become detrimental to their physical well being.

It can be noted that particularly among the female certain problems related to menstrual cycle could be noticed.

Table 6.31: Menstrual cycle related problem of women

Age	Diseases					Total
	Leucorrhoea	Irregular period	Irregular discharge within period	Abdominal pain within period	Excessive blood discharge	
15-19	3 42.86	1 14.29	2 28.57	-	1 14.29	7 100.00
20-24	4 44.44	1 11.11	3 33.33	-	1 11.11	9 100.00
25-29	7 41.18	2 11.76	3 17.65	2 11.76	3 17.65	17 100.00
30-34	3 37.50	1 12.50	1 12.50	1 12.50	2 25.00	8 100.00
35-39	1 16.67	3 50.00	2 33.33	-	-	6 100.00
40-44	-	3 100.00	-	-	-	3 100.00
45-49	-	5 100.00	-	-	-	5 100.00
Total	18 32.73	16 29.09	11 20.00	3 5.45	7 12.73	55 100.00

Source: Field Study

From the concerned women as well as from the doctors of North Bengal Medical college gynecological section it was known that, long submerge in the waist deep water might create certain genital infection. Again, hard manual labour by sitting on the foot for longer duration as well as malnutrition might be a crucial factor to create numerous menstrual cycle related complications. Even it can create early menopause or other child birth related complications for the women if not properly treated at the period of initiation.

Again after getting a rid of their day long manual labour they hardly found any peace after returning to their huts. There within a congested place a number of people were staying together. It might tell upon their mental relaxation. Further, after their return to the huts, they had to listen about the essential familial requirements and the regular saga about their scarcity. Thus after day long hard manual labour they had hardly any scope to rest in peace for a little while.

Human beings are associated with different occupation for their survival. The studied people had choosen the stone based occupation as their last scope of settlement and survival. During the initiation phase of the work they had a deep

rooted expectation that Balasan river could give them a permanent settlement and economic backbone. However only after a few decade it became revealed that the stone crushing occupation, working environment and the livelihood condition might be the prime cause of a number of diseases, occupational injuries and ill health conditions for them. They had completely ignored their physical condition, requirement of leisure and responded only to the call for survival only. Thus, the stone based occupation had created multifarious problem related to the health situation and social life of the studied people. Thus in spite of providing economic backbone to the concerned people the said occupation was degenerating their every economic possibilities in different aspects.

Status of treatment of the diseases

In the studied families the prevalence of diseases and occupational injuries were quite common. However, along with the diseases, the feature of treatment varied to a large extent. It was associated with different social and cultural perspective as well as with the influence of family members. The status of treatment related to the commonly occurring diseases among the children and adult can be represented through the following table-

Table 6.32: Feature of treatment for frequently occurring diseases among the children and adult

Feature of Treatment among the children								Total cases	
Treatment completed		Treatment under process		Treatment dropped		No treatment			
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
22	20	46	42	125	113	159	170	352	345
6.25	5.80	13.07	12.17	35.51	32.75	45.17	49.28	100.00	100.00
Feature of Treatment among the adults								Total cases	
Treatment completed		Treatment under process		Treatment dropped		No treatment			
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
-	-	66	41	217	149	200	234	483	424
		13.66	9.67	44.93	35.14	41.41	55.19	100.00	100.00

It can be noted that time based utilization of resources was a very crucial factor related to their occupation. On the other hand they were simply not in an economic position to avail any unwanted expenditure. The frequently occurring diseases and occupational injuries were a almost a regular phenomenon to them and as such they mostly ignored any treatment or maximum had a consultation

with the local quacks or traditional healers. However, for the children they had completed the treatment in a few cases because they were very little of age as well as the parents had some bitter experience of their earlier ignorance. However, the adults hardly think about those minor issues and as soon as they became little bit cured they used to discontinue it.

Again their ignorance to frequently occurring diseases and occupational injuries often made the cases complicated and those turned out into long term sufferings. Such cases reduced their scope to conduct the work with full physical potentiality and vigor. Such cases required medical institutional treatments mostly as represented through the following tables-

Table 6.33: Feature of treatment for long term diseases among the children and adult

Feature of Treatment among the children								Total cases	
Treatment completed		Treatment under process		Treatment dropped		No treatment			
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
7	4	13	9	63	40	17	28	100	81
7.00	4.94	13.00	11.11	63.00	49.38	17.00	34.57	100.00	100.00
Feature of Treatment among the adults								Total cases	
Treatment completed		Treatment under process		Treatment dropped		No treatment			
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
49	27	140	93	294	304	-	-	483	424
10.14	6.37	28.98	21.93	60.87	71.70	-	-	100.00	100.00

However, a very few of them had completed the entire course of treatment; on the other hand most of them after getting satisfactory relief from their sufferings automatically dropped the further courses. It was recorded that in such cases they had to go for frequent check up to the western medical practitioner at the nearest PHC as well as they were advised to do certain pathological tests for a number of times to know about their status of recovery. Along with that they were restricted from their hard manual labour and from certain food. Such issues were absolutely not supportive to their economy and livelihood sustainability. It was an urgent need for the entire families that they should join to their occupation soon and just after a little bit relief mostly they preferred the work rather than to become affiliated more with the treatment.

The above all factors can be analysed from an in-depth view. The time schedule was very important for them to pursue their occupation. In most of the cases they

gave a very least importance to the ill health conditions of their family members mostly for the utilization of their time in work. However, if they had started the treatment, often they were advised for a number of pathological tests and medicines by the doctors. Their poor level of income could hardly meet up with such financial expenditures. Again, such in depth clinical diagnosis required a long duration. It became very difficult for them to spend their crucial time for prolonged medical treatment, other wise very soon they had to live in hunger. It forced them to drop the treatment without completion of the course and by attaining a partial relief. Further the concerned society treated the male folk as the prime earner of the family. Thus it was socially assigned that priority should be given behind the treatment or partial relief of the male folk from the physical problems. It was believed among them that if the males of the families (even the male children) were not physically well, then the concerned families would have to face a number of problems, while the female folk of the concerned families would be unable to prevent such hindrances.

Cause of diseases, method of treatment and the result of treatment:

In the studied area, the cause of diseases and ill health condition can broadly be categorized into two sectors, i.e. supernatural causes and natural causes as mentioned below-

Table 6.34: Cause of Diseases in case of children and adult

F.O.D. among children		
Supernatural	Natural	Total cases
548	149	697
78.62	21.38	100.00
L.T.D. among children		
Supernatural	Natural	Total cases
71	110	181
39.23	60.77	100.00
F.O.D. among adult		
Supernatural	Natural	Total cases
354	553	907
39.03	60.97	100.00
L.T.D. among adult		
Supernatural	Natural	Total cases
292	615	907
32.19	67.81	100.00

Source: Field Study (F.O.D.= Frequently occurring diseases; L.T.D.= Long term diseases)

It can be noted that mostly in case of short term diseases (78.62 per cent) of the children and in a number of cases (39.23 per cent) related to long term diseases, the concerned parents had a strong belief on different supernatural forces as the prime causal factor (Table 6.34). It has been reported that the neighbourhood relationship, in the studied area was very much jealous. They had a strong faith that no one can look after the familial peace and prosperity of others. Meanwhile, it has been reported that if any family had all the children as son then they were tremendously jealous by their neighbours, because they could not have to spend the money for dowry. Thus the neighbours had a very cruel intention to influence different supernatural agencies against them so they might have mental tension, unwanted medical expenditure and most importantly hindrance to their work. Thus, often they apply different malevolent magico- religious performances to harm their neighbour or to create familial tension for them. As the children were most sensitive or tender, so they could easily become the victim of such harmful magico-religious applications. Thus often it was applied upon the children and frequently they became ill. However, mothers of the son became very much cautious after any such incidence and according to the advice of the traditional healers they tied different sanctified lockets to their arms and waist, which were believed to protect them from evil spirit. It was believed that presence of such sanctified objects might have prohibited the supernatural agencies to do any major harm to their child.

Again, among the studied families certain supernatural aspects were detected as the prime casual factor for frequently occurring and long term diseases among the adults. It has been reported that in every family, both male and female collectively worked as the working force. Even their collective earning could hardly manage the proper livelihood requisites. Thus if the prime earning member, or even the female folk became ill, then their livelihood condition became utter miserable. So, the neighbourhood jealous and allied magico-religious performances could create numerous hindrances in their livelihood particularly in their health aspects. Further, the concerned families had a strong faith that the open exposure of the Balasan river bed was associated with evil wind and different supernatural agents. The adult members mostly had to work for long on the river bed. Obviously such evil forces had an ample scope to make the man victim and a number of ill health symptoms or allied irregularities were noticed among them (Table 6.34).

It can be noted here that the people who had belief in the supernatural causes of diseases, fore mostly opted the traditional method of treatment to redress their ailment. Again, the people who had belief in the natural causes of diseases foremostly opted the western medical method of treatment related to their health and diseases. These are discussed below in detail-

1) Super natural causes of diseases and traditional method of treatment:

Traditional Health practitioners: In most culture, there was a specialist who treated illness, injury, diseases and related misfortunes and quite frequently they corresponds to the leader of religious practices. The magico-religious practitioners was also considered to be practitioner of magic or witchcraft traditionally. He was endowed with many abilities and that was dedicated to the vocation. In the studied area, the service of Ojha, Medicine man or Kabiraj were sought depending upon the cause of illness. There were a few categories of healing processes applied by him as per by requirement. Magical spells were applied for remedy from evil sight, charming arrow, mental problem, female diseases and stomach ache for the children. Magical spell with magico-religious process was applied for ghost attack and witch capturing. On the other hand, for snake bite magico-religious processes were associated with the herbal treatment. Different types of magical spell could help him for detection of different diseases. It is to be mentioned here that the patient party has to promise in prior condition about the offerings, supposedly for Goddess Manasa or God Masan after the complete remedy.

During the present Study interview was taken from the traditional medicine man named as Mr. Upen Das, aged 65 years. Earlier they were settled in the Bagura district of Bangladesh and further came to the Balasan colony in 1985. He had acquired the knowledge from his father Mr. Bojen Roy and from Mr. Jotin Roy who was a traditional healer in their early settlement. He was associated with that healing practice since last 40 years. It had no written record and it was completely based on oral tradition, personal experience, observation of symptoms and capability to identify the medicinal plant resources as well as their method of utilization. He stated that diseases were caused due to a number of co-related factors. According to him, measles or pox was caused due to congestion of heat and cold within the body. If it stayed for long within the body then consequently

it generated a number of other diseases. He stated that the stone based work and the working atmosphere was not at all suitable for the good health of the concerned people. The concerned people worked under scorching sunlight and simultaneously they were in the regular touch of water. It generated frequent temperature fluctuation within their body which caused numerous ill health factors. Further, he stated that another major factor of numerous diseases was the effect of evil wind. Evil wind could attack a person, when he had committed some misdeed. Particularly, when a man eat some rubbish or dealt a very uncontrolled life or illegal offence and after that goes to outside, then he was certainly to be attacked by the evil wind. Evil wind could also attack a person if he took the overnight stored food, rotten food or dry fishes. It was predicted by looking a few symptoms of the affected person. Often he used to speak irrelevant words. On the other hand when a children was affected by the ghost attack their colour of the body turned into red, blue and even green. If proper magico-religious healing was not done at the initial stages then such attack could be even fatal. It could be prevented with the help of different magico- religious performances like jhara associated with adequate power of hymn. The traditional medicine man simultaneously gave them the medicines prepared from the available medicinal plants resources in and adjacent areas. To redress the effect of the disease and to bring back the disease affected people in normal course of life different rituals like Sitala puja, Teesta Buri puja, Kali puja, Masan puja was performed by them. In some cases the worships were associated with animal sacrifice to appease the benevolent spirit and to prohibit the evil effect of malevolent deities. Among the studied families the children were mostly suffering from fever, intestinal disorder, jaundice etc. Adult persons were suffering from fever cold and cough, digestive problem, chest pain, body pain, respiratory problem, stomach upset etc. Meanwhile the adult females had their menstrual cycle related problems as well. Further, he stated that the concerned disease affected people were very much psychologically depended upon him for the treatment. According to the status of the health problem, the medicines were provided to redress the ailment. The most frequently required medicinal plants were *Ulatkamal*, *Danda kalash*, *Chitanath*, *Kalpanath*, *Durba*, *Jabaphul*, *Shapla*, *Raktachandan*, *Patshirja*, *Manimuni*, *Hatisura*, *Sajina* and *Sanjibani*. It is to be mentioned here that specially on the request of the said medicine man, the researcher has not mentioned the scientific

name of the said medicinal plants. Generally the leaves, barks, flowers, roots were utilized for the preparation of different diseases. More than 4-5 different types of medicines could be prepared from a particular plant by utilizing its different parts. He collected the plants himself and prepared the desired medicine by thorough pasting or rapid boiling. The prepared medicines were either to be consumed with water or it was needed to drink in the liquid form. Sometime he used to give the patients the sanctified lockets prepared from the root of the trees to protect them from evil wind, evil eye etc. It is to be mentioned here that the treatment related with the biting of the snake was a very hard one. The plants like *chumbuksol*, jute and leaves of the jute were required to initiate the treatment. Thereafter, the stem of the banana tree were cut into small pieces to prepare *bhela* or floated pot which is left to move in water. The last stage of the treatment was done through *kori* or conch shell to suck the poison of the snake. If the patient was still not cured then merely any chance is left for his survival.

