1.1 Scope and Objectives

Economic development of an area depends mainly on the development of both agriculture and industry. The present study deals with different aspects of industrialisation as well as agricultural development in the districts of Burdwan and Bankura in West Bengal during the period 1951-'81.

Our objective here is to examine the trends in growth of industries and agriculture in these districts and also to analyse the various aspects of the development processes achieved in agriculture and industries in the period. The thesis makes an attempt to analyse primarily the trends in productivity, cropping patterns, the structure of industries, the structural shifts of industries, growth of employment and sectoral composition of employment, concentration and localisation of industries and the prospects for small-scale and village industries. Village industries are of crucial importance in both the districts, particularly in the relatively undeveloped

1 See 1.6 below.
district of Bankura. A separate chapter has therefore been devoted to a discussion on the problems and possibilities of these industries.

A shift of employment from primary sector to industrial as well as service sector is considered to be one of the indices of economic development. Such shift appears to have occurred in both the districts in the period from 1951-'81.

Rural-urban migration of population and growth of urban population are associated positively with industrialisation and economic development. The nature of the trends in growth of urban and rural population in the districts has been examined separately.

The study covers two neighbouring districts, Burdwan and Bankura in West Bengal. Of the two districts, Burdwan is comparatively more developed both in agriculture and industry. While analysing economic geography and profile of the districts, one finds some similarity in availability of labour and natural resources. Mobility of labour and cheap, untapped minerals from Bankura to Burdwan, Midnapur and surrounding areas offer good scope for economic development of the Burdwan-Bankura region.

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2 Clark (1957), Kuznets (1965), Datta,B (1960), and Datta,A(1973).
3 Such similarity is present particularly in respect of mineral resources like coal, fire clay, china clay, wood etc.
Development of communication between Raniganj and Bankura facilitates inter-district and intra-district movement, sustains local markets, besides boosting trade and commerce with concomitant development in the remotest corners of the locality. But lack of efficient and adequate railway services in Bankura has stunted its growth.

Special features of both the districts have also been analysed in the discussion on concentration and localisation. A comparative study of the areas will help a better appreciation of the factors impeding and/or helping economic development in other areas as well.

The study seeks to throw some light on female participation in agriculture and industries in the districts.

An attempt has been made to make comparisons of growth patterns and possibilities of Burdwan, Bankura\(^4\) and West Bengal as a whole where data have been available\(^5\).

1.2 Survey of the Existing Literature

While a number of studies have already been made on specific economic problems of Burdwan, Bankura and the general

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4 Burdwan and Bankura mean Burdwan and Bankura districts.
5 Growth patterns of some neighbouring West Bengal districts have also been compared in some aspects.
problem of economic development of West Bengal, no comprehensive study appears to have been made on the economic development of the two districts.

Among these works we find a general study in Boyce. Boyce has studied institutional constraints to technological change in Bengal as a whole. Agricultural growth in West Bengal and Bangladesh in the period 1949-'80 is investigated in relation to demographic, technological and institutional changes. While examining output trends in general he has also discussed the position of the districts like Burdwan and Bankura in the analysis on inter-district variation in performance. He shows that the exponential growth rates of agricultural output in Burdwan, Bankura and West Bengal during the period 1949-'80 have increased significantly. Faster development in Burdwan has also been noticed. His is a significant contribution to the problems of economic development in Bengal as a whole.

A districtwise study on performance of Indian agriculture by G.S. Bhalla and Y.K. Alagh has analysed the spatial patterns of performance of Indian agriculture during 1962-'65 to 1970-'73 at a disaggregated district level. They observe that cropping pattern has significantly affected growth in many districts particularly in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal etc. Both Burdwan and Bankura have been ranked among

7 Bhalla and Alagh (1979).
twenty districts, growth rate ranging from 1.5 to 4.5 per cent.

Siddheswar Roy explains some aspects of technological development of agriculture in West Bengal as a whole since independence.  

