Chapter-V
Poverty Scenario in West Bengal

5.1: Introduction

Before discussing the poverty scenario in the state of West Bengal, it is of utmost importance to know its demography and economy.

West Bengal is situated at the centre of the eastern region of India strategically positioned three international frontiers like Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, sharing its borders with Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa and Assam. It is about 700 km from the Bay of Bengal in the south and has the Himalayas in the north. It covers a total area of 88752 sq. km. It is about 3 percent of total area of India and total population of 913.48 lakh (As per provisional figures of 2011 census). The table-5.1 below shows a comparative picture between India and West Bengal on the growth of population, density and literature during different censuses.

5.2: West Bengal - Early Development

To understand the incidence of poverty in rural India during 1960s and 1970s the consumption basket of Rs. 15 per capita per month at 1960-61 all- India rural prices was taken as the minimum level of living. Table-5.1 shows the estimated percentages of rural people in some 16 states (including West Bengal) below the level of living in 1960-61 and 1967-68.
Table-5.1: Percentage of Rural People below the Minimum Level of Living in Different States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>States</th>
<th>1960-61</th>
<th>1967-68</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andra Pradesh</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>38-51(44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32-52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>38+</td>
<td>61-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>25-37</td>
<td>48+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>42+</td>
<td>67-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>36-47</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>40+</td>
<td>56-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mysore</td>
<td>34+</td>
<td>57-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>56+</td>
<td>64-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>33-</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>46-61(51)</td>
<td>61-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>39-</td>
<td>60-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>22-42</td>
<td>74+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All India</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table-5.1 shows that in 1967-68 about or more than half of the rural people were below the minimum level of living in West Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh. During 1960-61 and 1967-68 there had been a large increase in the number of people below the minimum level in Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Mysore, Punjab and Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

To fight against poverty the Government of West Bengal indentified 4,612 villages as
'backward villages' in 2004. The majority of such villages are located in Dakshin Dinajpur, Uttar Dinajpur, Maldah, Purulia, West Midnapore and Purulia. Two basic criteria- female literacy rate less than 30 percent and marginal and non-marginal workers constituting more than 60 percent- were considered in the selection of 'backward villages'. Many other variables such as mortality rate, income of the family, literacy rate, health facility, etc. were not considered here.

Again, Government of West Bengal conducted the rural household survey in 2006 by its panchayats and rural development department. The survey revealed that 3.5 percent people in the state failed to manage even one meal a day. What is more, 16.5 percent people were not in a position to acquire two square meals per day for all months in a year. In 2007 the state government surveyed in the backward villages and found that 20 percent people received one meal a day. The NSSO in its 61st round survey also found that in the whole of West Bengal there were 9 percent people who could not manage sufficient meal. The job cards are not distributed to a great number of people. The survey conducted by the state government also mentioned in 2008 that about 38 percent of people got jobs under NREGS and on average not more than 14 days work was provided.

Percentages of rural and urban population with inadequate calorie intake have been shown in tables 5.2 and 5.3 respectively.
Table - 5.2: Percentage of Rural Population in the States with an Inadequate Intake of Calories, in 1961-62

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Monthly Per Capita Expenditure Class</th>
<th>Per Capita Total Annual Consumption Expenditure</th>
<th>Total Caloric Equivalent of Daily Diet</th>
<th>Percentage of Rural Population Lying below This Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>8-11</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2495</td>
<td>13.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>11-13</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>2237</td>
<td>18.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>11-13</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>2475</td>
<td>25.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>2380</td>
<td>13.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Punjab (including Haryana)</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>2402</td>
<td>13.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>2222</td>
<td>19.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mysore</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>2238</td>
<td>26.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>2198</td>
<td>37.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>2342</td>
<td>43.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>2233</td>
<td>44.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>2260</td>
<td>47.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>2321</td>
<td>55.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>2303</td>
<td>61.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>2355</td>
<td>62.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Union Territories</td>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>2388</td>
<td>43.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>34-43</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>3007</td>
<td>90.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>38.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All India</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>2194</td>
<td>30.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-5.3: Percentage of Urban Population in the States with an Inadequate Intake of Calories, in 1961-62