Meanwhile, a number of locally available plant resources were utilized by the traditional medicine man to cure the health sufferings of the disease affected people. Name of the diseases along with the name of plants used by him for remedy are given below-

Table 6.35: Locally available medicinal plants and their usage to prevent different diseases

Diseases	Medicinal plants and their usage	Restrictions
1. Throat swelling	<i>Kalpanath</i> , <i>akand</i> , ghee, honey, camphor, <i>kaloziira</i> mixed together along with basak, tulsi leaves to prepare the medicine. It was prepared either in a paste form or in a liquid form to consume.	Cold food is Avoided.
2. Cold and cough	A syrup is prepared with the extract of <i>Dandakalash</i> , <i>Kalpanath</i> , Tulsi leaves. It should be consumed in every year.	Cold and sour food is voided is avoided.
3. Fever due to fear	Tel pora and Dzol pora	Fish, meat, garlic and onion.
4. Tuberculosis	Stem of <i>Raktachandan</i> , <i>Raktosapla</i> , Lemon, Tulsi, clove and cardamom seed were mixed together to prepare the extract. It should be consumed for 3 to 5 times in a day.	Sour food, coconut, Banana, papaya, Curd, onion.

5. Diarrhoea	A syrup was prepared with zinger, boj, <i>dandakalash</i> , <i>chirata</i> and consumed twice to thrice in a day.	Fish and hot food.
6. Measles	Patient was smeared with water, fan and branch of neem on the first day. Tablet made up of atap rice, pata siraja, keasr and milk was given twice on a day. Home is advised to keep clean.	Fish, meat, was to be avoided and complete best rest was advised.
7. Pox	Patient was smeared with water, fan, branch of neem. He was laid on banana leaf and smeared with sesame seed oil.	Fish, meat, was to be avoided and complete best rest was advised.
8. Dog bite	One bowl made up of brass was struck to the injured place to suck the poison from the wounded place. A tablet was prepared with <i>jagaddambur</i> leaf and bettle leaf was advised to consume for twice in a day.	Fish, meat and milk.
9. Blister	Durba grass, neem leaf, ghee and musambi was mixed together to prepare a tablet and was to be taken twice or thrice in a day.	Pumpkin, brinjal and papaya.
10. Burning	A paste was prepared with coconut oil, bileachra, earthworm milk, telakucho leaf, chandralata and was advised to rub on the wounded place three to four times in a day.	Soap not to be used.
11. Asthma	Root of <i>dandakalash</i> , bark of <i>jagaddambur</i> , <i>talmichri</i> , <i>golmorich</i> were mixed together to prepare an extract. It should be taken for one month and thrice a day with warm food.	Any cold food.
12. Jaundice	A syrup was prepared with extract of arhar leaf, <i>hatisura</i> leaf. Patient was smeared with oil, banana leaf and cane made bowl.	Any yellow coloured food.
13. Body pain	The place was rubbed with the sanctified oil, turmeric extract,	Prawn, pumpkin and

	kalpolata extract fro twice in a day.	sour food.
14.Ear Problem	Dust of conch shell were mixed with lemon extract and ear passage was cleared for twice a day.	Any sour food and hot food.
15.Stone in belly	An extract was prepared with patharkuchi leaf, juice of kultikala, bathua leaf and coconut juice. Advised to consume twice in a day.	Pumpkin, sour food, curd, brinjal, tomato and any burnt food.
16.Menstrual cycle related problem	Bathed with holy sanctified water. Sanctified locket was given to get protected from evil spirits. A syrup prepared with raktachandan and raktasapla was advised to consume twice a day.	Pumpkin, sour food, curd, brinjal, tomato and any burnt food.

Source: Field Study

However, he stated that many of the required medicinal plants were quite scarce in the studied area. Even if it was available, the distance was quite far from the locality. It caused a major hindrance for him to go there and collect the same. Ultimately he was facing a severe obstacle to prepare the required medicine and to supply it regularly to the people. He stated that some people were selling different adulterants of the medicinal plants. Again, the fresh medicines were getting replaced by dry medicines and it could not generate proper function. However, it would generate several other problems irrespective of redressing their ailments. He opined about extinction of traditional healing method because the concerned people (particularly the younger generation) were quite reluctant to learn the said process. He was also facing the same problem in his family. On the other hand, the patient expected the instant remedy, which was not possible by this method in every circumstance. Further, the degradation of medicinal plants was another added criterion in this context.

In the studied area the magico-religious healing practices was quite prevalent. Mr. Monglu Barman aged 70 years was associated with that practice since 35 years. Earlier they were settled in the Rangpur district of Bangladesh and further came to the colony in 1980. He learnt the skill from his father Aghor Barman who was a famous magico-religious healer. He stated that it had no written record and

completely based on oral tradition, prediction of symptoms through personal experience and the skill to control supernatural agencies. He acquired such skills by rigorously worshipping Goddess Kali with animal sacrifice. Further he acquired the skills of astrology to know the fortune controlling planets and the probable misfortune to be created by them. He stated that some planets were malevolent and they control different evil supernatural agencies. Such forces were like the evil wind, evil eye, charming arrow etc. Even in the colony some aged males or females also had the skill to control such agencies. According to him the people in the colony were quite jealous to each other and in a number of cases they tried to do the harm of others by influencing such agencies. However, people in such cases brought the misfortuned person and even children to him. He could easily trace out the root cause of the ailment and accordingly applied his skills to over rule the malevolent effects of evil supernatural forces. He had a number of holy sanctified material objects like peacock feathered broom, lockets, red and black thread, vermilion, necklace of sanctified beads, mustard etc. to perform different rituals. According to him in ordinary cases performances of certain rituals could easily cure the patient. However in complicated cases one or more animal sacrifice were required and even sometime rituals were performed throughout the entire night. He stated that the newly became mothers used to take their children under his care; he used to give them sanctified lockets or beads to tie up in the hand or waist. It would protect them from every evil force until it remained in touch of their body. According to him during such performances a patient was advised to maintain certain restrictions and if it was disobeyed then it could turn into havoc which even might be fatal for the affected person. During such performances along with the affected people only one of his family member was allowed to be present. He stated that the common people were very much psychologically depended upon them and had applied his skills always for the beneficiary of the people. He remembered the words of his deceased father that if at any point of time such skills were applied for the malevolent purpose then the healer would forget the entire skill. Thus he had dedicated the life always for the well being of the poor people. Against his healing he never claimed any consultancy personally, whatever the people used to give him from their convenience he always received it. However, the expenditure related to rituals was to be bore by the family members of the affected person only.

The following tables can reflect the different supernatural causes related to frequently occurring and long term diseases-

Table 6.36: Supernatural causes of diseases in case of children

Super natural causes in case of F.O.D.				Total cases
Evil wind	Getting frightened	By other evil means		
407	69	72		548
74.27	12.59	13.14		100.00
Super natural causes in case of L.T.D.				Total cases
Evil wind	Effect of goddess	Getting frightened	Ban mara	
21	29	6	15	71
29.58	40.85	8.45	21.13	100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 6.37: Supernatural Causes of diseases in case of Adults

Super natural causes in case of F.O.D.			Total cases
Evil eye	Evil wind	Ghost attack	
67 18.93	185 52.26	102 28.81	354 100.00
Super natural causes in case of L.T.D			Total cases
Ban mara	Evil wind	Ghost attack	
86 29.45	156 53.42	20 6.85	30 10.27
			292 100.00

Source: Field Study

From the field Study, it was reported that the children who were suffering from different short term diseases like fever, cold, cough, dysentery, allergy etc. the prime causal factor was the effect of evil wind, while in some cases it generated from fear or due to the influence of other evil means. As the children were accompanied by the parents to the river bed, they could easily become the victim of evil wind which was very prevalent there. It has been reported that adjacent to the river bed there was the burning *ghat*¹⁵ and funeral pyre. The wind generated in the river bed had the evil effect of the deceased soul and it used to make the children an easy victim. Often the children got frightened by looking at the burning pyre or dead body and they felt sick. Further, it was reported that particularly the women who had lost their child had an effect of evil eye.

¹⁵ Ghat: River bank where the dead bodies are set on pyre.

Specifically the recently born babies were effected due to such causes (Table 6.36). Further, in case of short term diseases among the adults, the effect of evil wind and ghost attack were highly noticed. It was primarily due to their prolonged working exposure on the river bed. Sometime a number of evil agents were also applied by the others to make them ill (Table 6.37). Again, among the children different long term diseases like fever and muttering, measles, dog bite were quite prevalent. It was reported that the measles caused due to the effect of Goddess *Sitala*. Again due to the effect of different charming arrows numerous health disorders took place among them. Meanwhile charming arrows could be applied on different inter mediate agents like dogs and they used to bite the targeted victim (Table 6.36).