In an inter-district study of rural economy of West Bengal Manjula Bose brings out the differences in the levels of development among the districts of West Bengal as given by various economic indicators. Analysing the average ranking of the districts (according to their economic condition) as made by the Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, West Bengal on the basis of 1960-'61 data, she finds that even after two decades the ordering remains nearly the same as economic indicators will show.

Dhirendra Nath Konar identifies the economically depressed districts of West Bengal on the basis of some indicators namely, rate of growth of population, density of population, rate of urbanisation etc. The result derived from this work is that the ranking of the districts with reference to the major features of demography has remained more or less unaltered between 1971 and 1981.

9 Bose (1984,85).
Biplab Dasgupta\textsuperscript{12} anticipates a promising growth rate in the Asansol complex which is already the major urban entity outside Calcutta Urban Agglomeration. He also suggests that the rich agricultural land of the rest of Burdwan can lead to a dynamic agriculture-based urbanisation.

In the light of some indicators like per capita income, industrialisation, urbanisation and agricultural productivity, Rajendra M. Chakrabarti\textsuperscript{13} has placed Burdwan in the group of the most developed region of the State. Bankura has been placed in the group of most backward region although in the light of their performance in agriculture and industry, Bankura and Birbhum appear to rank somewhat higher than the remaining five districts within the group. He shows in his study that the key factor in regional backwardness and inequalities has been the low rate of agricultural growth in the backward districts like Bankura: Burdwan enjoys the highest agricultural productivity compared to other districts of West Bengal.

In a case study of Durgapur, Nandita Basak\textsuperscript{14} has examined the spatial impact of this particular town on the economic and demographic aspects of the surrounding region. She observes that the impact has been transmitted to the nearby rural areas mainly through generation of employment in non-agricultural activity.

\textsuperscript{12} Dasgupta (1988).
\textsuperscript{13} Chakrabarti (1990).
\textsuperscript{14} Basak (1988).
We find a chequered history of the coal belts in Burdwan and Bankura districts in the thesis of P.K. Chakrabarti who analyses the development of coal industry in West Bengal during the period 1901-1976.

On the basis of the yield of rice per hectare during 1960-61 to 1988-89 Rajendra M. Chakrabarti shows in another study on inter-district inequalities that the district of Bankura has become more backward than Burdwan in course of the above period.

Sudeshna Ghosh Roy has analysed the urbanization process in two contrasting regions of West Bengal; the developed region of Twentyfour Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly district, located near Calcutta and the four backward districts located in the western part of the State — Midnapur, Purulia, Bankura and Birbhum. She also finds that the main impulse for urban growth in West Bengal has come from growing industrial and manufacturing activities.

Some recent case studies on Bankura observe that in the early days of British Raj some traditional household industries like brass metal etc. have been developed by the East India Company in Sonamukhi which became a major marketing town in the region.

17 Ghosh Roy (1988).
A similar picture has been presented in another important town Bishnupur, with similar problems of stagnation following the decay of traditional industries, and the continued backwardness of agriculture in the hinterland.\(^{18}\)

We have a contrasting picture in the related works of Kalyani Sarkar\(^ {19}\) where Bankura has been included in the most developed region along with Burdwan, Howrah, Hooghly and 24-Parganas. This is in sharp contrast with the ranking of districts by Chakrabarti in his study mentioned above. She finds some similarities in Bankura and 24-Parganas regarding cropping intensity, density per square kilometre etc.

A survey\(^{20}\) undertaken by Jadavpur University for evaluation and assessment of the Drought-Prone Areas Programme in Bankura, Midnapur and Purulia districts in March 1979–June'79 has shown that in real terms the programme had made very little impact, although in money terms some expenditure had been incurred. It is observed that these areas are underdeveloped with a chronic shortage of water for irrigation, moisture-content of the soil, unsatisfactory productivity trends in agriculture, extreme inadequacy of alternative employment opportunities, a high percentage of scheduled castes and tribes in the population etc.