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Monthly Per Capita Expenditure Class</th>
<th>Per Capita Total Annual Consumption Expenditure</th>
<th>Total Calorie Equivalent of Daily Diet</th>
<th>Percentage of Rural Population Lying below This Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>2343</td>
<td>21.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>2294</td>
<td>37.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>2365</td>
<td>41.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>2250</td>
<td>42.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>2213</td>
<td>23.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>2568</td>
<td>51.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Punjab (including Haryana)</td>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>2128</td>
<td>52.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mysore</td>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>2273</td>
<td>57.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>2436</td>
<td>58.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>24-28</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>2187</td>
<td>50.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>24-28</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>2293</td>
<td>55.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>28-34</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>2313</td>
<td>48.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Union Territories</td>
<td>28-34</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>2292</td>
<td>48.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>28-34</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>2226</td>
<td>58.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>28-34</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>2196</td>
<td>70.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>43-55</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>2672</td>
<td>88.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>54.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>All India</td>
<td>21.24</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>2159</td>
<td>46.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rural and urban population in the top six and top nine states with higher poverty in terms of calorie intake during 1961-62 respectively have been shown in tables 5.4 and 5.5 respectively.

Table-5.4: Percentage of Rural Population in the top six States with Higher Poverty in terms of Intake of Calorie, 1961-62.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>States</th>
<th>% of Rural Population Lying below the Minimum calorie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>90.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Andra Pradesh</td>
<td>62.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>61.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>55.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>47.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>44.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table-5.5: Percentage of Urban Population in the top six States with Higher Poverty in terms of Intake of Calorie, 1961-62.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>States</th>
<th>% of Rural Population Lying below the Minimum calorie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>88.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>70.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>58.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>58.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mysore</td>
<td>57.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Punjab &amp; Haryana</td>
<td>52.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>51.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Union Territories</td>
<td>48.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>48.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vital information on West Bengal and India has been portrayed in table-5.6 below.

**Table-5.6: Vital Information about India and West Bengal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL No.</th>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>As per 2001 Census</th>
<th>As per 2011 (P) Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Population (in Lakh)</td>
<td>801.76</td>
<td>10287.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Density of Population (per sqkm)</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Percentage of urban population to rural population</td>
<td>27.97</td>
<td>27.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Literacy (percent)</td>
<td>68.64</td>
<td>64.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sex Ratio (Number of females per 1000 males)</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India, 2001 and 2011(provisional)
P= Provisional

Note: Literacy relates to percentage of literates in population aged 7 years and above.

The map of West Bengal is displayed in figure 5.1 below.
5.3: Infrastructure

The power installed capacity in West Bengal is 10194.1 MW (April-November, 2011-12) and power generation capacity is 55527.0 MU. The state offers steady supply of power at a competitive rate. It is well connected with land, water and air with the other parts of the country accounting for 2578 kms of National Highways, 4505 kms of State Highways, and 4500 kms of Railway Network. It has an International airport in Kolkata and a domestic airport at Bagdogra in Siliguri. Two ports are available, one in Kolkata and the other in Haldia.

There are 12 Growth Centres for small and medium enterprises, for electronic industries, software Technology Park etc.

Major Industries


5.4: West Bengal Scenario: current status

West Bengal is the sixth largest economy in the country after Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. The service sector is the highest contributor in the economy of West Bengal. It contributes 65.52 percent of the net state domestic product (NSDP) compared to 18.76 percent from primary and 15.72 percent from secondary sector. During 2011-12, the rate of growth of per capita income in the state was 6.21 percent. During 2011-12 the growth rate of industrial production was 1.8 percent compared to 2.8 percent growth rate at the national level. Similarly, during 2011-12, the
growth of Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) in West Bengal is 6.66 percent against 6.48 percent growth of gross Domestic Product (GDP) in India.