In case of long term diseases of the adults, respiratory problems, occupational injuries, diarrhoea, chest pain, tuberculosis were quite prevalent. The concerned families had a strong belief that such cases were primarily due to the effect of evil wind which generated through their prolonged exposure on the river bed for work, sometime after dusk or even in night. Further some of the neighbour had the skill to imply charming arrows to destabilize their normal livelihood out of jealous. It was primarily because the ill health of an individual reduced the scope of work for him. If it is reduced then a certain portion of valuable natural resources might remain unutilized for work. It could provide a little scope for his neighbour to utilize such amount of resource in his work as well as to learn a little more. Ultimately the struggle for survival generated numerous ways to an individual even to perform different malevolent activities for the sustenance of ones own self (Table 6.37). The following tables can reflect the nature of initial treatment related to supernatural causes different types of traditional method of treatment and their results-

Table 6.38: Cases of Initially opted traditional method of treatment among children

Cases of children in F.O.D.			
Male	Female	Total cases	
272	276	Male	Female
77.27	80.00	352	345
		100.00	100.00
Cases of children in L.T.D.			
Male	Female	Total cases	
34	37	Male	Female
34.00	45.68	100	81
		100.00	100.00
Cases of Adults in F.O.D.			
Male	Female	Total cases	
166	188	Male	Female
34.37	44.34	483	424
		100.00	100.00
Cases of Adults in L.T.D.			
Male	Female	Total cases	
130	162	Male	Female
26.92	33.54	483	424
		100.00	100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 6.39: Method of traditional treatment among the children and adult

For F.O.D. among children				For L.T.D. among children			
Traditional medicine man	Magico religious healer	Indigenous method	Total case	Traditional medicine man	Magico religious healer	Indigenous method	Total case
80	198	166	548	11	41	19	71
14.60	36.13	30.29	100.00	15.49	57.75	26.76	100.00
For F.O.D. among adult				For L.T.D. among adult			
Traditional medicine man	Magico religious healer	Indigenous method	Total case	Traditional medicine man	Magico religious healer	Indigenous method	Total case
81	143	130	354	5	135	106	292
22.88	40.40	36.72	100.00	17.47	46.23	36.30	100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 6.40: Result of traditional treatment among the children and adult

For F.O.D. among children				For L.T.D. among children			
Cured	Not cured	Recovered	Total case	Cured	Not cured	Recovered	Total case
44	284	220	548	1	64	6	71
8.03	51.82	40.15	100.00	1.41	90.14	8.45	100.00
For F.O.D. among adult				For L.T.D. among adult			
Cured	Not cured	Recovered	Total case	Cured	Not cured	Recovered	Total case
47	247	60	354	18	216	58	292
13.28	69.77	16.95	100.00	6.16	73.97	9.86	100.00

Source: Field Study

In case of the children and the adults, where supernatural factors were believed as the prime causal factor of different frequently occurring and long term diseases, traditional method of treatment was foremostly opted by them (Table 6.38). It was strongly believed by them that the western medical practitioners could not prevent the malevolent effect of supernatural agents. The concerned patients could be cured only by applying the traditional method of treatment. Regarding the method of traditional treatment, it can be noted that in case of the children the concerned families mostly had faith on the magico-religious healers. They had a strong psychological faith upon him that only he could prevent the evil effect of different supernatural events and could save the livelihood of their children. They used to abide by every particular advised by the concerned healers and kept a strong faith that their children would get recovered soon. However, in case of a number of frequently occurring and long term diseases the concerned families provided them the medicine of traditional medicine man or the medicines prepared through indigenous method. It has been reported that the cause of different diseases and ill health situation were intimately associated with the local environmental circumstances and allied natural factors. If natural factors could generate a disease, then within itself only the solution of such problem must be present. They believed that different medicinal plants which were available within and adjacent to the studied area, could prevent their multifarious ill health factors. The traditional medicine man provided a number of medicines for their ailment of fever, cold, cough, dog bite, ear swelling etc. Again, they also applied a number of indigenous method particularly related to measles, cold cough etc (Table 6.39). On the other hand, in case of the adults suffering from different frequently occurring and long term diseases, mostly they opted the treatment of the magico-religious healers. Again the cases of traditional medicine man and indigenous method of treatment was quite prevalent. Meanwhile it has been reported that one of the major cause of their acceptance of traditional medical system was its very nominal expenditure and the availability of the healers within their locality. Also it did not required any sort of allied economic burden and they could get the relief within a few days (Table 6.39). However, the result of traditional method of treatment was not very exemplary. Among the studied children, a very few frequently occurring and long term cases of diseases were completely cured; while in most of the cases it was unable to provide even minimum recovery to their ailment (Table 6.40). Again

among the studied adults mere cases of frequently occurring and long term diseases were cured by them completely; while in most of the cases the concerned patients had not shown any symptom of recovery from their ailment (Table 6.40). It has been reported that lack of locally available medicinal plant resources and other therapeutic plant agents had created tremendous problem for the traditional medicinal man and magico-religious healer to conduct their treatment properly. It was reported by the traditional medicine man that if the required medicinal plants were very difficultly found in market, it was mixed with numerous adulterants and it would not provide the appropriate function. Often they could not supply the regular dosage of their medicines and the entire treatment was dropped. Even the magico religious healers advise the concerned families to collect a number of therapeutic agents for their performances. In many cases the concerned family members were either unable to found them or they could not purchase them due to heavy expenditure. Thus both the scarcity of medicinal plant resources and economy had limited their scope to avail the completion of traditional healing practices and their physical sufferings remained the same. Thus in the studied area, although the traditional health care practices were accepted by a large section of people, but a very few of them were fortunate to get completely cured from their sufferings. Still it was widely acceptable by the concerned people because of the fact that they were very much psychologically depended on the traditional healers due to their cultural affiliation. Further it could easily provide them the much desired remedy to some extent and to get back to their work in a quick succession.

2) Natural causes of diseases and western method of treatment

On the other hand, a number of families believed that multifarious natural factors were primarily responsible for different health problems both in case of the children and adult (Table 6.30).

During the present Study interviews were taken from the health staff of the Balasan colony health sub centre, doctors of the Matigara Primary Health Centre (PHC) and North Bengal Medical College. It has reported that the people of Balasan colony were mostly engaged with the stone based work. Their working schedule was from dawn to dusk and it was more or less same throughout the every season. Such a heavy work load and a very poor level of nutritional feature

might have created numerous health problems among them. Almost every person in the studied area was suffering from some sort of diseases or occupational injuries and thus health problem became a community matter for them rather than an individual aspect. The main diseases which were common to the people of the Balasan colony was fever, cold, cough, diarrhoea, dysentery, tuberculosis, respiratory problem, anemia, occupational injuries, menstrual cycle related problem etc. For the children ear swelling and allergy were an added criterion. The busy working schedule of the parents had reduced the scope for them to look after the children regularly. Often the children rambled through the dirty places and even they lied on the dirty roads. The dust of the road and the dirt might generated skin diseases among them. On the other hand, during the stone based work often the studied people met up with a number of occupational injuries in their eyes, hands, fingers, legs. Often such injuries generated serious inflammation in their body parts with mucous secretion. It has been reported that the heavy working schedule associated with almost empty stomach and polluted working atmosphere might have generated tuberculosis among them. At the initial stages of any health sufferings the people generally preferred the quacks of local medical stalls. In many cases they medicines could not redress the problem and gradually the problems got turned over with many complications. Again, the busy working schedule had almost snatched the opportunity from them to take their bath and food regularly; even in many cases they had to skip their meal. Ultimately most of the time they remained hungry but their labour of work never got reduced rather than it increased rapidly. As a result frequently they fall in a number of ill health conditions. It has been reported that the concerned people who revealed the truth that they were suffering from tuberculosis were assisted with the Direct Observatory Treatment (DOTs) by the colony health sub centre. However, if an in-depth survey was initiated from the end of the government then it was afraid that tuberculosis or its trace would be found in most of the families of the studied area. Even there was high probability that the child population would also be a sufferer. Meanwhile, pure drinking water and modern means of sanitation were acutely scarce in the studied area. It became an additional criterion to generate a number of water borne diseases among the studied people. Although a few BPL families were facilitated with the modern sanitary means, but it was a very mere against the total requirements; even the families who were

facilitated only a partial support was given to them and the remaining part was advised to manage by themselves. However, the poor families who could hardly manage their food, it was a luxury for them to manage the modern sanitary means. Thus the partial facility would never met up with proper accessibility in the real life and ultimately the entire situation remained as same. As a result, in most of the cases, the people were selecting the river bed and the household vicinity for the said purpose. The foul smell emerged from it was making it very hard for the people to breath a fresh air. It has been reported that in the studied area the feature of reproductive mother child health was very poor. The health sub centre provided immunization to the reproductive mothers and the children. However, often the reproductive mothers forgot about their immunization as they were busy with the work. Even immunization drop out of the children was also frequently noticed. As a result there was a high probability that the children might get suffered from those diseases, for whose prevention he was supposed to be immunized. During the field Study it was noticed that among the concerned people some beliefs were persisted in mind depth related with the immunization of the children. Particularly, the aged female folk had a strong belief that immunization generated a number of other diseases in the tender body of the children. Moreover, such prevention made the Goddess Sitala or Teesta Buri angry and the children had to face their anger. They had a cultural belief that measles and pox were the blessings of Goddess Sitala on an individual. So, if artificially it was prevented then an individual would lack her blessing in course of livelihood. Under such circumstances the worker of the local health sub centre had a mere chance to immunize the children properly. Even if they had a plan to go to those families to share the views, often they were thrashed out with abusive languages. Most importantly the pulse polio campaign also could not meet up with complete success in spite of rigorous effort. Even if the health staffs conducted door to door campaign, in most of the cases the guardians were absent in the families and the children or neighbours could hardly tell them the fact. On the other hand if the concerned parents were in the houses, still their illiteracy and lack of general health awareness hindered them to reply the questions properly as asked by the health workers. It is to be mentioned here that generally the women and the children mostly came to the health centre for the medicines. It has been reported that the injured places of the people often got swelled up. The western

medical practitioners stated that it might be due to their alcoholic nature. Again as most of them were suffering from anemia and malnutrition, thus the levels of Red Blood Corpuscles were low among them while the levels of White Blood Corpuscles were quite high among them. It generated such swelling of body parts including liver, which turned into the fatal cases like cirrhosis of liver. It has been reported that among the seasonal diseases, in summer the frequency of diarrhoea and dysentery was much higher. Again, in monsoon skin diseases and water borne diseases were much prevalent. During the winter season, the concerned people were mostly suffered from fever cold and cough. Thus throughout the entire year everyone was more or less suffering from some sort of health problems. Along with that major or minor occupational injuries were a regular phenomenon. In case of the studied people frequently occurring diseases and occupational injuries as well as long term diseases and occupational injuries were noticed both in case of male and female as well as for children and adult in numerous forms. These are discussed below in detail.

Regarding the frequently occurring diseases of the children lack of proper care was considered as the prime causal factor. It was admitted by the concerned parents that they went for work by keeping their children in the houses. Mostly, their activities were seldom noticed and even they used to lick different waste and rubbish objects. In such a way germs might get contaminated and they suffered from different ill health conditions. Again, the concerned families had hardly any scope to purify the drinking water for the children. Even when they took them to the river bed, the parents provided them the river water for drinking as observed in a number of cases. Obviously such polluted water might have generated multifarious ill health condition among them. Often their busy working schedule reduced the scope to feed their children at a proper time and hardly they could maintain any specific schedule for it. As a result, it might generate numerous digestive problems and allied ill health condition for them (Table 6.41). Further, related to the long term diseases among the children, the concerned parents stated malnutrition as the prime cause of a few diseases. Economic scarcity had reduced their scope to provide adequate food for their children. It might have reduced their resistance and physical tolerance and often they got suffered to a number of diseases; even they might be anemic due to it. On the other hand in a number of cases the concerned parents took their children regularly to the river bed.

Prolonged exposure to the polluted stone field and the dust of the stone might created the problem of skin allergy, ear swelling among them. Further, most of the time, they were exposed to the scorching sunlight of the river bed. Again as the parents were busy in the work they had a mere scope to look after their children all the time. It was noticed that the children were frequently getting drenched into the river water and again playing in the sunlight. Accoridng to the view of the western medical practitioners, it might generate temperature imbalance within their body and fever, cold, cough became a common phenomenon for them. Further, in a number of cases the concerned children were associated with their parents in the work. During such works often their tender body parts meet up with a number of injuries and often the wounded place became swelled up with mucous secretion (Table 6.41).

On the other hand, the adult male and female members were the prime earning member of the studied families. They had to work day long in every circumstances and by facing every adverse conditions. They had a mere scope of adequate food and nutrition, required to conduct such heavy work load. Again, the dust and heat of the stone, sand etc. as well as entire working atmosphere created a number of ill health condition for them. Meanwhile, the concerned work is associated with a number of physical injuries which were quite painful and could generate other complications. Thus the stone crushing work and its consequent factors were primarily responsible for most of the diseases and ill health condition among them (Table 6.42).

