References


Deb, N. and M. Hossain (1984), ‘Demand for Rural Industries Products in Bangladesh’, 

Deininger, K. S. and P. Olinto (2001), ‘Rural Non-Farm Employment and Income 
Diversification in Columbia’ World Development Vol.29, No.3, pp. 455-465

Dev, Mahendra, (1990), ‘Non-Agricultural Employment in Rural India: Evidence at a 

3, pp.67-89

Eapen, Mridul (1995), ‘Rural Non-Agricultural Employment in Kerala, Inter-Districts 

Eapen, Mridul (1994), ‘Rural Non-Agricultural Employment in Kerala: Some Emerging 

Ellis, F. (2000), Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries, Oxford: Oxford 
University Press.

Evans, H. E. (1990), ‘Rural-Urban Linkages and Structural Transformation’, Infrastructure and 

Fabella, R. V. (1985), ‘Rural Industry and Modernization’ in Development and Diversification in 
Rural Industries in Asia, (eds.) S. Mukhopadhyay and C. P. Lim, Kuala Lumpur: Asian 
and Pacific Development Centre.

Fields, G.S. and G. Yoo, (2000), ‘Falling Labour Income Inequality in Korea’s Economic 
Growth: Patterns and Underlying Causes’, Review of Income and Wealth, Vol.46, No.2

and Enterprises in Rural India, London: Intermediate Technology Publication.

The Indian Journal of Labour Economics, Vol.38, No.4, pp. 567-576

Govt. of West Bengal, (2010-11), Economic Review, Bureau of Applied Economics and 
Statistics.


Govt. of West Bengal, (2003), *Murshidabad District Gazetteers*, Higher Education Department.


Rural Non-Farm Activities and Poverty Alleviation: A Study on West Bengal

(Abstract)

This study examines the extent and determinants of the rural non-farm activities and also the importance of such activities in reducing poverty and income distribution inequality in rural West Bengal. For this purpose, we analysed both the secondary and primary data. The analysis of the secondary data provided an aggregative idea about the employment diversification processes in rural West Bengal and her districts. Analysis of such data also helped to identify a few macro-indicators that might influence the expansion of the rural non-farm activities in the state of West Bengal. One of the important conclusions from this part of our study is that both the ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors are simultaneously working to expand employment opportunities in the rural non-farm sector in West Bengal.

The primary data have been collected from 400 rural households of one sample district, which is Murshidabad. Analysis of primary data helped to build an understanding about the rural households' participation in the non-farm activities of various types as also the significance of such activities for reducing rural poverty and inequality. An important conclusion from the analysis of primary data is that a vast majority of the rural households obtain their livelihoods from both the farm and the non-farm sectors simultaneously. A good proportion of the workers are also ‘multi-active’. However, this does not depict the true significance of the non-farm activities and the livelihoods diversification process as the non-farm sector itself is highly heterogeneous in nature, ranging from the 'low-return' to the 'high-return' activities. We observed that the access to the 'high-return' activities has been limited primarily due to the workers’ lack of education/skills and assets, inferior caste status, poor land base, and so on. Moreover, economically affluent households enjoyed greater access to the 'high-return' non-farm activities. The poor households are mostly engaged in the 'low-return' activities owing to their distress conditions. Although better access to the non-farm employment/income opportunities reduces the incidence and depth of poverty, the households’ differential access to the non-farm activities (especially those with 'high-returns') causes income distribution inequality in our study areas.