The state is highly dependent on agriculture, although services and industries play an increasingly significant role in the economy. A large part of the state is economically backward, namely, large parts of six northern districts and three western districts of Purulia, Bankura and Birbhum and the Sundarbans area. The Green Revolution (1965) only touched two districts-Burdwan and Hoogly. However, there has been a significant spurt in food production since the 1980s and the state now has a surplus food grain production. Agriculture contributes around 19 percent to the state’s gross domestic product during 2009-2010 (‘West Bengal’ India Brand Equity Foundation, 2011). West Bengal’s NSDP at factor cost( at current prices ,2004-05 Base) is shown below in table-5.7 and this shows an upward rise in the NSDP during 2004-2009 at 2009 price.

Table-5.7: West Bengal’s NSDP at factor cost (at current Prices, 2004-05 Base)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Net State Domestic Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>190,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>209,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>238,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>272,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>309,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>366,318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: “West Bengal” India Brand Equity Foundation, 2011

West Bengal is known for its position among one of the leading industrialized states of India. It is noted as one of the major centre for industries such as jute, steel, tea, sugar,
chemicals and fertilizers. But its share to total industrial output in the country has been in a declining condition (less than 6 percent). Very recently the state has been facing hardships. Land is not made easily available. In this context, it is necessary to have full cooperation from the people and from the state and central governments. The state government, in particular, should come forward to settle the problem and create a congenial atmosphere in establishing large and medium-sized industries along with the thrust for the expansion of cottage and small scale industries (SMEs). Service sector has been the fastest growing among the three sectors at a compound annual growth rate of 15.2 percent from 2004-2005 to 2009-2010. It is one of the country’s leading exporters of finished leather goods. In 2009-10, the state accounted for around 13.5 percent of the country’s exports of leather and leather products. The state accounted for around 70 percent of India’s dried flower exports in 2008-09. It is also the leading exporter of shrimps and tea. However, the rapid industrialization process has given rise a debate over land acquisition for industry in this agrarian state; although NASSCOM-Gartner ranks West Bengal power infrastructure the best in the country.

We will now examine the performance of some of poverty alleviation schemes, such as, Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana, wage-employment scheme, distribution and redistribution of vested agricultural land and registration of bargadars under operation barga.

**Swana Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana** is one such programme for alleviating poverty in West Bengal. The data presented below in table 5.8 show the performance of the scheme from 2001-02 to 2011-12. The performance of the programme is judged in terms of credit disbursed, subsidy provided and physical achievement counted in terms of number of Swarojgaries (self-employed) covered.
Table-5.8: Performance under Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana in West Bengal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2010-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Credit Disbursed (Rs. lakh)</td>
<td>2006.38</td>
<td>2252.39</td>
<td>3161.11</td>
<td>4310.56</td>
<td>6192.87</td>
<td>8688.45</td>
<td>9595.97</td>
<td>5041.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Subsidy Disbursed (Rs. Lakh)</td>
<td>1016.68</td>
<td>1614.98</td>
<td>2254.15</td>
<td>2736.04</td>
<td>3959.82</td>
<td>5400.07</td>
<td>5757.27</td>
<td>2981.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Physical Achievement (number of swarojgaries covered)</td>
<td>15480</td>
<td>18829</td>
<td>28251</td>
<td>33551</td>
<td>46496</td>
<td>63092</td>
<td>66859</td>
<td>33790</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Panchayats and Rural Development Government of West Bengal, 2012.