Table 6.41: Natural causes of diseases in case of children

Natural Causes for F.O.D.					Total cases
Irregular food		Polluted water	Lack of care		
26		51	72		149
17.45		34.23	48.32		100.00
Natural Causes for L.T.D.					Total cases
Malnut rition	Impr oper care	Polluted water	Dust of Stone	Injury during work	
21	42	5	15	27	110
19.09	38.18	4.55	13.64	24.55	100.00

Source: Field Study

Table 6.42: Natural causes of diseases in case of adults

Natural Causes for F.O.D.				Total cases
Irregular Food	Heavy work load	Stone crushing work	Polluted water	
12 2.17	75 13.56	314 56.78	152 27.49	553 100.00
Natural Causes for L.T.D.				Total cases
Irregular Food	Heavy work load	Stone crushing work	Polluted water	
15 2.44	152 24.72	341 55.45	107 17.40	615 100.00

Source: Field Study

Again, related to the long term diseases of the adults, it has been reported that their prolonged association with the stone crushing work, working atmosphere as well as occupational injuries were primarily responsible for numerous critical ill health conditions. Moreover, often they used to drink the river water to quench their thirst, which might have generated a number of health complications for them probably in the form of jaundice, diarrhoea and dysentery (Table 6.42). According to the report of local health sub centres and from the filed Study, it was revealed that the concerned work was primarily responsible for tuberculosis, chest pain, asthma, respiratory problem, number of physical injuries with swelling among them.

Further, it was reported by the concerned women folk that their heavy work load, malnutrition, lack of proper cleanliness and the generated heat of stone and sand were the prime responsible factor for their different menstrual cycle related problems (Table 6.43). Again, it has been reported that such complications often created unwanted pregnancy for them and they were forced to by the family members abort the baby.

Table 6.43: Cause of diseases for women's physiological problem of menstrual cycle

Problem in menstrual cycle	Causes				Total cases
	Heavy work load	Malnutrition	Heat of stone and sand	Lack of cleanliness	
Leucorrhea	3 16.67	6 33.33	9 50.00	-	18 100.00
Irregular period	-	2 18.18	7 63.64	2 18.18	11 100.00
Irregular discharge	-	2 18.18	7 63.64	2 18.18	11 100.00
Abdominal pain within period	-	5 100.00	-	-	5 100.00
Excessive blood discharge	2 28.57	1 14.28	-	4 57.14	7 100.00

It is to be mentioned here that in case of the long term disease of the children, the concerned parents foremostly opted the western medical treatment as mentioned below-

Table 6.44: Cases of initially opted western medical treatment

Cases of children in short term diseases			
Male	Female	Total cases	
80	69	Male	Female
22.73	20.00	352	345
		100.00	100.00
Cases of children in long term diseases			
Male	Female	Total cases	
66	44	Male	Female
66.00	54.82	100	81
		100.00	100.00
Cases of adults in short term diseases			
Male	Female	Total cases	
317	236	Male	Female
65.63	55.66	483	424
		100.00	100.00
Cases of adults in long term diseases			
Male	Female	Total cases	
353	262	Male	Female
73.08	61.79	483	424
		100.00	100.00

Source: Field Study

It was noticed that in a number of cases the parents whose children were suffering from frequently occurring diseases and if it remained uncured by the traditional healers then in any further cases they used to initially prefer the western medical treatment. On the other hand for the adults, in case of both short term and long term diseases western medical treatment was mostly preferred. It has been reported that the traditional healers imposed numerous restrictions related to their treatment. However for the concerned people it was rather difficult to maintain such obligations, while they needed an early recovery from their sufferings. Meanwhile, sharp gender biasness could be noticed related to their treatment. In the studied families, the adult male members were considered as a prime earner and head of the family. His physical well being and working capability was earnestly needed for the sustenance of the family. Thus if he felt ill then his treatment was earnestly required for the quick recovery. Again in the studied families if both the adult male and female were ill or suffering from an health disorder, then the prime attention was given to the treatment of the male and secondarily for the female (Table 6.44).

Meanwhile in certain families, the females were the prime earning member due to illness of their husbands. However, with that earning they tried to provide the prescribed medicines for the husbands at their level best. So, in the studied families the adult male folk enjoyed the priority over the treatment which was rather a cultural acceptability for them.

The western medical treatment required a prolonged duration. Most of the medicines were not found in the Government medical institutions and the concerned people had to purchase it from the market. Even in Government medical institutions some unidentified agents asked for some bribe from them to find out the medicine. For such purpose an allied economic expenditure was required. Further in most of the cases the medical practitioners prescribed numerous pathological tests for them. However due to lack of proper infrastructure, they could not do it in the local health sub centre or even in primary health centre. On the other hand a visit to North Bengal Medical College needed undesired economic expenditure related to transportation and day long stay out there. On the other hand, the economic scarcity prevented to conduct such pathological test from market based private clinical centres. Ultimately such prolonged medical treatment needed a lot of economic expenditure and time. The stone crushing people were not at all in any position to spend their valuable time in vain as well as to bear the huge burden of economic expenditure. In contrary the medicines from the quacks, could give them a quick temporary recovery and they could resume their work very soon. It can be noted that for the studied people, more duration of working involvement could provide more amount of money for survival. Thus irrespective of wasting such valuable time behind the medical treatment it was a better option to go for a quick recovery from the ailment and to utilize the precious time in proper way to earn for the sake of livelihood. Further the different methods of western medical treatment are discussed below-

Table 6.45: Method of western medical treatment among the children and adults

For F.O.D among children				For L.T.D. among children			
Medical institution	Quack	Homeopathy	Total case	Medical institution	Quack	Homeopathy	Total case
30 20.13	101 67.79	18 12.08	149 100.00	20 18.18	80 72.73	10 9.09	110 100.00
For F.O.D among adult				For L.T.D. among adult			
Medical institution	Quack	Homeopathy	Total case	Medical institution	Quack	Homeopathy	Total case
135 24.41	379 68.53	39 7.05	553 100.00	167 27.15	429 69.76	19 3.09	615 100.00

Source: Field Study

If western medical treatment of the children were considered for both frequently occurring and long term diseases, then they generally preferred the quacks and thereafter western medical institutions (Table 6.45). On the other hand, in case of western medical treatment of the adults they preferred the quacks foremostly for both short and long term diseases (Table 6.45).

From the field Study it has been reported that the concerned people preferred the quacks for a number of factors.

The quacks were easily available within their locality and their medicines could be easily found at the local dispensaries. The western medical treatment required a prolonged duration and allied economic expenditure were necessary to accumulate the medicines. The stone crushers were not in a position to spend their valuable time in vain as well as to bear the huge burden of economic expenditure. The medicines from the quacks could gave them quick temporary relief and they could rejoin their work very soon. If the western medical treatment was considered, in most of the cases they were cured or partially relieved from their frequent and long term sufferings (Table 6.46).

Table 6.46: Result of western medical treatment among the children and adult

For F.O.D. among children				For L.T.D. among children			
Cured	Not cured	Recovered	Total case	Cured	Not cured	Recovered	Total case
90 60.40	27 18.12	32 21.48	149 100.00	73 66.36	23 20.91	14 12.73	110 100.00
For F.O.D. among adults				For L.T.D. among adults			
Cured	Not cured	Recovered	Total case	Cured	Not cured	Recovered	Total case
376 67.99	31 5.61	146 26.40	553 100.00	312 50.73	37 6.02	266 43.25	615 100.00

Source: Field Study

From the field Study it has been observed that particularly the stone crushing occupation, working atmosphere and local environment had generated a number of ill health condition and occupational injuries for them. Their continuous working involvement had created acute injuries on the eyes, fingers, hands and even legs. In a number of cases, mucous secretion was noticed from such injured places and it had become an ulcer. Further, chest pain, asthma, respiratory problem and even tuberculosis were quite prevalent among the studied people. These critical diseases might have occurred among them due to continuous exposure to the dusty and polluted working environment. Meanwhile in most of the cases, they used to neglect their health problems at the initial stages and find out temporary remedial measures. Often within a very short period the cases emerged out as much complicated and sometime the western medical practitioners found it very difficult to cure their health problems. It has been noticed that the health suffering of the stone crushing people had a binary factor. In one hand they had to face multifarious occupational injuries and on the other hand due to polluted working environment as well as due to lack of proper means of livelihood, safe drinking water and sanitation numerous burden of diseases were highly prevalent. Although the colony had a health sub centre, but it was lacking with adequate man power and proper supply of medicine as well as allied facilities. Thus along with the poverty and hunger, ill health condition, occupational injuries and numerous burden of diseases had become a part of daily life for the studied people.

It was quite clear that continuous increase of population was a major problem in the studied area. Due to continuous influx of the people a very limited portion of

land became over crowded. During the Study it was observed that hardly any vacant place would be noticed in the colony. The established huts were almost hand logged with each other and merely any space of aeration was to be noticed. Ultimately such over burden of population created more polluted atmosphere throughout the entire area. On the other hand local panchayat and their higher authorities were yet to take any initiative either to prohibit the population influx or to provide the people adequate health care facilities. The local health sub centre had a very limited infrastructure. With that minimal level it was almost impossible for them to meet up with the medical needs of the concerned people. In most of the time it was not provided with sufficient amount of medicine. Even if the medicines were there, the demand of it was in a multiplied number in comparison to the supply. The said sub centre was lacking the infrastructure to conduct the child birth. In such cases often the communication emerged as a major problem for them to avail the facility of western institutional delivery. Ultimately it was conducted in the households; however a number of cases were unsuccessful. Moreover merely any initiative was taken by the local panchayat to organize any regular health camp or health awareness campaign in the studied area. Even the local Panchayat had seldom taken any initiative to purify the wells other sources of drinking water. Again, the concerned people could hardly manage their basic needs of livelihood. The living condition of the people were in a worst ever condition. The local administration tried to provide the needed facility to the people but it was quite disproportionate according to the demand. It is to be mentioned here that after displacement the studied people selected the stone based occupation for their common minimum livelihood. They did hard manual labour work as much as possible to meet up with the familial requirements. Meanwhile in earlier through agricultural work and domestication of cattle, poultry birds at least they had the security of their daily food. But after displacement and further resettlement they were no more associated with agricultural work and domestication due to lack of agricultural and grazing land. Even their scopes of rearing of poultry birds were hardly to be noticed. They had to completely depend on market based products. However their earning was a major obstacle for the purchase of the same. It has been already mentioned that among the studied families the practice of kitchen gardening was almost lacking. Consequently, it reduced the scope of them to manage the food resources within

the courtyard and the alternative accessibility of supplementary nutrition was snatched from them. Their mere purchasing capacity could hardly manage the vegetables from the market. The hard manual labour and quality of food was quite disproportionate among the studied people and it might have generated numerous health problems among them.