20. Bose, Op.-cit. The survey was conducted under the supervision of Manjula Bose.
Tarapada Dhar\textsuperscript{21} has edited a few articles on some aspects of economic development of Bankura. Useful surveys on economic development of Bankura have been published in two volumes. Various aspects like production, employment, population, irrigation etc. have been considered and analysed.

D.S. Ganguly\textsuperscript{22} makes a study of urbanisation, growth potential and optimisation of industrial location on regional economy of West Bengal, namely, Burdwan Division\textsuperscript{23}.

District Gazetteers, Census reports, some R.B.I., U.B.I and Lead Bank studies including a few West Bengal Government publications contain valuable information about the economic as well as non-economic aspects of the districts. We

23 See also

(i) 'Roy (1993).
(iv) Sen and Mukherjee (1990).
(v) Peacock (1935).
(vii) Dantwala and Shah (1966) and
have also come across some popular studies\(^{24}\) on non-economic, primarily sociological, aspects of the districts like caste, culture, history etc.

However, we have not come across any comprehensive study on output trend, structural changes etc. in agriculture and industries of the districts of Burdwan and Bankura and West Bengal during the period 1951-'81. The present work is an attempt to study these diverse aspects of economic development of the two districts on a comparative basis.

1.3 Hypotheses

Economic growth in a region involves output growth. Like output growth there are other indicators of economic development, namely, urbanization, demographic change, structural transformation in occupation etc.

We have studied the aggregative aspects of growth, and structural shifts of employment and industries in the two districts under study. This structural transformation has been

considered as one of the indices of economic development in these areas\textsuperscript{25}.

Some of the hypotheses examined here are as follows:

(i) Both the districts of Burdwan and Bankura have developed in agriculture and industries.

(ii) There has been faster development in Burdwan.

(iii) There have been structural changes in employment and industries in both districts.

(iv) Small-scale industries have played an important role in economic development of these districts particularly in the relatively backward Bankura.

(v) Along with economic factors some non-economic factors, primarily sociological, have also played significant role in economic development in Burdwan during the period 1951-’81.

1.4 Methodology

The work is based chiefly on an analysis of statistical data. The time series data have been scrutinised before they are subjected to statistical treatment. Simple linear regression equations have been fitted to the observed data in order to estimate the rates of growth of factories, urban population etc. during the period under study. As the available

data have not always been suitable for rigorous statistical analysis, we have depended to a large extent on simple tools of forming tables and analysing the trends reflected in the tabulated data. Statistical data have often been supplemented by common sense judgement and analysis of observed conditions.

1.5 Sources of Data

We have depended mostly on published official data from different sources. Besides, unpublished reports available in collectorates, district and sub-divisional libraries have also been consulted.


27 Reports and returns available in the following institutions and libraries have also been looked into: Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Calcutta, National Library, Calcutta, ICSSR Documentation Centre, New Delhi, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, Central Library and Agro-Economic Research Centre, Visva-Bharati, Central Library, Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad, Library of National Archives, New Delhi, Library, University of Bombay, Commercial Library, Calcutta, Library of Department of Economics, University of Calcutta, Central Library, University of

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Further, the data have been supplemented by unpublished data collected from some factories and organisations mostly by scanning records from their official papers and registers, and partly by personal interviews and finally in the light of replies to a questionnaire on Ayuris. We have visited most of the coalfields, factories and surveyed rural areas in the districts. This has helped us in knowing people, their outlook, varied economic problems of the different areas and collect first hand information about these problems.

1.6 **Period of Study**

The study relates to the period 1951-1981. In a number of cases it has, however, been extended to late eighties and early nineties.

1.7 **A Pre-view**

Chapter 2 gives an economic account and a brief history of industrial evolution in the districts. This is the background paper of the study.

Chapter 3 examines the nature of the growth trends in agriculture during 1951-'81. The chapter analyses

(continued from previous page)

North Bengal, Central Library, University of Burdwan, Indian Statistical Institute Library, Calcutta, Library of National Sample Survey Organisation (Field Operations Division), Zonal Training Centre, Calcutta, UCO Bank Staff Training College Library, Calcutta etc.