Table-5.8 shows that there had been sharp increase in the disbursement of credit and subsidies from 2001-2002 to 2005-2006, and from 2005-2006 and continuously from 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. The data for 2010-11 and 2011-2012 were partial (i.e. up to November in each year). For that reason the credit and subsidy disbursed to swarojgaries (self-employed) sharply went down in both the years i.e. during 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. The physical achievement of any programme can best be judged in terms of number of beneficiaries received the benefit and the growth in the number of beneficiaries, the volume of credit and subsidy money received by them. From this point of view, it can be viewed that this programme is successful in West Bengal.

The performance of wage-employment schemes has been portrayed in table 5.9.
Two important wage-employment schemes are in operation in West Bengal as poverty alleviation measure. These are SGRY and MGNREGA. The performances under these schemes are presented in Table 5.9 for 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011 (up to November, 2010) and 2011-2012 (up to November, 2011). Performance under these schemes during 2004-2005, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 was more or less static or deteriorating. The progress was spectacular especially since 2009 in terms of expenditure and man-days creation.

Some progress has been made in the distribution of vested agricultural land in the state of West Bengal to the landless poor, day labourers and marginal farmers. The distribution of such land started since the Congress government. The system of land distribution continued also during the United Front government. The Left Front government in West Bengal claimed their success in land reform. Also the then government claimed that they had done much to the rural poor and marginal farmers through the distribution of vested agricultural land.
They also gave ownership right to the share-croppers registering them by the system of **Operation Barga**. The Left Front government also claimed that they successfully decentralized rural power by the three-tier panchayati raj institutions.

The data presented below in table-5.10 (gathered from the book written by Ajit Narayan Basu, *Paschimbanger Krishi Niti*, page 64) show the distribution of vested land under different regimes, i.e. under congress government, united front government and under left front government.

**Table-5.10: Distribution of Vested Land**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Land Distributed (Lakh Acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress Government</td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Front Government</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Front Government</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ajit Narayan Basu, *Paschimbanger Krishi Niti*, p-64

Data show that the total land distributed to land less and marginal farmers was 6.26 lakh acres (combining the distribution made under congress government and united front government). This is larger than the land distributed under the left front regime in West Bengal i.e. 4.26 lakh acres (up to 2001-2002, Ref. Economic Review, 2001-2001). Up to 2001-2002, 14.95 lakh share croppers had been recorded and usufructory right was conferred on them.

The revised data on vested agricultural land distributed to the poor published by the Land and Land Reforms Department, Government of West Bengal in 2011 are shown in table-5.11 below.
### Table-5.11: Redistribution of Vested Land

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>984032</td>
<td>472443</td>
<td>537141</td>
<td>1993616</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cropped area redistributed (areas)</td>
<td>628284</td>
<td>140417</td>
<td>146688</td>
<td>913389</td>
<td>103800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The area of agricultural land distributed and the number of beneficiaries (as on Nov.30, 2011) are shown in table-5.12.