In case of the studied families it was noticed that they had only one or two set of dresses for every individual. They used to wash it mostly with water because they had no money to purchase the expensive accessories of washing. It was noticed that the studied people mostly used to take bath in the river water and they had a very limited time to take bath from their busy working schedule. Hardly had they found enough time to maintain proper physical cleanliness for themselves and their children. The huts of the studied people settled on Balasan river bed was not properly constructed and they remained quite adjacent to one another in a congested fashion. Those were not properly ventilated and sometime it became difficult to respire properly. Within a single room a number of family members had to stay together. Most of their settlements were lacking from basic scientific amenities like sanitation, drainage system, electricity etc. Even mostly they had to work within their dwelling room. Thus their settlement and dwelling hardly generated any scope for a healthy and hygienic livelihood. In such a condition it would be hardly possible to maintain a good health condition. They used the polluted water of river and open well for daily livelihood requirement without any proper purification through boiling. Poverty reduced their scope for minimum utilization of fuel. Naturally several water borne diseases were highly prevalent among the studied people. Further, they utilized the smoke emitting fuel only. On the other hand in a congested and improperly ventilated hut it might create some sort of respiratory problem. It is to be mentioned here that most of the families somehow managed to provide the food twice for all of their family members. It was mostly confined without any sort of regular animal protein. They used to take food after long duration of gap because within the busy working schedule they had hardly any time to look after any other things. Thus mostly they had to conduct the arduous manual labour in an empty stomach which might not be good for their health. Even to earn a square meal the pregnant women also had to do the work regularly for long hours. Poverty forced them to ignore their several cultural taboos related to a pregnant woman and earning became their prior focus of

attention inspite of any cultural obligation. She was hardly given any special physical care or any special nutritive food. Even most of them were not provide any proper western medical check up or required immunization during their pregnancy period. Mostly they preferred home as the place of child birth under the care of midwives who had no western medical knowledge. Collectively such factors might be a cause of fetal loss and child mortality in the studied area. Again, after the child birth the busy working involvement of the mothers' restricted them to look after proper care of their children and significantly in most of the cases the immunization of the children were not provided regularly. In a number of cases the elder brothers or sisters look after their younger siblings while the parents remained busy in work to earn a fold of rice. The studied couples were well aware about the family planning but they did not accept it. It might be due to the fact that for better earring they were in need of more working hands. On the other hand due to high rate of child mortality they were not sure about the survival of their child and always preferred for another to secure their scope of earning. Further the stone based occupation and working environment had generated a number of diseases, ill health condition and occupational injuries for them. The prolonged duration of hard manual labour in a dusty polluted working atmosphere and in an empty stomach had created a number of ill health conditions for them. It became a part of their daily livelihood. However, they initially ignored such cases. It might be due to the fact that wastage of time behind the treatment would ultimately reduce their working schedule and scope of earning. If not cured then generally they preferred the quacks because they were available within the locality and the people were in need of a quick recovery with minimum economic expenditure. However a number of such cases gradually became complicated and they had to go for the western medical institutions for thorough check up. Meanwhile it became hardly possible for them to waste their valuable time for treatment rather than the work. Their absence from work created severe crisis for the family and the burden of treatment landed them into huge debt from local sources. Thus whenever they felt cured to a certain extent, they used to discontinue the treatment. During the Study it has been reported that the neighbourhood relationship were not harmonious and cordial. Jealousy, quarrel and conflict were a part of their daily life. Often the neighbours influenced a number of supernatural agencies to create misfortune and ill health condition to

the targeted person particularly the children. On the other hand as their settlement was also adjacent to the river bed and crematory place thus a number of evil supernatural powers were believed to be quite influential in the studied area. Such cases often made the people vulnerable to a number of ill health condition and in such cases they became psychologically depended on the traditional healers. However due to lack of different required medicinal plant resources in the studied area had reduced the scope of the traditional healers to cure the health sufferings of the people by the applying their knowledge. Further, it can be noted that, poor level of income could hardly meet up the desired familial requirements. Poverty, scarcity, insecurity of settlement and identity crisis became an integral part of their daily life. Along with them addictions and gambling of adult males was the undesired economic burden in connection to familial requirements. Often it created familial quarrel between the couple with exchange of abusive words. Thus among the studied families the working atmosphere and livelihood circumstances were hardly suitable for physical and mental well being. Particularly for the children such issues might be quite detrimental for their psychological development and personality formation. In case of the studied people familial, neighbourhood as well as overall social relation had created additional mental stress, conflict and tension to them, in-spite of peaceful co-habitation. Thus, it can be stated that in the context of present Study, the mental and social health of the social crushers had been violated very seriously.

From the overall discussion it may be summarized that, before the displacement the studied people were never economically rich. But the local environment, occupation and settlement ensured their security of food, physical health condition and mental peace. After displacement they were exposed to an absolutely new occupational and social environment. Such circumstances became hardly able to secure their livelihood. They became forced to adjust with the working schedule, working environment and social environment. In every aspect of their life they had compromised to earn a fold of rice for their survival because they had no alternative. Anyhow they became compelled to get attached with the stone based work and in this entire process they became suffered from several diseases, ill health condition and occupational injuries. Even their mental well being, peace and happiness could hardly be noticed.

Due to certain unwanted political turmoil they were forced to get displaced. It affected their society, culture and traditional economic organization in various ways. After the resettlement a proper economic backbone was an earnest need for the concerned people. However the stone based occupation was unable to provide it to the concerned people. With a mere source of income, they could hardly manage the common minimum livelihood requirements of food, nutrition and proper health care facilities for them. Lack of education was a major obstacle for them to develop a general awareness about health and hygiene. Lack of proper infrastructure of the health Sub centre was an additional criterion in this regard. Further, the nearest Primary Health Centre as well as the Medical College had better health infrastructure. However, the frequent check up associated with western medical treatment as well as expenditure behind the prescribed medicines had generated an utter reluctance for the people to avail the western medical treatment. Rather they preferred the local quacks for a quick remedy of their diseases as well as to regenerate the working schedule. Further in consequence to that they became affiliated to a new occupational environment and social circumstance which severely told upon their health situation related to occupation and daily livelihood. By health we mean the physical, mental and social well being. In the perspective of the present Study, the three dimensions of human health was being seriously violated by a number of correlated factors like economy, education, working environment, livelihood condition and social situation. The life of the studied people passed through the continuous phases of earlier settlement, displacement and resettlement. During this process their traditional agricultural occupation became altered by hard manual labour work. Consequently along with the changes over settlement, occupation and occupational environment, their health status passed through the continuous phase of good health condition to the vulnerability of several diseases, ill health condition and occupational injuries. Among them the health problem was not an individual matter, rather the entire community was affected by it through generations. Form the overall discussion, it can be stated that the entire studied occupational group had gradually lost the status of good health condition and became vulnerable to several diseases, ill health condition and occupational injuries. Thus, in the studied area the overall health problem was not an individual matter, rather the entire community was affected through it for generations.

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CHAPTER-VII

GENERAL OBSERVATION

All over the world there are various groups of people and for their survival they are engaged in various occupations. It is necessary for the maintenance of their livelihood which includes food, dress, shelter, health, education and so on. It is the fact that for survival yet many of the people depend on primitive economy like hunting, gathering, shifting hill cultivation, terrace cultivation, pastoralism etc whereas many people depend on modern economy and in between there are so many groups of people. In this regard the hunting gathering, pastoralism, various types of agriculture, jobs in various sectors, business, trade, labour work etc are treated as the prime economy of the people. Economy is an integral part of the human life. It plays a very significant role to form the culture and social structure of human society. Apart from various psychological needs, material wants are very essential for fulfilling the demand of daily requirements. To get these or fulfill their demands, people depend on various occupations. Such occupations are very much related to the nature and it depends a lot on the availability of natural resources. Besides these human being can develop new types of economy by applying their knowledge.

Every community has its own way to meet its basic needs for the existence of its members failing which they are threatened with extinction. As example for survival the ethnic groups like Inuits, Jarwa, Onge, Chenchu etc depend on hunting gathering; Toda, Kahasa on pastoralism; many depends on shifting hill cultivation, terrace cultivation, settled cultivation etc. Moreover there are so many people who depend on various occupations for maintaining their livelihood. It is the fact that due to various reasons like natural calamities, environmental degradation, socio-political crisis, terrorism, modernization, globalization and so on the traditional occupation of various groups of people may get changed. Such adverse situations insecure and even sometime destroy their sources of earning as well as occupation which may create a serious crisis on their life and livelihood. Therefore the opportunities of earning may not be very simple for all the people as it is very much influenced by different adverse situations and even those may

threaten their survival. Under such situations only for survival many of the said people have to be engaged in various hazardous occupations like stone crushing, working in tobacco industry, mining works, brick industry etc as they had no alternative. Such occupations could adversely affect the health situation and other developmental perspectives of human being. Meanwhile due to lack of other better alternative occupation and only for survival the concerned people are forced to get engaged themselves in those types of occupation.

The present study has been conducted in Balasan colony on the Rajbanshi families who came from Bangladesh and other districts of North Bengal. Earlier they were settled agriculturist. However the changing situations forced them to associate with the stone based occupation. They were forced to get displaced from their ancestral settlements due to socio-political turmoil and other socio-economic reason. They were traditionally agriculturist and each family had their own cultivable land. The Rajbanshis had their own cultural tradition, social norms and customs. They were primarily concentrated in Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal and Rajsahi, Jashohar, Dinajpur of contemporary Bangladesh. However, in the context of an earlier study I came to know that a section of Rajbanshi people who were mostly migrated from Bangladesh further became resettled in the Balasan colony which was adjacent to the Siliguri town of Darjeeling district. They were engaged in the stone based occupation and were dwelling on the vested land of the river bed. They were living in different adverse situations. Their agricultural land, settlements were either grabbed or looted during the socio-political turmoil in Bangladesh. Due to lack of any alternative economic resource and only for survival they engaged themselves in a hazardous occupation like the stone based work. The overall situation of the said people had attracted me to know about their situations in detail. In this regard various issues raised up to my mind. They lost all of their properties in most of the cases, their land were forcefully grabbed during the socio-political turmoil in Bangladesh and due to various reasons most of the studied families came to the Balasan river bed as an illegal and undocumented migrant. Were those situations affected their traditional socio-cultural practices, if yes then to what extent and how? Does displacement had any detrimental impact on their traditional occupation and socio-economic life, if yes then at what level and how? During the study they were engaged in a hazardous occupation i.e. the stone based work, was it

sufficient for maintaining their livelihood? If not then was it creating any problem in their daily life and what were those? They were living on the vested land of the river bed but whether the place was appropriate for settlement? They were compelled to come here illegally as resourceless and roofless in condition; had it forced most of the family members to get engaged in the studied occupational pursuit? If yes then how long at what extent? Only for survival they engaged themselves in a hazardous occupation like stone based work, is it any way affecting their livelihood, if yes then how and at what level? They were the undocumented and illegal migrants, thus could they have the security of basic human right attributes or they were debarred from it? In an overall aspect how they were adjusting and adapting with this new environment and changing situation?

The above issues significantly attracted my attention and to know about them in detail the studied area i.e. the Balasan colony has been selected. To conduct the study the families who were engaged in the stone based occupation had been selected. The study was mainly done on the basis of primary data collected through empirical field work by applying anthropological research methods. Such issues are discussed below in detail-

The present study has been conducted among the families who were associated with stone based work in Balasan colony. All of them belonged to the Rajbanshi community and in earlier they were associated with agricultural occupation. However due to certain socio-political and socio-economic crisis they were forced to get displaced and became roofless and resourceless. In search of livelihood and occupation they came in Siliguri and found the scope of stone based occupation. The Balasan river bed provided them the place of resettlement and opportunities of a new occupation against manual labour. Gradually they became affiliated with the stone based occupation and it became an integral part of their daily livelihood. Among them all of the family members were associated with the stone based work. Due to displacement numerous changes can be noticed in their life and livelihood. In every aspect they had to adjust with different inconveniences because they had no other alternative. Most of them were dwelling in the studied area as an undocumented migrant as they had no document of Indian citizenship like voter identity card, ration card etc. They could not even thought to leave their settlement and occupation because in elsewhere they would not get any minimum

scope of livelihood. Thus within the studied settlement they became compelled to struggle for their survival.