28 See below. (Chapter 9)
the output trends in agriculture whereas technological progress has been described in chapter 4. The discussion embraces the following aspects: area under crops, production of principal crops, cropping intensities and cropping patterns.

Chapter 5 is devoted to the study of industrial growth trends, 1951-81. Registered working factories as well as employment in registered working factories have been considered here. Due to non-availability of comprehensive data on industrial output and investment, employment data on industries have been used as indicators of industrial output trends. On the front of industrial growth we have examined the nature of the trends in the number of factories in employment.

Chapter 6 concentrates on industrial employment trends and structural changes. This chapter focuses on the post-independence shifts of industries from small scale to large scale and heavy industries as well as from traditional and food products (rice, cotton etc.) to basic metal (iron and steel, engineering and wood industries) in Burdwan and Bankura respectively.

For the purpose of spatial comparisons it is necessary to consider compositions of the factories in the regions in respect of their category and size. It has been considered important to highlight the nature of growth of the
industries in the Durgapur-Raniganj-Asansol belt where a chain of large capital goods industries has developed during the period under study. Development of these industries has exercised significant positive linkage effects on the industrial development in both the districts and more remote areas in the State.

Peculiarities and problems prevailing in the districts have been noted in the analysis of concentration and localisation of industries in chapter 7.

A study of industrial growth requires a study of growth of output and employment both in the large scale and household industries. It appears that the small-scale and household sectors have a greater importance compared to the large scale sector in respect of their contribution to output and employment. Prominent small and village industries have been analysed along with their specific problems in chapter 8.\textsuperscript{29}

Chapter 9 is confined to a summary of the development processes and principal factors behind economic backwardness and development. Explaining the economic and infrastructural factors responsible for faster development and backwardness:

\textsuperscript{29} The data used are evidently inadequate for any comprehensive and satisfactory study of industrial growth trends. The analysis is nevertheless expected to reflect the broad trends in industrial growth quite well.
the chapter examines how far some non-economic, primarily socio-
logical, factors have been important in the explanation of the
different patterns of development of the two districts.

It is a common hypothesis that the caste factor
plays an important role in economic development in any area. It
is also a popular belief that there is a positive relation
between concentration of low caste people and lower development
in an area and vice-versa; This hypothesis has not, however,
been corroborated by our study. This part of our study delinea-
tes some aspects of specific backward blocks and compares
their economic status with some economically developed blocks
of the districts.

It has also been observed that one particular
ethnic group of population, known as 'Ugra-Kshatriya' or Aguri,
has been concentrated in Burdwan belt and played an important
role in generating faster pace of economic growth in the dis-
trict of Burdwan compared to the district of Bankura.30

The factor of migration has played asymmetrical
role in the case of the districts. In case of Burdwan, which
is more urbanised, there has been an inflow of the able bodied
workers from the districts of Bankura during the month of
peak demand for labour. In this context, the study considers

30 We have surveyed different parts of Aguri-concentrated areas
of Burdwan and interviewed some Aguri and non-Aguri perso-
nalities on the basis of a definite questionnaire.
rural-urban composition of population, ratio of urban to total population, decennial growth rates of rural, urban and total population. Intra-district and inter-district shift of man power from rural (agriculture) to urban (industry) areas is in evidence.

Age-sex distribution has also been treated as another factor in economic development in these districts. Life expectancy and age-sex distribution of population indicate the productivity of growing population heightening economic development in these areas. Interdependence between the districts has also been taken into account.

1.8 Conclusion

Economic development is a complicated process and it is very difficult to make a comparative study of the development of different regions and to find explanatory factors for such development patterns. Our endeavour has been, therefore, to focus on the broad processes of development and the prominent factors responsible for economic backwardness and development.

1.9 Limitation of the Study

The study has been naturally conditioned by the availability of data. Inadequacy and often non-existence of data have compelled us to leave out factors which are of crucial importance.