

Social and Economic Development

Issues and Challenges in India



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Social and Economic Development: Issues and Challenges in India
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Editors

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Changing Pattern of Occupational Structure and Development Status in Barasat Subdivision of North 24 Parganas District, West-Bengal

Dr. Rajat Halder & Dr. Kalyan Kumar Mandal***

Introduction

Sectoral transformation of economy is a major factor of economic development (Souza, 1985). It is found that, the workers have gradually been decreased in primary sectors.. In 1961, 46.04 percent workers to total main workers were cultivators. In 2001 only 17.7 percent workers were engaged as cultivators. 21.86 percent workers to total workers were agricultural labourers in 1961 and it also fallen into 20.10 percent in 2001. In 1961, 46.04 percent workers to total main workers were cultivators. In 2001 only 17.7 percent workers were engaged as cultivators. 21.86 percent workers to total workers were agricultural labourers in 1961 and it also fallen into 20.10 percent in 2001. So the workers are increased in other than primary sectors i.e in secondary, tertiary and quaternary sectors. Trewartha (1969) observes that an increasingly relative high proportion of workers engaged in secondary activities which is typical of modern world, is a symbol of economic metamorphosis in which there is an increasing use of machine and mechanical power. He also points out that while the growth of secondary sector represents mainly a strengthening of economic potential of a country, a large increment of tertiary activities leading to a well-balanced tertiary group, points to a high degree of national sophistication and a flowering of national prosperity

The Study Area

The study area is one of the most important subdivisions of North 24 Parganas District. It comprises Barasat-I & II, Deganga, Amdanga, Habra-I & II and Rajarhat Community Development (C D) Blocks. Together they cover an area of 996.73 square kilometers with a population of 2789611 (Census of India,

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2011), which is 24.34 percent of total area and 27.87 percent of total population of the district. The study area formerly recognized as a rural agrarian type but now it is mainly considered as urban based industrial zone.

Objectives of the Study

The present study seeks to fulfill the following objectives:

- To trace the changes in occupational structure and sectoral transformation of workers.
- To find out the causes of shifting worker from primary to other economy.
- To find out the impact of such changes on the development.

Methodology and Database

The present study has been made under a detailed methodology. Present work has been carried out with the review of literature; and collection of secondary data as well as other related materials on occupation structure and changing pattern of workforce participation. Data are collected from different books and reports of conventional institution viz, Bureau of applied economics and statistics, Directorate of Census Operation. The study incorporates different methods and cartographic techniques used for data compilation, data analysis and data representation through various statistical, qualitative and quantitative techniques.

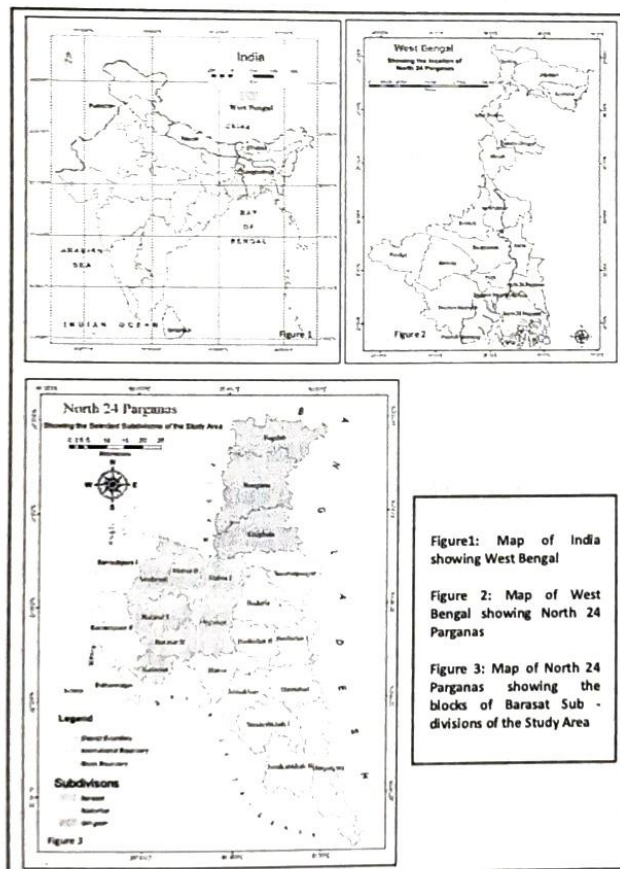


Figure 1: Map of India showing West Bengal

Figure 2: Map of West Bengal showing North 24 Parganas

Figure 3: Map of North 24 Parganas showing the blocks of Barasat Sub - divisions of the Study Area

Changing Pattern of Occupational Structure of the Subdivision

The 2011 Census of India recognized four major occupational group cultivators, agricultural labourers, household industries and workers in other sectors. These are discussed for the study area as follows. In 1961, most of the workers in the study area were engaged in agricultural pursuits. Nearly 6 out of 10 workers seem to be in the agricultural sector either as cultivators or agricultural labourers. 40.37 percent of the workers to total main workers were cultivators. After two decades, in 1981, it was 26.1 percent. In 2001 and 2011 only 11.47 percent and 8.37 percent workers were engaged as cultivators.