In earlier the studied people were associated with settled agricultural work. Land was their sole property and agricultural productions sustained their livelihood. Due to several factors they were forced to get displaced and due to displacement they became completely roofless and resourceless in condition. They had a very limited amount of cash in their hand and with that mere amount it was simply impossible for them to start a new occupation or to purchase a plot for resettlement. They had completely lost their previous economic security. For survival they selected the Balasan river bed because the vested land provided them a scope of resettlement without any financial burden. It became possible only through local adjustment and influence of local political parties. On the other hand the river based resources like stones, sand, boulders provided them an alternative economic pursuit and the scope of much needed income because such raw materials had a huge demand in different construction works of Siliguri and several neighbouring areas. Gradually they started to collect the river based resources and used to supply them according to the demand. The said work required only hard manual labour without any sort of capital investment. On the other hand the studied people had no other better alternative and it compelled them to become affiliated with the hazardous stone based occupation. Arduous manual labour was the only way of income in the studied occupation. It can be noted that for the sake of earning throughout the entire Balasan river bed a huge number of families were solely depended on the river based resources. Still a number of families were coming to the studied area for their settlement and occupation. Thus to generate the scope of better earning and livelihood an individual was supposed to become affiliated in the work as much as they could. Meanwhile more working hands were essentially required for better scope of earning. All the studied families applied their best possible level of capability to work and for the sake of survival they had to face severe struggle in every aspect of their livelihood. In the said occupation both male and female were equally involved. Even in most of the cases their children were also directly affiliated with the stone based work. The studied occupation had no age, gender biasness and they regularly remained involved in the arduous manual labour to conduct the stone based works. It can be noted that the lease of the river was taken by an

urban contractor. He used to select a few person from the studied community as the *Sardars* or local work organizers. The common workers used to conduct their work under the supervision of a particular *Sardar*. The Sardars used to pay the labourers according to their quantity of work. It can be noted that for survival and better scope of earning, all the concerned people had tried for every possible opportunities of work. Throughout the entire day they were compelled to do the work in a dusty and polluted working atmosphere. They started the work early in the morning and spent the entire day in hard manual labour without any leisure period. To earn a fold of rice they had hardly any scope to look after their physical well being or any other recreation. Inspite of such rigorous effort their level of monthly income were quite poor in condition. On that mere income a number of family members were directly dependent. The studied people completely had to depend on the expensive market based products in every aspects of their livelihood. Such mere income was a major hindrance for them to fulfill their common minimum livelihood requirement and it might have a greater impact on different aspects of their livelihood.

Livelihood of Human being is primarily related with the security of certain fundamental requirements like food, dress, shelter, education, health and those can get secured only under a strong economic backbone. However, economy of the studied people was quite poor in condition and as a result it might be difficult for them to maintain their livelihood as well. Food is the most essential requirement for human survival. In case of the studied families, before their displacement the agricultural productions, grazing land, domestication and other sources of economy provided them the security of regular food. However in the studied area there was no scope of agricultural work, domestication and rearing of game birds. Even the studied people had no scope of fishing from the Balasan river. For food they had to depend on the expensive market based products. Their poor income would hardly provide the scope to afford the required amount of food for their every family member. Even if the children demanded for more food then they had no scope to redress their hunger. The studied families somehow used to manage rice, pulse and vegetables as their regular food twice in a day. Only a few families could manage any type of animal protein in their diet even once in a week. It can be noted that during the pregnancy period nutritious diet used to become an obvious requirement for the expected mother. However the

studied families had not the economic capability to provide any sort of special nutritive food for their pregnant females. It is to be mentioned here that the studied people used to wake up quite early in the morning and within a very short period they used to get affiliated with their work. Before going to the work in some cases they used to have a little amount of food or otherwise in most of the cases they had to start the work in an empty stomach. During the busy working schedule they did not have any fixed time of lunch and even sometime they got the scope of lunch only in the afternoon. Mostly the concerned people and even their children used to have their lunch in the dusty and polluted river bed. However after the lunch they had the scope of food only in the dinner. Thus the studied people who were associated with arduous manual labour work used to remain hungry for most of the time. The mere amount of food might not be similar according to the requirement of the studied people and it could hardly redress their hunger. Even during the pregnancy period the female folk had to do hard manual labour work and mostly she used to remain in empty stomach.

In respect to dress of the studied people it was observed that most of them had only one set of dress. They used to wear it in their home as well as during the work. Often it used to get drenched by river water and it used to get dried on their body. They merely had any sort of winter garment to prevent the cold and chilling breeze of the river. Further, it was noticed that as they had only one set of cloth thus it became difficult for them to wash it properly because the alternative wearing were almost absent. Further due to economic scarcity they could hardly provide a new set of dress to their children even during festive days or in any special occasion. It can be stated that they did not have required amount of dresses even they had not the capacity to purchase a new set of dress for their every family members under such acute economic scarcity. Their mere income somehow provided the scope of living under different constraints and only by adjusting with those inconveniences.

Further if we analyze their status of dwelling then it was the fact that they were compelled to get displaced from their earlier settlements of Bangladesh and became completely roofless and resourceless in condition. They were desperately searching for any mere scope of survival and only for that they became bound to get affiliated with the hazardous occupational pursuit. Further they got the scope of resettlement on the vested land of Balasan river without any sort of capital

investment. They did not have the financial capability to purchase any plot of land for their settlement. They established the small huts only by local adjustment and under the local political influence. However their huts were not properly constructed. Their floor were earthen, walls were either earthen or made up of cane and bamboo, while the roofs were either made up of tin or bamboo. Most of their huts had only one dwelling room. They used to cook either within the dwelling room or it was confined within a corner of their earthen balcony. Within the sole dwelling room a number of family members were compelled to stay together. The rooms were not properly ventilated and quite suffocating in condition. On the other hand in the studied area the huts were quite congested to each other. Proper ventilation of a hut was hardly to be noticed. However, the congestion of neighbourhood hut and a sole dwelling room was not favourable to maintain privacy particularly for the females. The children had no separate space for their study and mental development. They had to read within the unwanted disturbances created by their family members and neighbourhood. Ultimately it might have hampered their concentration on the studies. Further, most of the houses were lacking the facilities of proper drainage, scientific means of sanitation and electrification. After the dusk in most of the cases they used to spend their life in darkness due to lack of electrification and their economic inability to purchase the fuel for the source of light. Further, as their huts were not properly constructed thus frequently they used to get damaged. However, their economic scarcity hardly provided them the scope to repair them on requirement. Particularly during the monsoon rain water used to get penetrated from the roof and their earthen floor, walls used to get moist. In those conditions such places created an utter hardship for their dwelling; but they had no scope of alternative and somehow they managed their survival. On the other hand, due to their lack of identity related to citizenship they could hardly claim the rights over the facilities provided by the Government of India and West Bengal. The locally influential persons used to provide such facilities only among some of their known individuals but it could not meet up with the required need of the people. As most of the huts had a single room of dwelling thus they had no scope to accommodate any other person or their kin members. As a result their kin members who were living in adjacent areas or neighbourhood districts, hardly visits to them and it had been detrimental to their kinship based social relation. Thus their place of

dwelling was hardly favourable for a suitable living or to maintain any proper social relation.

Among the studied people illiteracy was a common phenomenon. Displacement, migration, resettlement might have seriously affected their education. Even due to this fact many of them were compelled to discontinue their studies. Among the generation of descendants poverty became a major obstacle for education. Even due to this fact many of them were compelled to discontinue their studies. Among the generation of descendants poverty became a major obstacle for education. The parents due to their poverty could hardly provide basic educational infrastructure of books, pencil, copy to their children. Their children had only one set of school dress and when it was washed then they had no scope to attend their school without dress. The parents could even hardly provide the required tuition fee to their children. Again to support the families economically they had to get affiliated with the work regularly. During the time of school they had to remain engaged with the work in most of the cases. In case of the studied families work and income of the children were the priority and compulsion which hindered them to conduct their studies regularly. Their tender stomach used to strive in hunger. The children did not have any separate place of their studies. After the dusk due to lack of electricity and other sources of light mostly it became difficult for the children to continue their studies. Again, whatever the books and copies they had hardly managed it used to get drenched and damaged due to the penetration of rain water into their huts. Moreover the household and social environment were also quite significant related to their education. Addiction of their fathers, practice of gambling and other illegal works within the locality, acute familial and neighbourhood chaos, had hardly provided them any scope of proper educational environment. Even they could not get any guidance in studies from the parents due to their illiteracy. Such issues had created several inconveniences to their education and gradually they used to loss their interest over education. Frequent drop out from the education was a common occurrence in the studied families. Thus, although the generation of the children and adolescent group were literate, it was mostly confined below the completion of secondary level. Only a very few had qualified the secondary level. Further, it can be noted that in the studied area there was only a primary school. The students who had completed the primarily level could hardly get the scope of admission in higher academic institutions of

outside to their locality due to lack of identity and citizenship. Thus it was the fact that due to displacement, migration, scarcity, lack of separate space to study in the room had collectively created severe obstacle to their education. Further their compulsion for work and earning, lack of parental guidance, familial conflict, different illegal activities were the additional factors which had ultimately hindered their scope of education to a greater extent.

The studied people when got the scope of resettlement and new source of occupation, they had a lot of hope and aspiration to live in peace and happiness. However, in reality the situation was that in every aspect of livelihood they had to face a number of obstacle to acquire their common minimum livelihood requirements. For survival they had to face a severe struggle. The prime earner of the families could merely fulfill the livelihood requirements of their family members. They were living in an absolute insecure condition. It was the fact that the prime requisites which were essential for maintaining the daily livelihood were quite insufficient and to manage it they had to face a lot of difficulties in every aspect.

The studied people were forced to come in the Balasan colony due to several reasons and ultimately they were facing numerous difficulties to maintain their daily livelihood. Due to socio-political turmoil their place of ancestral settlement and traditional occupation got altered. In this regard they shifted from agricultural to stone based work and started to dwell on the vested land of Balasan river. Obviously it had an impact on their family, marriage and kinship. They had a strong inter familial bondage and the eldest male members were the prime decision making authority. After displacement most of them became scattered from their family members. Even in a number of cases the people got remarried and established their new family. With the changes of agro based economy to stone based economy their family became shifted from joint to nuclear in nature. Apart from other reasons primarily due to poor level of earning they preferred to have nuclear families. It became a noticeable trend in ego's generation whereas in case of their fore fathers' joint families were predominant. The reason for such nuclearisation might be attributed to poverty and scarcity of livelihood requirements. It was a fact that the aged people could not earn a noticeable amount like their younger children. Thus they often became an unwanted burden

for their children, because the prime earner of the families first had to think about his own wife and dependent children. They preferred their parents when they had more working capability and a fair amount of earning. As soon as the collective familial income got reduced the young married children expressed their unwillingness to bore the burden of food and livelihood requirements of their aged parents. Every time the prime earner of the families had to face the continuous pressure of demand from their family members but they could hardly fulfill their daily requirements. Such situations created familial quarrel in between them and it severely violated the familial peace and harmony throughout the entire studied area. Financial crisis was a major obstacle for the studied families to conduct the marriage ceremony of the children. Particularly in case of the daughters it was more difficult. In the studied area a number of people used to come from different places related to the work. A few incidences created insecurity for the young girls to a certain extent. The parents were interested to conduct the marriage ceremony of their girls quite at an early age. However, arrangement of dowry often became a major factor and sometime they had to cancel the entire process. It was the fact that the people of outside the locality were quite reluctant to establish any sort of marital relation with the families of Balasan colony who were associated with the stone based work due to their poverty, lack of identity and insecurity related to unauthorized settlement socio-cultural environment and so on. In earlier their marriage ceremonies were performed with utter enthusiasm and every kin members and neighbourhood participated in that ceremony. However during the study due to economic scarcity the marriage ceremonies became much reduced. A number of rituals were discarded because the required items were unavailable within the locality. It was organized mostly within the family members. Kin members from outside or neighbourhood were seldom invited during the marriage ceremony. It was because of the fact that they did not have any money for unwanted expenditure. In earlier the concerned people had a strong kinship based affiliation. But due to displacement and migration they became scattered from one another. Even if they stayed within the studied locality the interaction became much more reduced. After resettlement their life became very much insecure and their income was worsely affected. It did not promote any undesired economic expenditure for the kin members. With a very poor level of earning even it became almost impossible

for them to manage their livelihood. Beyond that if they had to maintain frequent interaction with other kin members then it would be difficult to maintain both the ends. The people had hardly any scope to invite their kin relatives to their bizarre settlement due to lack of space and comfort. It also reduced the level of interaction in between them. Ultimately displacement and poverty had reduced their kinship based social interactions and solidarity to a great extent. Earlier the kin members used to participate in each others joys and sorrows. But in the studied area due to several factors the studied families became much more self centric and could hardly think beyond their own beneficiary.