### Table-5.12: Area of Vested Agricultural Land Distributed and Number of Beneficiaries

**Beneficiaries in West Bengal by District (As on 30th November, 2011)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Area of land distributed (in hectares)</th>
<th>Number of beneficiaries (persons)</th>
<th>Scheduled Castes</th>
<th>Scheduled Tribes</th>
<th>Other Castes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Burdwan</td>
<td>25361</td>
<td>94657</td>
<td>44189</td>
<td>84038</td>
<td>222884</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Birbhum</td>
<td>19698</td>
<td>77307</td>
<td>36743</td>
<td>47465</td>
<td>161515</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bankura</td>
<td>26143</td>
<td>94306</td>
<td>37758</td>
<td>50430</td>
<td>182494</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Purba Medinipur</td>
<td>20407</td>
<td>44121</td>
<td>12407</td>
<td>172759</td>
<td>229287</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Paschim Medinipur</td>
<td>95242</td>
<td>207736</td>
<td>177403</td>
<td>305952</td>
<td>691091</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Howrah</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>6326</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>19405</td>
<td>26273</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hooghly</td>
<td>5419</td>
<td>35885</td>
<td>14524</td>
<td>26357</td>
<td>76766</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>North 24-Paraganas</td>
<td>12401</td>
<td>55717</td>
<td>25047</td>
<td>71410</td>
<td>152174</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>South 24-Paraganas</td>
<td>31574</td>
<td>73128</td>
<td>13482</td>
<td>106571</td>
<td>193181</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nadia</td>
<td>9064</td>
<td>31579</td>
<td>6497</td>
<td>64794</td>
<td>102870</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Murshidabad</td>
<td>18951</td>
<td>34685</td>
<td>9503</td>
<td>126722</td>
<td>190910</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Uttar Dinajpur</td>
<td>29908</td>
<td>79632</td>
<td>22240</td>
<td>56222</td>
<td>157824</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Dakshin Dinajpur</td>
<td>21018</td>
<td>40092</td>
<td>47078</td>
<td>43692</td>
<td>130862</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Malda</td>
<td>31804</td>
<td>41821</td>
<td>30284</td>
<td>89415</td>
<td>161520</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Jalpaiguri</td>
<td>41543</td>
<td>74817</td>
<td>28944</td>
<td>43495</td>
<td>147256</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Darjeeling</td>
<td>12686</td>
<td>19882</td>
<td>14222</td>
<td>19480</td>
<td>53584</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Cooch Behar</td>
<td>26075</td>
<td>87405</td>
<td>5567</td>
<td>41948</td>
<td>134920</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Purulia</td>
<td>29904</td>
<td>32637</td>
<td>35067</td>
<td>30446</td>
<td>98150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>459102</td>
<td>1131463</td>
<td>567497</td>
<td>1400601</td>
<td>3093561</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Land and Land Reforms Department, Government of West Bengal.
Table-5.12 also displays the district-wise distribution of vested land among different categories, such as, the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other castes. Recording of bargadars have been done under the system of ‘operation barga’. The table-5.13 shows district-wise recording of bargadars and SC, ST and other caste people as on November, 30, 2011.

Table-5.13: Recording of Bargadars in West Bengal by District (As on 30th November, 2011) (Area in hectares)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Scheduled Castes</th>
<th>Scheduled Tribes</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Area</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Area</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Burdwan</td>
<td>46310</td>
<td>16689</td>
<td>17908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Birbhum</td>
<td>47044</td>
<td>20382</td>
<td>17543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bankura</td>
<td>31912</td>
<td>7478</td>
<td>12533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Purba Medinipur</td>
<td>21256</td>
<td>3168</td>
<td>1663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Paschim Medinipur</td>
<td>41001</td>
<td>6286</td>
<td>24464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Howrah</td>
<td>10064</td>
<td>2641</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hooghly</td>
<td>38973</td>
<td>8292</td>
<td>13634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>North 24-Parganas</td>
<td>20906</td>
<td>6045</td>
<td>10466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>South 24-Parganas</td>
<td>42100</td>
<td>11677</td>
<td>3604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nadia</td>
<td>20864</td>
<td>5465</td>
<td>1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Murshidabad</td>
<td>14470</td>
<td>4845</td>
<td>2411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Uttar Dinajpur</td>
<td>12339</td>
<td>2785</td>
<td>4412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Dakshin Dinajpur</td>
<td>20288</td>
<td>6376</td>
<td>16116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Malda</td>
<td>20192</td>
<td>8768</td>
<td>20290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Jalpaiguri</td>
<td>28480</td>
<td>15981</td>
<td>13555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Darjeeling</td>
<td>4154</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>3042</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Cooch Behar</td>
<td>50513</td>
<td>19711</td>
<td>952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Purulia</td>
<td>3416</td>
<td>1551</td>
<td>2411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>474282</td>
<td>150043</td>
<td>167325</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Land & land Reforms Department, Government of West Bengal, 2012.

