CONCLUSION

Implicit in the previous discussion is the fact that a tremendous change has taken place - both spatial and temporal in the realm of agro-economy of Serampore subdivision. The very changing agricultural landuse is directly related to the needs of growing human population. It was established in the foregoing chapters that the very location of the subdivision extending from the Hooghly industrial belt, in the east, to the typical rural scenario near the Damodar river, in the west, vividly depicted the gradual change.

With the influx of population, the urban areas along the Hooghly river gradually encroached on the adjoining rural areas towards the west. The communication network increased greatly during the last three decades that gave to the people of urban fringe (Serampore and Uttarpara police station) a good accessibility to the urban amenities and better education than to the people of distant villages. With the establishment of new industries along the National Highway, in addition to the earlier industries along the Hooghly river, job opportunities in the secondary and tertiary sectors increased. The availability of assured steady income made the urban fringe people less interested in agriculture (traditionally an unreliable source of income). Arable land, orchards, fallow land, etc. could not resist the onslaught of the growing industries and demand of land for other infra-structural
facilities including newer settlement sites. These also made the urban fringe people less dependent on agricultural avocation. As secondary and tertiary occupations provide assured steady income than agriculture, people of the urban fringe villages are moving away from agricultural pursuits and their interest in cultivation is on the decline. Thus, those crops that require less labour and care get preference in this area. Environmental pollution from various industries and increasing pilferage of crops are also responsible for declining interest in agriculture which is reflected in the lowest level of agricultural development in the context of the adoption of modern technology in the fringe area.

The agro-economic characteristics of the villages situated in distant area (Jangipara police station) are altogether different from that of the villages in the fringe area. The type of spatial and temporal changes are also not identical to that of fringe villages. Here, a high percentage of land is brought under plough mostly at the cost of fallow and culturable waste land. Cropping intensity has also increased to a great extent. The increasing net sown area indicates that the prime task of the land is to provide food for the growing population. Cultivators also adopted modern technology to get better return from the soil. As a result, this area shows a very high position as regards agricultural development. The increasing production of cereal crops makes the area surplus. Development of transport and other infrastructural facilities have accelerated the level of agricultural development.
The transition villages (Chanditala police station) resemble a transition character between fringe and distant areas in respect of priority to agriculture, adoption of modern agricultural techniques, selection of crops, occupation, etc. The increasing percentage in non-agricultural avocations in this part implies that return from agriculture could not support the people fully to sustain their livelihood. The ratio between production and requirements of cereal crops in Chanditala also proves the above statement. The increasing accessibility to the urban and industrial centres encourage the people to shift partly from agriculture to more secure and better income yielding professions. A good number of people, though at present practising agriculture, are seeking non-agricultural occupations. However, the change is not abrupt. The transition villages situated near the urban fringe villages are akin to the later while those near the distant villages have much similarity with the distant villages.

Thus, within the frame-work of present investigation it can be said in the conclusion that:

(1) more land is involved in change near the urban areas than that in the distant rural areas in respect of general landuse between 1954-57 and 1980-81. It is 33.06, 9.12 and 5.89 per cent in fringe, transition and distant areas respectively,

(2) more land is involved in change in distant rural areas than that in the urban fringe when agricultural landuse between 1954-57 and 1980-81 is taken into consideration. It is 20.13, 24.31 and 36.03 per cent in fringe, transition and distant areas respectively,
(3) not sown area in the urban fringe decreased from about 48.62 per cent to 32.69 per cent of the total area during last 36 years (i.e. 1944-45 to 1980-81),

(4) expected increase in area under vegetables is not discernable in the fringe zone due to encroachment of suitable areas by settlements. On the contrary, an appreciable increase in area under vegetables is found in transition part due to increase in accessibility to the urban markets. The increase of vegetable areas in transition zone is about 56 per cent in nearly four decades. Area under cereal crops has decreased by about 6 per cent in urban fringe areas while it has increased by about 37 and 55 per cent in transition and distant areas respectively from 1944-45 to 1980-81,

(5) distance from the urban centres and dependency on agriculture is highly positively correlated with the level of agricultural development. Correlation values are 0.83 and 0.72 (significant at 1% level) whereas density per km$^2$ of net sown area is negatively correlated. Correlation value is - .58 (significant at 5% level),

(6) dependency on agriculture is closely correlated to the distance from the urban areas. In 1961 people dependent on agriculture (in sample villages) was about 44 per cent, 70 per cent and 76 per cent in fringe, transition and distant areas respectively, while the percentage figures for the similar areas in 1981 were about 28, 64 and 81. Thus, it is observed that (i) the people of urban fringe villages are marginally dependent on agriculture,
(ii) the people of transition villages are partially dependent on agriculture whereas (iii) the people of distant villages are greatly dependent on agricultural economy.

Lastly, it may be said that the agricultural economy of Serampore subdivisions is gradually shifting from subsistence to commercial level.