In their early settlement the concerned people performed a number of cultural programmes and celebrated different social occasions. They used to play a number of games and sports. It was significant aspects of their social life because it helped to strengthen inter personal relation and community level of understanding. Even after the initial phases of resettlement also they used to continue it in their life. Gradually day by day the studied area became more populated and the natural resources of the river were started to get shared by a large section of population. It made their earning more competitive and they hardly found any leisure period for recreation. After the day long work they became physically and mentally exhausted. They seldom had any interest to go for any sort of physical amusement. However, in the studied area an yearly event of sports was organized but it had lost the earlier enthusiasm. The studied people used to remain in arduous manual labour throughout the entire day. To earn a fold of rice they had to exercise their extreme level of physical capability, whereas women and children were also not excluded from it. The studied female folk had to work both in the family and in the stone field. They could rarely have the chance for any sort of mental recreation, gossiping or any other amusement. In most of the families the children were also directly involved in the stone crushing work. Due to work they had to discontinue their study in most of the cases. They had hardly any scope to enjoy their life in childhood merriment and cheer. Rarely could they get the opportunity to play. Still sometimes they used to play football, carom etc. However, if it was noticed by their father then they were cursed or beaten up because by playing they were wasting the valuable moments of work. In the studied area after the daylong arduous work the adult population used to get involved in alcoholism, gambling etc. For them it was the only method of mental

recreation by which they tried to forget their poverty, hardship and obstacles at least for a certain period of time. Even if they used to play the games often the quarrel broke out between the parties and sometime it turned violent in nature. It can be noted that miserable condition of livelihood had reduced their tolerance very much and even some minimum issue ultimately created acute conflict among them.

It was the fact that there were several crisis in the daily life of the studied people and those were also the responsible factors for creating disturbances in their life. Certain unwanted socio-political factors forced the studied people to get displaced and resettled in the Balasan colony. However, they had no authorization of their settlement and till date they were recognized as an undocumented migrant. They had no record of identity and citizenship. It possessed always a threat for them that the administration might vacate their land at any point of time and it might make them roofless once again. On the other hand due to lack of identity they could hardly claim over the Government aided facilities. Thus they were deprived in every aspect of life and rather they were recognized only as an occupational group in outside. During the study they were under the domain of modern political organization. The studied settlement gradually developed through the local adjustment of the people and under the influence of some persons. Verbally they controlled over the entire work organization and settlement of the local people. In the studied area the local administration was controlled by the modern panchayat. However, due to several causes the social life of the studied family members were mostly in disturbed situation and it was not only disturbed in a particular family rather it was a common phenomenon of each and every affected family of the studied area. The studied people had no legally authorized right over their settlement. They always had the fear that administration could evacuate them at any moment and always it generated a sense of insecurity among them. Further their dwelling huts were not properly constructed and it was lacking certain basic amenities. The hard manual labour used to give them a poor level of income in return. Such mere income could not even provide the security of livelihood requirements for them. Poverty and scarcity became synonymous with their livelihood. The social environment of the studied area was also not good. A number of illegal works, inter familial, intra familial conflicts became a regular phenomenon for them. The younger generation hardly expressed any sort of

obedience and regards to their elders. In every aspect the disintegration of social value system could be noticed among them. Such issues always played as the probable causes of chaos and conflict among the studied families.

At the familial level, being physically and mentally exhausted when the prime earners came back to their huts in the dusk, then he was told about the scarcity of food and allied familial requirements. He could hardly fulfill a few of them and most of them remained unsatisfied. It initiated the exchange of unpleasant words in between the family members. Their neighbourhood relationship was also not very much peaceful and harmonious. Due to economic crisis and several other problems acute mental stress could be observed among the family and community members as a whole. They were living with very much psychologically disturbed in condition.

The overall consequences created a circumstance of frustration which resulted in an acute state of depression among them. Often those circumstances forced them to get involved in chaos, conflict, illegal affairs, gambling, addictions and so on. The studied people used to get involved in gambling with a hope to earn more but ultimately used to loss their mere belongings also. They consumed alcohol to forget for sometime about their miserable life but it ultimately snatched their merely earned money and their poverty got increased into manifold. In the studied area ever since the birth a child could notice acute poverty, scarcity and insecurity in every aspect of their life. It gave them hardly any scope for proper psychological development, personality formation and socialization. Peaceful co habitation could be rarely found in the studied area. The people hardly maintained any cordial harmonious relation. Obstacles in livelihood and struggle for common minimum requirements severely told upon their value systems, norms and fellow felling for each other. Jealousy, misconduct and lack of respect remained as the way of behaviour with the neighbourhood. Displacement created disorganization in their society and still they were on the way of disintegration. They became migrated to avoid the conflict and to live in peace and dignity. However, in reality after resettlement different social problems emerged out and complicated the entire situation into manifold. From the overall discussion it may be said that their social and economic situation hardly provided them any scope to live in a peaceful co habitation and their mental state as well as social circumstances were not supporting a favourable condition of living.

The stone based work and the socio-cultural, working environment generated a number of ill health condition and occupational injuries for them. The economy of the concerned people was quite poor in condition. To earn a fold of rice they had to do rigorous had work in every climatic season in the dusty and polluted working environment as persisted on the river bed. Regularly they had to do the work in the waist deep or chest deep water of the river. They used to get drenched, their dresses used to become completely wet but they did not get the scope to dried up them. It used to occur on their body only. Again during the summer they used to work under the scorching sunlight; during the monsoon throughout the entire day they had to do the work by getting completely drenched from tip to toe; in winter they had to face the chilling breeze of the river as well as had to collect the stones, sand from the river water by getting down to its depth. Thus in every season their works used to get conducted but it always gave all sorts of physical discomfort to them. The Balasan river bed was quite dusty and polluted due to the collection and breaking up of stone, sand and frequent movement, loading of vehicles. Thus for the workers even a fresh intake of breath used to be hardly possible. Their poor level of income could only provide a little amount of food twice in a day for all the family members. Even they could not provide sufficient amount of food to the children on their requirement. The studied people used to do the work mostly in their empty stomach and the duration of food consumption used to be quite long. It might be the fact that the people who were engaged in hard manual labour might need adequate amount of nutritive food to conduct their work. However in case of the studied people it was a different reality. The females even during their period of pregnancy used to do the work regularly for their familial requirements. However, for her provision of any better diet could never been possible. Regularly they used to take their lunch in the dusty and polluted stone field to save their time of work. It can be noted that the stone field was regularly used by most of the families as a place of excretion and sometimes for cremation. Naturally it was not advisable as a place to consume food. Further they merely had any scope to consume purified drinking water. Mostly they used to drink the water of polluted river or open wells without any scope of purification. Their huts were not properly constructed and in most of the cases those were lacking from certain basic amenities like scientific means of sanitation, proper drainage and sewage, electricity etc. The earthen floor, walls of

their huts frequently used to get damaged and became almost unhealthy in condition for their living. Their huts were very congested, not properly ventilated and when under such construction they used to cook within the dwelling room then it became suffocating even for breathing. Most of their huts had a single dwelling room. Particularly the children and adolescence could not find any separate space for themselves and it might have certain impact to their personality formation. In the studied area as most of the families were lacking from sanitary means, they used the household surroundings and the river bed as a suitable place for this purpose. Lack of proper drainage system often used to create acute water logging in the colony and any sort of heavy shower used to make it as a bog pit.

The people used to remain busy in the hard manual labour work throughout the entire day. They had hardly any scope to maintain proper cleanliness of their body and clothes. In the morning they used to clean their face only with water. Further, they had their bath by dipping once or twice in the river water within a quick succession. Even after sewage they hardly used to clean themselves with soap. In most of the cases they had only one set of dress thus rarely they had the possibility to wash them properly. As a result their dresses were looked like quite filthy. On the other hand dressing of hair and nails were also not frequently done by the studied people as those were time consuming and related with economic expenditure. Even the mothers had hardly enough time to properly clean their children. The colony was itself quite dusty due to the works related with stone, sand etc. Consequently their huts were also quite dusty and shabby in looking. Collectively such issues might have certain impact on their health situation.

In their poverty stricken families diseases and health problem could only create additional economic burden for them. In the studied area the western medical institution was even lacking with some common minimum infrastructure. For better treatment people had to go for higher level of medical institutions at distant places which was rather a long and continuous process. Among the studied families time of work was very crucial for earning. Thus they were not at all interested to waste much time behind such treatment. Generally they preferred to consult with the local quacks to save their time and money related to treatment. However most of such cases often became complicated and then the people became compelled to go for long duration of treatment. In the mean time to conduct the treatment often they had to take loan from local sources and the

economic condition of such families became much poorer. The entire situation made them bound to discontinue their treatment and to go for the work as early as possible. In such a way some of the cases became chronic in nature and certain occupational injuries had created a permanent physical anomaly among them. Even to earn a fold of rice the pregnant women could hardly follow their cultural taboos. They had to work hard during pregnancy. Even after the child birth she could not care the baby properly, because in their poverty stricken families affection of mothers would hardly redress the hunger of their children. It compelled them to focus primarily on earning and in this consequence often they forgot about the immunization of their children. Certain cultural stigmas also created major obstacles related to immunization of the children and their probable future effect remained as a matter of concern. The studied people had a strong faith related to the role of different super natural agencies which could create different ill health condition and misfortune for them. In such cases they became very much depended on the traditional healers. Due to scarcity of required medicinal plants in the studied area the concerned healers faced a number of obstacles to continue such treatment. The stone based work and the working atmosphere was responsible for a number of diseases and occupational injuries among them. Poverty and lack of medicinal plant resources had created certain major obstacles for them to obtain the western medical method as well as traditional method of healing among the studied people.

After displacement the occupation, working atmosphere and social circumstances were absolutely unfavourable for the studied people to live even in a moderate standard condition. Poverty, social insecurity, conflict became synonymous with their livelihood. Along with that the burden of diseases and health problems became an additional criterion to their sufferings. The people had no scope to live in physical, mental or social well being under such circumstances, where as they could get rid from them only after their death.

We are keenly desired to live with dignity by virtue of being a human. In this connection we want the security and protection of our fundamental human rights. In case of the studied people certain socio-political crisis and other issues generated a serious challenge on their social, economic, cultural rights and severely told upon the human dignity whereas the people were getting humiliated

in every aspect. Such issues forced them to get displaced and they searched for an alternative settlement where they could live in peace and with dignity. After getting resettled in Balasan colony it was expected that the stone based occupation would provide them an economic backbone and they would get the security of their fundamental rights. However, with the passage of time the entire scenario became absolutely different from their expectation. They were engaged in a rigorous manual labour but their earning was very poor. Even it was below than the fixed amount of Government rate. They exercised their extreme physical labour to supply the raw material for urban development but their economic condition was quite bizarre. A number of family members were depended on a very poor amount of income. They were not getting their proper wage against their labour as per Government regulation and it deprived them from their economic right. They had no authorization over their settlement and they had no identity in the new settlement. It completely violated their rights to citizenship and nationality. The studied people had no scope to accumulate their regularly required food through agriculture, domestication etc. They had to completely depend on expensive market based products for food. However poverty was a major hindrance for them to provide the food for every family member as per their requirement. Even they could not secure the required amount of food and nutrition for their pregnant women and children. The studied people used to conduct arduous labour work mostly in empty stomach or in hungry stomach. Thus in every aspect their rights of food and nutrition of every studied people had been seriously violated. Even they could not get the purified drinking water. They mostly had only one set of dress. Due to economic crisis the parents could not provide a new set of dress for their children in festive days. It signified that their right to dress was also not secured. Further, the huts of the studied people were not properly constructed. Most of them had a single dwelling room where a number of family members were compelled to live together. Often their huts used to get damaged, but they could not repair them due to poverty. They were financially incapable to purchase a plot of settlement in outside and somehow managed to stay on the vested land of Balasan river bed. Particularly during the rainy season water used to get penetrated through roof and the earthen floor, wall used to get swelled up and damaged due to absorption of moisture by the soil. In such cases it became almost impossible for living. There huts were lacking other