In 1961, 18.59 percent of the workers to total workers were agricultural labourers. The ratio between the cultivators and the agricultural labourers in the study area was 2.2:1. In 1981, the percentage was registered with 23.51. It is increased due to natural increase in the population of labourers' households, influx of surplus labourers from the small and marginal farmers' households and the eviction of tenant operators due to the enactment of tenancy legislations. The percentage of agricultural workers to total main workers had fallen. It was only 12.35 percent and 13.23 percent in 2001 and 2011.

In 1961, only 3.35 percent of the workers were engaged in household industries. It had fallen in 1981, and the percentage was registered as 2.03. In 2001 and 2011, it is slightly increased, and the percentage became 3.35 and 3.4. As a whole, the share of working population in the household industry of the study area was much lower.

The other workers consist of the workers in manufacturing in 'other than household industry, construction, trade and commerce, transport and communication, services and in other services'. These types of occupations are considered as secondary and tertiary economic activities. In 1961, the percentages of other workers were only 37.68. 1981, It was registered as 48.37 percent. After two decades, in 2001 and also in 2011 the percentages of other workers were 72.83 and 75.00.

Shifting of Workers from Primary Economy to Other Economic Activities

In 1961, 60.26 percent of the total workers were engaged in primary activities such as agriculture, fishing, plantation, forestry, livestock rearing etc; and 39.74 percent were engaged in 'other than primary activities' such as household industry, manufacturing, construction, trade and commerce, transport and other services in the study area. Most of the workers of the primary sector were engaged in agricultural pursuits. At the block level, the highest percentage of primary workers to main workers was found in Amdanga (87.91 percent) followed by Deganga (77.34 percent). These two are purely rural blocks. The scenario was different in Habra, where percentage of workers in 'other than primary sector' was the highest with 64.02 percent and primary workers accounted for only about 35.98 percent.

The percentage of 'other than Primary workers' to total main workers had increased from 45.28 percent in 1961 to 50.40 percent in 1981. 49.60 percent of the main workers were basically engaged in primary activities in 1981. In 1961 the number of primary workers was 100787 persons and other than primary worker were 70147 persons. The corresponding number in 1981 was 155124 and 157606 persons respectively. The number of people subsisting on primary activities and 'other than primary activities' increased by 53.91 percent and 124.68 percent respectively during the period 1961-1981. So, the growth of workers in 'other than primary sectors' was higher than the primary sectors. In 1981, Cultivators, agricultural labourers and 'other primary workers' togetherly constituted more than 80 percent of the main work force in Sandeskhali (92.26 percent), Bagdah (84.37 percent), Hingalganj (84.37 percent), and Haroa (81.00 percent); where the workers in 'other than primary sector' was below 20 percent. These blocks are located either in Sundarban or border area of Bangladesh. The scenario was differed in Rajarhat, Barasat and Habra where the workers in 'other than primary sector' were 68.92 percent, 58.52 percent and 56.25 percent respectively. These blocks are close to the Greater Kolkata, and a large number of urban workforces have been engaged in non-primary as well as non-agricultural activities.

Table 1: Share of workers to total main workers in North 24 Parganas

CD Blocks	1961		1981		2001		2011	
	Other than Primary Workers	Primary Workers*	Other than Primary Workers	Primary Workers	Other than Primary Workers	Primary Workers	Other than Primary Workers	Primary Workers
Barasat Sub.	39.74	60.26	50.40	49.60	76.18	23.82	78.40	21.60
Habra I & II	64.02	35.98	56.25	43.75	76.81	23.19	76.03	23.97
Deganga	22.66	77.34	21.72	78.28	43.34	56.66	41.55	58.45
Amdanga	12.09	87.91	20.25	79.75	41.56	58.44	43.93	56.07
Rajarhat	53.68	46.32	68.92	31.08	91.88	8.12	96.96	3.04
Barasat I & II	46.72	53.28	58.52	41.48	84.23	15.77	85.30	14.70

*Including mining, fishing, plantation, quarrying, livestock, and forestry.

Data Source: District Census Hand Book of 24 pgs and North 24 pgs.