The distribution of vested agricultural land to the landless poor and the marginal farmers and that of registering the share croppers by the system ‘operation barga’ in West Bengal gave a great fillip to the landless and marginal peasants and the share croppers. But the amount of land distributed under this programme was very small or tiny i.e. up to 2000
among 25.44 lakh of landless and poor peasants were distributed vested land and the per head distribution of land is only 0.41 acres. (Economic Review, 2001-2002). This small plot of land is really economically non-viable. But a report responding the distribution of vested land published by the West Bengal Board of Revenue, Statistics Cell, statistical Report VII (Calcutta: 82) tells different story. The story is “it is perfectly understandable that if we want to maintain the status quo we should try to involve as many as people as possible in it so that at least a majority of the population acquires stance in the status quo or the system in question. Keeping this view, it is perfectly reasonable to distribute small bits of land however uneconomic to land hungry peasants and/or agricultural labourers so that they never look for any radical alternative to the present property system and be eager to acquire some property. However to call it socialism is a sad travesty of truth [West Bengal Board of Revenue Statistics Cell, Land Reforms in West Bengal; Statistical Report VII (Calcutta: 82). The poor cultivators mostly could not/cannot cultivate small plots of vested agricultural distributed to them, because cultivating this land cannot give them the crop that may be sustainable. Thus, this transfer of land has become economically non-viable to them.

Under operation barga, up to 2002-03, about 14,000,00 bargadars had been registered. The system allows 25 percent share of crops produced to the land owner if the owners do not bear the costs of other inputs. Thus, in many cases the operation barga becomes economically non-variable. Further, the selling off barga land was just not possible in the late seventies and early eighties of the last century. This right to land offered by the government was treated like the ownership rights. The registered sharecroppers felt that the landowners could not evict them from land at will. But since the mid-eighties onwards huge land selling by the tiny farmers (who received vested land) and registered sharecroppers. Later on, the government passed a bill that provides the tiller “by execution of a mutual
agreement, surrender the right of cultivation in respect of 50 percent of the land cultivated by him as a bargadar, if the owner of the land conveys the right and title in respect of the remaining 50 percent of such land under the same mutual agreement to such bargadar” (Ref. Times of India, 21.11.2006).

Land reform measure in such as distribution of vested land and operation barga to some extent benefited the beneficiaries. But the fact is that there has been rapid increase in landlessness among the rural peasants in spite of distribution of vested land and registration of share-croppers. The National Sample Survey, 1999-2000 also admitted the large increase in the landlessness among the rural households from 39.6 percent in 1987-88 to 41.6 percent in 1993-94 and to 49.8 percent in 1999-2000. This was occurred due to substantial diversification of rural employment to non-agricultural activities (HDR, West Bengal, 2004). The data shown in table 5.14 show the extent of land alienation of pattaholders and eviction of bargadars in West Bengal.

### Table-5.14: Pattadars lost possession and bargadars evicted from land (By 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>% of pattadars who have lost possession</th>
<th>Percent of bargadars who have been invited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darjeeling</td>
<td>14.71</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalpaiguri</td>
<td>16.72</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooch Behar</td>
<td>12.33</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Dinajpur</td>
<td>22.35</td>
<td>31.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinajpur</td>
<td>19.17</td>
<td>30.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malda</td>
<td>10.41</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murshidabad</td>
<td>15.87</td>
<td>19.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birbhum</td>
<td>16.62</td>
<td>9.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdwan</td>
<td>11.93</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadia</td>
<td>11.27</td>
<td>7.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North 24 Parajanas</td>
<td>16.99</td>
<td>16.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugli</td>
<td>14.63</td>
<td>10.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankura</td>
<td>15.45</td>
<td>11.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purulia</td>
<td>16.11</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midnapore</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>15.9</td>
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<td>Hawra</td>
<td>9.34</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South 24 Paraganas</td>
<td>22.07</td>
<td>10.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.23</strong></td>
<td><strong>14.37</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Land and Land Reforms Department, Government of West Bengal, 2002.