basic amenities also. It was a fact that due to poverty they had no scope for better means of settlements; on the other hand due to lack of identity and citizenship they had to face different obstacles to avail the Government aided facilities. Thus their right to settlement was also seriously violated. The children had to support their family economically and they became compelled to do the work. It had reduced their scope to attend the school regularly. On the other hand economic scarcity of the parents became a major hindrance to provide adequate educational requirements for their children. Even they could hardly pay the tuition fees regularly. Ultimately such issues collectively created an obstacle to their education and the cases of drop out, discontinuation were a common occurrence. Again the issues of identity crisis and lack of citizenship hindered their children in the educational enrollment at the higher level. Thus there were multifarious aspects which violated their rights to education. Disease and occupational injuries were a part of their daily life. The studied area did not have a well equipped western medical institution. On the other hand such medical institutions were outside of the studied area. It would ultimately become difficult for the affected people to avail those facilities mainly due to transportation associated cost as well as the long schedule of treatment. In their poverty stricken family every moment was valuable for working and earning. Thus they were quite reluctant to waste their precious time behind the medical treatment. Temporarily they used to have some medicine from the local quacks or according to the nature of ailment they preferred to consult with their traditional healers. However, in most of the cases it did not meet up with permanent curing and often became more complex. However, they had compromised with their physical suffering to their maximum level of tolerance for the sake of earning and work. Ultimately their rights to health had been seriously violated as well. In case of the studied people the basic amenities of livelihood were required to have at least the minimum level of security for every individual. However, those were far from meeting up with the actual requirement of the people. To survive they had to struggle in every aspect and in spite of such hard struggle they merely got the basic requirements while most of them remained unfulfilled. Thus their basic rights to livelihood had been seriously violated in every aspect.

The studied Rajbanshi people had their own cultural tradition, ancestral settlement, traditional occupational pursuit. Land was their prime property and the

land based productions, other local resources helped to sustain their livelihood. However due to severe socio-political turmoil they were forced to get displaced and further migrated. In this way they lost their ancestral settlement and traditional occupation. They became completely roofless and resourceless in condition, whereas for survival they were searching for any sort of alternative. Further they got the scope of resettlement on the vested land of Balasan river and for survival became compelled to get affiliated with the hazardous stone based occupation. However, the studied occupation became unable to provide them the much desired economic security and their rights to basic amenities of livelihood have been seriously violated. Thus due to displacement they lost their traditional occupation and further it degenerated their economic backbone. Further due to displacement the traditional joint family system of the studied people got diminished and they lost their close kin members. Even after resettlement and affiliation with the stone based work, the pattern of earning and requirement of livelihood preferred them to practice the nuclear family system, whereas the participation of kin members became much lesser in different social occasion. Earlier related to agricultural work, land and cattle they used to perform numerous rituals. But after displacement along with the alternation of traditional agricultural occupation those rituals became completely obliterated from their society. Thus particularly due to displacement significant alternation could be noticed to their social structure, social organization and traditional cultural practices. Again particularly due to poverty they were facing severe obstacle in accumulating basic livelihood requirements. Ever since the birth poverty, scarcity, hunger, struggle became an integral part of life for a child. Further, the working involvement, livelihood condition and several other factors made them vulnerable to a number of diseases and occupational injuries. Particularly due to the stone based occupation the studied people used to get suffered from a number of diseases and occupational injuries. However due to poverty, lack of proper institutional infrastructure as well as lack of medicinal plant resources the people suffering from different ailment had a very limited scope of proper treatment. Such issues were noticed among the people of the entire community. Different health problems as well as prevalence of different diseases and occupational injuries could be noticed among the members of every studied families. Fear of insecurity related to related to settlement, stress related to the scarcity of livelihood

requirements, undesired social issues, lack of familial integration, had severely reduced their every possibility of mental happiness and well being. Thus the stone based occupation, working environment and social condition had multidimensional effect on the physical health condition and mental happiness. It was not only the matter of an individual or a particular family rather it could be noticed in the entire community and among every studied people. Their entire socio-economic and socio-cultural life became severely affected due to displacement and further involvement in the stone based occupation. The studied occupation had rarely provided them any sort of security to livelihood rather it might have multiple detrimental impacts upon them. They accepted the new settlement and the hazardous occupation of stone crushing with a hope and aspiration for the security of livelihood. However in reality they were exposed to scarcity, struggle, obstacles and inconveniences in every aspect of their livelihood. Ultimately the studied occupation, occupational environment, social environment and livelihood conditions certainly had a number of detrimental effects on the society, culture and health situation of the studied people.

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GLOSSARY

Adhibas: According to the rules of Hindu marriage adhibas is the concerned rituals which are performed before the day of marriage.

Adhikary: He is the local priest of the Rajbanshi community.

Agrodani Brahmin: According to Hindu religion the Ogrodani Brahmins are categorically lower than the priests and they are primarily involved with the rituals related with death.

Ambubachi: According to Hindu mythology it is the pollution period of Goddesses related to menstrual cycle.

Asar Amathi: According to Hindu mythology it is the worship of Goddess Kamrup Kamakhya.

Baro Gopaler Ban: Caused headache with burning sensation in the body and the victim died with a few hours.

Basanti puja: According to Hindu mythology she is another form of Goddess Durga.

Bashi bia: According to the rules of Hindu marriage bashi bia is the concerned rituals which are performed after the day of marriage.

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

Bengali calendar: It has twelve months namely Baisakh(April), Jaistha(May), Ashar(June), Shravan(July), Bhadra(August), Ahwin (September), Krartik(October), Aghrayan(November), Pous(December), Magh(January), Phalgun(February), Chaitra (March).

Bhut: It was a male spirit and came to the household through doors, windows etc. It could attack both male and female at any time of the day.

Bira: 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.

Biswakarma Puja: According to Hindu mythology he the God of engineering works.

Borom Ban: It generates could in the sky and the victim is died due to thunder.

Chaluni or smaller seive: It was made up of both wood and thin iron wires. It had become very much helpful to distinguish between the smaller indivisible stones from the sand. After this isolation they utilized accordingly.

Chandi: According to Hindu mythology Chandi is worshipped as the form of Goddess Durga as the source of energy. She was worshipped for the safety and security of the village and its people.

Chauni puja: Malevolent and it particularly effects the female folk. It is a female evil spirit.

Dar: It was made up of iron rods and altogether it had three rods which were encircled through a ring. *Belcha:* 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. 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.

Dharma Thakur puja: Among the Rajbanshis the Dharma Thakur was treated as the main village deity.

Durga: According to Hindu mythology Durga is the most powerful Goddess and the wife of Lord Shiva.

Dzol pora: Sanctified water as provided by the traditional healer.

Dzuguni Ban: As it was applied, a vulture appeared in the sky and it used to create harm to the womb of the reproductive mother.

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

Gaheli: It was an evil wind and it could create paralysis in body or it could snatch the baby from the womb of the reproductive mother.

Ganga: It is the longest and mythologically most scared river of India.

Garam: Benevolent and protective from evil super natural agencies.

Gayen: It was the prime iron implement for stone crushing work. It was cylindrical in shape.

Ghat: River bank where the dead bodies are set on pyre.

Haat: In Indian villages a local market is organized once in a week. Here people can purchase their essential commodities at a moderate price. Even they can purchase by exchange of goods too. It is known as haat.

Hawa tepa Ban: It accumulated wind in the abdomen and the victim died.

Hectare: The hectare is a unit of area, defined as being 10,000 square meters. $1 \text{ hectare} = 10\,000 \text{ m}^2$

Holi: According to Hindu mythology it is a spring religious festival of colours.

ICDS: Integrated Child Development Scheme, a special developmental programme of Government of India. It is related with the educational and social development of children particularly in the poverty stricken families.

Jamaisasthi: It is the occasion where mother in law performs certain rituals yearly for the prosperity of son in law.

Janmastami: According to Hindu mythology on this very day Lord Sri Krishna took birth.

Jhajhri: The said implement was made up of iron. 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.

Jhuri: The said implement was made up of bamboo split. It was mainly utilized to bore the collected stones and sand from the tide to the river bed.

Kali: Kali is another image of Goddess Durga and the wife of Lord Shiva.

KB 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. 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.

Kirtan: During religious occasions it is the musical forms of mythological songs where a large section of community participated.

Kodal: The major component element of the said implement was iron and wood. With it they used to dig up the soil to collect the stones and boulders from the river bed.

Laxmi: According to Hindu mythology Laxmi is the Goddess of wealth and wife of Lord Narayan.

Loknath: According to Hindu mythology he was a saint.

Lord Sri. Krishna: According to Hindu mythology he is the God who protects the Earth from evils forces.

Manasa: According to Hindu mythology Manasa is the Goddess of snakes.

Masan: Benevolent and supreme God.

Masna Ban: It generates ulcer to the whole body of the victim.

Meheri buri Ban: It created madness to the victim.

Modon Kam: Benevolent and performed in the community level.

Mogor: It was an extremely dangerous male spirit. It attacked to any male or female in the night.

Naba Brindaban: According to Hindu mythology it is the worship of Lord Krishna and Devi Radha.

Nabanna: It is a Bengali harvest celebration, celebrated with food, music and dance on the cultivation of new crops.

Narayan: According to Hindu mythology Narayan is the prime God. He protects the entire universe from the evil effect of the demons and other destructive forces.

Ojha: In the villages of India ojha is the traditional magico-religious healer. The villagers were depended on him for the ailment of different diseases. He used local medicinal plant resources for the same. He even could redress the venomous effects of the poisonous snakes.

Patta: The documents necessary for the ownership of a residential land is called as patta. It is a title deed.

Pettani: If an unmarried woman died she became a Poiri, while if a pregnant woman died she became Pettani. They generally used to attack the children.

Phota: In the villages of Bengal women wore a piece of cloth, which covers their body from chest upto knee.

Poiri: An evil spirit which causes complications during pregnancy.

Pous sankranti: According to Hindu mythology it marks the transition of Sun into Capricorn sun shine on its celestial path. Traditionally it has been one of many harvest days in India.

Puja: The method of religious worship according to Hindu ritual is known as Puja.

Rakhi: According to Hindu mythology it is the sacred tie of brotherhood.

Sabol: It was a long, rigid and cylindrical iron implement. It was used to dug up the river basement or the river bed to collect boulders and stones.

Saiva: According to Hindu mythology the Saivas' are the worshipper of lord Shiva.

Sankranti Charak puja: According to Hindu mythology it is a folk festival of West Bengal and Bangladesh to worship lord Shiva

Shakta: According to Hindu mythology the Saktas' are the worshipper of mother Goddess.

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

Shitala: According to Hindu mythology she is treated as pox Goddess.

Shiva: He is the most powerful God according to Hindu mythology, who is also known as the destructor.

Shivmandir: A location adjacent to the studied area at a distance of around 1 km named after the temple of Lord Shiva.

Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad: It is the administrative body at the Subdivisional level of Siliguri. It was formed in 1986-87 period after the formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council.

Sishu Siksha Kendra: A mission of the Government of India, related to the education of children in rural areas.

Sraddha: According to Hindu rituals after the purification, it is the religious performance with a prayer for the peace of soul to the deceased body.

Surdeo: An evil spirit according to the belief of local people.

Tantrik: According to Hindu mythology the Tantriks are the worshipper of supernatural powers.

Teesta Buri puja: According to Hindu mythology it is the worship of rivers.

Tel pora: Application of sanctified oil provided by the traditional healer.

Tepa Ban: It swells up the abdomen and excretions were seized, which caused death ultimately.

Tulsi mancha: It is the sacred place for the Rajbanshi families within their household territory. Here they kept the throne of their household deity.

Vaishnav: According to Hindu mythology the Vaisnavs' are the worshipper of Lord Sri Krishna.