It is evident from the table-1; there has been a general upward trend in the movement of main workers from primary economy to other economies. Generally this transformation is the result of continuous population growth and shrinking in agricultural land as well as the scope of primary activities gradually. According to Heer (1968), the counter pressure of population growth will take the form of increased motivation to undertake a new organization of economic activities based on a more advanced technology. In 2001 and 2011, the main workers of 'other than primary sector' have increased to 76.18 percent and 78.40 percent in the study area, while in 1981, it was only 50.40 percent. In 2001, the workers in primary sector increased by 1.64 percent on

the contrary, the workers in 'other than primary sector' increased by 209.93 percent over that of 1981. In 2011, the worker in 'other than primary sector' was 682322 persons and the workers in this sector increased by 35.32 percent during the period of 2001-2011. The general trend in the movement of workers was therefore, higher in 'other than primary sector' than the primary sector, because of the following reasons:

- (1) Indian economy is small farmers' economy with limited land and other resources (Banerjee, 1977). According to Shah (1961-62) the major problem of agricultural workers is the lack of work - the unemployment due to rapid increase of population and pressure of land. One of the another reasons for the decrease of the agricultural labourers is that the nature of employment in agriculture is highly seasonal with a cycle of peak and slack seasons owing to labour intensive subsistence type of agriculture practiced in the most of West-Bengal (Chattopadhyay, 2001). There has been a continuous growth of population of the study area, as a result not only the total land but also the proportion of per capita cultivated land has been steadily shrinking in size. Cultivators have mostly small-size of holding of land, and the cultivation is mostly carried out with the help of family labours. The availability of limited available land for cultivation among the households is compelling to its workforce to participate in different non-farm employment (Mehta, 2003).
- (2) The wage rate of agricultural labourers is relatively less than the wage rate of the workers in hosiery, ceramic, tailoring, building constructions, road maintenance, public transport etc. It is found that the changes of wage rate in terms of money of the above stated occupation are faster than the agricultural labourers (table-2).

**Table 2: Increase of Wage Rate of Different Categories of Workers
(Base year - 1980)**

Year	Indices of Change in Wage Rates among Various Workers				
	Public Transport	Construction	Tailoring	Ceramic	Agriculture
2002	922.68	718.32	774.00	809.58	648.89

Source: Labour in West -Bengal, Annual Reports

- (3) The process of urbanization in the study area has been taking place in a faster rate, and urban workforce is increasing day by day. In 2011, 54.66 percent of total population of Barasat subdivision is urban population. The workforce of urban population finds their livelihood in non-primary economic activities which are growing with the neo-liberal economic scenario.
- (4) The development of transport and communication system is another factor for the growth of workers in 'other than primary economy. Commuting with the Kolkata Metropolitan region is now quite easier

due to good railway and road transportation. The development of transport and communication system gives the scope for employment and income generation for its population in 'other than primary sector'.

- (5) Most of the primary activities, mainly agriculture, are sufferer from seasonal characteristics but the secondary, tertiary and other economic activities usually do not suffer due to seasonal factors.
- (6) The progress of literacy and education in the study area is responsible for shift in the economy from the primary activities to secondary and tertiary activities.

Shifting of Workers and Development Status

Development generally is used to describe the process of economic and social transformation within countries (Thirlwall, 2003). The progress of education in Barasat Subdivision can be viewed more rationally from a study of the census figure in respect of attainment of literacy by the people of the study area. Here only 23.42 percent were literate in the census year of 1951. Census of 2001 represented 67.94 percent literates amongst the population of the study area. Because of most of the worker shift from primary to other economy as a result per head income has increased because the wage rate of any secondary and tertiary workers is higher than the agricultural workers. Another factor is that secondary and tertiary activities are not a labour intensive work like agriculture so child of these non-agricultural families need not necessary to go to the work at their childhood rather they get chance to the school.

In terms of per capita small savings the Barasat Subdivision found to be better placed compared to the rural Subdivision. Highest per capita small savings was found in Rajarhat with Rs. 5562.45 (D.S.H.B, 2007). Because of the workers of the Barasat Subdivision are mostly other than primary workers who do not suffer from the Problems such as seasonal economic characteristics like agricultural and allied activities. Secondly the wage rate of other than primary workers is also higher than the Primary Workers. The average of the study area was Rs 849.64 per capita per annum.

Table 3: Growth of Literacy Rate in Different Decades in North 24 Parganas

CD Block	Literacy Rate in Different Decades						Per Capita Small Savings (in Rs per annum)
	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2001
Barasat Subdivision	23.42	30.79	38.71	47.57	54.88	67.94	-
Habra-I&II	30.29	37.37	45.59	55.3	60.59	71.88	3787.98
Derange	17.83	21.61	28.2	34.99	43.03	57.72	193.38
Amdanga	16.34	19.85	24.69	37.22	46.48	60.72	128.79
Rajarhat	22.75	29.93	39.17	49.79	59.53	71.32	5562.45
Barasat-I&II	23.08	32.51	40.84	47.62	54.84	68.18	1000.54

Source: District census Hand Book, Statistical handbook, 2001